

KUNSTHANDEL A.H. BIES



Een zomers rivierlandschap

Olieverf op paneel 46,3 x 35,5 cm
Gesigneerd rechtsonder 'W:Roelofs'

Willem Roelofs - *Amsterdam 1822 – 1897 Berchem (Belgium)*

Willem Roelofs is one of the most important representatives of the Hague School, the painters who introduced Impressionism to the Netherlands around 1860. He greatly developed as an artist during his career, from a classic romantic painter to a true Impressionist.

Roelofs moved to Brussels in 1847. In the Belgian capital he quickly became successful. He exhibited two landscape paintings at the Brussels salon in 1848. For one he was awarded the gold medal, the other he sold to the king of Belgium. Many prizes and honorary memberships would follow.

Roelofs was a key figure in the Brussels art community. In 1855 he was co-founder of the Société Belge des Aquarellistes. He also took several students under his wing, such as Alexander Mollinger, Constant Gabriël and Hendrik Willem Mesdag. When living in Brussels he got to know the French painter François-Auguste Ortman.

Probably because of his friendship with Ortman, he heard about an artist community in Barbizon and in 1851 he decided to visit the town located southeast of Paris. Roelofs was one of the first Dutch painters to go to Barbizon and his visit would mark a decisive turn in his artistic career.

Roelofs was deeply impressed by the French painters in Barbizon, the birthplace of Impressionism. The looser style of painting, working from nature and painting outdoors were all aspects that appealed to him. Following the example of the Barbizon School painters, he started painting in a more impressionist style. He thus became one of the founders of the Hague School.

Much like other Hague School painters, Roelofs attempted to depict the landscapes as realistically as possible, without idealisation and primarily with a view to the effects of sunlight on the ever changing nature. Even though he chose to reside in Brussels, his preference was for Dutch subjects. and he painted the forested areas in Drenthe and Gelderland and the water-rich regions in Utrecht and North and South Holland in particular. Apart from the land, the air and an occasional cow, Roelofs required little more for inspiration and his typical Dutch landscapes are as such praised for their simplicity and realism.

Roelofs had two sons, who also became well known artists: Willem Elisa Roelofs Jr. (1874 – 1940) and Otto Willem Albertus 'Albert' Roelofs (1877 – 1920).