Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Carl Ludvig MESSMANN (Copenhagen 1826 - Gothenburg 1893)

Nocturne: Trees at the Edge of a Lake

Pencil, with stumping, heightened with charcoal and white chalk.

Inscribed *L. Messmann. del* on the old mount.

101 x 142 mm. (4 x 5 5/8 in.)

The mount of this drawing bears the drystamp of the 19th century Danish collector Benjamin Wolff (1790-1866), who owned a number of drawings by Carl Messmann.

Artist description:

Very little is known of the Danish landscape draughtsman, painter and lithographer Carl Ludvig Ferdinand Messmann. In 1840, at the age of fourteen, he enrolled at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (the Kunstakadamiet) in Copenhagen, where he remained until January 1845. He also trained as a lithographer at the Copenhagen lithography workshop Em. Bærentzen & Co. Among Messmann's favoured subjects were the countryside in and around the Danish capital. He often worked in the Frederiksberg Gardens and the forest of Charlottenlund, on the shores of the Øresund north of Copenhagen, as well as elsewhere in North Zealand, producing drawings, nature studies and lithographs imbued with a romantic sensibility and an appreciation of nature. Messmann also worked in the Danish towns of Aalborg, Kolding, Ribe, Tønder and elsewhere in the late 1840s. In 1848 he volunteered for service in the First Schleswig War between Denmark and Germany, serving in Jutland and Funen, but the following year was allowed to be discharged since his wife had just had their first child. In 1849 he and his family moved to Frederiksberg, on the outskirts of Copenhagen. A painting of Hesselager Manor, on the island of Funen in southeastern Denmark, was one of the first works he exhibited in public; at the Royal Danish Academy in the Charlottenborg Palace in 1850. The artist was to exhibit a total of twenty works at Charlottenborg during the decade of the 1850s, seven of which were purchased by King Frederik VII of Denmark between 1854 and 1859.

By 1852 Messmann had settled in Roskilde, the ancient capital of Denmark, west of Copenhagen, where he made several drawings and paintings of the 13th century Roskilde Cathedral. He continued to exhibit landscape paintings and pencil drawings, and the second half of the 1850s were to be a particularly productive period. Apart from Frederik VII, other Danish collectors of Messmann's work included the businessman Johan Hansen and the publisher Jacob Hegel, as well as such fellow artists as Carl Emil Baagøe, Ludvig Abelin (L.A.) Schou and Johan Christian Dahl.

Messmann often worked in Sweden, and in 1857 moved there permanently, living briefly in Malmö before settling in Gothenburg in September 1859. The artist lived and worked in Sweden for the remaining thirty-four years of his career, making occasional trips back to Denmark. He became as well known for his views of Gothenburg as he had been for his earlier depictions of Copenhagen, and also worked as a teacher of drawing and perspective. Messmann illustrated a series of views of Gothenburg and its surroundings as lithographs for Viktor Rydberg's Göteborg med dess omgifningar, which was published in twelve volumes between 1859 and 1862. He continued to exhibit both paintings and drawings, characterized by a precision of handling and an attention to detail, until his death in Gothenburg in 1893, at the age of sixty-seven. The artist remains a somewhat obscure figure today, and is rarely mentioned in accounts of 19th century painting in either Denmark and Sweden. Drawings and paintings by Ludvig Messmann are today in the collections of the Museum of Copenhagen, the Roskilde Museum and the Øregård Museum in Denmark, as well as the Goteborgs Stadtmuseum in Gothenburg, the Malmö Konstmuseum in Malmö, the Nasjonalgalleriet in Oslo and the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, while a handful of lithographs by the artist are in the British Museum.