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2021 HIGHLIGHTS

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HIGHLIGHTS

2021



Thomas Baumgartner
(Munich 1892 - 1962 Kreuth)
Portrait of two Krumen soldiers

Signed and dated (upper left):
'Th. Baumgartner 1916'

Oil on unlined canvas

39 ¾ x 32 ¼ in. (101 x 82 cm.)

The present work shows two African soldiers from the so-called Krumen people, an ethnic group living mostly along the coast of Liberia and Ivory Coast. The picture belongs to a series of around twenty-seven portraits of prisoners-of-war which the German artist Thomas Baumgartner painted between 1916 – 1917 in the *Halbmondlager* (known in English as the "Half Moon Camp"), a prisoner-of-war camp in Wünsdorf near Berlin, Germany, during the First World War. The camp housed mainly Muslim Arab, Indian and African soldiers from the British and French colonies who had fought against Germany for the allied side. The intended purpose of the camp was to convince detainees to switch allegiance from Britain and France. To that end, detainees lived in relative comfort and were given everything they needed to practice their faith. The German explorer in Africa, Adolf Friedrich, Duke of Mecklenburg (1873–1969) commissioned the series of portraits from Baumgartner, who was spared from being sent to the frontline as a result of this extensive commission.

The soldier in the foreground confronts the viewer with a confident frontal stance and steady, direct gaze, which lends the picture a striking immediacy as well as revealing the personalities of the sitters. The strong, composed stillness of the soldiers' poses is juxtaposed beautifully with the loose and energetic handling of the brushwork, which is painted with thick impasto in an impressionistic manner.







Josef Mangold (Cologne 1884 - 1937)

Red poppies in a vase

Signed (lower right): 'Jos. Mangold.';
dated on the reverse 'pinx. 1931'

Oil on unlined canvas

21 1/8 x 17 in. (53.8 x 43.2 cm.)

Mangold's painting is characterised by an emphatically objective approach to the depicted subject. The present still life *Red poppies in a vase* is determined by basic geometric forms and a sharp contouring line. Entirely in the spirit of the New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) a movement in Weimar Germany the artist succeeds in letting the subject of the picture speak through a sober representation, without relying on more expressive means of design. The simple clarity of the composition's visual language, bathed in a cool and clear light, reveals earlier artistic models, from the Renaissance and the late Middle Ages. Despite their old-master influence, Mangold's works, which are formulated without pathos or narrative elements, are distinctly modern.





Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller
(Vienna 1793 -1865 Hinterbrühl)

View of Lake Altaussee and the Dachstein

Signed and dated (center right):
'Waldmüller 1834'

Oil on panel

12 ¼ x 10 ½ in. (31 x 26.5 cm.)

The present work, painted in 1834, is a *tour de force* by Austria's leading painter of the Biedermeier. Primarily known for his genre paintings, Waldmüller himself considered his artist's calling to be the representation of nature. As he wrote in 1846: 'recognition that nature must be the only source and sum total of our study; there alone can be found the eternal truth and beauty, the expression of which must be the artist's highest aim in every branch of the plastic arts.' (quoted in A. Roessler, G. Pisko, *Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller: Sein Leben, sein Werk und seine Schriften*, Vienna, 1907, vol II, p. 9).

View of lake Altaussee and the Dachstein belongs to a sequence of landscapes painted in the Salzkammergut, an area stretching from the city of Salzburg eastwards along the Alpine Foreland to the peaks of the Dachstein Mountains in which Waldmüller spent his summers from 1829 until 1843. This period is regarded as the climax of his development as a landscape painter and by 1834 the majority of his artistic output consisted almost entirely of landscapes painted in the Salzkammergut.

These sojourns in the mountains seem to have given him the opportunity to liberate himself from formal portraiture which had dominated his career. Based on his own observation from a real vantage point, *View of lake Altaussee and the Dachstein* reveals Waldmüller's ability to create a remarkable sense of recession and depth using an extremely precise technique reproducing both the smallest background details and the principle foreground elements without losing definition. The landscape betrays the idiosyncrasy of a Biedermeier landscape with its luminosity, contrast of light and shadow, symphony of colour, the sunlit mountain peaks reflecting in the shimmering blue of the lake, and just a small cluster of houses to remind us of human existence. Waldmüller's *plein-air* landscapes from this period can be regarded as a milestone on the way to modernism.

