

L. A. RING

1854–1933

101. *Road with Boy*, 1887

(*Bondedrengen på vej mod hjemmet. Landsbyen Ring*)

Oil on canvas, 17 $\frac{2}{3}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (45 x 65 cm)

Signed and dated lower left: L A Ring 87

PROVENANCE: The art dealers Winkel & Magnussen; the art historian Karl Madsen; Winkel & Magnussen, Auction 237 (Karl Madsen), 1938, lot 64, ill. p. 27 (with additions to the text); Chauffør Harry Pedersen (1953); Kunsthallen, Auction 247, 1961, lot III, ill. p. 4; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 581, 1992, lot 458, ill. (described as *Landskab*).

EXHIBITED: Charlottenborg, 1887, no. 331 (described as *Landsbygade*); Guildhall, London, *A Selection of Works by Danish Painters*, 1907, no. 11 (described as *The Village of Ring, Sealand*); Liljevalchs Konsthall, Stockholm, *Nyare Dansk Konst*, 1919, no. 170; Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen, 1924, no. 44; Forum, Copenhagen, *Det danske Kunststævne*, 1929, no. 367; Charlottenborg, *Mindeudstillingen for L.A. Ring*, 1933, no. 52; Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen, *L.A. Ring*, 1953, no. 14.

LITERATURE: H. Chr. Christensen, *Fortegnelse over Malerier og Studier af L.A. Ring i Aarene 1880–1910 (Tillæg 1922)*, Copenhagen 1910, no. 92; Karl Madsen, *Maleren L. A. Ring in Samleren*, 1927, pp. 161–184, ill. p. 161 (described as *Landsbyen Ring, Tidligt Foraar*); Peter Hertz, *Maleren L.A. Ring*, Copenhagen, 1934, pp. 192–93 and p. 58 ill. (described as *Bondedrengen paa Vej mod Hjemmet. Landsbyen Ring*); Eske K. Mathiesen in *L.A. Ring, Ordrupgaard*, Copenhagen, 1984, p. 12 (and again in English translation p. 17).

The art historian and painter Karl Madsen wrote in the periodical *Samleren* in 1927: “Summer is less attractive to Ring’s landscape art than winter, autumn and early spring. The clear, cool air of spring is reproduced with great sensitivity in a picture painted in 1887 in which the road with ramps lining a ploughed field leads through a brief avenue of willow trees to his native village. A farmer’s boy, shown walking along the road and looking at the farms with their white, sunlit gable ends, was removed at the request of an art dealer, but has later been resurrected.”

According to the artist’s first biographer, Peter Hertz, in 1887—the year after painting *Harvest*—the young L. A. Ring was in a state of desperate poverty and melancholy. His figure pictures were not selling at all; there was a market only for landscapes, and among them, pictures portraying sunshine were the most easily sold. This circumstance must have been the reason—much against his will—Ring humored the first owners of the picture, Winkel & Magnussen’s Kunsthandel, in their demand that the boy be removed. “Only by constantly forcing his way through the overpainting has the figure again asserted his position in the composition . . .” writes Hertz. Even with the help of the many different titles assigned to the work it is impossible to determine with any certainty when Ring painted over the figure of the boy and when it reappeared.

Ring and Karl Madsen, who once owned the painting, were good friends. Perhaps these two together brought about the reinstatement of the lonely walking boy who could now without interference continue his walk into the depth of the picture, heading toward the village of Ring, where his world starts.

S.L.