



Inv. no. B 424

JOAKIM SKOVGAARD (1856–1933)
EVENING FALLS. INDIGENOUS HOUSES ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF
BUITENZORG, JAVA, 1908
OIL ON CANVAS

33,5 X 53 CM

In 1907, Joakim Skovgaard embarked on a journey to Java in what was then the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. Lasting from the beginning of December 1907 to June 1908, the journey is well documented; partly because Skovgaard maintained a daily correspondence with family and friends, partly because he published his travel memoirs in 1909. In addition, he painted several pictures which not only testify to his fascination with Javanese nature, but also to how he found portraying its unique qualities very difficult.

Skovgaard visited Java during the rainy season, and he was often forced to paint in overcast weather. He struggled to properly reproduce the light and colours of the island. In order to meet his own and others' expectations of what a tropical island far to the east was supposed to look like, Skovgaard incorporated pictorial elements that focused on the exotic traits, such as palm trees, volcanoes and rice fields.¹ Such elements are featured in *Evening Falls. Indigenous Houses on the Outskirts of Buitenzorg, Java*, which C.L. David acquired in August 1908 in connection with an exhibition at Den frie Udstilling in Copenhagen – just a few months after Skovgaard's return from Java.

The main subject of the painting is the landscape, comprising lush natural countryside and cultivated rice fields. The Javanese, whom Skovgaard (also) had difficulty painting, are reduced to small patches of colour, except for the man to the left, carrying the heavy crop on his

shoulders. He was probably included to highlight the foreign aspects of Javanese culture by virtue of his skin colour and attire. In the background, a monumental volcano looms over its surroundings, and in the middle of the picture a number of palm trees protrude above the other vegetation.

¹ *Iben Overgaard, Jane Sandberg and Anne-Mette Villumsen (eds.): Joakim Skovgaard, Skovgaard Museet and Øregaard Museum, Viborg 2006, p. 135.*

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The painting is probably mentioned in a letter from Joakim Skovgaard to Agnete Skovgaard 1908-04-09, Skovgaard Museets Brevarkiv, folder 58, no. 46,
(<http://skovgaard.ktdk.dk/d/YoOi?locale=da&q=Joakim+Skovgaard>);
Arbejder af professor Joakim Skovgaard : udstillede i Den Frie Udstilling fra 20-30. september 1923 og i Stockholm fra 9-31. oktober, Kunstforeningen, København 1923, no. 64;