

VILHELM HAMMERSHØI: THE POETRY OF SILENCE

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

28 June – 7 September 2008

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The Royal Academy of Arts will be holding the first Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) retrospective in the UK this June. The exhibition will feature over 60 paintings spanning the career of this celebrated Danish artist. The works have been selected from museums and private collections in Europe, the United States and Japan.

Hammershøi's most compelling works are his quiet, haunting interiors, their emptiness disturbed only occasionally by the presence of a solitary, graceful figure, often the artist's wife. Painted within a small tonal range of implied greys, these sparsely-furnished rooms exude an almost hypnotic quietude and sense of melancholic introspection.

Hammershøi portrays in muted tones and with decisive geometric stringency his sparsely-furnished apartments. In so doing, Hammershøi consistently dispenses with anecdotal detail transforming the interiors into hermetically-sealed places of disturbing emptiness. With refined discretion Hammershøi uses the apartment as a pictorial laboratory to make us sense the emotional abyss behind the façade.

In addition to his interiors, the exhibition will also include Hammershøi's arresting portraits, landscapes and deserted, urban spaces in his home town of Copenhagen and in London, recording these in the sombre light of overcast winter days where time seems to have stood still. Hammershøi travelled extensively throughout Europe, visiting London on several occasions. The magical introspection and psychologically charged nature places Hammershøi within the context of the international Symbolist movement at the turn of the nineteenth century. Yet the overtly personal references that occur throughout his art make it unique.

During his lifetime Hammershøi was compared to artists such as Eugène Carrière, Fernand Khnopff and – most importantly – James McNeill Whistler with whom his paintings share both a limited palette and a severe simplification of form and composition.

ORGANISATION

Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence has been organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London, the National Museum of Western Art and NIKKEI, Tokyo. The exhibition has been co-curated by Dr Felix Krämer, Curator, Hamburger Kunsthalle, and Dr Naoki Sato, Curator, National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, with Maryanne Stevens, Director of Academic Affairs, Royal Academy of Arts.

SPONSORS

Supported by OAK Foundation DENMARK and Novo Nordisk

OAK Foundation DENMARK

"In the course of the last 25 years, Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) has been rediscovered as one of the most outstanding and original artists of his time. Major exhibitions of his work in Paris, Hamburg and New York during the last decade testify to the strong international appeal of this central figure of Danish art. This new and important Hammershøi exhibition at the Royal Academy is therefore most timely, and OAK Foundation DENMARK is happy and proud to be associated with it."

OAK Foundation DENMARK, founded in 2002, is an offshoot of the OAK Foundation - a charitable and philanthropic organization established in various countries, with its headquarters in Geneva. Within a specific Danish context, OAK Foundation DENMARK prioritizes support for the arts and for social projects.

Novo Nordisk

"We are sponsoring this exhibition of Hammershøi's work as part of our ongoing support of the Arts and to bring perspective to a period of great importance for Danish painting. It is our privilege to support the Royal Academy of Arts and this celebration of such an important Danish artist," said Viggo Birch, head of Novo Nordisk UK.

Novo Nordisk is a healthcare company and a world leader in diabetes care. The company has the broadest diabetes product portfolio in the industry, including the most advanced products within the area of insulin delivery systems. In addition, Novo Nordisk has a leading position within areas such as haemostasis management, growth hormone therapy and hormone replacement therapy. Novo Nordisk manufactures and markets pharmaceutical products and services that make a significant difference to patients, the medical profession and society.

EXHIBITION TOUR

30 September – 7 December 2008, the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan

CATALOGUE

To accompany this outstanding exhibition, the Royal Academy will publish a catalogue exploring the singularity of Hammershøi's vision and examining his links with Dutch masters of the seventeenth century and art of the Danish Golden Age. The book, beautifully illustrated with works that span all stages of Hammershøi's career, includes essays by Felix Krämer, Naoki Sato and Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark.

DATES

Press View: Tuesday 24 June 2008, 10am – 2pm
Open to public: Saturday 28 June – Sunday 7 September 2008
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night openings: Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

ADMISSION

£8 full price; £7 Registered Disabled and 60 + years; £6 NUS / ISIC cardholders; £4 12–18 years and Income Support; £3 8–11 years; 7 and under free.

TICKETS

Tickets for **Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence** are available daily at the RA. To book tickets in advance please tel: 0870 848 8484 or visit www.royalacademy.org.uk. Groups of 10 or more are asked to book in advance; please tel: 020 7300 8027, fax: 020 7300 8084 or email: groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk

IMAGES

Publicity images for **Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence** can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section.

For public information please print 020 7300 8000 and www.royalacademy.org.uk
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