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Karl Mediz

Vienna 1868-1945 Dresden

Das Frauenbad am Felsentor

Oil on canvas

60 3/8 x 61 1/4 in. (153.4 x 155.5 cm.)

Painted on Lokrum Island, 1902



Provenance

The artist's estate;

Ellen Melas Kyriazi Collection, and by descent to the family of Sam Josefowitz, and by descent to the previous owners.

Literature

L. Hevesi, *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 207-214.

R. Bruck, *Ausstellungskatalog: Karl Mediz*, Dresden, 1904.

Exhibited

Vienna, Lower Belvedere, *Hagenbund*, 1903.

Dresden, *Emile Pelikan-Karl Mediz, Gemälde und Zeichnungen*, 18 September - 23 October 1943, no. 1 (ex. cat. pp. 5,16, illustrated).

Vienna and Linz, University of Applied Arts and Upper Austrian State Museum, *Emile Mediz-Pelikan 1861-1908, Karl Mediz 1868-1945*, April 24 - May 25, 1986 and April 23 - June 22, 1986, no. 91. (ex. cat. p. 183).

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Karl Mediz painted the present work in 1902 when staying on Lokrum Island, Croatia, with his wife, the Austrian landscape painter Emily Mediz-Pelikan. Both artists were greatly inspired by the beautiful surroundings of the Adriatic coast and this is where they spent some of their most prolific time (fig. 1). The distinctive red sandstone rock formations of a cove on Lokrum (fig. 2) are depicted with a kaleidoscopic pattern of lines creating patterns between the gradations of red tones. The cloud formations and the receding arches in the rock pull the viewer in towards the water, there the calm figure floats, arms outstretched - in parallel with the horizon line.

Austrian landscape and portrait painter Karl Mediz was discovered by Friedrich von Amerling (1803-1887). He studied art at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna and at the Académie Julian in Paris, and painted in a style derived from both Symbolism and Art Nouveau. He was often in the artist colony in Dachau near Munich and Knokke, where he met Emilie Pelikan. They married and moved to Vienna, where they found only little recognition of their work as artists. Only a small circle of connoisseurs, among them art critics or fellow painters like Uhde, Lehmden, Hörmann and Hervesi supported them. In 1894 the couple moved to Dresden, where there was a more progressive climate for art. In Germany, Karl Mediz soon gained some success as a portraitist and together with his wife, who also worked as a painter, they lead a successful life as artists around 1900. When he exhibited his first large-scale painting at the Kunstausstellung in 1899, the audience compared his work even to Giotto's frescos. Soon after, the artist achieved his breakthrough in 1903, when the 'Untere Belvedere' in Vienna, at the time housing contemporary art, even acquired two of the painter's key works. The artist also participated in landmark exhibitions like the international Kunstausstellung in Dresden and the collective exhibition in 1902 at the Hagenbund in Vienna. After the early death of his wife in 1908, Karl Mediz painted less and less and turned towards graphical arts. He continued to live in Dresden until his death just before the bombing of the city. His estate soon passed into the hands of the new East German Communist régime and his works were forgotten until 1986, when an exhibition of his and Emilie's paintings was held at the Oberösterreichische Landesmuseen in Linz. Mediz's symbolist landscapes are undoubtedly influenced by Gustav Klimt's celebrated landscapes and the Viennese Secessionists at the turn of the century such as Ferdinand Hodler as well as Giovanni Segantini.

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Fig. 1: Emilie Mediz-Pelikan (1861 – 1908), *View of Lacroma*, 1902, oil on canvas, 80 x 90 cm. (31.5 x 35.43 in.), private collection



Fig. 2: A hidden cove, Lokrum Island