

VILHELM HAMMERSHØI

1864–1916

35. *Landscape Study from Haraldskær Paper Mill by the Stream in Vejle* (1883)

(*Landskabsstudie. Fra Haraldskær Papirfabrik ved Vejle å*)

Oil on mahogany, 7½ x 9½ in. (18 x 25 cm)

PROVENANCE: The artist's sister, Anna Hammershøi; the insurance company director Mogens Bramsen, whose paternal grandfather was the brother of the art collector Alfred Bramsen; Mogens Bramsen's heirs, Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 712, 2002, lot 1503, ill.

LITERATURE: Sophus Michaëlis and Alfred Bramsen, *Vilhelm Hammershøi, Kunstneren og hans Værk*, Copenhagen, 1918, no. 13 (described as *Landskabs-Studie fra Haraldskær Papir-Fabrik ved Vejle Aa*); Susanne Meyer-Abich, *Vilhelm Hammershøi. Das malerische Werk*, Inauguraldissertation, Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, 1995, no. 19 (described as *Landschaftsskizze*).

When he painted this landscape with factory buildings in 1883, Hammershøi was still a very young man. That spring he was a pupil in the Artists' Free Study Schools, at the same time continuing at the Royal Danish Academy, which he had attended since 1879. He spent the summer of 1883 at Vejle, a beautiful town by a fjord in eastern Jutland, at the home of his uncle William Rentzmann, who was showing interest in his progress. About 1882, his uncle had commissioned the painting *Priam Pleads with Achilles for Hector's Corpse*, in which Hammershøi used a relief by Bertel Thorvaldsen as his model. This is today in the possession of Malmö Kunstmuseum. Hammershøi profited artistically from the visit, which resulted in several landscapes of the area.

It is no random factory Hammershøi has painted. The picture shows the Haraldskær Paper Mill, a little to the west of the town of Vejle, as it looked in 1883. From 1872, the owner had been Hammershøi's Uncle William, an enterprising factory owner who worked extremely energetically not only on behalf of his own factory but the paper industry as a whole. Several steam engines were working behind the facades, while the idyllic lake in the foreground acted as a millpond, the water from which was used for production.¹

The artist has chosen an overcast day such as is often found during the Danish summer, and he has reproduced the red buildings from a distance, partly covered by large dark green trees and with light green reeds and slender trees on the right. The sky is dominated by large, whitish-gray clouds, reflected in the pond. The painting is done with great skill, although it is a more cautious approach than the Hammershøi we normally encounter because the work dates from such an early period.

E.F.

¹Jacob B. Jensen, *Papirfabrikkerne i Vejledalen*, in *Vejle Amts Årbog*, 1984, pp. 7–32.

