

Rydhave, the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Copenhagen

# American Perspectives on Danish Art

Cover

ANNA ANCHER (1859-1935)

**Lunch Hour, 1916**

*Oil on canvas, 69,8 x 59,8 cm*

*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

# Art, Diplomacy, and the Wonder of it All

By Ambassador Laurie S. Fulton



Photo by Omar Ingvaldsen

*Ambassador Laurie S. Fulton has been U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark since July 2009*

Denmark is a fairy-tale country. Since arriving here as US Ambassador, I have lived this enchanted tale, from a unique Danish-American perspective.

As a child, stories of elves, trolls, swans and fairies were part of my life. My mother read aloud to us from Hans Christiansen Andersen stories sent by her Danish aunt. During my first visit to Denmark in 1970, we were looking for traces of my great-grandfather, Mads Jensen-Aale, who had been a member of the Landsting, the old upper chamber. Visiting Christiansborg, the seat of the Parliament, we were disappointed to find that a portrait of him no longer was hanging in the hall. With the help of Mads' youngest daughter, we asked about the portrait. Sensing our disappointment, one of the attendants at Christiansborg asked us to wait

while he looked for it. He disappeared, only to return later to invite us into a room where he had placed a very large portrait featuring six distinguished-looking parliamentarians, including my great-grandfather, gathered around a committee table. How did he locate this painting? Had the man known Mads Jensen-Aale? Had he listened to his debates? We never found out, but having the portrait found and brought out for us to see was a moment of pure magic. How very Danish of him, I thought, to go to such trouble to accommodate American family visitors.

Still, the story does not end here. For when I returned to Copenhagen in the summer of 2009 as President Obama's Ambassador to Denmark, Jette Nordam, the Chief of Protocol at the Danish Foreign Ministry,

generously asked me, after all the formalities had been dealt with, whether there was anything else she could do to assist me. Recalling the portrait, I found myself asking if she could put me in touch with someone at Folketing to see whether I could borrow the portrait of my great-grandfather that I had seen nearly 40 years earlier. Again, magic followed. Wheels were set in motion, doors were thrown open, and today the portrait of the six distinguished parliamentarians, including my great-grandfather, is the focal point in the reception hall of the US Ambassador's Residence, welcoming every visitor to Rydhave, and speaking eloquently of this Ambassador's Danish roots and the long-standing relationship between our countries.

There is more to this fairy-tale. My various visits to Denmark have allowed me to travel throughout the country. I have visited many wonderful art collection, from the Carlsberg Glyptotek to Skagen's Museum. I admired the early modern painters with their sense of light and choice of subjects that were at once familiar, yet also unique. Some of the paintings reminded me of rural South Dakota where I grew up – but with a

different mood that intrigued me and that I longed to explore. The fascination has stayed with me, and when I came back as Ambassador, I hoped for such paintings on the walls at the Residence. Yet I had no reason to believe that it would happen.

Then I learned that Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum was closing for renovation in the coming year. When Chalotte Sabroe, the Director, heard of my interest, with extraordinary kindness, she invited me to borrow works from the collection to hang in Rydhave until the museum could open again.

This is just like a fairy-tale come true. Every day when I come home, I am greeted by the portrait of my great-grandfather, and by masterworks of Anna Ancher, Olaf Rude, Christine Swane and Jens Søndergaard to mention but a few. For me, there could not be a more warm welcome to Denmark, and a promising start for my work in enhancing Danish-American connections. I hope you will enjoy the paintings in their new – albeit temporary – setting and that you too will feel welcome and at home.



Photo by Omer Ingerslev

The Men behind the Agricultural Legislation Meeting on October 4, 1919, painted 1934-35  
Oil on canvas, 162 x 215 cm  
On loan from the Danish parliament, Folketinget

Ambassador Fulton's great-grandfather, Mads Jensen-Aale (1865-1941), is seated on the left with beard.

# A Rich Period in Danish Art History

By Charlotte Sabroe, Director, Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

It is with special pleasure that Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum is exhibiting a small selection of its collection at the Residence of the American Ambassador, Rydhave. We hope it will contribute to the greater understanding of Danish art history and cultural heritage, which is of great importance for the museum. Besides, hanging art work at Rydhave in fresh – and very beautiful – surroundings gives them a new life.