In the early 20th century, the present picture is recorded in the possession of Johann II, Fürst Liechtenstein, who was the reigning Prince of Liechtenstein between 1858 and 1929. He was an art connoisseur, adding greatly to the Liechtenstein Princely Collections and is considered a prominent patron of the arts and sciences during his long reign. By 1930, *View of lake Altaussee and the Dachstein* was owned by the Jewish businessman and distinguished art collector Dr Hermann Eissler (1860-1953), whose collection was renowned for its exceptional number of works by Austrian and German 19th century artists.





Charles Wautier (Mons, 1609 - Brussels, 1703) and
Michaelina Wautier (Mons, 1617 - Brussels, 1689)

The Calling of Saint Matthew

Signed (upper right): 'C. Wautier
fecit'

Oil on canvas

48 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 57 $\frac{5}{8}$ (123 x 146.5 cm)

Painted circa 1650 - 60

This painting, signed by Charles Wautier, is likely to be one of several works that the artist painted in collaboration with his sister Michaelina, until recently a 'forgotten talent' and the subject of a landmark exhibition in 2018 (Michaelina Wautier 1604–1689 *Glorifying a Forgotten Talent*, organised by the Rubenshuis and held at the Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp, 1 June – 2 September 2018).

The present work is discussed by Pierre-Yves Kairis in the catalogue of that exhibition in the context of another larger canvas depicting Christ among the Doctors in which he suggests convincingly that Michaelina Wautier painted the head of the youthful Christ and Charles Wautier executed the rest. What is equally apparent in *The Calling of Saint Matthew* is the different, and arguably more accomplished, handling of the figure of Christ's youthful attendant, which suggests that it too was painted in collaboration with his sister. Indeed the softly modelled sculptural handling of the central head in the present picture recalls what is perhaps Michaelina's best-known painting, the *Two Girls as Saints Agnes and Dorothy* exhibited in Antwerp, and most likely dating from the end of the 1650s (fig.1). Charles and Michaelina shared a house and presumably a studio in Brussels from 1638 or shortly afterwards until her death, and collaboration between them must have been common.



Fig. 1: Michaelina Wautier, *Two Girls as Saints Agnes and Dorothy*, Antwerp, Museum voor Schone Kunsten.



Lotte Laserstein (Preussisch Holland, Germany

1898 – 1993 Kalmar, Sweden)

Portrait of the artist - en face

Signed (upper right): 'Lotte Laserstein'

Oil on unlined canvas

13 x 12 ¼ in. (33 x 31cm.)

