

BERTHA WEGMANN

1847–1926

126. *A Young Woman, Marie Triepcke, Sitting in a Boat, c. 1884*

(*En ung pige, Marie Triepcke, siddende i en båd*)

Oil on canvas, 50 x 42¼ in. (127 x 107 cm)

PROVENANCE: Auction, P. S. Krøyer's estate, Charlottenborg 1910, lot 535 C (described as *En ung Pige siddende i en Have* [A Young Woman Sitting in a Garden]); Merchant F. Zachariae, Fredensborg; Winkel & Magnussen, Auction 205 (F. Zachariae), 1936, lot 223 (described as *Portræt af Frk. Triepcke, senere Maleren P.S. Krøyers Hustru* [Portrait of Miss Triepcke, Subsequently the Wife of the Painter Krøyer]); Bruun Rasmussen, Vejle, Auction 27, 1993, lot 996, ill. on cover.

EXHIBITED: Charlottenborg, *Bertha Wegmann, Mindeudstilling*, 1926, no. 106 (described as 1887 *Portræt af Fru P.S. Krøyer som ung Pige, siddende i en Baad*, Gross. Zachariae, Fredensborg); Liljevalchs Konsthall, Stockholm, *De drogo till Paris*, 1988, no. 214 (described as *Marie Triepcke som ung pige*); Gammel Holtegaard and Skagens Museum, *Portrætter fra et ægteskab, Marie og P.S. Krøyer*, 1997, no. 1; Øregaard Museum, Copenhagen, *Bertha Wegmann på Øregaard*, 1998, no. 26 (described as *Maleren Marie Triepcke, g. Krøyer, 1884*); and Kvindemuseet, Århus, 1999; Bruce Museum of Art and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut, and The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, New York, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 2005, no. 14, ill.

LITERATURE: Lise Svanholm, *Marie Krøyer*, Skagen monografier, no. 2, Copenhagen 1987, ill. p. 11; Tonni Arnold, *Balladen om Marie, en biografi om Marie Krøyer*, Copenhagen 1999, p. 13, ill p. 12 (dating 1883–84); Patricia G. Berman, *In Another Light: Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York 2007, p. 166, ill. p. 167.

Female beauty and youthful grace constitute the motif in this picture, which is one of Bertha Wegmann's most important works. It is at the same time a portrait of Marie Triepcke (1867–1940), who herself became an artist but was best known as the wife of the painter P. S. Krøyer. The painting was formerly in the possession of the Krøyer family. The feminine element manifests itself strongly in the smart pink-checked dress and the model's coy posture beneath the willow tree's low-hanging leaves, making it emblematic of a young girl. This interpretation does not correspond to Bertha Wegmann's own, for according to her, she was painting momentary situations. Her conception of the narrative aspects of the picture meanwhile differs from the norm in Denmark; her work was indelibly marked by her German training.

Doubts have been raised as to the year in which the picture was painted, although in the catalogue accompanying the memorial exhibition for the artist in 1926 it is dated 1887. Dates are rarely found in Bertha Wegmann's exhibition and auction catalogues, which could indicate that this is a reliable date.

The dating of c. 1884 has appeared in literature from recent years and is based on some memoirs jotted down by Marie Krøyer a few years before her death in 1940. Here she says of the picture's genesis: "I was a model for Bertha Wegmann for a large portrait, which was painted in Tivoli's Garden, down by the moat—at that time, that setting was not part of the public space for Tivoli's guests, but it was idyllic with tall trees, water lilies, ducks, and where only a few were allowed in. My sitting time stretched over a half of a year, and I confided in Bertha Wegmann, that my goal was to try to become a painter, and she saw my work and motivated me and promised me to write to Krøyer and ask him to teach me."¹ There can be various views as to whether this source provides decisive support for the earlier dating, as Marie Krøyer repeatedly reinterpreted and romanticized her memoirs throughout her unhappy life, in which her marriage to Krøyer broke down and she left him and her daughter for another who also failed to give her happiness. But now we know for sure that the model and the artist were in contact from 1883 to 1885, when Marie Triepcke, who



wanted to become a painter, was a pupil of Bertha Wegmann during the winters of those years.² This and the youthfulness of the model in the picture support the 1884 date.

The painting is a conclusive example of the skilled, professional style of painting that Bertha Wegmann mastered. There is coloristic subtlety in the contrast between the figure, the green foliage, and the area beneath, where the brushstrokes have been accorded their own life on the surface of the painting. E. F.

¹Cited by Lise Svanholm 1987, p. 22f.

²Elisabeth Fabritius, *Skitser af Marie Krøyer og Anna Ancher*, Michael og Anna Anchers Hus, 2002, p. 5f.