

CARL HOLLSØE

1863–1935

138. *Interior with Woman Seen from Behind* (after 1900)

(*Interiør med kvinde set bagfra*)

Oil on canvas, 37 x 28½ in. (94 x 72 cm)

Signed bottom right: C. Holsøe

PROVENANCE: Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 291, 1973, lot 103, ill. p. 21; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 822, 2011, lot 33, ill.

We see a living room with ivory-colored walls, where a young woman sits by a rectangular spinet. She is seen aslant from the back, with her head gracefully bent over a white paper, perhaps a piece of music she is studying. The painter commands immediate attention to her beautiful white neck, which dominates the picture, accentuated by her dark hair and boat-necked black dress. At her right, a cello leans against the spinet in a position that almost makes it resemble another person.

The room is bright and airy and has an extremely high ceiling. Behind the painter, there is a small, paned window, reflected in the glass above two pictures in gold frames that hang at the rear wall. They are flanked by two smaller ones, also in gold frames. Outside the frame, to the left, there is another window, from which the sun shines on the woman's figure and on the edge of the gold frames. The white rear wall is parallel to the plane of the picture, which gives it a sense of tranquility and at the same time highlights the individual figures and pieces of furniture.

Holsøe was a good friend of Vilhelm Hammershøi, and like him focused especially on interior painting, inspired by Dutch 16th-century art. They both preferred to paint bright rooms, furnished with fine, well-kept, bourgeois furniture. In their work method, the two artists are alike as well. When comparing Holsøe's paintings, one can see how the rectangular piano and other mahogany furniture, along with other pictures and decorations, reappear in ever-new arrangements. A woman's figure with her back turned, also inspired by the golden century of the Netherlands, was Holsøe's preferred motif; his oeuvre has many more examples of this than that of Hammershøi.

Carl Holsøe did not date his pictures, which makes it hard to establish the time of their creation. In other interior paintings where the window type in this painting occurs, there is a view of green areas. *Interior with Woman Seen from Behind* must therefore have been painted after Holsøe moved from Copenhagen, shortly after 1900, to more rural surroundings north of the capital, first Charlottenlund, and after that Bondebyen ("the Peasants' Town" quarter) in Lyngby.

E.F.