



# VILHELM HAMMERSHØI

1864–1916

## 134. *Landscape with a Row of Trees* (probably 1880s)

(*Landskab med en række træer*)

Oil on canvas, 7¾ x 11¾ in. (20 x 30 cm)

Not signed or inscribed

PROVENANCE: The sculptor Helen Schou, Copenhagen; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 770, 2007, lot 428, ill.

This small sketch of a landscape was probably painted when Hammershøi was still a young man. As was so often the case, he chose a clouded day when the sky was almost white. We look at a wide green field, bordered at the left by a row of dome-shaped trees. The grayish-green color of the foliage suggests they are willows. They grow in an embankment and form a strong diagonal to the left of the picture. Beyond the trees there is a stream, but how large it is we cannot tell. Beyond the water more green appears. To the right on the horizon behind the field are some bushes and four tall trees, probably poplars, all painted very dimly.

The paint is in part very thin, the brown ground being visible in the embankment. Apparently Hammershøi scraped off some of the paint, a well-known technique of his seen in other sketched landscapes by the artist, such as *Landscape from Virum Near Frederiksdal, Summer*, 1888, no. 38 (in the Loeb collection).

This little sketch was formerly part of the collection of sculptor Helen Schou (1905–2006), who had a fine eye for the qualities of Danish painting. Her major work is the equestrian statue of King Christian X, finished and erected in 1955 in Aarhus, Jutland's largest town. Her stately home and large studio in Ordrup, north of Copenhagen, overlooked Øresund Sound. It was the neighboring house of the private residence of the American ambassador to Denmark. Ms. Schou and Ambassador Loeb became friends during his Danish tenure.

The history of the painting is otherwise unknown, left unrecorded by Alfred Bramsen in his Hammershøi oeuvre catalogue, published in 1918, nor was it noted by Susanne Meyer-Abich 1995.<sup>1</sup> However, the authenticity is ensured by Ida Hammershøi, widow of the painter, who wrote the following words in ink on the back of the canvas: "malet af Hammershøi attereres Ida Hammershøi" (painted by Vilhelm Hammershøi certified by Ida Hammershøi).

E.F.

<sup>1</sup>Susanne Meyer-Abich, *Vilhelm Hammershøi. Das malerische werk*, Inauguraldissertation, Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, 1995.