

# OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

KEITH VAUGHAN (1912-1977)



**Seligheit I, 1944**

28 x 20.8 cms  
(11.00 x 8.17 in)

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P.O.A.

Collage with watercolour, bodycolour and part squared for transfer  
Signed and dated '44

Provenance:

Tib Lane Gallery, Manchester

Mr & Mrs Geoffrey Green (acquired directly from the artist)

Allen Freer

Exhibited:

Whitechapel Art Gallery, London: Keith Vaughan – Retrospective Exhibition. March-April 1962, cat.no. 12.

Olympia, London. Keith Vaughan. February-March 2002. cat no. KV 458

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester: Keith Vaughan – A Centenary Exhibition. March-June 2012.

This work, from the early 1940s, is thoroughly Neo-Romantic in style and character. Vaughan was in the habit of putting together densely worked sheets of related studies comprising various pages of his sketchbooks. These were pasted down on separate, larger sheets and re-worked as a whole then housed in special hand-made folders. Despite using only the most basic materials of pencil, pen and ink, diluted gouache and crayon, Vaughan was able to produce complex visual ideas with great emotional impact.

Although a fine German speaker, Vaughan was somewhat dyslexic. He titled this work Seligheit but probably intended to use the German word seligkeit, which translates as 'bliss' or 'salvation'. His highly personal journals reveal that he felt emotionally remote from the rest of the world and his paintings of figures sheltering in coves and caves were an instinctual act of self-preservation in a hostile world. He produced three works entitled Seligheit and subsequently exhibited them in his Whitechapel retrospective exhibition in 1962, indicating that the theme carried considerable significance for him. Each possess a cocoon or womb-like quality, as if the crouching figure has located the bliss of a secret place of shelter and safety.

Vaughan's inscription implies the date of execution to be 1944. However, the signature and date, inscribed in ballpoint pen, were added long after he completed the study sheet and it was more likely to have been made in early 1943. The study at the upper right has been squared up ready to be transferred to a larger image and was used as the basis for the cover design of 'New Writing and Daylight' in the summer of that year. It was also used again in a bookplate that he designed for Mervyn Jones Evans, however the cave-like shelter in which the figure crouches was transformed into a shell.