

KARL&FABER

Carl Spitzweg

Hunter, looking back at a girl

Lot 113



Low estimate :

High estimate :

EUR 100,000.00

EUR 150,000.00

Buyers premium incl. VAT :

32 %

Artist

Carl Spitzweg

Additional description

Öl auf Leinwand. (Um 1875–77). Ca. 32 x 54 cm. "S im Rhombus" unten links.

Period

19. Jahrhundert

Technique

Gemälde

Provenance

Wohl Verkaufsverzeichnis Nr. 364: "Alter Jäger (à la Kobell); verkauft 1878 an Freifrau Caroline von Gumpenberg (1816-1889), München; Privatsammlung Deutschland.

The encounter between the sexes occupies a prominent place in Spitzweg's work and is not always devoid of biographical elements. His great love, Clara Lechner, died of pulmonary catarrh before their planned wedding, and following this painful loss, Spitzweg never entered into another serious relationship. Throughout his life, he remained the proud bachelor whom he depicted countless times in his paintings. Indeed, the themes of love and marriage are present in his work to an extent rarely seen in the work of any other artist – paintings such as *The Intercepted Love Letter* or *The Eternal Bridegroom* depict such encounters between the sexes, which were mostly of a fleeting nature. This is also the case in our painting, in which a hunter gazes after a dairymaid walking down a path into a small valley to climb up to the dairy hut, which is visible to the left behind the rugged hilltop. The dairymaid, with her load balanced on her head, dressed in a red skirt, blue apron, golden-yellow bodice and white blouse, embodies the artist's ideal of womanhood, which he has explored in numerous thematically similar paintings. Have she and the hunter met before and spoken to one another, perhaps arranging to meet again? Or is this a depiction of an unfulfilled longing, a missed opportunity to approach the young woman, which the hunter now ponders with a wistful gaze? As always, Spitzweg leaves this question open, emphasising the fleeting nature of their encounter and leaving the viewer to their own moral judgement and imagination. As so often, Spitzweg depicts the hunter not as a heroic conqueror of nature but as a somewhat eccentric oddball who does not always return from the hunt successfully. Our painting is known by various titles, including **The Hunter Kobell** (also **Le Chasseur Kobell**), which does not refer to Spitzweg's fellow painter Wilhelm von Kobell, but, according to an old tradition, to the Munich dialect poet and professor of mineralogy Franz von Kobell, whose physics lectures Spitzweg had attended at the University of Munich in 1829–

30. The hunter is said to bear Kobell's facial features and forms part of a series of portraits and genre scenes in Spitzweg's late work, in which he depicts well-known figures as typical characters. But is our painting a genre scene at all, or is it rather a landscape? This question actually always arises with Spitzweg – everyday activities are too closely interwoven with his conception of nature. Here, too, the path leads into a ravine that separates longing from reality; the severed ivy branch in the left foreground and the water trough with the drinking dog on the right, the rock face with its wayside shrine and bench, and finally the gate, setting the stage for the hunter, behind whom the ravine opens up in a green, turbulent palette reminiscent of the colour swirls in a William Turner painting. Here Spitzweg reveals himself as a magnificent colourist who translates colour into emotion; here the loose brushwork characteristic of his late work reveals the almost proto-Impressionist traits of his painting. Dr Peter Prange