

PAUL FISCHER

1860–1934

32. *Harriet Skiing* (early 20th century)

(*Harriet på ski*)

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

Signed lower right: Paul Fischer

PROVENANCE: Presumably identical with *Harriet paa Ski*, Auction, *Paul Fischer* Charlottenborg 1.2.1904, lot 47 (12 x 8 inches or 30.2 x 20.08 cm, purchased by a tailor by the name of Ibsen); Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 452, 1983, lot 60 (described as *Lille skiløbende pige*).

EXHIBITED: Bruce Museum of Art and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut, and The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, New York, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 2005, no. 27, ill.

When outdoor activities came into fashion at the end of the 19th century, the bourgeoisie went in for sports in both winter and summer. This painting can be viewed as a document of cultural history, illustrating skiing before real sports clothing was developed. The girl is Harriet, the artist's eldest daughter, born of his first marriage to Norwegian-born Dagny, daughter of Oslo art dealer Julius Frederik Grønneberg and Hulda Tegner. Hulda Tegner was the cousin of two idiosyncratic and distinguished Danish artists, the illustrator and porcelain artist Hans Tegner (1853–1932) and the controversial symbolist sculptor Rudolf Tegner (1873–1950).

Harriet's posture and cheerful expression suggest that she was already a skilled skier, but it is not possible to determine whether the picture was painted in Norway, where the opportunity for skiing exists throughout the winter, or in Denmark, where it is impossible to predict when there will be snow. Deer Park at Jægersborg to the north of Copenhagen was at that time the skiing area most frequently used by the people of Copenhagen.

Harriet was born in 1890, which dates this painting to the beginning of the 20th century. Fischer often used her as his model, as he did with the rest of his children. The artistic gifts she inherited from both her parents later led her to a professional career as a painter, first exhibiting in 1911. During the following years, she exhibited together with her father at Båstad in Sweden. From 1915 to 1920 she studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and also received instruction in Paris and Madrid; this led her away from artistic life in Denmark, where she never really made a name for herself.

E. F.