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**FELIX KELLY**

1914 - 1994

*Lewes Crescent, Brighton*

Oil on board 55 x 71

Signed

15,000 - 25,000

Exhibited:

Brighton Art Gallery & Museum *The Painter's Brighton*  
July, 1962. Original label affixed verso.

Ex collection Anthony Metherell Esq, United Kingdom

The life of expatriate artist Felix Kelly (1914 - 1994) is as intriguing as his work. Born in Epsom, Auckland, he attended Kings College but left New Zealand aged 21 years for the bright lights of London. Befriended and patronised by many leading society figures of the day, Kelly exhibited alongside Lucien Freud, Julian Trevelyan and on one occasion Frances Hodgkins. A life of glamour and creativity ensued. Kelly painted the famous Castle Howard murals, where 'Brideshead Revisited' was filmed, designed theatre sets for Sir John Gielgud and Dame Sybil Thorndike and illustrated magazines such as Harper's Bazaar. Kelly's distinctive work, rarely seen at auction, is held in British and American collections, Te Papa and Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery.

A major retrospective was held at Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, earlier this year. Kelly's extraordinary life is documented in Donald Bassett's biography *Fix: The Art & Life of Felix Kelly*

During the 1960s Kelly spent much of his time painting in the deep south of the United States. However this work from that period, is of historic Lewes Crescent, Brighton. Here the viewer is led along a meandering path, somewhat reminiscent of Auckland Albert Park. Manicured green lawns with elegant residences, so beloved by the artist, overlook the Victorian pleasure pier, one of Britain's first piers, constructed in 1832. The soft, almost mystical ambience associated with Kelly's paintings, and clearly evident in this work, heightens its appeal.

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*Important, Early & Rare Thursday 18 November 2010*

