



Inv. no. B 455

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863–1958)
BOY STANDING ON ONE LEG WHILE STRIPPING OFF HIS
STOCKING, 1902
WATERCOLOR ON PAPER

48.3 × 41.8 CM

Over an eight-year period, from 1902 to 1910, J.F. Willumsen worked on a large oil painting of bathing children on a sun-drenched beach, *Sun and Youth*.¹ His sources of inspiration and extensive work process are richly documented in letters, notebooks, photographs etc. Furthermore, he created hundreds of studies and preliminary works, mainly while travelling around Europe.

Boy Standing on Leg while stripping off his Stocking is one such study, done in April–May 1902, where Willumsen was in Amalfi. The visit constituted his first encounter with the Italian coastline and its wide beaches, and he was thrilled by the blue sea and the strong sunlight. The bathing boys also caught Willumsen's attention, so it is hardly surprising that it was here he created his first studies for *Sun and Youth*.

The watercolour depicts a boy taking off his sock. Despite the naturalistic style and defining contours, the boy's appearance and pose are striking. For one thing, his upper body seems surprisingly large and muscular considering the boy's young face. The very fact that the boy is wearing a sock at all is in itself peculiar. It is not inconceivable that Willumsen staged the scene, specifically wishing to work with a body awash in strong sunlight.

The boy in this watercolour does not appear in *Sun and Youth*, even though Willumsen also did other, later studies and photographs of boys on the beach wearing socks.²

¹ See for example *Stående dreng, der holder i sin strømpe, 1904, J.F. Willumsens Museum, acc. 3478.*

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

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