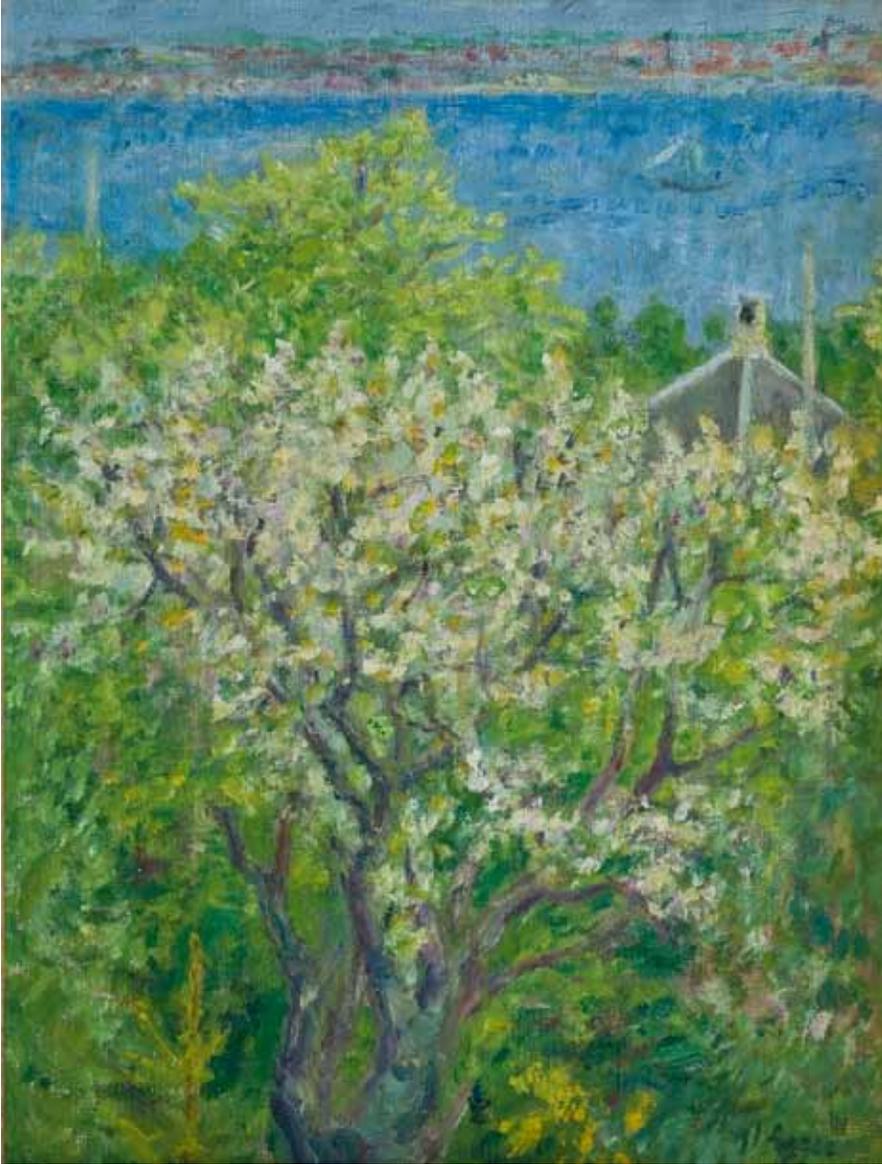
The collections at Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum represent all the milestones of Danish art of the last 300 years, from Jens Juel and Abildgaard in the 18th and early 19th century to Per Kirkeby and Olafur Eliasson in the 21st. The works on display at Rydhave mainly represent “Early Modernism” from the end of the 19th century until about 1940. Those are the fifty years in Danish art history, during which artists, drawing on the example of the French Impressionists, left the capital and settled in different parts of Denmark. As early as in the 1870’s a group of Scandinavian artists found their way to Skagen, where the sea, fishing population and unique light were transformed into paintings. One of the artists’ colony’s most prominent figures was Anna Ancher, whose bold, coloristic painting “About Noon” can be seen at Rydhave.

The island of Bornholm also attracted many artists. The most famous among them is probably Oluf Høst, but Olaf Rude and Nils Lergaard have also lived on the island for longer period, and each in his own way captured its special scenery. The landscape and, in particular, the light in these more distant parts of Denmark fascinated the artists. Jens Søndergaard kept coming back to Thy, where he grew up, and rendered the harsh Western shores in fantastic, expressionist paintings. In Seeland, it was the coast of Odsherred, and the hills in the outskirts of the flat, dammed up Isefjord that appealed. Here, the Swane family lived along with artists such as Karl Bovin and Kaj Ejstrup.

