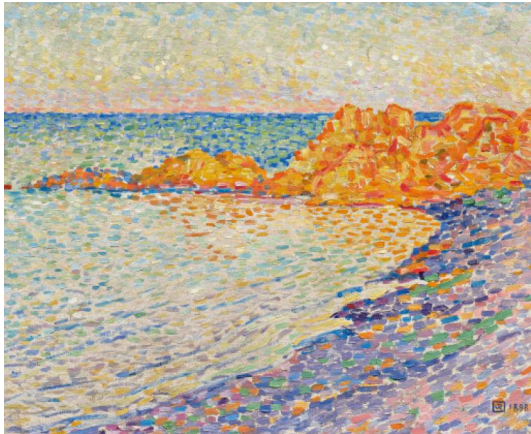


Lot 1219



Auction **Fine Art**

Date 17.05.2024, ca. 16:45

Preview 10.05.2024 - 10:00:00 bis
13.05.2024 - 18:00:00

RYSSELBERGHE, THEO VAN
1862 Gent - 1926 St-Clair/Var

Title: "Petite plage à Saint-Tropez".

Date: 1898.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Mounting: Relined.

Measurement: 40,5 x 49cm.

Notation: Monogrammed and dated lower right: "vR 1898".

Frame: Framed.

Verso:

On the stretcher label with handwritten details on the depiction as well as exhibition label Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 30.10.1956.

Literature:

R. Feltkamp: Théo van Rysselberghe 1862-1926, Paris/Brussels 2003, p. 320, no. 1898-021 with ill.

Provenance:

Jean Willems, Brussels;

Private ownership, Germany.

We would like to thank Olivier Bertrand, Luxembourg, who also confirmed the authenticity of the work in an e-mail dated 24.04.2024.

Deserted the bay is lying in front of us. The beach is lying serenely in the blue shadow while sun rays paint the rock formations that protrude into the sea in a warm gold. The sea is calm; the rocks are distinctly reflected in the water surface. Distinctness, however, is, in the context of this small landscape, a fallacious expression. The colour is whirring and vibrating. There are no firm contours, lines or threedimensional modellings. And yet the painter has understood to clearly convey the place and its mood.

Théo van Rysselberghe was 35 years old when he painted this atmospheric "portrait" of the little beach near St. Tropez and he had perfected a special form of expression, pointillism, for more or less 10 years.

Van Rysselberghe who had been born in the Belgian town Ghent had been educated in his home town at first, then, however, at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels from 1879 on. After first participations in the public salon exhibitions in Ghent and Brussels, the young artist could celebrate his first successes in 1882/83 when he presented his travel impressions in exhibitions after an extended stay in Morocco. It was the first of three Morocco voyages during which the young artist already felt fascinated by the southern light. Depicting light became his great challenge and the central theme, to which he committed himself from then on.

When 20 artists organised themselves within the "Société des Vingt" (in short "Les XX") as a group in Brussels in 1883. This society of young avant-garde artists was interested in the exchange with international, primarily French colleagues. Among the members were, amongst others, James Ensor, Ferdinand Khnopff or Félicien Rops. 20 international artists were invited to the annual exhibitions of the "Vingtistes" for giving new impulses to the Belgian art scene but certainly for connecting the Belgian artists internationally, as well. Also because of this progressive concept Brussels became a centre of modern art in the finishing 19th century.

In 1886, Auguste Renoir und Claude Monet exhibited at the "Les XX". Théo van Rysselberghe was deeply impressed by their special new depiction of light and his own so far rather realist style became increasingly impressionist.

Van Rysselberghe, who was already well known in the Parisian art scene, was a driving force behind the "XX" and became the group's "talent scout" in France. He "discovered" Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec as well as his own fellow pupil from his Academy days, Vincent van Gogh, who was able to conclude his only public sale during his lifetime at the group's exhibition in 1890.

However, the most lasting influence on van Rysselberghe's own work was his involvement with the innovative, pointillist painting of George Seurat and Paul Signac, whom he met in Paris in 1886. He was also able to persuade both of them to take part in the "XX" exhibition in Brussels.

While the Impressionists placed the atmospheric depiction of light at the centre of their artistic endeavours, the Pointillists took a radically scientific approach. Colours dabbed onto the canvas in dots were not mixed together, but stood side by side. The picture was to be created in the eye of the beholder, which the painter constructed according to optical laws. The arrangement of the colour values in the spectral circle and the intensification of the complementary contrasts governed his art, with handwriting and brushstrokes taking a back seat.

Van Rysselberghe was the most influential Belgian painter who predominantly used this new technique from around 1888. However, he modified the strict doctrine of pointillism, working with tonal colour values and - as in the example of the present landscape - with short brushstrokes. These strokes (here in the sea waves or in the transition between rocks and water) could also be applied longer and with a different intensity than the "pure doctrine" of pointillism envisaged.

In the year before the present painting "Petite plage à St. Tropez" was created, van Rysselberghe had already painted the same motif in a slightly smaller format. In our later work, the artist has shifted the complementary colours by one shade: from violet-yellow in the earlier painting to a blue-orange contrast. He has also given the sky more space in the present work. This more recent version is richer in contrast and conveys an intense freshness. In 1910, Théo van Rysselberghe, who had lived permanently in Paris since 1898, moved to the Côte d'Azur for the rest of his life. Here he found the light of the south, which he had already captured so atmospherically in this small landscape.

Estimate: 90.000 € - 120.000 €; Hammer: 205.000 €

