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EST. 1817

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Emilie Mediz-Pelikan

(Vöcklabruck 1861-1908 Dresden)

Willows at a creek

Oil on unlined canvas

25 1/2 x 33 1/2 (65 x 85 cm.)

Painted in 1895

Inscribed by hand on exhibition label on the reverse: 'Emilie Mediz-Pelikan / Weiden am Bachgrund / Krems 1895 / Kat.-Nr. 142, Echtheit beglaubigt Jeikner / 2.11.43'



Provenance

From the estate of the artist;
with Kurt Kalb, Vienna;
private collection, Vienna, until 2023

Literature

Eduard Jeikner, *Emilie Pelikan - Karl Mediz. Gemälde und Zeichnungen, Katalog zur Ausstellung im Galeriegebäude auf der Brühlschen Terrasse*, ed. Heimatwerk Sachsen, Dresden 1943, no. 142.

Oswald Oberhuber/Wilfried Seipel/Sophie Geretsegger, *Emilie Mediz-Pelikan (1861 - 1908), Karl Mediz (1868 - 1945)*, exhibition catalogue (with catalogue raisonné), Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna and OÖ Landesmuseum, Landesgalerie Linz, 1986, no. 232, illustrated.

Erich Tromayer, *Emilie Mediz-Pelikan. Bilder, Briefe, Gedanken*, Vienna 1986, p. 236, no. 244, illustrated.

Exhibited

Dresden, Galeriegebäude auf der Brühlschen Terrasse, 1943, no. 142.

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Emilie Mediz-Pelikan (nee Pelikan) was a student of Albert August Zimmermann at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, and she followed him when he was appointed professor in Salzburg and later in Munich. In 1888, following Zimmermann's death, she moved to the artist's colony in Dachau, outside Munich. She formed a close relationship with the painter and head of the colony, Adolf Hölzel. Amongst the other artists was the younger Viennese painter, Karl Mediz. Around this time, Emilie spent some time in Paris studying the Impressionists. Her first gallery exhibition was held in 1890 by which time she was living in Knokke, Belgium, where she met Mediz again. The two were married in Vienna in 1891, moving to Krems an der Donau where their daughter Gertrude was born. Success, however, was very hard to come by and they settled in Dresden in 1894. In one of the only contemporary accounts of their work to be published in English, the British-Austrian art historian Amelia Sarah Levetus wrote that "These two artists are man and wife; they have wandered in many places together, over the highest mountains and across glaciers, on the banks of deep rivers and on their pilgrimages have painted scenery and portraits and everything else between. They have endured the greatest hardships together and have worked together; they have chosen the same subjects for their canvases, yet their individualities remain, and in similar subjects also there is a great variety of treatment...Frau Mediz-Pelikan also has immense energy, combined with poetry of expression more delicate than that of her husband; she loves to paint lavenders and silver greys, to bring out the very depths of that which she is depicting."

In 1898, both Emilie and Karl were invited to show three pictures each at the inaugural Vienna Secession exhibition. Whilst her early work showed the influence of her interest in Impressionism, fostered during her stay in Paris, her next phase showed a Symbolist quality, particularly in the power of nature. In 1901, three oils by Mediz-Pelikan were included in the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Dresden (*Harmonie in violette*, *Orangenbaum* and *Olivien*). These oils were shown alongside works by, amongst others, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Anders Zorn, James Abbott McNeil Whistler, Lucien Pissarro, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, and George Frederic Watts. Two years later a joint exhibition of works by Karl Mediz and Emilie Mediz-Pelikan, including twenty-four paintings and sixteen drawings by the latter, was held at the Hagenbund, the Austrian artist's association in Vienna. At the February 1903 exhibition, her painting of *Blossoming Chestnut Trees* was acquired by the state for the newly-established Moderne Galerie at the Lower Belvedere in Vienna, which opened to the public three months later. Mediz-Pelikan was eventually made an honorary member of the Hagenbund, which did not formally accept women until 1924. In 1904 an exhibition of Emilie's graphic work took place at a gallery in Dresden, and in 1905 and 1906 her paintings were shown at the Künstlerhaus in Berlin.

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Emilie Mediz-Pelikan died suddenly of a heart attack in 1908, at the age of forty-seven. Her husband was devastated by the loss, and became something of a recluse, creating mainly graphic works and only a few paintings. His career never recovered before his death thirty-eight years later, in 1945. Although the estate of both Emilie Mediz-Pelikan and Karl Mediz was administered by the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Dresden, the couple's daughter Gertrude refused to allow any exhibitions of their work to take place. The estates passed into the ownership of the East German state, and both artists fell into obscurity. Mediz-Pelikan's paintings and drawings were eventually returned to Austria, and much of the estate was acquired by the Viennese art dealer Kurt Kalb. Although a small exhibition of her work was held in Linz in 1986, it has only been in the past two decades that Mediz-Pelikan's *oeuvre* has been truly rediscovered and her posthumous reputation as a gifted landscape artist and draughtsman secured. In 2019, Emilie Mediz-Pelikan was among the artists included in the revelatory exhibition *City of Women: Female Artists in Vienna 1900-1938*, at the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna, which today owns four paintings by the artist.