

J. L. JENSEN
1800–1856

63. *Poppies and Lilacs*

(*Valmuer og Syrener*)

Oil on panel, 27½ x 22 in. (70 x 56 cm)

Signed lower right: I.L. Jensen

PROVENANCE: Sotheby's, Auction "Elisabeth," London, November 2, 1988, lot 7 (described as *Poppies and Lilacs*).

EXHIBITED: 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. 6, ill.

In this picture, which is filled to overflowing, we see spring in all its profusion—not exotic plants, but spring in a Danish country garden, concentrated in a sophisticated, slightly garish display of color. The pale purple lilac, known from every hedge, is combined with the delicate, simple red poppy and branches bearing white blossoms. Perhaps the painter was also interested in the contrast in size between the three flowers he combined in a single composition.

Because it is a herald of spring, the lilac symbolizes the first stirrings of love. The poppy expresses doubt.

M.T.

The following flowers are seen in the painting:

FROM THE TOP: *Syringa vulgaris* L., "lilac"; *Papaver somniferum*, "opium poppy" and "opium poppy peony-flowered series"; *Philadelphus coronarius* L., "mock orange."

T.T.