While these various artists’ colonies concentrated on the Danish landscape, other artists focused on the rest of the world. Ejler Bille was among the initiators of the artists’ group “Linien” that worked with nonfigurative painting, inspired by the surrealists. The pioneering work by the group, in turn, inspired a whole generation of artists, including Else Alfelt and Paul Gadegaard.

It is a multifaceted period of Danish art which hangs at Rydhave. It has been delightful to work with Ambassador Fulton and her staff, and I hope that the Ambassador and her many guests at Rydhave will enjoy the works of the museum.

Photo by Omar Ingerslev



**Flowering Cherry Trees**, undated  
Oil on canvas, 98,5 x 78,5 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

KNUD AGGER (1895-1973)

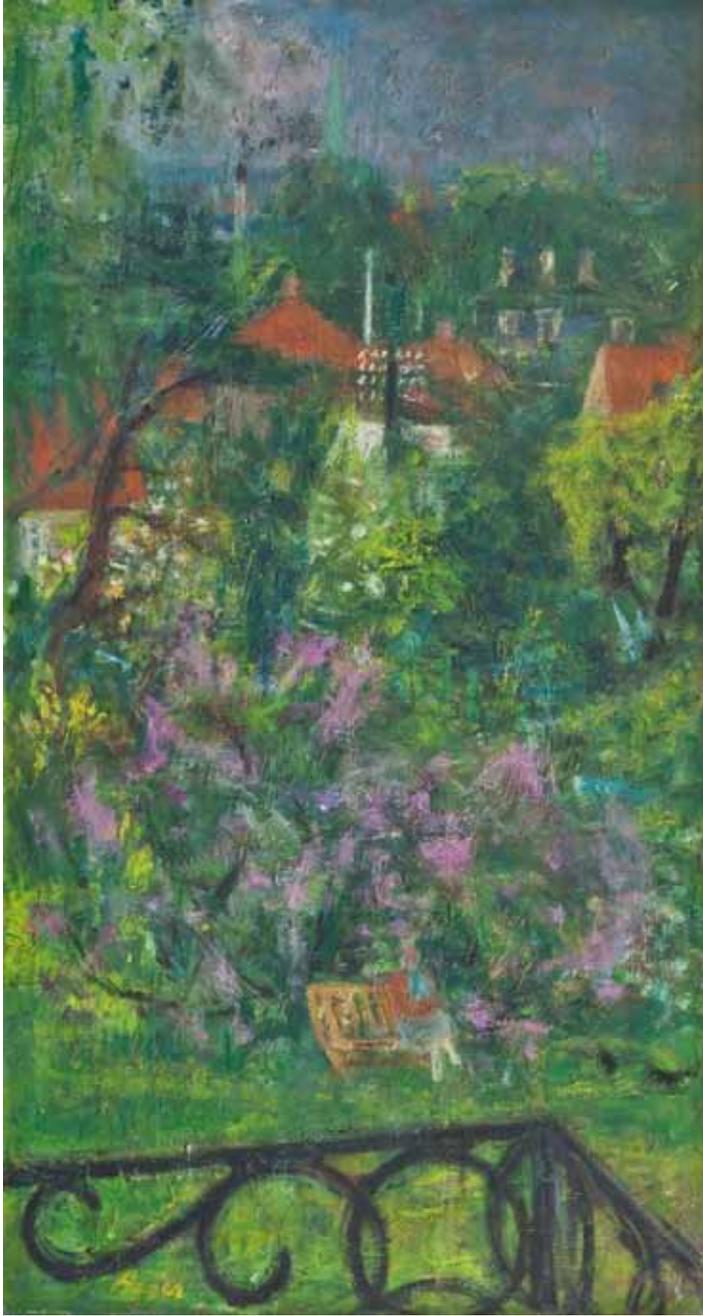
KNUD AGGER (1895-1973)

**Flowering Cherry Trees**, undated  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 70 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum



Photo by Omar Ingeliev

Photo by Omar Ingerslev



**Gathering Storm over the Sea**, undated  
*Oil on canvas, 119 x 65,5 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

KNUD AGGER (1895-1973)

ELSE ALFELT (1910-1974)