Painted *circa* 1934 - 35

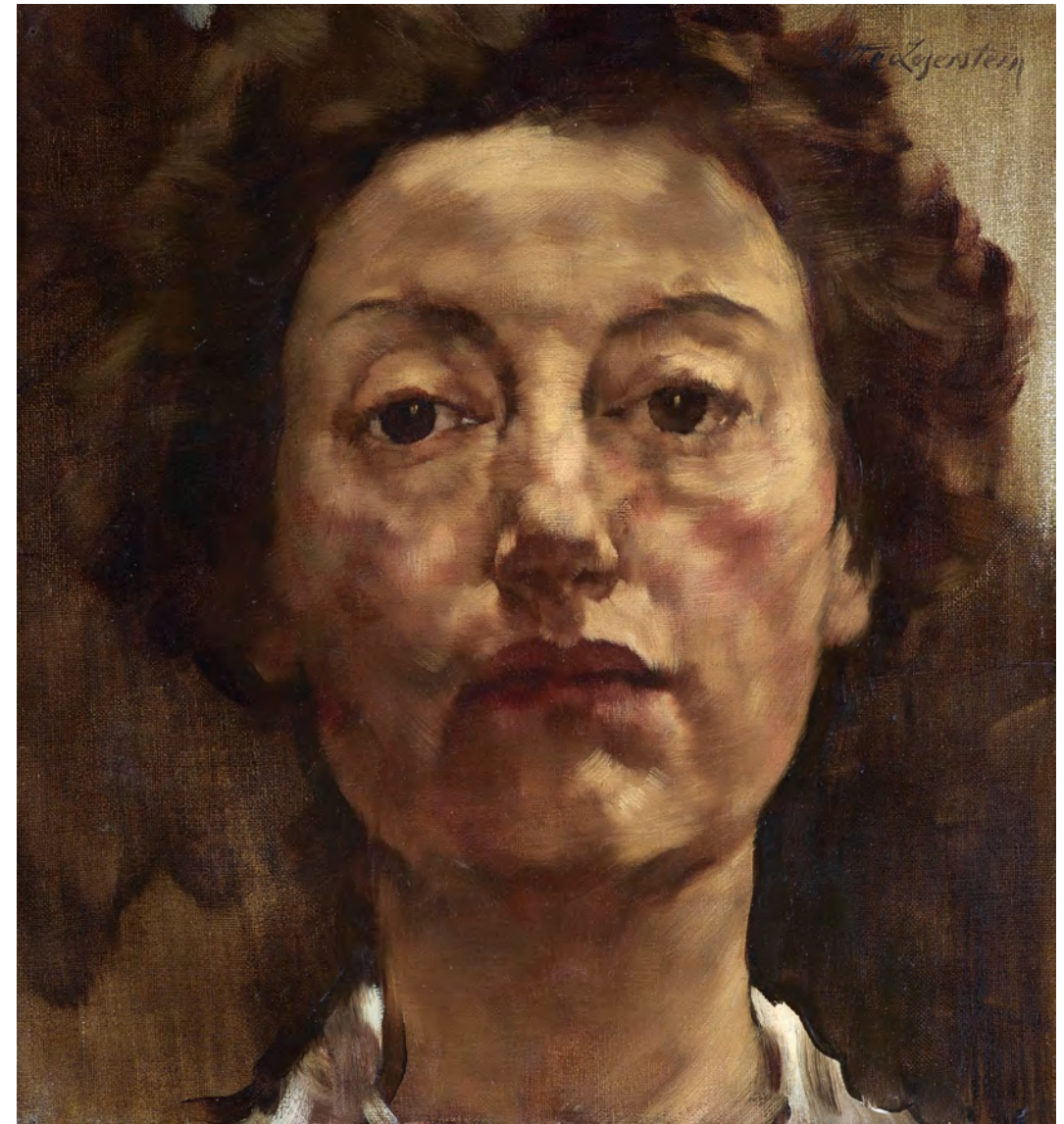
The German-Swedish painter Lotte Laserstein (1898–1993) can rightly be considered one of the great women artists of the 20th century, whose skill and reputation have, until recently, unjustly been forgotten.

In the Weimar Republic she was celebrated as a shining talent, and art critics at the time predicted a brilliant ascent capped by her winning the Academy's gold medal in 1925. However, the promising career came to an abrupt end when the Nazis seized power and declared Lotte a 'three-quarter Jew'. In 1937 she emigrated to Sweden, where she stayed for the rest of her life, and with her forced displacement Laserstein also vanished from the art historical map and the collective consciousness.

In the first comprehensive retrospective of Laserstein's work at the Museum Ephraim-Palais, Berlin in 2003/4, Dr. Anna-Carola Krause wrote of the present painting, 'Economic in its use of colour and virtuoso in its execution it focuses less on the professional painter than on Lotte Laserstein as a private individual. There are stronger signs here than in other self-portraits that she is exploring her face to mirror her soul. The head has been placed with strict symmetry, emphasized by a light which emanates from the darkness without betraying its source, and viewed from a slightly upward perspective, [a] compositional ruse which elevates the self-portrait from the viewer's standpoint and makes it look as though the artist is looking down on herself. Humiliation and pride go hand in hand.

