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JOHANNES LARSEN (1867–1961)  
JACKDAWS ON FEEDLOT, 1951  
PEN AND WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

48 X 63 CM

Johannes Larsen often ventured out into nature when working on one of his favourite subjects: birds. Hoping to disturb his models as little as possible, he often sat down directly on the ground, working without an easel.<sup>1</sup> However, this was not the case when the artist created this watercolour showing a group of jackdaws up close in a wintry landscape. The work was created in the living room of the family's forest farmhouse Båxhult in southern Sweden, which offered a view of the feeding area. Jays and various small birds were frequent visitors, but occasionally other birds came too, such as jackdaws.<sup>2</sup> Johannes Larsen observed them with a keen eye. The watercolour shows the jackdaws from various angles and in different positions, and the colours of their plumage and startlingly bright eyes are rendered with great colouristic flair and skill.

The scene of the jackdaws feeding is dated April 1951. Johannes Larsen had turned 84 a few months earlier. However, age had in no way rendered him infirm. On the contrary, Johannes Larsen remained extremely productive and created several important works, especially in the years 1949–1951 where he worked intensely with the combination of pen and watercolour.<sup>3</sup> His travel activities had, however, been pared back to just one long, annual trip to Båxhult, which is why his late oeuvre is dominated by scenes from the Swedish

farm and from his home at Møllebakken in Kerteminde.

- <sup>1</sup> Erland Porsmose: *Johannes og Alhed Larsen: Et hjem i naturen*, Ordupgaard, Charlottenlund 2015, p. 123.
- <sup>2</sup> Johannes Larsen describes his chosen motif in a letter to Erik Zahle. See Erik Zahle: 'Malerisamlingens vækst' in *C.L. Davids Samling, Tredie del*, Copenhagen 1958, p. 130.
- <sup>3</sup> Erland Porsmose: *Johannes Larsen. Menneske, kunstner og naturoplever*, Copenhagen 1999, p. 338.

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Erik Zahle: "Malerisamlingens vækst" in *C.L. Davids Samling, Tredie del*, København 1958, pp. 130, 176-177; Susanne Thestrup Truelsen in Kjeld von Folsach and Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, Davids Samling, København 1995, cat.no. 59, pp. 146-147;