

Articulating an American Aesthetic
Frank von der Lancken

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Frank von der Lancken, *Self-Portrait* (detail), c. 1912, oil on canvas.
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Acknowledgements

The senior Art Historical Methods Seminar is unique among undergraduate programs in art history in that it offers students the opportunity to become curators for a semester wherein they formulate, research, write a catalogue for, and organize a public exhibition in The Trout Gallery. In the short three and one-half months of the fall semester, this process always seems a difficult challenge. The students, however, rose to the occasion and devoted an enormous amount of time, energy, and boundless enthusiasm not only to the course material for the seminar, but also to research and writing the essays for this catalogue. The thematic approach, installation design, and idea for organizing the catalogue are the result of their collaborative creativity, and the end result is something they can all be proud of. Their good humor and unflagging industry throughout the semester made the seminar a pleasure to teach, and I extend here my congratulations to them on a job well done.

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— *Members of the Art Historical Methods Seminar*
— *Melinda Schlitt, Professor of Art History,*
William W. Edel Professor of Humanities

Introduction

by Melinda Schlitt, Professor of Art History, William W. Edel Professor of Humanities

In 2008, the esteemed American writer and occasional art critic for *The New York Review of Books*, John Updike, delivered the National Endowment for the Humanities Jefferson Lecture entitled, “The Clarity of Things: What Is American About American Art?” According to the NEH, being invited as the speaker for this honorary lecture series is “the highest honor the federal government confers for distinguished intellectual and public achievement in the humanities,” and Updike took the opportunity to connect his address to a new NEH initiative called, “Picturing America.”¹ This government-sponsored initiative had unmistakable—though unstated—associations with the American Arts & Crafts movement during the first quarter of the twentieth century, where the democratization of art was a primary goal of its artists. As described on the NEH website, “Picturing America...brings masterpieces of American art into classrooms and libraries nationwide. Through this innovative program, students and citizens will gain a deeper appreciation of our country’s history and character through the study and understanding of its art.”² While one could quibble about what the NEH considered “masterpieces” among the forty selected works, or wonder whether the less-than-subtle nationalistic tone of the project was in the best interests of artists practicing in America today, the question Updike asked—What Is American About American Art?—is still a fundamental and salient point of departure. It is a question that has been asked innumerable times by artists, scholars, museum curators, critics, and students alike. No one response has gained authoritative ascendancy, and the number of definitions is as diverse as the individuals who have offered them. But it is perhaps this very diversity and its resistance to an absolute definition that lies at the heart of the character and culture of American art.

Updike’s attempt to answer the question centered around the broad (but also contestable) idea that until the advent of Expressionism in the twentieth century where he saw American artists articulating their “independence,” American art had been defined by a sense of “insecurity” that was tied to but not seen in the artistic traditions of Europe. Fifty years earlier in 1958, the noted Art Historian and Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Lloyd Goodrich, posed almost the exact question in his essay, “What Is American In American Art?” Updike invoked Goodrich’s answer, which proposed that, “One of the most American traits is our urge to define what is American. This search for a self-image is a result of our relative youth as a civilization, our years of partial dependence on Europe. But

it is also a vital part of the process of growth.”³ While the landscape of art history and the interests of art historians and curators have changed significantly in the past fifty years—witness the massive survey texts on American art with titles like, *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity* (2008), and *Framing America: A Social History of American Art* (2002)—Goodrich’s observation about self-definition and the search for identity still holds. As recently as 2010, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston opened a newly redesigned “Art of the Americas” wing, which questioned the notion that colonial “American” art is defined by work created only in the United States and suggested, rather, that it encompassed art made in North and South America as a unified whole. As another example, the editors of one of the premiere academic journals in the field of art history, *American Art*, state that its articles “...encompass all aspects of the country’s visual heritage from colonial to contemporary times.”⁴ One could invoke countless other formulations along with those above that underscore Goodrich’s observation. This polemical condition particularly foregrounds research and interpretation when the art of a relatively obscure American artist practicing during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, and about whom no major work of criticism or scholarship exists, is the subject of an exhibition and scholarly catalogue. Such is the case with Frank von der Lancken (1872–1950).

When Hirschl & Adler Galleries mounted a major exhibition of von der Lancken’s work in 2001 with an accompanying catalogue by Thomas B. Parker, it was the first public showing of the artist’s paintings and drawings since his 1941 one-man show at the Philbrook Art Center (now, Philbrook Museum of Art) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The present exhibition at The Trout Gallery and accompanying catalogue is the second major exhibition of von der Lancken’s art, and it complements—with a different interpretive perspective—the Hirschl & Adler exhibition of eleven years ago. Von der Lancken’s historical obscurity and lack of critical fortune in the scholarly literature during the past sixty years is easily accounted for when his intentions and goals as an artist are understood. Unlike many of his contemporaries, von der Lancken was not an ambitious self-promoter; he had few public exhibitions (even though he won prestigious medals for his work), sold work only when he needed to in order to help support his family, and did not seek out many private or public commissions. An artist of immense talent and first-rate training, von der Lancken chose rather to devote his time and energy primarily to teaching, and he held positions

throughout his career at some of the most progressive and prominent art schools in the United States, including the Pratt Institute, School of the Applied and Fine Arts of the Mechanics Institute, University of Rochester, and the School of Arts & Crafts at Chautauqua.⁵ Von der Lancken was also involved with many of the key participants in the Arts and Crafts Movement early on, and he maintained an ardent belief in the democratization of art and many of the Movement's aesthetic ideals throughout his life.

