



Inv. no. B 450

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863–1958)  
BUTCHER'S SHOP NEAR NIKOLAJ TOWER, 1890  
OIL ON CANVAS

60 × 68,5 CM

J.F. Willumsen found the subject of *Butcher's Shop near Nikolaj Tower* in the district around Nikolaj Church in Copenhagen which from the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1917 was known as 'Maven' (The Stomach) due to its proliferation of butcher's shops. Willumsen's scene is set in one such shop where an elderly woman stands in the doorway, gesturing to attract the attention of the somewhat disinterested butcher. The butcher's shop abounds with meat, from animal carcasses on hooks and inflated bladders to heads of calves and lambs.

Even at this early stage of his artistic career, Willumsen had a strong fascination with expressive and painterly qualities which in this work manifests particularly in the contrast between light and shadow as well as in the use of strong colours where red dominates. In addition, the macabre spectacle – full of raw flesh, blood and dismembered animal carcasses – is striking, simultaneously fascinating and repulsive to the viewer.

J.F. Willumsens Museum in Frederikssund owns an earlier version of the painting from 1886.

Published in:

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

Roald Nasgaard: *Willumsen and symbolist art 1888-1910*, Diss. New York University 1973, printed 1996, fig. 1, pp. 2-3, 6, 32;

Grete Zahle: *Dansk Kunst 1885-1915*, Kunstforeningen, København 1976, cat. 57, p. 56;

Leila Krogh in Kjeld von Folsach and Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, København 1995, cat. 12, p. 68-69;

Lise Buurgård: *J.F. Willumsen: bjerget, kvinden, selvet*, 2. ed., Odense 1999, fig. 84, p. 79;

Henrik Wivel, Annette Rosenvold Hvidt, Lars Handesten: *L.A. Ring. Årstiderne*, Ribe Kunstmuseum, Ribe 2022, fig. 52, pp. 84-85;

Henrik Wivel: *Jeg er en anden: en biografi om J.F. Willumsen*, København 2024, Vol. 1, 1863-1914, fig. 24, pp. 54-55 and 58;