The dark monochromatic hues lend this small format a material intensity and an inner force which appears to radiate from the frame-filling subject. Nevertheless, the facial expression is ambivalent and ultimately hard to define. It is this state that defies precise description which suggests the conflict Laserstein must have experienced in her new enforced Jewish identity'.

This remarkable self-portrait was painted *circa* 1934-35, just before the artist fled Germany, and today her Berlin period is seen as the peak of almost eighty creative years. After the war, Laserstein never returned to Germany, describing her life as having been torn in two. She later described this trauma and the part that her art played in it: 'Reality? To me, that has always been my work, ever since I was my child. If I had in not my had my own reality in my paint box....I could not have borne those years when everything was taken from me: family, friends and home. I retrieved some of it thanks to my only reality'. Phoebe Blatton, in reviewing the 2018/19 Frankfurt and Berlin retrospective exhibition Lotte Laserstein: Face to Face for the Apollo Magazine writes, 'Throughout her life, Laserstein was preoccupied with the enigma and confrontation of the returned stare, her own emerging as the most constant and profound of all. It is the portraits, specifically the self-portraits in which Laserstein's dark eyes look back at us under hooded lids, with an almost haughty upward tilt of her top lip, that make an indelible impression. A 'face-to-face' suggests a deeper level of communication and, with this on offer, we have an obligation to return the gaze squarely, with eyes and mind open'.



'She can paint. She has a pronounced sense of the earnestness of beauty. One feels it down to one's fingertips'

Anonymous, 1930 (quoted in *Lotte Laserstein: Face to Face*)



Hjalmar Eilif Emanuel Peterssen
(Kristiania 1852 -1928 Lysaker)

Laksefiskere på Nesøya (Salmon Fishers at Nesøya),
1891

Signed (lower centre) 'Eilif Peterssen;
(lower left) 'Nesoen'; and dated
(lower right) '1891'

Oil on unlined canvas

55.1 x 74 in. (140 x 188 cm.)

The Norwegian artist Eilif Peterssen is considered one of the pioneers in the development of Nordic landscape painting, and a key member of the Scandinavian Romanticism movement.

He travelled widely in Europe, including Munich, London, Paris, Venice and Rome. His distinctive style of *plein-air* subject matter evolved from his association first with Danish painter Peder Severin Krøyer in the artists' colony that developed in the fishing community at Skagen in Jutland, Denmark, and then in the summer of 1886 with fellow Norwegian artists on a farm at Fleskum in Norway where their work celebrated nature and the great outdoors.

Salmon Fishers at Nesøya, executed in 1891, is a testimony to Peterssen's position at the forefront of the development of Nordic landscape painting. It depicts a typically Nordic landscape on a warm summer's day, with a verdant sun drenched landscape, unlike the pure, almost Symbolist landscapes which his fellow artists had been painting at Fleskum. The location depicted is the island of Nesøya, a wooded island located in the fjord not far from Oslo. The painting reveals Peterssen at his most Impressionistic, not Symbolist, using broad strokes with thick impasto in the rocks, water, trees and clothing of the fishermen, which are all executed in a dynamic virtuoso, almost abstract, dazzle of strokes. The artist uses a high viewpoint and creates a deceptively casual 'snapshot' composition with only a small amount of sky visible, instead mostly reflected in the water to convey a mood of Nordic summer.

The translucent light imbues the composition with an optimistic warmth and sense of well-being that combines the spontaneity and bright colours of Impressionism with a provincial motif that celebrates the innocent rustic charm of summers spent in the Norwegian fjords. Layered with national pride, the painting is a poignant expression of simple values and a healthy lifestyle in a rural idyll, that recalls the nuances Peterssen first explored in his masterpiece, *Summer Night* (1886) in the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway.





Vilhelm Hammershøi
(Copenhagen 1864 - 1916)

Den Hvide Dør (The White Door)

Inscribed, dated and signed (on a label on the reverse): 'Interior fra Karl Madsen's Bolig Lyngby/malt i 1888/v. Hammershøi'

Oil on unlined canvas

24 5/8 x 21 1/2 in. (62 x 55 cm.)

