PRESS RELEASE

Henrik Wivel

Vilhelm Hammershøi

Painting as Poetry

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Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864–1916) has had a significant influence on Danish visual art since his debut in the 1880s. His distinctive visual language attracted international attention early-on, and today he is world-renowned for his tight compositions, grey-violet palette, and depictions of architecture, people and nature. In May 2023, Vilhelm Hammershøi's painting *Interior, the Music Room* (1907) was sold for 9.1 million dollars at Sotheby's in New York, setting a new sales record for a work by a Danish artist.

In his new book, Danish author and one of the world's leading Hammershøi experts Henrik Wivel uses previously unknown source material from the diaries and letters of the artist's brother, Svend Hammershøi, to shed light on the marriage of Ida and Vilhelm. Wivel also draws on his extensive knowledge of Hammershøi's work and the era in which he lived, providing perspectives on contemporary artistic modes of thought and their current relevance. Based on interpretations of Hammershøi's paintings of people, interiors, architecture and landscapes, Wivel not only creates a fascinating narrative about an artist who uses light to depict his surroundings; he also attempts to open the doors to an inner world of deep existential complications, loneliness, meditative reflection and erotic fascination.

Vilhelm Hammershøi has played an unquestionably pivotal role in defining realism, symbolism and decadence in art history. His use of photography has both defined the style and inspired artists throughout the modernist movements of the 20th and 21st centuries. Architects, photographers, film directors, scenographers and designers have also been inspired by Hammershøi, whose painterly interpretations

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continue to shape our contemporary understanding of art and the world in an unbroken line of influence.

With *Hammershøi. Painting as Poetry*, Henrik Wivel completes his lifelong work on Vilhelm Hammershøi's oeuvre, which he began as early as 1982, when he published an interpretation that has since been described as groundbreaking in art history.

About the Author

Henrik Wivel (b. 1954) is a critic, author and dr.phil. He has published numerous books on literature, art, architecture and film, most recently biographies on the Danish Symbolist artists L.A. Ring (2020) and J.F. Willumsen (2024). With an interest in Hammershøi dating back to 1982, he is recognised as one of the world's leading Hammershøi experts.

Further information and contact details

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For the press kit and photos see www.strandbergpublishing.dk/presse

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Double Portrait of the Artist and his Wife, 1892

Interior, the Music Room, 1907
The painting was sold for 9.1 million dollars in May 2023 at Sotheby's in New York, thereby setting a new sales record for a work by a Danish artist