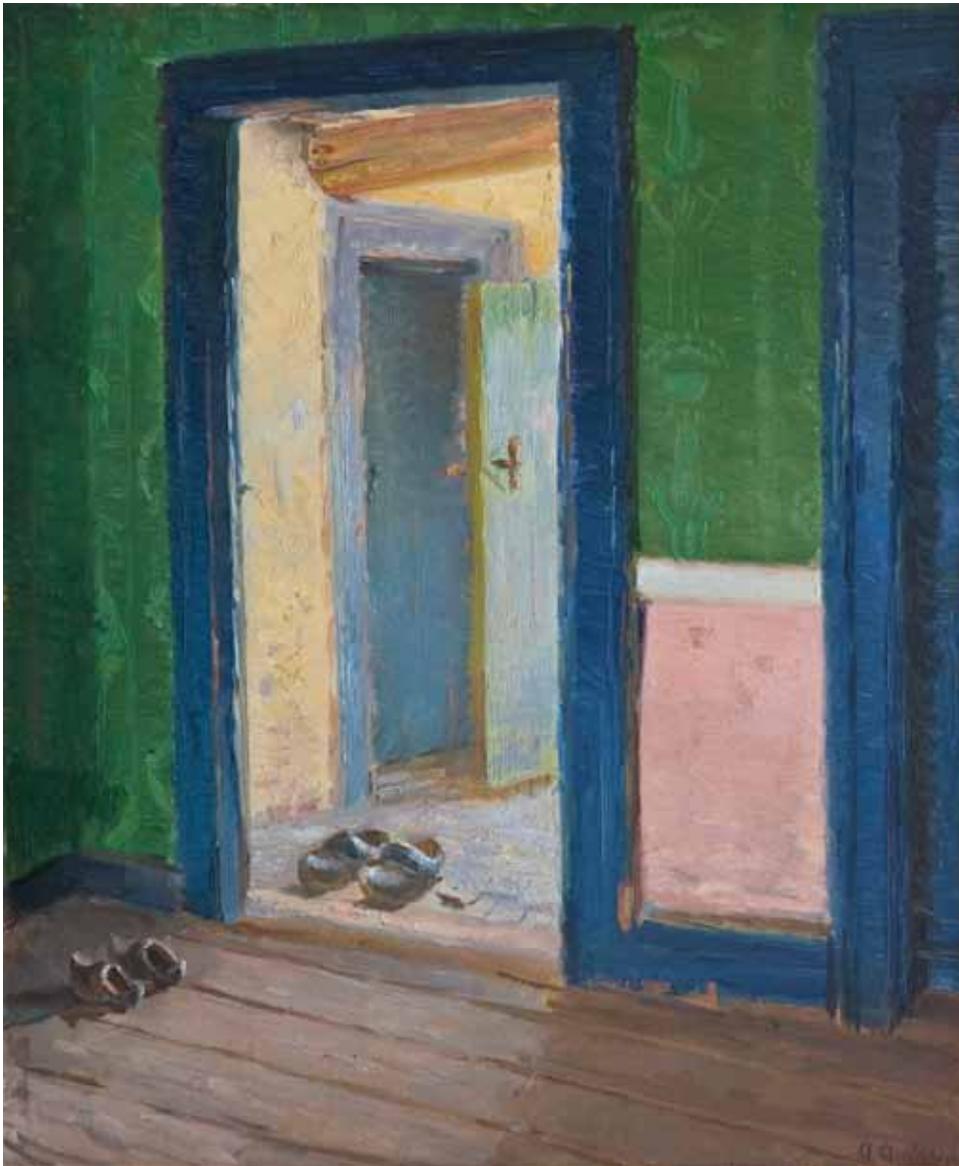


Photo by Omar Hjertev

**Cathedral Picture 1 Yellow for C. Monet, 1955**

*Oil on plywood, 104,8 x 104,2 cm*

*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*



**Lunch Hour, 1916**  
Oil on canvas, 69,8 x 59,8 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

ANNA ANCHER (1859-1935)

EJLER BILLE (1910-2004)