In the Hirschl & Adler catalogue, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator*, Thomas Parker accomplished the difficult and admirable job of establishing a working chronology for von der Lancken's art and formulating a narrative trajectory of his life and teaching. For the present catalogue, the student curators chose to focus on understanding von der Lancken's aesthetic goals and ideals within an historical context, and brought that understanding to bear on a careful interpretation and analysis of his art. Indispensable to this endeavor was a large archive of primary documents that Hirschl & Adler generously shared with the seminar by way of the von der Lancken estate, which included exhibition reviews, newspaper articles, written letters and notes in von der Lancken's hand, family photos, and a variety of early twentieth-century publications where von der Lancken articulated his views about the purposes and effects of art. Rather than attempt to situate von der Lancken's art within the panoply of art-historical interpretive readings of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American art, many of which are informed by ancillary theoretical constructs, the students wisely elected instead to stick with the primary sources as their interpretive point of departure, and especially the views of von der Lancken himself. As an introduction to the students' essays, then, I will provide a brief biographical sketch here.

As Parker noted in the beginning of his catalogue essay, American art at the turn of the twentieth century witnessed a diverse mixture of schools and styles with the presence of academicism—Impressionism, the Arts & Crafts movement, and soon-to-emerge strains of Social Realism—all of which had a significant impact on von der Lancken as an artist.⁶ Modernism was the dominant movement on the horizon, and its eventual ascendancy elicited impassioned critiques from von der Lancken throughout his career, mostly decriing its excesses and departure from beauty—as he defined it—as a goal of art. When von der Lancken began his studies at the Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, New York) around 1888, he was just sixteen years old and would have encountered there an aesthetic emphasis in the curriculum based in the popular Arts & Crafts Movement, along with many prominent and influential artists among its faculty. By 1890, he was at the

prestigious Arts Students League in New York City where he would have studied with luminaries inclined towards academic and Impressionist aesthetic ideals, such as Kenyon Cox, H. Siddons Mowbray, J. Alden Weir, William Merritt Chase, James Carroll Beckwith, and John Henry Twachtman, among others.⁷ Between 1896–1897 (or early 1898), von der Lancken was in Paris studying at the renowned Académie Julian with Jean-Paul Laurens and Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, and then at the Académie Colarossi, also in Paris. Both of these schools had been established in the nineteenth century as more progressive alternatives to the traditional École des Beaux-Arts, although they also maintained a similar aesthetic philosophy and emphasis on the figure as the foundation for their curricula.

This period of study was profound and formative for von der Lancken, and his career began to take off once he returned to New York in 1898. During this time his work was included in exhibitions at the Society of American Artists, the National Academy of Design, and in 1899, at the Boston Art Club, the Society of American Artists, and the Architectural League.⁸ When von der Lancken began teaching evening classes at Pratt in 1903, his emphasis shifted from exhibitions to pedagogy and from that point on, his career is marked by fewer exhibitions and an energetic commitment to instruction. His life also became somewhat migratory, with summers spent in New Milford, Connecticut until 1946, permanent residences in Rochester, New York from 1904–1923, Louisville, Kentucky from 1924–1926 (which saw his unsuccessful attempt to establish a new art school there), and finally Tulsa, Oklahoma from 1926–1950, where he and his wife, Giulia, were known as “the first family of art in Tulsa.”⁹ Significant too, was von der Lancken's association with the School of Arts & Crafts of the Chautauqua Institution, in Chautauqua, New York, to which he was appointed Director from 1921–1924, teaching during that time and then again between 1928–1930. His association with Chautauqua and the many public lectures he gave there proved to be crucial to the student curators in their research, as virtually verbatim accounts were recorded in several editions of *The Chautauquan Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chautauqua Institution, between 1922–1930.

