

LUDVIG FREDERIK FIND

VAMDRUP 1869 – COPENHAGEN 1945

Ludvig Find hailed from Østerbygård near Vamdrup in the northern part of Southern Jutland. His father was a theologian and later became a parish priest. In the summer of 1885, Ludvig Find was apprenticed to an artisan painter and started at the Technical School that same year. Soon after this, he became a pupil at the Overgaard and Jensen Egeberg School of Drawing with the aim of being admitted to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. He achieved this objective in April 1886.

The teaching in the academy, however, was a disappointment to the young Ludvig Find, as it was for so many of his contemporaries. After less than two years he applied to De frie Studieskoler under P. S. Krøyer, who for a time influenced him. However, Find quite soon started to react against Krøyer's naturalistic plein air painting. Nor was a period spent in Zahrtmanns Skole in November–December 1900 any help in fulfilling Ludvig Find's artistic ambitions.

About 1892 he turned his back on naturalistic genre painting once and for all and adopted a decorative Symbolist idiom inspired by the Danish pioneers of this style, Mogens Ballin (1871–1914) and Gad Frederik Clement (1867–1933). Find became enthralled with Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) and the group surrounding him, known as Les Nabis. He had become acquainted with their work through Ballin, who had learned French from Gauguin's Danish wife, Mette Gad, and was a visitor to her home. At the same time he established a close link with the poets associated with the literary periodical Taarnet (1893–1894), whose editor, Johannes Jørgensen (1866–1956), would later become a famous author; he was also an inspired and sensitive art critic with a lyrical, colorful flow of language well suited to the symbolist idiom. During the periodical's brief life at the beginning of the 1890s, Find, along with Mogens Ballin and the Dutch painter Jan Verkade (1868–1946), were its main suppliers of vignettes and illustrations.

A journey to Italy, including visits to Florence and Venice in 1893–1894 undertaken together with the painters Carl Frydensberg (1872–1944) and G.F. Clement, was of great importance to Find. There his interest in Symbolist painting was reinforced, particularly as a result of his encounter with 15th-century Italian art. He was especially fascinated by the works of Piero della Francesca (c. 1420–1492), making copies of some of them. These efforts left their mark on Find's art, especially in the strangely inscrutable monumental portrait, 1897 En ung mand, Den norske maler Thorvald Erichsen (A Young Man, the Norwegian Painter Thorvald Erichsen), in Den Hirschsprungske Samling.

The journeys abroad were of crucial significance to Ludvig Find's artistic development, especially the visits to Paris in 1902 and 1904. There his art took a quite different turn as he followed the example of the former Nabis painters Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) and Édouard Vuillard (1865–1940) and moved toward a colorful, light-fled neoimpressionist style of painting that he combined with his knowledge of the decorative play of lines and surprising cuts in Japanese woodcuts. With this, Find

had discovered his true form of expression, one of the first examples of which was the Loeb collection's *Den ny hat* (The New Hat). While continuing in this direction, he gradually discovered his own circle of motifs, which he continued to cultivate for the rest of his life. With his family and home as his preferred models, he painted landscapes, gardens, and children, "usually with great painterly zest and a sweet gracefulness which he retained in his art until late in life," commented Jens Peter Munk. In addition, he painted a considerable number of portraits, many of them children. Ludvig Find visited Paris again in 1907, and he was also in London that same year. In the spring of 1910 he made a short visit to Berlin.

Find made his first appearance at Charlottenborg in 1889 and exhibited there for the next four years and in 1896. From 1897 to 1945, *Den Frie Udstilling* was his forum. He became a member in 1898 and some years later was appointed to the exhibition committee. The list of the exhibitions in which Ludvig Find participated and the many grants and distinctions he received is long and distinguished. All that will be mentioned here is the award of the Eckersberg Medal, given to him in 1928.

Find was responsible for various works of illustrations. In addition he turned for a time to ceramics with Herman A. Kähler (1846–1917) in Næstved, and he produced designs for works in pewter for Mogens Ballin.

S.L.

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