The White Door is Vilhelm Hammershøi's first known painting of an empty interior, a subject which would become a hallmark of his artistic oeuvre. It was executed in the autumn of 1888, when Hammershøi was staying with his friend Karl Madsen, a celebrated Danish art critic and art historian, at his home in Lyngby, north of Copenhagen. In a 1908 interview, Hammershøi talked of his unique aesthetic awareness of empty rooms: 'I have always thought there was such beauty about a room like that, even though there are no people in it, perhaps precisely because there weren't any'. In Hammershøi's painting the room depicted is deliberately empty. The open and closed doors suggest existential choices, and the dark, strangely impalpable, wooden floor create a sense of distance between us and the world within, which is only 'populated' by light. A jamb stove in the corner of the room holds our attention, set against a grey wall, next to an open door leading to another closed door bathed in a white light in an undefined space. The stove does not seem capable of performing its true function of radiating warmth, and its hulking black shape appears more akin to a sentinel whose job it is to stand and keep watch.

Dispensing with anecdotal detail, so central to Danish Golden Age art, Hammershøi depicts his interiors as a series of disquietingly empty, silent spaces in which the passage of time appears to have been inexplicably suspended and only a sense of self-absorption remains. These atmospheric interiors, inconceivable without the influence of Dutch seventeenth-century painting, particularly that of Johannes Vermeer, are also indebted to the painters of the early nineteenth century Danish Golden Age, whilst at the same time placing the artist firmly in the context of European *fin de siècle* Symbolist art.

Hammershøi's paintings comprise many layers of paint, and the artist generally worked on a canvas for a long time, differentiating individual nuances of colour and shade in the course of the painting process. He applied his relatively dry paint in short, even brushstrokes, layer upon layer, until he had captured all the tones of a single colour, their rhythm encompassing the entire picture plane, often independently of the objects depicted. Sometimes, just before he finished a canvas, he would cover the image with a fine veil of grey, enveloping the objects and their outlines in a mysterious haze.

While his contemporaries were experimenting with colour in Paris, Hammershøi was developing an aesthetic of restraint, what Hans Rosenhagen in 1900 described as 'a fine, spiritual art, all sensibility'. Asked why he used a reduced palette, he replied: 'I'm utterly convinced that a painting has the best effect in terms of its colour the fewer colours there are'.



'Hammershøi is not one of those about whom one must speak quickly. His work is long and slow, and at whichever moment one apprehends it, it will offer plentiful reasons to speak of what is important and essential in art.'

Rainer Maria Rilke, 1905.



Giovanni Battista Salvi, il Sassoferrato
(Sassoferrato 1609 - 1685 Rome)
The Virgin in Prayer

Oil on copper

8 7/8 x 6 7/8 in. (22 x 1.5 cm.)

Provenance
Private European collection, until 2019.



This small work on copper represents one of the most celebrated subjects from the artists's oeuvre, the *Virgin in prayer*. Sassoferrato specialised in these moving devotional images of the Virgin and the simplicity and sobriety of the composition made this one of the most effective and iconic images of the 17th century, a time when the Marian cult, thanks to the directives of the Counter Reformation, gained new traction. His mastery of this subject is also beautifully displayed in *The Virgin in Prayer* in his larger version of the subject on canvas, datable to 1640/50 in the National Gallery of London (fig.1).

Fig. 1: Sassoferrato, *The Virgin in prayer*, National Gallery, London.







Joseph Wright of Derby ARA (Derby 1734 - 1797)

*Charles Hurt of Wirksworth (1758–1834); Susannah Arkwright,
Mrs Charles Hurt (1762–1835) with her daughter Mary Anne*

A pair, the first painted *circa* 1790, the second painted *circa* 1787–90

Oil on canvas

Each 91 ¼ x 55 ¼ in. (232 x 140 cm)

In their original Wright of Derby neo-classical frames

Joseph Wright of Derby's paintings are universally recognised as exemplary models of 18th century British art and these two magnificent paintings are amongst his finest, depicting two of his circle of acquaintances. Charles Hurt, who came from an old and distinguished family of Derbyshire landowners and industrialists, owned a lead-smelting business at Wirksworth and was a highly successful mining engineer. His wife, Susannah, was the daughter of Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the cotton spinning water-frame and the so-called 'father of the modern industrial factory system'.

