



Inv. no. B 363

JOHANNES LARSEN (1867–1961)
BLACKBIRD, 1910
WOOD, PAINTED

H: 13; L: 21.3; W: 7.4 CM

Johannes Larsen's long and extensive oeuvre encompasses many different modes of expression, and he was often working in series. In 1909–1910 he embarked on a series of small animal sculptures carved out of wood. The series consists of a total of seven works,¹ including *Blackbird*, which has been carved from a single piece of wood and painted. In front of the life-sized bird are two red rose hips bright against the white snow.

Blackbird was created at a time when Johannes Larsen ventured out into nature for month-long working sojourns, often during winter and preferably in isolated places where he could devote himself to his insatiable interest in birds. Many became the subject of his paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints, unsurprisingly earning the artist one of his nicknames: 'The Bird Painter'.

The small series of wooden sculptures created in the years 1909–1910 did not occupy a major position in Johannes Larsen's overall production. Nevertheless, the individual sculptures are full of character and testify to his technical skill, his gift for observation, as well as to his finely tuned sense for working with wood. In 1904, Johannes Larsen made his first attempts at cutting and carving wood. These efforts reach a culminating point a few years later, proving him to be an artist with a keen eye for the material as well as for the

graphic possibilities hidden in each individual piece of wood. Over time, the woodcut became one of his favourite methods of printmaking, as evidenced by his magnum opus within the technique: his illustrations for Steen Steensen-Blicher's collection of poems *Birds of Passage* (1838), created during the years 1911–14.

¹ Erland Porsmose: *Johanns Larsen. Menneske, kunstner og naturoplever*, Copenhagen 1999, p. 134.

² In addition to the blackbird, Johannes Larsen also created a lark, a goldfinch, an eider, an ermine, a least weasel with a mouse and a harbour porpoise. See Erland Porsmose: *Johannes Larsen. Menneske, kunstner og naturoplever*, Copenhagen 1999, p. 134.

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