

FRAMING SALE (WAS £795) - Royal Menagerie - Cary's London -
Framed

£625

Kristjana S Williams



REF: 3164

Height: 64.5 cm (25.4")

Width: 97 cm (38.2")

Description

Conservation Framed with AR70 Glass.

Mirroring the attention to detail on the underlying map by master cartographer, John Cary, Kristjana unpicks the fascinating history of the Royal Menagerie and simultaneously examines the juxtaposition of the Royals vs. the common marketeers in London of old.

In 1235 the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II bestowed upon King Henry III the most exotic and preposterous gift he could divine; 'three leopards' (in fact probably lions) and thus began the Tower of London's Royal Menagerie which would proceed on through the centuries, pillaging the animal kingdom - eagles, pumas, ostriches, baboons, tigers, camels, elephants and more. The Polar Bear, seen here draped in Royal finery, was a 1252 gift from the King of Norway which was allowed to swim, not so freely, in the Thames and catch fish. And the common people flocked to the Tower to behold the gruesome, glorious, fascinating, repugnant menagerie of beasts prowling around their circular yard and to wonder at the might of the Royals who kept them. This continued on, peaking in the early 19th century with the acquisition over 300 new specimens, but the advent of the RSPCA in 1824 finally led to the decision that the animals needed a more suitable home. In 1831, 150 of them were moved to Regent's Park and the ZSL London Zoo was created, now a highly regarded scientific zoo.

Kristjana marries the animals on the print with this rich historical backstory. They hold 'Royal Menagerie' signs in their mouths. The Ostrich has a plaque and the Crown Jewels on its back. Two tigers are given elaborate headdresses and represent the many large cats that made the tower their home. There are the 6 ravens of the Tower of London, wings clipped (and still so today) lest King Charles II decree should come true, "If the birds leave the White Tower will crumble and the country will be thrown in to chaos". We see the animals that grace the Royal Parks; deer, squirrels and badgers. Then there are the dwellers of humbler haunts; foxes, rats, pigeons and mice. All making up the bestial tapestry of London.

Kristjana portrays the market places and lanes the marketeers once inhabited: Petticoat Lane, Grey's Antiques Market, Billingsgate Market, Leadenhall Market, Spitalfields Market, Columbia Road flower market, Brick Lane and its Sunday Upmarket, Camden Market, Greenwich Market, Newton Street and Pineapple Place. Each market proffers a basket displaying its particular wares, each street name hints at goods once exchanged along its length.

We see also ghost tube stations; Downing Street and the British Museum. There is a perfume bottle telling the story of 'Madeleine', a scent developed to mask the acrid air of the underground, but which was itself so potent, it caused 3 passengers to pass out and so was swiftly abolished. Spot the ticking clock and the rat with the Viking Hat, 'Viking' once a proposed name of the Victoria Line.

Many museums are featured and examples of their eclectic collections spill out across the map. These include the British museum, The Science Museum, The Horniman Museum, The Victoria and Albert Museum and the Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

This complex tale is framed in black industrial ironwor...