As Michael L. Gitlitz rightly noted in his introduction to the 2001 Hirschl & Adler catalogue,

Von der Lancken's work and his aesthetic philosophy were often very progressive, and yet they could also be quite traditional. He was at times absolutely current, even cutting edge in his propagation of the gospel of the Arts and Crafts

movement. At other times, he was oddly anachronistic, a man out of his time, as in his disdain for the excesses of modernism.¹⁰

What the students found during the course of their research were three recurring and foundational qualities that emerged as aesthetic ideals in the paintings and drawings represented in this exhibition, and that these qualities were also voiced by von der Lancken himself in the written sources they consulted: eclecticism, beauty, and temporality. How these qualities were fashioned and expressed visually by von der Lancken is the subject of the essays that follow here. Whether one is reminded of John Singer Sargent, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, Winslow Homer, or Thomas Eakins (among others) when looking at von der Lancken's work, a

unique stylistic identity emerges in the collective understanding of his art aesthetic goals. Eclecticism is manifest in the deliberate and tempered manipulation of style to support the specific character of an individual work: beauty, in the conscious and deft expression of pictorial form and illusion; and temporality, in representing a precise moment as part of the viewer's experience before the image. In answering Updike's question, "What Is American About American Art?," Frank von der Lancken represents, in many ways, the quintessential "American" artist of his generation: peripatetic, idealistic, and experimental, with an eye cast perennially towards the future and the betterment of others through his own efforts and work. Indeed, he can be said to have articulated a distinctive American aesthetic.

1 <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards>.

2 <http://www.neh.gov/explore/picturing-america>.

3 Mary Black and Lloyd Goodrich, *What is American in American Art: An Exhibition in Memory of Joseph B. Martinson for the Benefit of the Museum of American Folk Art. M. Knoedler & Co., Inc. New York, February 9 - March 6, 1971* (New York: C. N. Potter, 1971), 2. (Goodrich's 1958 essay is revised and reprinted here.)

4 <http://americanart.si.edu/research/journal/>.

5 See, Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirsch & Adler Galleries, 2001), for a complete chronology of his life and teaching career.

6 Parker, 9.

7 Ibid., 12.

8 Ibid., 40.

9 Ibid., 41.

10 Ibid., 5.

Woman with Flower

by Jessica Moran

As stated by Frank von der Lancken, “Art is a language of sensation and the verbal description of a sensation is difficult.”¹ In this assertion, the purpose of art is to make sensation more accessible to the audience and to create a tangible image of the nonvisual. The artist must make the viewer see what cannot be seen. While articulating a sensation through words is difficult, it is even more challenging to represent a sensation through visual imagery. The artist must formulate his subject to convey an idea, a mood, or an expression. Despite the fact that representational art depicts a concrete subject, it is representative of an abstract concept. While the subject of a portrait is the sitter, the sitter is also often a vehicle for the expression of an idea. According to von der Lancken’s philosophy, the artist fulfills his role when he communicates a sensation through his art that has an effect on the viewer.

Von der Lancken believed that art is an essential part of American society and that it should be both accessible and comprehensible. He concurred with the aspiration of modern artists to return to the fundamental ideals of art. In a 1929 lecture, he asserted that, “The conscious return to the primitive is an attempt to get back to the elemental things, balance, rhythm, color, and form, which are at the basis of art.”² Von der Lancken promoted the return to the basic principles of art as a way to create cohesion and precision within a painting. This cohesion between elements would render a “sensation” throughout the image. By precisely integrating the fundamental elements of art, the artist creates an image that conveys meaning and is also visually accessible to the viewer.

In contrast to his support of the return to the fundamentals in modern art, von der Lancken did not agree with the experimental nature of many of the so-called “isms.” He stated, “we are living in a period of scientific research along specialized lines and this is what too many artists are doing—experimenting.... These experiments have not the completeness of great works of art....”³ This experimentation that von der Lancken denounced refers to various styles of modernism, such as Cubism, that deal with abstraction and the deconstruction of forms. In his regard, by manipulating the foundational elements of art, the reformulated structure of the image became unintelligible to the viewer and thus was not representative of beauty. Von der Lancken attributed this experimentation to an “opposition to an industrial and mechanical age.”⁴ This new age involved imagery that is geometric, structural, and precise. While modernists tried to break down these structures and reconstruct them within



Woman with Flower, cat. 1.

their work, as he saw it, von der Lancken applied the same structural sensibility to his own art.

In conjunction with von der Lancken’s assertion that art should be comprehensible, he also believed that Americans should appreciate its value. In a 1925 lecture, he discussed his perspective on art education and expressed the need for Americans to not only understand but also to appreciate beautiful art. He described the climate of the arts at the time in stating, “Women’s Clubs have furthered the cause of art in

many ways but the average man is not interested. This may be due to over emphasis on the long-running pink tea aspect of art but whatever be the cause it is something that must be remedied before we can have anything worthy of the name of a national art in this country.”⁵⁵ Thus, in order for America to develop an aesthetic that is distinctly American, society had to recognize the importance of art and comprehend what was beautiful art. While beauty is arguably subjective, von der Lancken’s aesthetic ideal pertains to a return to the natural and the creation of an authentic, accessible image. With the return to the fundamentals of art, artists are able to create a “sensation” in the viewer that is the result of the image.