The Hurts and the Arkwrights were typical of the interconnected group of leading industrial families in Derbyshire that made up Wright's close circle of patrons and who were the driving force behind the Industrial Revolution. For an artist who was keenly interested in the industrial activity of his time, and the scientific developments and understanding that lay behind it, their friendship and patronage inspired many of Wright's most dramatic compositions.



Corneille de la Haye, called Corneille de Lyon
(The Hague c.1500/10 - 1575 Lyon)

*Madeleine de France, Queen consort of Scotland
(1520–1537)*

Oil on oak panel

5 ½ x 4 ⅝ in. (13.8 x 11.8 cm.)

Painted *circa* 1536–7

This beautifully preserved portrait on panel by the Franco-Flemish painter Corneille de la Haye, called Corneille de Lyon, depicts Madeleine de Valois (1520 – 1537), the fifth child and third daughter of the French king François I. This is the only wholly autograph portrait of Madeleine by Corneille known to exist, although it is known in a number of studio and later variants and was painted when the artist was at the height of his powers soon after his arrival at the Valois court in Lyon. The singular virtuosity with which the artist has captured the sweet, slightly melancholic expression of the young princess, places this portrait among the most ravishingly beautiful and endearing in all Corneille's oeuvre. The simplicity seems to speak of piety and devotion, and its almost miniature scale accentuates this jewel-like quality.

In September 1536 James V of Scotland came to France and asked for the hand of the sixteen-year-old Madeleine, with whom it seems likely he had fallen in love. However, because of her fragile health, likely tuberculosis, when Madeleine arrived in Scotland on 19 May 1537 she tragically died only months later in her husband's arms at Holyroodhouse. The royal marriage was one of the shortest in history, a mere six months and seven days, earning her the name of Summer Queen of Scots.



[ACTUAL SIZE]

The necklace in this portrait is set with lozenge-shaped diamonds interspersed with pearls, scarlet enamel or more probably tiny rubies. In the lore of the lapidary the ruby parallels the rose and are equally important attributes of Venus since they both carry the promise of passionate love. However, the ruby's sparks in Madeleine's necklace are very modest both in size and value and perfectly consistent with a virgin child bride. Pearls, like Venus, are born of the sea and a shell and these too are one of the love god's many attributes. Consequently, the pearls and diamonds in this delicate portrait can be read as the prospect and promise of Madeleine's enduring love in marriage.

We are grateful to Geoffrey Munn OBE FSA for his comments on the jewellery.

Co-owned with The Weiss Gallery.



[Larger than actual size]

Giovanni Battista Benvenuti, called L'Ortolano
(Ferrara c. 1487/88 c.1525/27)

The Madonna and Child

With branded collector's mark 'LS' below a cross (on the reverse)

Oil on panel

15 x 12 ¼ in. (38.2 x 31.2 cm.)

Painted *circa* 1510-20.

Ortolano, who owed his soubriquet to his father's employment as a gardener, was evidently trained at Ferrara in the orbit of such artists as Domenico Panetti, in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Like his older Ferrarese contemporary Boccaccio Boccaccino, he came to express a contemplative ideal which owed much to the world of Venice, which he apparently visited with the young artist Benvenuto Tisi, il Garofalo. He would continue to respond consistently to painters with similar classical leanings, Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo and the mature Raphael.