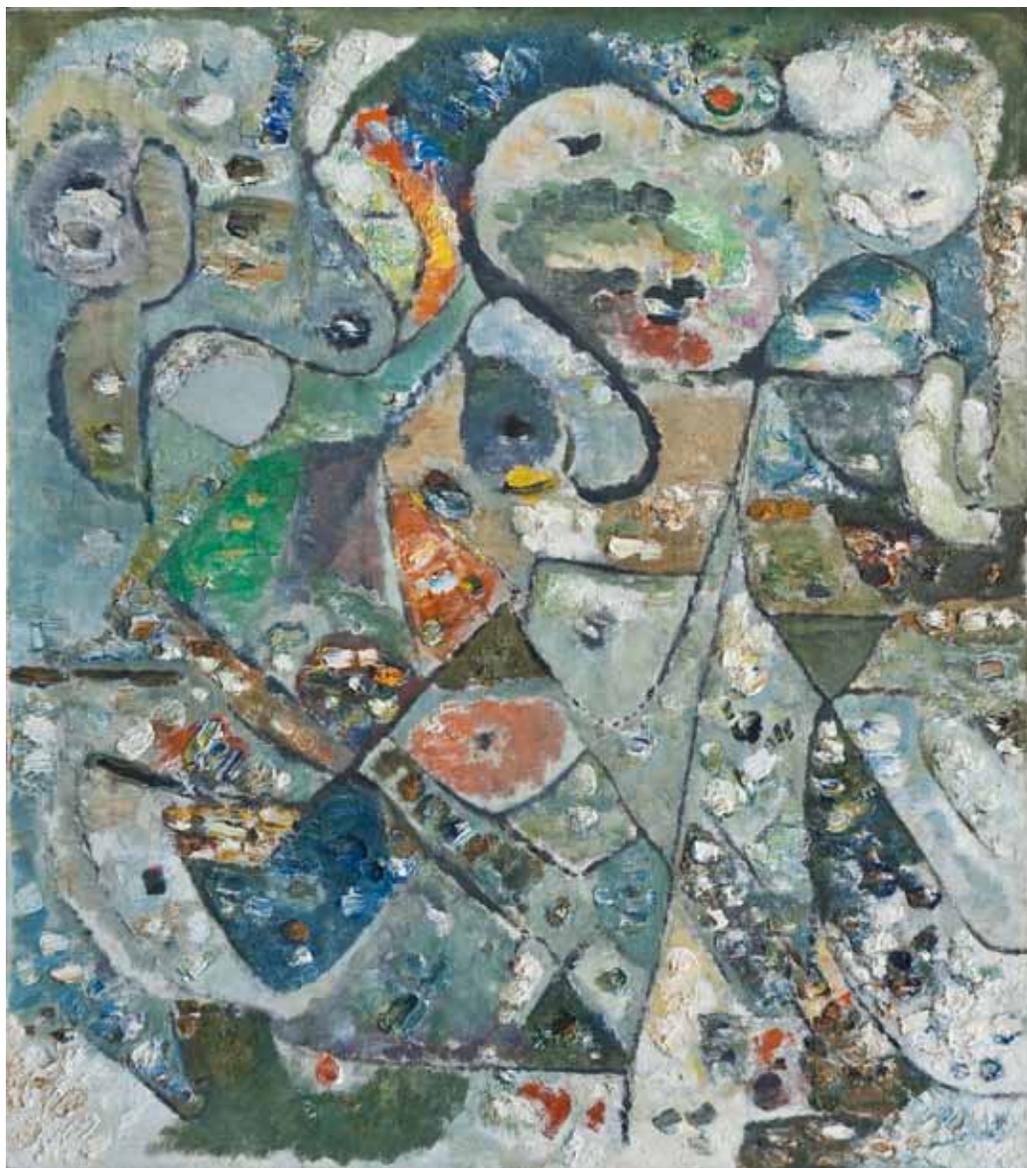


Photo by Omar Hegender

**Anthropomorph Figures, 1963**  
*Oil on canvas, 84,2 x 74,7 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*



**Landscape with Dandelions, 1848**  
*Oil on canvas, 41,2 x 53,3 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

CHRISTEN DALSGAARD (1824-1907)

KAJ EJSTRUP (1902-1956)



Photo by Omar Hjerslev

**Landscape (Renneerne), Odsherred, 1943**  
*Oil on canvas, 86,6 x 111,5 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