Furthermore, von der Lancken asserted that, “The true function of art education is to bring out in people what they feel naturally.”⁵⁶ By educating Americans about art, they could be able to understand it better and perhaps be affected by it on a more meaningful level. Art is not solely for visual representation, but for the communication of an idea for the viewer to understand or evaluate. In von der Lancken’s conception of art, the goal of the artist is to capture an authentic representation of human experience to which the viewer can relate. In turn, it is difficult to educate Americans about modernism because there is no precedent, and it rejects the fundamental constructs of beautiful art. Therefore, in relation to von der Lancken’s ideals, the American aesthetic should not be defined by modernism, but should rather be a reflection of the modern notion of the return to the “primitive” or the fundamental. By returning to the foundations of art, the artist would be able to create a visual language that would be comprehensible because of its grounding in the American experience.

With an understanding of von der Lancken’s aesthetic philosophy, we are now able to evaluate his technique and the common elements that are shared within his work. Regardless of whether he was painting a landscape or a portrait, von der Lancken attempted to create an authentic visual interpretation of life. While each of his portraits is unique in its significance and construction, they all maintain a vivacious quality representing the essence of the sitter. Von der Lancken’s portrait, *Woman with Flower*, has a distinctive quality of presence that creates an intimate setting. Each element of the portrait works to create the sensation of the figure’s immediacy. The intimacy that resonates throughout this portrait suggests von der Lancken’s relationship to the sitter by allowing the viewer to look at her through his eyes.

The intimacy that von der Lancken created can be partially attributed to the direct address of the figure. Von der Lancken positioned the figure frontally, her piercing gaze captivating the viewer. The fixed stare of the figure is enduring, as if she stands directly before the viewer and forces eye contact. The frontal position of the figure within the

composition allows the viewer to enter the space of the picture and engage in a dialogue with the subject. An intimate moment is experienced between the viewer and the sitter, which suggests the presence of the sitter. By depicting the figure facing forward, von der Lancken placed the viewer in his own position, in relation to the figure, allowing the audience to understand how the artist sees his subject. The engaging expression of the sitter gives her a quality of life that makes her seem present to the viewer. The authentic connection between the *Woman with Flower* and the viewer correlates with von der Lancken’s ideal of returning to nature and creating “a language of sensation.”

Von der Lancken captured his relationship to the sitter through her seemingly comfortable expression. The sitter cocks her head slightly to the left—her face soft and relaxed. She calmly gazes outward, demonstrating a sense of familiarity. This portrait has a great sense of temporality as a specific moment in time—a snapshot of an instance when von der Lancken and the sitter were together. The expression of the sitter is candid, as if in any instant she could begin to speak. She is full of a life-like quality and von der Lancken successfully created an authentic interaction that the audience is able to both understand and share with her.

The gesture of the figure also contributes to the intimate mood and her immediacy. The figure’s hands are as equally prominent and expressive as her face. In the words of American portraitist, Thomas Eakins, “A hand takes as long to paint as a head nearly and a man’s hand no more looks like another man’s hand than his head like another’s.”⁵⁷ Hands are a unique expression of a person’s age, demeanor, and character. In *Woman with Flower*, von der Lancken purposefully depicted the figure in a three-quarter view in order to include her hands in the composition. The hands are a vehicle for the expression of the intimate connection between von der Lancken and the sitter while also amplifying the presence of the sitter to the viewer. The figure stands with one hand out in front of her as if she is grasping something while the other hand is by her side, relaxed. Von der Lancken carefully rendered her fingers curling around an object. The figure’s loose grip suggests a prior or imminent action of giving and receiving. This suggested movement also adheres to the notion of the figure’s presence with the viewer. The extension of the hand, like the direct gaze, enhances the dialogue between the sitter and the viewer. As von der Lancken portrayed the figure holding her hand in front of her body, it seems to extend into the viewer’s space. The gesture of the hands also suggests a level of comfort with the artist and perhaps their close relationship.

Von der Lancken amplified the immediacy of the sitter through her physical proximity to the viewer. The structure of the composition pushes the figure closer to the



Figure 1. Frank von der Lancken in *Tulsa Tribute*, May 11, 1941. Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, Estate of Frank von der Lancken.

foreground. The wall behind the figure grounds her within the frame while also minimizing the space between her and the viewer. Von der Lancken framed the figure so that there is little space above her head, accentuating her height. He demonstrated her proportion by the archway that begins to curve above her head. The life-sized proportion of the figure also makes her more accessible to the viewer. The cropping of the frame right above her knee creates the illusion of the entire figure while framing the most expressive portion of the figure from the head to the hands. This framing also suggests von der Lancken's intention to place this painting low enough on a wall so that her gaze would meet the viewer's. The placement of the figure within the space invites the viewer to connect with the figure, while also creating such an immediacy, that it seems as though she could step out of the frame. The figure's proportion makes her appear to be literally standing before the viewer, full of life.

