



EDWARD CUCUEL

(San Francisco 1875–1954 Pasadena)

Nach dem Bade (After the bath). Before 1912.

Oil on canvas.

Signed lower left: Cucuel. Titled in English on the reverse on the stretcher.

80 x 90 cm.

We would like to thank Galerie Schüller for their scientific support. Provenance: Private collection, Switzerland. Exhibition: Dresden 1912, Frauenkunst zum Besten von Mutter und Kind, Brühlsche Terrasse, 7 April - 5 May 1912, no. 157 (with label on the reverse). Literature: Von Ostini, Fritz: Der Maler Edward Cucuel, Zurich, Vienna, Leipzig, 1924, p. 39 (title: Im Gebüsch; with ill.). Edward Cucuel was born in San Francisco as the son of an Englishwoman

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and a French newspaper publisher. Due to the profession of his father, he began work as an illustrator for the Examiner at the age of 14. Afterwards, he visited the San Francisco Art Institute, and later in Paris, prestigious institutions such as the Académie Julian, the Académie Caroussi and the Académie des Beaux-Arts under Jean-Léon Gérôme. Upon his return to the United States, he once again worked as a newspaper illustrator in New York in 1896, before travelling back to France and Italy to study the Old Masters. Further study trips in 1904 took him to Spain, Algeria, Ceylon, Japan and China. He later worked as an illustrator in Berlin and Munich, where he joined the "die Scholle" artist group. He was particularly influenced by the plein air painting of Leo Putz, with whom he spent four years at Schloss Hartmannsberg at the Chiemsee. The collaboration with Putz was very productive for Cucuel. He found a kindred teacher in his slightly older colleague, from whom he learnt a great deal, motivating him to turn away from illustration and devote his practice entirely to painting. The two artists painted their outdoor nudes on an overgrown island in a lake frequented only by them. There, they would work the entire day, returning by boat late evenings, tired but overjoyed. It was a creative period purely devoted to the sake of painting, far away from the public. Their companions were Lotte von Marcard, Cucuel's later wife, and Frieda Blell, who later married Leo Putz. The work offered here, "Nach dem Bade", which Cucuel presented at an exhibition in Dresden in 1912, probably originates from this period. He produced a group of works depicting women during or after bathing, as seen in the present work. The artist embraced the challenge of capturing the play of light from the rays of sun shining through the trees onto the water, the undergrowth and the partially wet skin of the women. Cucuel accomplished this so successfully that these motifs belong to his most important paintings.

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