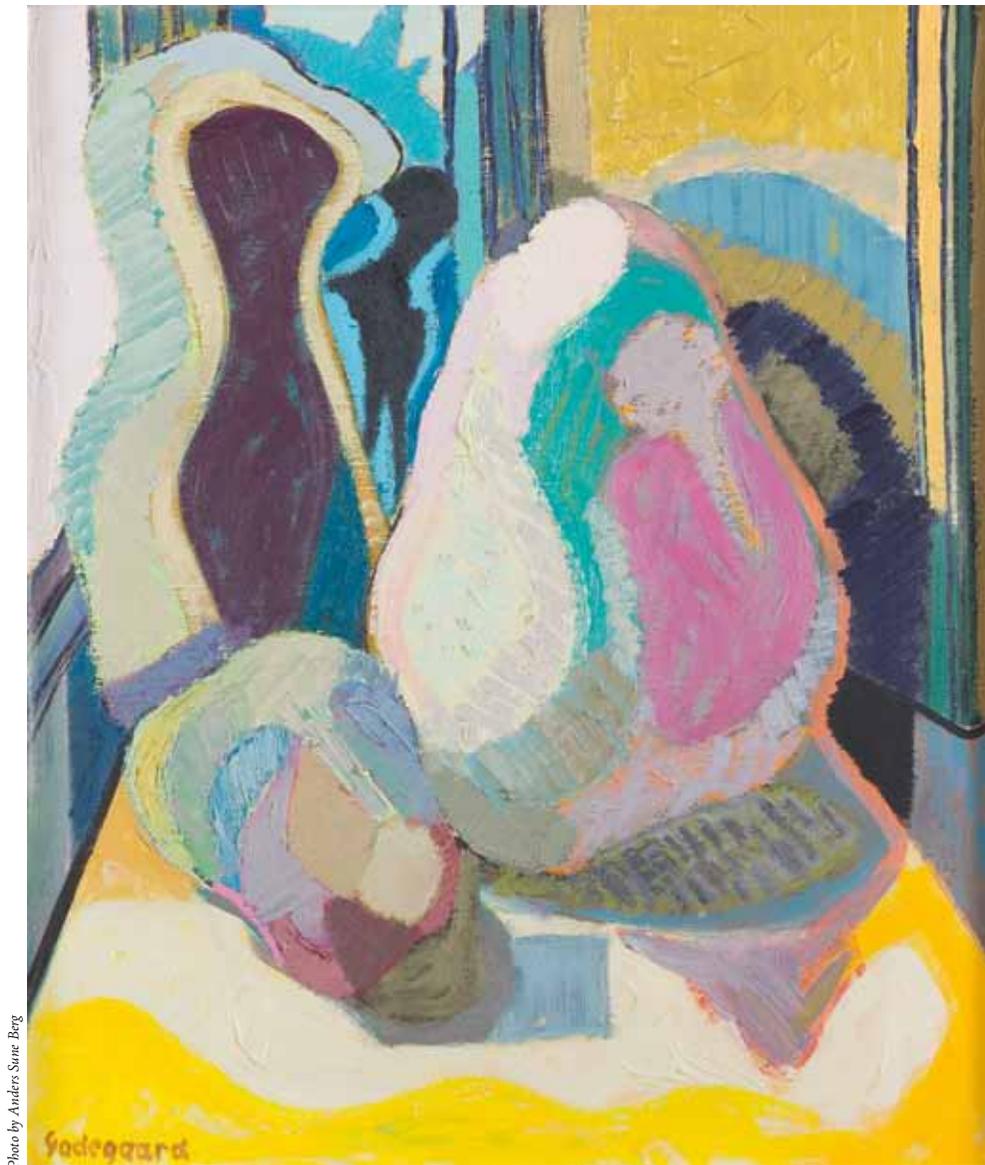


Photo by Anders Sune Berg

**Without a Title**, undated  
Oil on canvas, 54 x 45 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

PAUL GADEGAARD (1920-1996)

WILHELM BOYE GIVSKOV (1912-1995)

**Still Life. Table with Flower Vase and Fruit Bowl, 1948**  
*Oil on canvas, 112,5 x 62,5 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*



Photo by Ómar Ingénier



**Wheel Tracks in the Sand, 1945**  
*Oil on canvas, 114,5 x 128,5 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

VICTOR HAGEN-MÜLLER (1894-1959)

OLIVIA HOLM-MØLLER (1875-1970)



Photo by Omar Ingerster

**Wheat Sheaves, 1914**  
*Oil on canvas, 70 x 84 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

Photo by Omar Ingerstev



ARNE JOHANNESSEN (1908-1998)

**Fall Picture**, undated  
Oil on canvas, 56,1 x 68,6 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

ARNE JOHANNESSEN (1908-1998)