Von der Lancken's choice of color also enhances the contiguousness of the subject. The colors not only enhance the veristic nature of the sitter, but they also amplify the proximity between the beholder and the subject. The peachy pink color along the apples of her cheeks simulates the warmth of her skin—her face flushed and full of life. The vibrant red shade of her lips works cohesively with the color

of her cheeks and enhances the warmth of her skin. The warm hues in the skin as well as the burgundy of the flower and cape make the sitter appear even closer to the foreground. This forward projection is caused by the advancement of warm hues. Von der Lancken used predominantly cool hues in the background, causing the warm hues to advance even further as the cool colors recede behind the figure. The warm burgundy shade of the flower causes it to project outward toward the viewer, much like the figure's hands. Through shading, von der Lancken made the flower appear to be three-dimensional, further extending it into the space. The flower is a tangible adornment on the sitter's dress that allows the viewer to understand the figure as a three-dimensional form.

In a 1941 article from the *Tulsa Tribune*, entitled "One-Man Art Show," von der Lancken appears in a photograph alongside the *Woman with Flower* (fig. 1). The photograph captures von der Lancken in profile, facing toward the right. He grasps a palette in his hand as he sits before an easel, which holds the portrait. Since the painting is dated 1936, it is likely that this photograph was a contrived image for the article and von der Lancken posed in front of the painting. The article suggests that in this exhibition there were very few portraits. Why, then, does he pose with this particular portrait? Perhaps he posed with this painting because it was a work he regarded as indicative of his style. This photograph also could suggest that *Woman with Flower* was in the exhibition described in the article. It is plausible that this painting was very important to von der Lancken, as it clearly depicts an individual with whom he was close. This photograph verifies the intimacy of the painting and indicates its value to the artist himself. Furthermore, the fact that *Woman with Flower* remained in von der Lancken's personal collection until he died suggests that it was not a commissioned work.

In the text of this article, von der Lancken is called "one of the southwest's greatest known artists."⁸ Von der Lancken painted *Woman with Flower* in 1936, while he was in Tulsa, Oklahoma.⁹ Despite the fact he was originally from New York, he developed a well-respected reputation in Tulsa, such that he was considered a southwestern artist.¹⁰ The Native American vessel in the portrait *Woman with Flower* indicates knowledge of the local culture and imagery, and von der Lancken also captures the open expanse of the southwestern home. It is clear that von der Lancken associates this figure with the setting and that by creating an identifiable background, he provides evidence of the sitter's character.

Woman with Flower has some significant differences from von der Lancken's other work in this exhibition. Although the sitter looks straight out at the viewer with

gestures of familiarity, this portrait is still formal. Like the *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* (cat. 3), the figure is displayed alongside objects that represent her, such as the vase and the setting. However, the intimate mood in

this portrait is more prominent than in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, and the character of the sitter in *Woman with Flower* becomes secondary. Nevertheless, von der Lancken's portraits all share a compelling authenticity.

1 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

2 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

3 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 4.

4 "Modern Art," 4.

5 "Art in Daily Life," *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.

6 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

7 Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 59.

8 "One-Man Art Show," *Tulsa Tribune* (May 11, 1941).

9 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 33.

10 "One-Man Art Show."

The Old Barn

by Christina Wolf

Frank von der Lancken's painting, *The Old Barn*, depicts a familiar scene of rural America with a red barn in a pastoral setting bordered by rolling hills and a lightly clouded sky overhead. Although this painting is not dated, it is possible that von der Lancken painted *The Old Barn* between 1900 and 1910 during his time in New Milford, Connecticut. In the early 1900s, von der Lancken was drawn to New Milford as it became established as an informal artists' colony.¹ The Connecticut countryside surrounding New Milford proved inspiring to von der Lancken as he painted many landscapes in this region.

In addition to acting as an unofficial artist's colony, New Milford was predominantly known for its successful tobacco growing industry.² The first mention of a successful tobacco growing industry in New Milford dates to the early 1850s. By the mid-1850s, the rural area of New Milford supported five tobacco growers who annually produced over 9,000 cases of tobacco.³ When tobacco is grown and harvested, it must be hung to dry in large barns with peaked roofs and minimal interior walls to promote the flow of air. Based on New Milford's rich history in the growing of tobacco, as well as von der Lancken's fascination with the surrounding countryside, it is possible that the subject of *The Old Barn* is a tobacco barn situated somewhere in or around New Milford. At the very least, it is likely that the agricultural atmosphere of New Milford inspired von der Lancken's painting of *The Old Barn* as well as other landscapes in this exhibition.

When looking at *The Old Barn*, the viewer's attention is immediately drawn to the structures in the middle of the painting. Two, clearly defined, red barns are the subjects of this landscape, and there is a distinct difference between the two. The barn on the left is still standing, relatively intact. The second barn to the right is in shambles as it has clearly fallen over and seems to be sinking into the ground or has perhaps fallen into a ditch. Although the second barn has long been forgotten and now stands in ruins, the scene itself can be seen to represent von der Lancken's ideals of art and beauty. In *The Institute Breeze*, published in Rochester, New York in May of 1909, von der Lancken wrote, "Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape."⁴ What does this mean? To understand this statement, one must first understand von der Lancken's conception of beauty.