John William Godward (London 1861-1922)

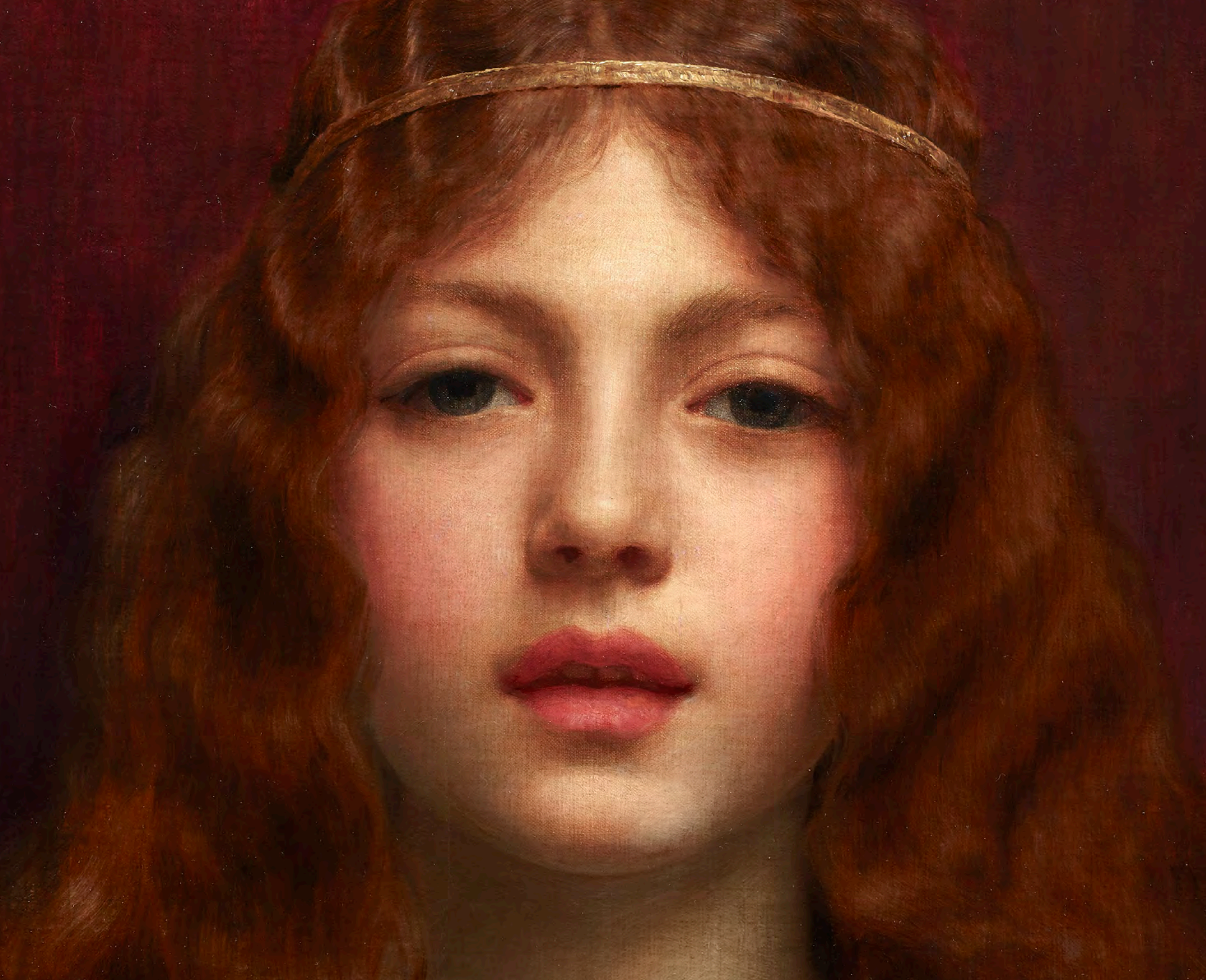
A young woman in ancient Greek dress

Signed and dated (upper left):
'GODWARD / 1906'; on the frame's
reverse, a sale label: '10/ J.W. Godward/
London/ideal head.'

Oil on unlined canvas

18 ⅛ x 16 ⅛ in. (46 x 41 cm.)

Godward's full-length compositions of women in classical dress are typically framed by structured geometric lines, classical architecture and static landscape features constructed from marble. However, his bust length paintings of young women allow for a greater sense of intimacy. Here we are confronted with a classical Roman beauty close-up and face on, her gaze meets ours and we are irresistibly drawn into her world, that of a bygone era.