Photo by Omar Hjertev

**Spring in the Forest**, undated  
*Oil on canvas, 55,6 x 65,7 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

Photo by Omar Jørgensen



**Street in Gudhjem, 1941**  
*Oil on canvas, 140 x 156,5 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

NIELS LERGAARD (1893-1982)

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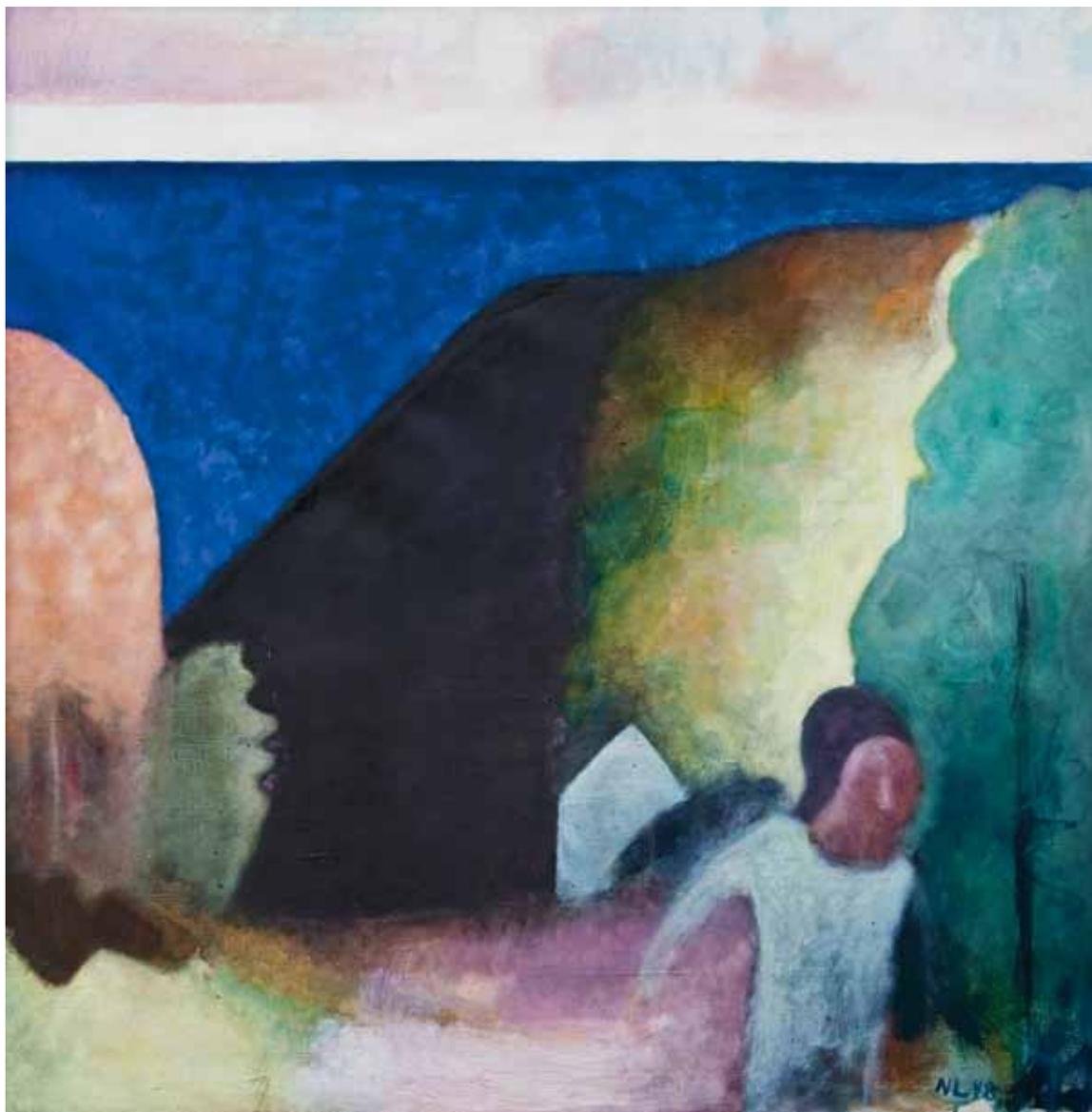


Photo by Omar Higuerter

**Spring Scenery, 1948**  
*Oil on canvas, 113 x 118 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

Photo by Omar Ingeric



**Landscape, 1926**  
Oil on canvas, 54,5 x 74 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum

OLAF RUDE (1886-1957)