In 1922, an article was written in *The Chautauquan Daily* on a lecture von der Lancken gave, entitled "Modernism in Art." In this article, von der Lancken states, "Art to us is synonymous with beauty. If the goal of all the 'isms' is art, then it is beauty too."⁵ For art to be "good art,"



The Old Barn, cat. 2.

to be popular and well liked, it must also be beautiful. A recurring theme in von der Lancken's lectures is art for the masses and art as a part of daily life among everyday people. Because von der Lancken focuses on art for the people, it can be assumed that when he refers to "us" in the previous quotation, von der Lancken is talking about the public. He continues, "But why do the moderns produce such preposterous and often seemingly ugly things? The answer is this: We are living in a period of scientific research along specialized lines and this is what artists are doing—they are experimenting. This is incomprehensible to many of us, especially if we judge by old standards of art."⁶ Keeping in mind, as previously suggested, that for art to be considered good art by the public it must be beautiful, von der Lancken states that when looking at the "isms" in art, such as modernism, impressionism, cubism, futurism, etc., if the goal of these movements, and therefore the artists involved in these movements, is to create popular art then creating beauty should also be the goal by association.

Von der Lancken continues his ideas by wondering that if the goal of the artist is to create beautiful art, then why are so many modern artists creating ugly works? He follows with an answer explaining that the world is becoming more scientific. The introduction of a scientific mindset is not only affecting artists, but also the art they create. Like scientists, artists were experimenting. This experimentation led to new forms of art and new movements in the art world that were

“incomprehensible” to artists like von der Lancken. He found the “isms” in art to be appalling because they do not follow “the typical progression of the art from the primitive to the decadent.”⁷ Von der Lancken explains that primitive art, that is to say “art that is intended as purely realistic by the artist” but is conveyed through basic lines and shapes due to the lack of knowledge of technique, was acceptable as one of the first art forms. Looking at art on a timeline, the progression from primitive art to decadent art—decadent art being art that encompasses “egotism,” has “exaggerated action or weak sentimentality and sweetness”—has been great.⁸ Chronologically, artists have moved past the stage of “primitive” art, as perspective in art has been completely mastered and artists are now able to show depth, mass, and temporality in their works.

Modernism, as von der Lancken states, cannot be located on the chronological timeline of the progression of art because it is a “conscious return to the primitive.” Artists of Modernism are attempting to get back to the basic elements of art, which von der Lancken defines as balance, rhythm, color, and form, but he also believes there is a proper way to employ these qualities without creating “modern art (that) is extremely barbaric (and) feels that it is not done naturally.”⁹ Based on von der Lancken ideals, his art, and most specifically his landscapes, represent precisely what he states modern art should be able to do without looking purposefully primitive, that is to “get back to the elemental without sacrificing all technical knowledge, and without introducing brutality and coarseness into art.”¹⁰

As previously mentioned, von der Lancken states, “there is nothing more beautiful than a landscape.”¹¹ Looking again at *The Old Barn*, von der Lancken’s definition of beauty can be understood through this work. The elements of line, color, and shape work together seamlessly to create a scene of serenity. Von der Lancken paints an exact moment in time, creating an atmospheric effect within the frame. The basic elements of painting are concealed, producing the desired illusion. For example, in *The Old Barn*, the multiple

horizontal planes act as rungs of a ladder, moving the viewer’s eye up and through the scene with each additional plane. The first level of the painting is the immediate foreground, the part of the landscape that is nearest to the viewer from the given perspective. Here, the brushstrokes von der Lancken uses are loose and quick which help to create the optical naturalism of the scene. Furthermore, the loose brushstrokes allow the viewer to understand that the immediate foreground is not in perfect focus because it is not the subject of the painting. As the viewer’s eye follows the gently sloping planes of the painting toward the barn in the center of the scene, von der Lancken’s brushstrokes remain loose and light until the viewer’s eye settles on the barns. In examining these structures, one sees that the tightest, most precise lines in the scene create the images of the two barns. Not only does this tight brushwork highlight the fact that the barns are the focus of the painting, but it also furthers the sense of depth within the scene. As the scene extends to the top of the canvas, von der Lancken’s brushstrokes again become looser in the rendering of the trees immediately behind the barns and then softer and less pronounced in the forest, mountains, and eventually the clouds in the sky.

Not only does von der Lancken state that a landscape is the epitome of beauty, but he also writes on how framing such works for the home should be more of a trend in the United States: “It is only now that a man in this country feels that his home of stone, and more permanent building material than wood, will remain long enough a family possession for him to have pictures made to order and painted on his walls, or mounted on them to stay there until the walls crumble with age.”¹² This statement is significant not only for the paintings von der Lancken produced, but also for what he thought paintings could mean for daily life. It is clear, based on the above statement, that von der Lancken thought art was essential in the lives of Americans. The idea of art in the domestic setting was one that von der Lancken expressed vividly and encouraged, promoting a widespread appreciation of beauty in art.

1 Thomas B. Parker, “New Milford,” in *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirsch & Adler Galleries, 2001), 16.

2 Ibid.

3 “New Milford Development: Beginnings to 1950,” *History of Land Use in New Milford, CT*, http://www.hvceo.org/luchange_newmilford.php.

