



Georges Lemmen (Schaerbeek 1865 - Uccle 1916)

The Seamstress (La Couturière), 1900

Charcoal and pencil on paper

245 x 348 mm

Signed and dated lower left, and stamped with the artist's estate stamp lower right

This drawing is related to the painting with the same title, in the collection of the Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels

At the end of 1888 Georges Lemmen becomes a member of Les XX, a Brussels-based association of avant-garde artists that organizes exhibitions that also include work from like-minded foreign colleagues like Van Gogh, Signac, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, Pissarro and Seurat. As the case with Theo Van Rysselberghe and Henry van de Velde, Lemmen also becomes strongly influenced by neo-impressionism. Not only in his paintings, but also in his drawings which often have his immediate surroundings as subject, particularly women in interior settings. From 1895 on, his working method becomes freer and more spontaneous, something attributable to influence of Les Nabis (mainly Vuillard). In his earlier drawings, as well, he is not just a mere votary of Seurat. With Lemmen, the contrasts between light and dark are 'softer and more distributed around the whole of the composition' (Roger Cardon, Georges Lemmen 1865-1916). In this portrait of his wife, the last traces of Seurat's influence disappear. Here Lemmen does not aim for two-dimensional effect, the figure is separated from back- and foreground, the light flows naturally. The artist has discovered a less 'scientific' approach, one that better fits with his intimist universe, his familial micro-cosmos. It comes as no surprise that he also took up this motif in painting and in lithograph. It mirrors his personality: 'his meditative, quiet and discrete nature; his particular attention to the secret life of the people and things around him and for the essential and enduring qualities that they hide deep within; (...) his overriding need to ultimately keep his work removed from his own anxieties and torments'. (Roger Cardon) It has been said of Bonnard and Vuillard, that in their works 'the world seems to hold its breath'. In the portraits of George Lemmen, too, one finds that rare moment imagined with great talent.

Provenance:

Georges Lemmen estate, Brussels

Frederick Barker, Chicago

Artist description:

LEMMEN, Georges (Schaarbeek, 1865-Ukkel, 1916)

Schilder, graficus, tekenaar, decorateur. Korte opleiding aan de academie te Sint-Joost-ten-Node o.l.v. Hendrickx. Onderging de

invloed van Henry van de Velde en legde zich toe op de sierkunsten. Ontwierp o.m. behangpapier,

stoffen, affiches, keramisch werk, tapijten, kussens. Onderging ca. 1880 de invloed van Degas en Lautrec en werd lid van de groep Les XX. Werkte dan impressionistisch en raakte in 1889 in de ban van het pointillisme. Nam deel aan de Salon des Indépendants te Parijs. Verbleef in 1892 te Londen en schilderde er pointillistische stads- en Theemsgezichten. Schreef ook heel wat geestige en scherpzinnige kunstkritieken, o.m. voor tijdschriften als L'Art moderne en Le Réveil. Werk o.m. in de musea te Brussel, Elsene, Gent, Antwerpen.

LEMMEN, Georges (Schaerbeek, 1865-Uccle, 1916)

Peintre, graphiste, dessinateur, décorateur. Il étudie brièvement à l'Académie de Saint-Josse-ten-Noode sous la direction d'Hendrickx. Influencé par le travail de Henry van de Velde, il se consacre aux arts décoratifs. Il conçoit, entre autres, du papier peint, des tissus, des affiches, des céramiques, des tapis et des coussins. Vers 1880, il est influencé par les oeuvres de Degas et de Toulouse-Lautrec. À cette époque, il rejoint le groupe Les XX. Ensuite, il se met à peindre de façon impressionniste et en 1889, il tombe sous le charme du pointillisme. Il participe au Salon des Indépendants à Paris. En 1892, il séjourne à Londres et y peint des vues de la ville et de la Tamise de manière pointilliste. Il écrit par ailleurs bon nombre de critiques d'art piquantes et subtiles, entre autres, pour des revues comme L'Art moderne et Le Réveil. Ses oeuvres figurent, entre autres, dans les collections des musées de Bruxelles, Ixelles, Gand, Anvers.