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Max Nauta (1896-1957)

Armbrug Oudezijds Voorburgwal, Amsterdam, 1920

Signed & dated 'Max Nauta '20'

Pencil, watercolor, and gouache on paper

19½ by 27½ inches (49.4 by 70 cm.)



Provenance

Restaurant Dorrius, Amsterdam c. 1930
Private collection, Zandvoort, 1965
Private collection, Costa Rica, 1989
Private collection, Bussum, 1992
Private collection, The Netherlands

Born in Deventer on 2 April 1896, Max Nauta spent a large part of his youth in Friesland, before moving to Alkmaar where he attended the Arts and Crafts School, followed by the Amsterdam Art Academy. Enabled by a scholarship from Queen Wilhelmina, he travelled to Cologne, Dresden, Munich, Paris, Chartres, London, and finally Prague. In Czecho-Slovakia, he encountered epic artist Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) and organized the first exhibition of Dutch art in Prague.

Nauta's naturalistic drawings present a tendency to impart a visionary dream; his forms and colouration scheme channel a mystic's voice. Especially his Amsterdam city scenes testify to the artist's complete originality of vision. Nauta loved to browse around small streets and narrow canals, alms houses and hidden alleys and corners, docks and old houses which he rendered with a great sense of atmosphere. With a simplification of his use of light-effects and colour as demonstrated in his snow-covered street scenes, the greenish-yellow tints of the houses against the glow of the snowpack portray a city in true *New Objectivity* style, prominent throughout Europe in the 1920s (fig. 1).

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Fig. 1: Max Nauta, *Ambonplein with the Gerardus Majella church, Amsterdam*, 1934 Chalk and watercolour on paper
Stadsarchief, Amsterdam