



Geer van Velde

(Dutch, 05.04.1898 - 05.03.1977)

Composition

Signed lower right 'GvV' Signed at the back "G van Velde"

Oil on canvas

100 x 100 cm / 39.4 x 39.4 inch

PROVENANCE

Provenance:

Estate of the artist

BIOGRAPHY

(Geer van Velde)



Geer van Velde (Lisse, NL April 5, 1898 – March 5, 1977)

Van Velde was the second son of Willem Adriaan van Velde and Hendrika Catharina von der Voorst, illegitimate daughter of an earl. Catharina and her four children (Neeltje, Bram, Geer, and Jacoba) were abandoned by Willem Adriaan after the bankruptcy of his business, leaving them in misery. Moving a lot, they eventually moved to The Hague in 1903. In 1910 at the age of twelve, Geer became an apprentice designer in the firm with Schaijk & Eduard H. Kramers. Kramers encouraged Geer to develop his interest in painting, as he did with his brother Bram van Velde. Geer van Velde left for Paris in 1925 to join his brother Bram. During the first difficult years in Paris the brothers Bram and Geer received financial support from their former patrons Eduard and Wijnand Kramers from The Hague. During the Great Depression this source dries up and Bram and Geer are left to fend for themselves.

In Paris Geer van Velde met Samuel Beckett, the Irish writer who became an important man in his life. Beckett introduces Geer to influential personalities such as Peggy Guggenheim, who showed his works in her London gallery in 1938. In the same year Geer and his wife Elisabeth left for the South of France. This year brought about a turning point in Geer's artistic and personal life. The Mediterranean light significantly influenced not only his palette, but also his visual language. His contacts with the painter Pierre Bonnard and gallery owner Aimé Maeght were likewise of great significance for Geer.

After the war the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague (1947) and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1950) showed interest in van Veldes' work in The Netherlands; Sandberg even visited Geer in his studio.

He won the first prize in the Biennale de Menton in 1951. Geer van Velde belongs to the Ecole de Paris. His works are in possession of various Dutch museums and collections.

Art and Technique

Never abstract, Geer's work, with its subtle, sometimes monochrome colors, resembles a long meditation on light. Indescribable movements underline intermediary spaces, the plastic equivalents of which are a linear architecture that gradually gives way to suggest depth. Without ever attaining Mondrian's radicalism, Geer separates the chromatic surfaces, cut into segments, from the background to liberate "the essential which is not what is visible but our inner world". Vertical lines surround an empty central area defining the picture space. Gradually these lines disappear, replaced by a square, in its turn divided into four. Planes and colors are distributed from this centre, luminous or dark surfaces underlined by light brush strokes and gouache stains, or by a few lines in charcoal or chalk. Piet Moget, an artist friend, recounted the way in which Geer worked, following his own explanations: "The artist prepared his canvas himself. He needed a plain background, which would absorb... he drew the main rhythms and masses in charcoal, then covered the entire surface of the canvas with a thin coat of zinc white with oil applied very dry without thinner. The charcoal lines remained just visible. He then stuck on newspapers to absorb the oil... He hated a slippery canvas" (Catalogue Rétrospective, Ville de Paris, 1982). Geer remained faithful to this technique.

Message

the artist told Bernard Dorival: "The eye does not have all the rights; it must leave something to intuition and intelligence. I tend increasingly towards lyricism" (Les étapes de la peinture française contemporaine, Gallimard, 1946)

EXHIBITIONS

- 1991 Paris, France, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou
- 1991 Sigean, France, Rétrospective. Lieu d'Art Contemporain Sigean (Aude)
- 1986 Albi, France, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi
- 1982 Paris, France Paintings and works on paper. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.
- 1972 Treigny, France exhibition at Château de Ratilly
- 1971 : Amsterdam, Kunsthandel ML. de Boer: *Geer van Velde*.
- 1966 Paris, France exhibition at the Musée Galliera
- 1963 Caracas, Venezuela, Cien Anos de Pintura en Francia
- 1963 : São Paulo, Museu de arte moderna: *VII Bienal de São Paulo*. Rio de Janeiro, Museu de arte moderna.
- 1962 London, UK, Tate Gallery, École de Paris
- 1961 Turin, Italy, Pittori d'Oggi Francia-Italia
- 1959 Warsaw, Poland Narodowe Museum
- 1958 Mannheim, Germany Kunsthalle
- 1955 Paris, France Peintres de l'École de Paris
- 1953 Amsterdam, the Netherlands Stedelijk Museum, Elf tijdgenoten uit Parijs
- 1952 Zurich, Switzerland, Kunsthhaus, Malerei in Paris
- 1952 London, UK Royal Academy of Arts
- 1952 Lausanne, Switzerland - Rythmes et couleurs, Musée Lausanne
- 1952 Recklinghausen, Germany, Drei Künstler aus Paris
- 1952 : Paris, Galerie Maeght: *Geer van Velde*.
- 1951 first Biennale de Menton, at which he received the first prize for a foreign artist
- 1950 Montevideo, Caracas, Lima De Manet hasta nuestros dias,
- 1949 Sao Paulo, Brazil, Museum of Modern Art, De la figuration à l'abstraction
- 1948 : Paris, Galerie Maeght: *Bram et Geer van Velde*. New York, Samuel M. Kootz Gallery: *Geer and Bram van Velde*.
- 1947 Nice, France, Galerie Ruhl Peintres d'aujourd'hui
- 1946 : Paris, Galerie Maeght: *Geer van Velde*.
- 1946 Cannes, France Gallerie Maeght with Matisse, Marchand, Chastel, Van Velde,
- 1942 : Nice, Galerie Muratore.
- 1938 : Londres, Guggenheim Jeune Gallery: *Geer van Velde*.
- 1935 : Wassenaar, Toonkamer Zonnewende.
- 1933 : La Haye, Toonzalen Corn Van der Sluys, : *A.G en Geer van Velde*.
- 1949 to 1971 Salon de Mai
- Selections for Amsterdam in 1961 and Tokyo in 1963.
- Réalités Nouvelles, and in the Grands et jeunes d'aujourd'hui.
- 1954, 1959 and 1960, École de Paris at the Galerie Charpentier.