4 Frank von der Lancken, “On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home,” *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.

5 “Modernism in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

6 Ibid.

7 “Modern Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Von der Lancken, 13.

12 Ibid.

Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass

by Jessica Moran

In a 1930 lecture at the Chautauqua School of Arts and Crafts, Frank von der Lancken explained his conception of modern art stating, “Life sometimes becomes extremely artificial and people cease to be keenly sensitive to these laws. Their natural selves become submerged and they no longer feel things directly from nature. It then becomes the mission of the artist and the teacher to bring people back to their human and natural selves.”¹ His philosophy was that art should not depict an artificial representation of life, but rather an authentic simulation of the natural. While art is in fact an artificial construct of reality, von der Lancken aspired to make this illusion to life seamlessly believable. Von der Lancken saw modern art as a potential means to infuse art with a natural sensibility based on the fundamentals of visual representation. He regarded art as a synthesis of balance, rhythm, color, and form.² Von der Lancken did not concur with the stylistic divisions of Modernism that delved into abstraction, because he felt that by manipulating the forms found in nature, art lost meaning and was therefore not beautiful. By authentically interpreting life, von der Lancken believed that artists had the ability to simulate human experience and thus have a powerful effect on the viewer.

Von der Lancken used the example of modern technology to outline the strengths and weaknesses of the modern age in art. In the twentieth century, as modern technology was revolutionized, art was also transforming as artists experimented with the construction of the basic elements of representation.³ He thought that beautiful art was a fusion of the fundamentals of art in order to create a cohesive image. In von der Lancken’s estimation, the precision and structure of the automobile could be seen as analogous to the meticulous unification of elements in a painting. He stated, “The automobile is a striking example of good structural design. The struggle to free itself from tradition is the briefest we know of. Today the automobile is beautiful in its fitness for its purpose. As a rule, the only fault with its form comes when an artist makes what he believes to be an artistic addition, such as a radiator cap with statuary which is inartistic because it is misapplied.”⁴ Von der Lancken linked the automobile with the beauty found in nature. The structural integrity of the automobile is beautiful in the sense that each constituent form fluidly connects to the next, creating a continuous movement through line. The addition of a statue on the radiator cap, to which von der Lancken referred, represents the relationship between modern art and modernism. While the basic form of the automobile is beautiful in its precision and cohesion of parts, that beauty is



Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass, cat. 3.

destroyed when interrupted by the adornment. Von der Lancken finds the automobile beautiful, as its form is a result of its function. Art is similar in the sense that if an object becomes unrecognizable it confuses the viewer and he or she is not able to understand or appreciate it. Von der Lancken seems to want to emulate structural integrity and comprehensible form in his art.

In a 1925 lecture, entitled “Art in Daily Living,” von der Lancken discussed the importance of art in American Society. He stated, “The average business man of this country has no time in his busy schedule for the spiritual and beautiful things in life, that is for art.”⁵ This assertion is probably true, as art had a very specific audience focused on the upper echelon of society. Von der Lancken aspired to widen the spectrum of the audience for art by making it more accessible to the average person. By going back to the fundamentals of

art and imbuing his paintings with precise images, von der Lancken could make his art more accessible to the viewer. He also supported the “Dayton Plan,” which allowed people to rent paintings for their offices or homes, and which made it possible for people to appreciate art on a daily basis.⁶ Thus, von der Lancken’s artistic philosophy was based on the notion that art should represent what was visually “natural” so that it could be comprehensible to the audience. Von der Lancken wanted to create a national art—an art for the masses.

The authenticity in von der Lancken’s paintings is not about recording what he saw, but rather in capturing a believable moment and essence. By capturing an authentic quality of life in his paintings, von der Lancken created a connection between the subject and the viewer. The authentic representation of nature in von der Lancken’s works makes the images comprehensible and evocative of a specific mood. His works are also founded on a keen sense of temporality.

A portrait that is indicative of von der Lancken’s pictorial ideals is *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*. Von der Lancken depicted a young woman of middle to upper class, and demonstrates the woman’s social status through her dress and the interior. While it is unknown when or where von der Lancken completed this painting, it has similar characteristics of portraits of the upper class produced by John Singer Sargent in the first half of the twentieth century. Sargent was a renowned American portraitist, described by the critic of American art, Michael Gormley, as “an almost nonpareil master of portraiture, able to convey complex messages about not only his sitters but also the societies in which they lived.”⁷ Sargent’s paintings are undeniably “beautiful” in the amplification of the sitter’s features and personal qualities. Von der Lancken seems to model this portrait with similar intentions to those of Sargent in an attempt to project the sitter’s social standing while also alluding to the intricacies of her character. The projection of the sitter’s character becomes synonymous with beauty.