Louis Leopold Boilly
(La Bassée 1761–1845 Paris)

*Portraits of four members of
the Hartmann family: André
Hartmann and his three
sons, Frédéric, Jacques and
Henri*

Oil on unlined canvas

8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (22 x 17 cm.), each

In their original French Empire frames
with composition ornament and original
gilding.

Through his circles of influence in Paris,
Boilly acquired an astonishing celebrity
for the realism of his small portraits. He
devoted himself to translating
physiognomy as faithfully as possible,
concentrating on the features of the face,
ignoring décor, and simplifying the
details of dress in favor of the larger
truth emphasizing the real personality of
the model: in the words of an author in
the satirical newspaper *La vérité en riant*,
'the only thing they lack is speech'.

André Hartmann, great Alsatian
industrialist (Colmar 1746 - Munster
1837) was considered in Alsace as one
of the founders of its industry. He was
the mayor of Munster from 1792 to
1815, and in 1814, received the Légion
d'Honneur as the doyen of French
industrialists. Married to Marie-
Catherine Waag, he had three sons
who worked with him: the eldest,
Frédéric (1772-1861), and Jacques
(1774-1839), worked with him as of
1792, and were joined a few years
later by Henri (1782-1856). It was
said of them '...this second
generation of industrialists merits
no less the recognition of the
country than their predecessors'.

The present paintings were unknown to
Pascal Zuber and Etienne Breton at
the time they completed their 2019
catalogue raisonné on Boilly: *Louis-
Léopold Boilly (1761-1845) Le Peintre
De La Société Parisienne De Louis XVI
À Louis-Philippe*.





Edward Seago RBS RWS
(Norwich 1910-1974 London)

*Still life with the artist's
materials*

Signed and dated (lower left) 'Edward Seago, 51'

Oil on artist's board

12 x 16 in. (30.5 x 40.8 cm.)

Painted 1951

Edward Seago was one of the most popular English landscape painters of the 20th Century. He was born and lived in Norfolk throughout his life and the influence of the greatest artists of East Anglia, from the 17th Century Dutch-inspired Norwich School, to John Constable and Sir Alfred Munnings can be seen in his work. His light-filled landscapes, many with vast skies and billowing clouds, are imbued with what one critic has described as 'an understated emotional language'. Due to a life-long heart condition which made formal training impossible, Seago was largely self-taught. He was influenced and mentored by leading landscape painters of the day such as Alfred East and Bertram Priestman who advised him not 'to be unduly governed by what you see in art, but by what you see in nature'.

His work gained wide popular appeal and his sell-out exhibitions had queues around the block on opening day, although art critics struggled to place his work in the context of modernism and the growing interest in abstraction. James Reid, his biographer, wrote that 'while Seago's subject matter evolved within a fundamentally traditional genre, his methodology, style and technique contributed to an innovative interpretation of the rural, urban and marine scene', which relied on a wonderfully fluid and refreshing use of paint.

His work is recognisably spontaneous: a moment captured in oil or watercolour, retaining the essential mood of the occasion whether vibrant or reflective, as in the present still life, is a true testament to his highly accomplished artistic sensibilities. He never became an Academician at the Royal Academy, but nonetheless he was a firm favourite with three generations of the Royal Family and in 1956 he was invited by Prince Philip to join him on a trip to the Antarctic aboard The Royal Yacht Britannia. Seago was also a prolific writer and published eleven books, including several with poems and prose by the Poet Laureate John Masefield. Seago's paintings are held in the Royal Collection as well as the Guildhall Art Gallery, the Government Art Collection, the National Portrait Gallery, the Imperial War Museum, Pallant House and the Yale Centre for British Art amongst many other public and private collections.





Front cover: detail from Lotte Laserstein
Self-Portrait

Frontispiece: detail from Hjalmar Eilif
Emanuel Peterssen, *Laksefiskere på
Nesøya (Salmon Fishers at Nesøya)*, 1891

Back cover: Thomas Baumgartner, *Portrait
of two Krumen soldiers*

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