



Inv. no. B 29, B 30, B 31, B 32, B 33 & B 34

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863-1958) & NBSP;
SIX BIRDS, 1903
BRONZE

H: 14 - 21 CM

In 1902, J.F. Willumsen received a commission for three paintings to hang over the doors in the dining room at the manor house of Charlottenlund near Ystad in Sweden. The trilogy of paintings was given the title *Mother and Daughter at Three Ages*.¹ The commission also included three frames with different bird motifs, these too created in 1904. Prior to this work, Willumsen sculpted the six smaller birds seen here.

*'And when the pictures were finished, I carved the frames myself in high relief. They depict a downward-facing spear, around which a plant winds. On the upper end of the spear hangs a ring, in which sits a bird. – For these birds I did many preliminary studies, not only in relief but also in the round, and a few of them were later cast in bronze.'*²

The six small birds are sculpted in different positions and attitudes of movement, all of them engaged in different activities. As in the case of B 460, the birds evade specific identification in terms of species. Precisely for this reason, several have concluded that Willumsen was primarily interested in focusing on the birds' expressions and movements, imbuing them with symbolic significance which reflected each woman's development and the interaction between generations in his painting trilogy.³

In connection with a major exhibition of Willumsen's works in Copenhagen in 1919, several bronze casts of Willumsen's sculptural works were made, including these six small birds and B 460. C.L. David acquired the works for his collection in 1927 from the art collector J. Chr. T. Levinsen, who also sold him the preliminary drawn sketches for the birds (B 243–245).

B: 29: H: 14 cm

B: 30: H: 19 cm

B: 31: H: 19,5 cm

B: 32: H: 21 cm

B: 33: H: 19,5 cm

B: 34: H: 20 cm

Fugleskitser, 1903
Papirklip med blyantstegning
23 x 18 cm
Inv.nr. B 243-B 245

- ¹ See for example Leila Krogh in Kjeld von Folsach and Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, Copenhagen 1995, p. 86.
- ² Ernst Mentze: *J.F. Willumsen. Mine erindringer*, København 1953, p. 159. Citation translated by René Lauritsen.
- ³ *J.F. Willumsen, Mother and Daughter at Three Ages*, 1904, private collection.

Published in:

Udstilling af skulptur, keramik, litografier, raderinger: Edith Willumsen - J. F. Willumsen 22. februar-9. marts 1919, Dansk Kunsthandel, København 1919, cat. 27 (only 5 birds);

Hjalmar Öhman: *J.F. Willumsen, med kommentarer af J.F. Willumsen*, København 1921, p. 98;

Willumsen, J.F.: *Mine Erindringer fortalt til Ernst Mentze med biografiske Oplysninger, Noter og Kommentarer*, København 1953, p. 159;

Leila Krogh in Kjeld von Folsach and Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, København 1995, cat. 23-28, pp. 86-87;

Lisbeth Lund and Anne Gregersen (eds.): *I symbolernes skygge. Skulpturer af J.F. Willumsen og Kaspar Bonnén*, J.F. Willumsens Museum, Frederikssund 2007, cat. 14, p. 78;

Henrik Wivel: *Jeg er en anden: en biografi om J.F. Willumsen*, København 2024, Vol. 1, 1863-1914, fig. 166, p. 223;