



EDUARD GRÜTZNER

(Grosskarlowitz 1846–1925 Munich)

Heimliche Studie (Secret study). 1892.

Oil on canvas.

Signed and dated lower left: Ed. Grützner. 1892.

79.5 x 60.5 cm.

Provenance: - Galerie Paffrath, Dusseldorf. - European private collection. - Auction Koller Zurich, 23.3.2018, lot 3211. - European private collection, thence by descent to the present owner. Literature: - Richard Braungart: Eduard Grützner, Munich 1916, ill. plate 5. - László Balogh: Eduard von Grützner. 1846–1925. Ein Münchner Genremaler der Gründerzeit. Monographie und kritisches Verzeichnis seiner Ölgemälde, Ölstudien und Ölskizzen, Mainburg 1991, fig. 341, p. 201,

colour plate 50 and book jacket. The monastic life must have been one of serene pleasure, if we are to believe Grützner's depictions of the clergy. With nimble brushstrokes and an eye for humour, he presents richly detailed scenes of monastic life. "Art should elevate and enliven", as Grützner himself once said (see Balogh 1991, *ibid.*, p. 4). Thus, he approaches his preferred artistic subjects from various perspectives, juggling with humorous representations which evoke a smile in the viewer. This can be seen in the painting presented for sale here, which depicts three monks studying in a monastery library, and which, as László Balogh writes, can be ranked as one of the "most appealing pictures of monastery libraries" by this artist (*ibid.*, p. 201). László Balogh even chose this motif for the dust jacket of his catalogue raisonné. While monks would otherwise be bent over their heavy, leather-bound folios with great seriousness and interest, driven by their thirst for knowledge, here in Grützner's work we encounter three smirking clergymen, applying themselves to a leaf of vellum, the image revealed by the warm and soft rays of the sun. The naked female bodies which are entwined on the leaf cause the three "art enthusiasts" to linger a moment before the beauty of the fine arts and forget their everyday duties. Using much varied detail, this characteristic work is part of a small series of ten further works, entitled "Monks or priests engaged in reading and other recreational activities" (*ibid.*, pp. 199–201). Alongside Carl Spitzweg (1808–1885) and Franz von Defregger (1835–1921) Eduard von Grützner is one of the most important Munich genre painters of the second half of the 19th century. Discovered and sponsored by the village priest of his birthplace Groß-Karlowitz, after his education at the Gymnasium, he learned drawing skills at the Hermann Dyck school of applied arts in Munich (Hermann Dyck 1812–1874). He was then drawn to Johann Georg Hiltensperger (1806–1890) and Alexander Ströhuber (1814–1882), who introduced him to the ideals of beauty of the antique. He later took lessons under Hermann Anschütz (1802–1880) and by way of connection to his education at the Munich Academy, in 1867 Eduard Grützner became inspired by the most important exponent of realist history painting, Carl Theodor von Piloty (1826–1886). This contact proved to be particularly influential in his later artistic life. In

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1886 Grützner became professor at the Munich Academy and in 1916 was even elevated to the nobility.

CHF 40 000 / 60 000

€ 41 240 / 61 860

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