OLAF RUDE (1886-1957)

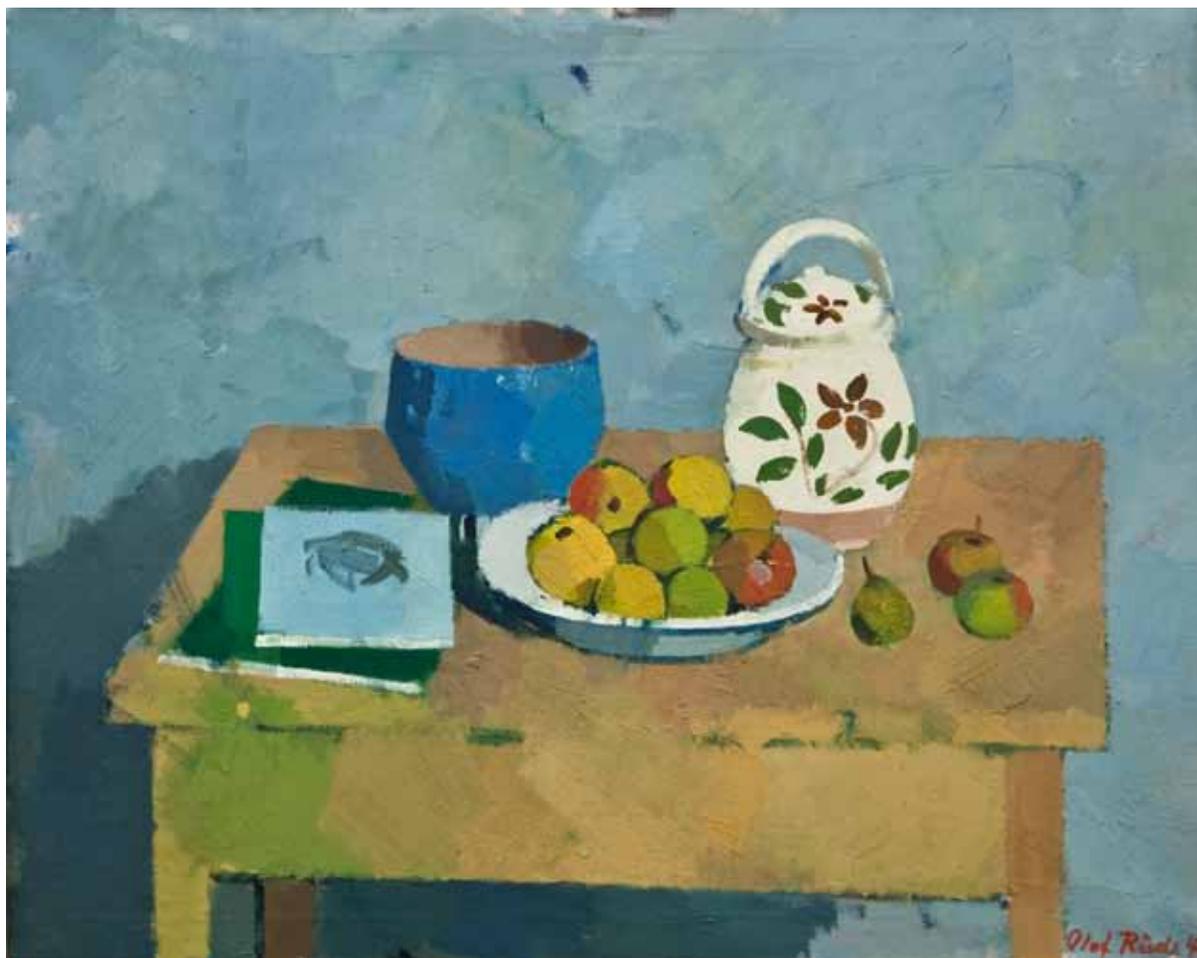


Photo by Omar Higueras

**Still Life**, 1944  
*Oil on canvas, 92,8 x 112,7 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

Photo by Omar Ingerslev



**Still Life with Stone Jar, 1942**  
*Oil on canvas, 93,3 x 78,3 cm*  
*On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum*

CHRISTINE SWANE (1876-1960)

JENS SØNDERGAARD (1895-1957)



Photo by Omer Ligesteru

**Summer Day**, 1950-51  
Oil on canvas, 112,1 x 134,6 cm  
On loan from Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum



