

RONNY VAN DE VELDE



Georges Lemmen (Schaerbeek 1865 - Uccle 1916)

Fruit-picking, 1904

Ink and watercolor on paper, 287 x 230 mm

Signed with the artist's monogram and dated 1er Septembre 1904 bottom right

This is probably a preliminary study for a large-format painting from 1905, where a child is added to the ladder's right, and the boy holding his apron open to receive the fruit is at far left. There is also another preliminary study or copy known, in oils, which comes over (as does this first study) as much more spontaneous than the definitive painting. Lemmen, after a neo-impressionist phase, had applied his great talent and devotion to the decorative arts, especially typography and graphic design, accomplishing important innovations until his integrity had come to clash with hard economic reality. When, after 1900, he returns to painting, he brings along his decorative ambition and talent. One could call this preliminary study 'typographical'. The garden wall here is not as in the final version a many-colored tapestry; the geometrical rows of brick constitute a sort of grid against which the apple tree and the figures emerge as floral motifs. While the painting nearly transforms the garden into a fin-de-siècle interior, the study here is full of late-summer sun. In the watercolor what is of prime importance for Lemmens is to make the joy of life's simple things tangible and close. In the painting this has become but a memory, evoked with some difficulty.

Artist description:

Georges Lemmen was a Belgian neo-impressionist painter. He was a member of a Belgian painter, engraver, draftsman and designer, George Lemmen, was born in 1865 in Schaerbeek. For a short period he studied at the school of drawing in St. Josse-ten-Noode. In the early 1880s he became influenced by Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. In 1888 he joined the avant-garde group Les Vingt in Brussels. In 1890-1893, under the influence of Théo van Rysselberghe, he moved towards Neo-Impressionism and painted numerous landscapes and portraits using the technique. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris and participated in Les Vingt exhibitions in Brussels. The death of Seurat in 1891 had a great impact on all the painters of the Neo-Impressionist group. By 1895 Lemmen

freed himself from Pointillism and painted in a more traditional, Impressionist style, though his colors were closer to those of the Nabis-painters. During his travel to England Lemmen became interested in artifacts. His one-man show in 1913 in Brussels had a great success. In July 1915 he moved to Ukkel, where he died in July 1916. His wide-ranging work includes numerous book illustrations, posters, ceramics, carpets, drawingsf "Les XX" from 1888.