

KUNSTHANDEL BOB SCHOLTE FINE ART



Self-portrait

ca. 1908

Pastel and pencil on brown paper
44.5 x 49 cm (paper size)

Provenance:

Estate of the artist, by descent to his mother and brother Constance (1858–1930) & Frans (1882–1929) de Nerée tot Babberich'

Atelier de Feu de l'Artiste Peintre C.K.H. de Nerée tot Babberich (2e partie), Mak van Waay, Amsterdam 21-23 March 1933, lot 83 'Réunion de vingt-deux portraits de lui-même. Au crayon, à l'aquarelle, à la plume, etc.', where acquired by Biesterbosch;

Galerie Monet, Amsterdam;

Galerie Michael Hasenclever, Munich, 1979, sold to;

Private collection, London, 2018;

With Emanuel von Baeyer, London, 2018, from whom acquired by;
Private collection, France.

Exhibitions:

Possibly Munich, September 1911, "categorie C: 'Pastelle, kolorierte Zeichnungen, Kompositionen etc.'", no. 19:
Selbstbildnis;
Berlin, November 1912;

Dresden, early 1912.

This self-portrait by Carel de Nerée tot Babberich (1880-1909), dating from around 1905-1908, is the most intriguing self-portrait in his oeuvre. In soft pastel colours, punctuated by vibrating lines and a double contour around the face, De Nerée presents himself without disguise. It is the only self-portrait in which he is depicted from the hips up. His expression is sombre, yet his gaze is direct and penetrating. His posture conveys a remarkable sense of determination.

The work was created during a period when De Nerée, suffering from tuberculosis, moved between European sanatoriums in the hope of recovery. The vulnerability of those years resonates in the pale background and restless linework. Yet there is also strength in the way he presents himself to the viewer. The work is raw and deeply personal, created not to please an audience, but out of a profound commitment to art. In its use of colour, vibrating lines and expressive character, it aligns with the international artistic innovations around 1900, which De Nerée followed closely.

De Nerée's more expressionist drawings provoked strong reactions at the first posthumous exhibitions held between 1910 and 1914. These works were exhibited far less frequently in the Netherlands than at exhibitions abroad, as they were considered too explicit, shocking and un-Dutch. This self-portrait reveals how De Nerée moved beyond the conventions of his time, developing a personal visual language that transcended national boundaries.