

JOHANNES WILHJELM  
1868–1938

128. *Young Girls at Skagen Beach*, 1916

(*Unge piger på Skagens Sønderstrand*)

Oil on canvas, 27¾ x 37½ in. (71 x 95 cm)

Signed bottom right: J. Wilhjelm 1916.

PROVENANCE: Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 679, 2000, lot 277, ill.

EXHIBITED: Charlottenborg 1917, no. 626 (described as *Unge Piger paa Stranden*).

LITERATURE: Kai Flor, *Johannes Wilhjelm*, Copenhagen 1937, in oeuvre catalogue (without numbers).

Sønderstrand at Skagen was already a well known and well tried motif when Johannes Wilhjelm arrived in Skagen in 1910. Nevertheless, he and others of his generation were able to paint the shore, sea, sun, and atmosphere in a different way from the original Skagen painters, and as he had a summer cottage at Skagen, he often returned to this motif. It might, as here, be one of young girls enjoying the sun and the air, or children paddling. In other pictures he shows the view along the shore toward the west, seen slightly from above with walking figures seen from behind in the foreground.

In this painting the shore is portrayed in such powerful backlight that it can almost be felt as being dark. Wilhjelm convincingly reproduces the broad shore, with the boats drawn up and the dancing sea and the afternoon sun reflected in the water inside the harbor breakwater. At this point in his career, Wilhjelm had become freer in his use of the brush, and he would often use strongly accented splashes of color as here in the girls' dresses, where areas of green, red, and violet are seen in the shaded areas.

The young girls are his own daughters, who often figure in his pictures of the shore, not as portraits but as figures in the landscape.

The frame is the original from the Kleis Kunsthandel in Copenhagen.

E.F.