

# . AGNEWS .

EST. 1817

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**Jenny Montigny** (Ghent 1875-1937  
Deurle)

*Cerisiers en fleurs*

oil on canvas

23  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 37  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (60.5 x 95.5 cm.)



## Provenance

By descent within the artist's family until 2020.

## Exhibited

On loan to the Charleroi, Musée des beaux-arts, 1997-98.

A founding member of the Luminist movement *Vie et Lumière* in 1904, Montigny was the favourite pupil of the painter Emile Claus (fig.1). The two enjoyed an intimate friendship that would last throughout their lives, and their names have long been linked. However as female artists are increasingly being rediscovered, Montigny is gaining recognition in her own right, rather than simply being a footnote in the story of Emile Claus. While she became obscure later in life, Montigny's artistic career was not without success. Montigny was one of only three female artists in her circle to be honoured with a museum acquisition, as the Fine Arts Museum (MSK) in Ghent acquired *The Gardener* in 1913, a monumental painting measuring 180 by 245 cm.

Born in Ghent where her father was a law professor at the city's university, Montigny's early interest in art was fuelled by an early encounter with *The Ice-Skaters* by Emile Claus, housed in the MSK. This pivotal experience led her to take private lessons with Claus at his country home Villa Zonneschijn. Unsupported by her parents, who disapproved of her artistic interests, Montigny dared to be independent, and settled at Villa Rustoord in nearby Deurle in 1904. While a number of other female artists emerged at this time, notably Anna de Weert (nee Cogen), Montigny was unique in living on her own, with neither a husband nor her parents. She made her debut at the Ghent Salon in 1902, and was a founding member of the *Vie*

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*et Lumière* group. During the First World War Montigny (like Claus) moved to London, exhibiting with the Women's International Art Group at the Grafton Galleries.



Fig. 1: Emile Claus with Jenny Montigny at her home in Deurle, photograph, 1920.

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