



HERMANN MAX PECHSTEIN

(Zwickau 1881–1955 Berlin)

Sommerabend. 1927.

Oil on canvas.

Signed and dated lower left: HMPechstein / 1927, as well as on the reverse signed, titled and with the address of the artist.

90 x 117 cm.

Provenance: - Jacobowitz & G. Tietz, Berlin. - Van Ham Cologne, auction 76, June 1978, no. 1558. - Galerie Wolfgang Ketterer Munich, auction 30, no. 1539 (with ill.). - Private collection, South Germany. Exhibition: Berlin 1939, Max Pechsteins neue Landschaften, August 1939. Literature: - Soyka, Aya: Max Pechstein. Das Werkverzeichnis der Ölgemälde, vol. II (1919 - 1954), Munich 2011, 1927/9, p. 366 (with ill.). - Hellweg,

Fritz: article in: Kunst vol. 79, book 11, August 1939, p. 245-349 (with ill. p. 347). - Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration, Darmstadt, book 5, February 1932. - Deutsche Kunstgemeinschaft, Mitteilungsblatt für Mitglieder und Freunde, March 1928, p. 46. The Kunsthaus Zürich has appropriately titled its current Kirchner exhibition "Vibrant Metropolis / Idyllic Nature", as it well demonstrates the importance of the natural idyll as the antithesis to the city for the co-founders of Die Brücke. This also applies to the other Brücke painters, particularly to Hermann Max Pechstein, who at first painted with his artist colleagues at the Moritzburg lakes near Dresden, then increasingly also alone in the East Prussian Nidden, and later in Pomerania. His stays in these areas were of great importance for Pechstein's pictorial work. According to his own statements, he felt particularly connected to the landscape and its people. There, in contrast to the hectic environment of Berlin in the years after the First World War, he seemed to have found his longed-for ideal of peaceful life. His works of this period are still stylistically determined by a traditional Expressionism, manifested particularly in the colours. The simple structure adheres to the landscape precedent. Compact, almost summarising forms underscore the Expressionist influence. "(...) but what is that compared to my work mania in my beloved Pomerania, I cannot get over it, I miss the pure life in pure nature, I fidget very much at times, and long for it incessantly, and hope so to experience it again, to once again be able to go up..." (see: Zeit für Kultur und Geschichte, issue 4/2007, p. 30). From 1921 onwards he travelled regularly to Pomerania to spend the summer months there. In the first year, he met his second wife Marta Möller in Leba. Until 1927 he stayed in Leba on a regular basis, especially during the summer months, but he also explored the surrounding area: "I learned not only to appreciate this coast, but also to love it. Be it on my ramblings further into the country, I came into the "blue country", into glorious forests, between which hidden lakes flashed and bubbling rivers and streams meandered through the countryside." (see: Soika, Max Pechstein. Das Werkverzeichnis der Ölgemälde, Munich 2011, p. 76.). In 1927, on one of these wanderings, he came across the fishing village of Rowe, only separated by a dune from the Baltic Sea but difficult

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to reach due to its location on Garder See. It was at that time that this large "Kornfeld" was created not far from Rowe. The vastness of this work is very impressive. It is striking how Pechstein enjoys dealing with the topic of extensive grain fields in the 1920s, for which the present work is a particularly outstanding example.

"Sommerabend" was shown in the 1939 exhibition "Pechsteins neue Landschaften" in Berlin and much celebrated, as the words of Fritz Hellweg show: "So confident in the harmony with nature, firmly facing it, employing his considerable artistic means to listen to the answer, not to command the questions – we have never seen Pechstein as happy in his work as in this exhibition, which combined 70 of his latest works, landscapes in oil, watercolour and drawing, as well as some figurative movement sketches, and enjoyed significant, well-deserved success. (...) In Sommerabend the ripe cornfields glow between deep green strips of pasture; as the sun departs, their rich colour becomes the last bearer of the dusking light. (...) Thus Max Pechstein's ability stands at an unprecedented level." (Hellweg, Fritz: essay in: Kunst Bd. 79, p. 245-349). Cornfields also play a central role in the late work of Vincent Van Gogh, of whom Pechstein used to say was "the father of all of us". For him, they were the embodiment of man's relationship with nature, a source of nourishment. The mountain in the background is the Reveköl, a subject to which many artists dedicated themselves. An exhibition in 2014 at the Landesmuseum Pommern in Greifswald was devoted to this mountain; more than 100 works were exhibited, including by Schmidt-Rottluff, who even referred to the Reveköl as the "Heiligen Berg" (holy mountain), thus it could almost be described as the "Mount Fuji on the Baltic".

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