

Edvard Munch, Künstler/-in (*12.12.1863 Løiten (Hedmark), +23.1.1944 Ekely (Oslo))



Title	Musik auf der Karl Johan Strasse
Also known as	Music on the Karl Johan Street Musique dans la rue Karl Johan Musikken på Karl Johan [original]
Date	1889
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions	image: 101.5 x 140.5 cm
Signature	inscr. b. l.: E. Munch 1889
Inscription	-
Catalogue raisonné	Woll I.182.176
Edition / number	-
Edition	-
Inv. No.	2534
Credit line	Kunsthau Zürich, 1941
Accession year	1941

Object type painting

Classification D 1[2] art 20th century worldwide

Description Depicted is a parade of military music on the Karl Johan Gade in Oslo. Munch probably painted the boy with the umbrella into the picture later and intensified the colour in places.
Høifødt tried to decipher the specific meaning of the painting as a critical distance from the Oslo bohemian scene. The couple seen from behind on the front left would be Christian Krohg with Oda Lasson; the gentleman on the front right would be her first husband Jørgen Engelhart, with their two children in between. The two couples behind them also contrast the irresponsible bohemian and moral bourgeois attitude: on the left, a characteristic seduction scene of a well-off gentleman and a poor young woman who has moved into prostitution; on the right, a married couple, Harald and Åse Nørregaard.

Provenance Edvard Munch (*1863 Løiten (Hedmark), +1944 Ekely (Oslo)) (Künstler/in)
[Verbleib unbekannt?]

M. With, Oslo

Verbleib unbekannt

o.D. – höchstens bis 1916, Oskar Moll (*1875 Brieg, +1947 Berlin) (Sammler/in), Breslau
spätestens ab 1916 – 1933; 1939 – 1941, Curt Glaser (*1879 Leipzig, +1943 Lake Placid,
NY) (Sammler/in), Tausch

1933 – 1939, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Museum), Berlin, Geschenk
1939 – 1941, Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft | Kunsthaus Zürich (Museum), Zürich, Leihgabe,
von Curt Glaser nach Rückzug aus Nationalgalerie Berlin

ab 1941, Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft | Kunsthaus Zürich (Museum), Zürich, Kauf, 12'000
CHF

Provenance category -

About the provenance

Curt Glaser, Director of the Art Library in Berlin who also worked in the latter's Museum of Prints and Drawings, wrote the first monograph in German on Edvard Munch and had shared Kunsthaus Director Wilhelm Wartmann's admiration for the Norwegian artist since the early 1920s. An art historian whose interests encompassed many areas, he began selling paintings by Munch as early as the late 1920s. When he emigrated to Switzerland, he deposited part of his collection with the Kunsthaus.

Glaser donated 'Music on Karl Johan Street' (1889) to the National Gallery in Berlin at the start of 1933 in memory of his first wife, Elsa Glaser. As the agreed conditions were not adhered to under the Nazis, he demanded the picture back and it was sent to the Kunsthaus for him in 1939. In 1941, shortly before Glaser emigrated to the US, Wartmann asked him if he would consider selling 'Music on Karl Johan Street' to the Kunsthaus. Settling on a price proved difficult. Glaser, who was interested in placing the painting with a museum, asked for CHF 15,000, the sum he had paid for it himself. By this time, however, the market had deteriorated considerably, and a price of CHF 12,000 was agreed – the largest sum that the Kunsthaus paid at any point between 1933 and 1945 for a work by a living artist. A key late work by Klee acquired in the same year, 'Überschach' from 1937, cost CHF 5,000, while the following year Picasso's 1905 work 'Hurdy-Gurdy Player with Boy' was purchased for CHF 10,000.

In-depth research conducted in association with the Munch Museum in Oslo has established that the price paid was in line with the market value at the time. The correspondence between the two colleagues has been preserved, and reveals the care and respect with which the acquisition was handled. Glaser sold a further painting by Munch to the Kunsthaus two years later, and his widow sold two more to the museum after the war. This is testimony to the Glasers' enduring regard for the Kunsthaus and ensured that the vast majority of their Munch paintings remained together in a publicly accessible collection. (State of research 20.06.2023)

Literature

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