



Inv. no. B 458

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863–1958)
BEACH. THE SEA AT BRITTANY, 1909
OIL ON CANVAS

47 × 60 CM

In the late summer of 1909, J.F. Willumsen set out for Brittany with the objective of conducting further studies in preparation of his monumental painting *Sun and Youth*.¹ This was not his first visit to Brittany: in the summer of 1890 he had painted in Pont-Aven, and in September 1904 he had sought out the Atlantic Ocean and the great sandy beaches at Le Pouldu.

In *Beach. The Sea at Brittany*, Willumsen has focused on the play of light on and in the sea. In the left side of the picture, strong sunlight hits the high horizon. Further down, that light is reflected in the sea, causing a glossy white surface to appear. The waves and surf absorb the light, creating long bands of green, purple and white that extend across the image. In the foreground is the beach itself, from which the water recedes calmly.

Compared to the many other studies of beach scenes done by Willumsen in 1909, in Brittany and at Skagen in Denmark earlier that summer, this painting is clearly sketch-like. Nevertheless, Willumsen used oil – not watercolour or pencil – prompting several observers to conclude that the artist's painterly mode of expression was coming into its own here.² Besides *Beach. The Sea at Brittany*, The David Collection owns another study for *Sun and Youth* (B 455).

C.L. David acquired the painting in 1927 from the art collector J. Chr. T. Levinsen, who found himself forced to sell pieces from his large Willumsen collection due to financial difficulties. It is the latest dated painting by Willumsen found in The David Collection, which contains a total of nineteen works by the artist, nine of which formerly belonged to Levinsen.

¹ *Mette Bøgh Jensen and Annette Johansen (eds.): I bølgen blå. Willumsen og de badende børn, Frederikssund 2016, p. 21.*

² *J.F. Willumsen, Sun and Youth, 1910, Göteborgs Konstmuseum.*

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Willumsen udstillingen, arrangeret af Den frie Udstilling i Anledningen af Kunstnerens 60-Aars Fødselsdag, København 1923, 2. ed., cat.no. 280;

Erik Zahle: "Billedkunst" in *C.L. Davids Samling. Nogle Studier*, [1], København 1948, pp. 208, 262-263;

C.L. David: *C.L. Davids Samling*, København 1960, p. 23;

Mette Bøgh Jensen and Annette Johansen (eds.): *I bølgen blå.*

Willumsen og de badende børn, Willumsens Museum, Frederikssund 2016, cat.no. 175, p. 153;