The tactile quality of von der Lancken’s painting is also reminiscent of Sargent’s work. Sargent had the ability to capture the sensual qualities of life through paint. Like von der Lancken, he painted various textures and transformed the medium into an experience. According to Trever Fairbrother, “The goal was to get the greatest visual effect from a minimum of painterly flourishes, so that the brushstrokes and splashes of pigment would blend into a strikingly realistic image when viewed from across the room.”⁸ Sargent’s paintings project a soft, glowing quality; the paint is so effectively blended, that it appears to be wet. Although von der Lancken is notably less painterly, with a less visible style, the textures he renders in this portrait are similar in many respects to those of Sargent.

There are a variety of details in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* that are emblematic of the social standing and character of the sitter. The figure’s dress is a light blue silk chiffon with a circular pattern, and a dark blue silk trim. The red Persian carpet in the background adds to the figure’s social standing, as Persian carpets furnished many wealthy Americans’ homes during the twentieth century.⁹ Sargent also included Persian carpets in his paintings, particularly those depicting individuals of higher status. In addition, the figure’s hand rests upon a small yet thick book, suggesting her literacy, or knowledge. The connotation of the sitter’s literacy and education also contributes to the promotion of her status. In von der Lancken’s 1930 lecture, entitled “The Intangible in Art,” he discussed the connection between an object and the sitter: “The things we do become a part of ourselves. The golf club or the tennis racket becomes part of the person who is playing. There is one graceful line that runs through both the implement and the person wielding it. The implements themselves gradually evolve into beautiful forms.”¹⁰ In *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, the book and the magnifying glass are the sitter’s implements. The figure is both literally and figuratively connected to her implements. As von der Lancken converged the line of the book and her hand, he conveyed the sitter’s connection to the text. The presence of the book suggests the act of reading and the thought process that an inquisitive mind engages in. The suggestion of the thought process provokes the viewer to ponder what the sitter was reading and, in turn, what she was thinking about.

In *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, von der Lancken returned to the “natural” through the creation of an authentic human experience. This effect is amplified by several elements of the painting, such as the indirect gaze of the sitter and the closed-off nature of the composition.

Despite the fact the sitter is not smiling, her expression is not inscrutable. Her concentrated stare indicates her pensiveness. Deep in thought, she stares intently—contemplating. Her slightly parted lips accentuate her expression of reflection and wonder. Von der Lancken rendered the eyes with the utmost naturalism, such that there seems to be the essence of life behind them. The specks of white on the irises of her eyes not only create contrast with the green hues, but also simulate a believable reflection of light. This quality of light upon the eyes gives them a moist, glistening effect that makes the sitter seem more present. The presence of the sitter aids in the believability of the woman and the viewer’s understanding of her pensiveness. The precision and careful attention to detail that von der Lancken applied within this painting enhances the authenticity of the sitter’s expression.

The sitter in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* does not look directly at the viewer, but rather off to the left

beyond the picture plane. This outward direction allows the viewer to observe her, without being confronted by her. By focusing her viewpoint beyond the viewer, von der Lancken does not include the audience in her space, allowing us to view her but not vice-versa. The relation of the sitter to the viewer is a construct of von der Lancken's aesthetic intention. By not including the viewer in the picture plane, von der Lancken prevents the interruption of the cohesive flowing lines of the form. The distinction between the sitter's space and the viewer's space creates a clear rhythmic movement between each component of the composition. In addition, the lack of interaction between sitter and viewer creates a reflective quality to the painting.

Although there is no direct interaction between the sitter in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* and the viewer, both share a similar experience. The way in which the sitter does not enter into the viewer's space actually enhances the pensive quality of the painting. Each figure, the sitter and the viewer, are isolated in separate spaces. As the sitter stood before von der Lancken she did not look at him, and they did not engage in a dialogue. Von der Lancken contemplated her as she perhaps reflected on her reading. Those that look at her become contemplative as well. The viewer looks at the figure and reflects on what she sees, engaging in a similar pensive process. The figure and the viewer participate in an introspective process in their solitude. Despite the fact the figure and the viewer do not directly interact through eye contact or gesture, they are linked by their personal experiences of reflection and thought.

The contemplative aspect of *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* makes it an intimate portrait. Von der Lancken created a connection between the viewer and the sitter, as both are deep in thought. Although the sitter's gaze does not meet the viewer's, the viewer is able to look at her as she contemplates her innermost thoughts.

This sense of introspection is enhanced by the interiority of the subject. The figure is extremely close to the picture plane. This proximity can be attributed in part to the proximity of the wall in the background. In addition, von der Lancken painted the figure almost life size, and she is the closest object to the foreground. The interiority of the image enhances the quality of introspection in the painting, as the viewer's eye cannot wander throughout the depicted space. The viewer is fixed to the image of the figure, only permitted to travel to the inner corners of his mind. The concept of being in an interior setting relates to the notion that the sitter is confined to her own thoughts, not permitted to go outside her mind and engage in a conversation with those around her. The proximity of the figure also amplifies the intimacy of the image and the presence of the sitter.

The pensive quality that von der Lancken created in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* relates directly to his aesthetic philosophy. By authenticating the human experience through thought and reflection, von der Lancken successfully returned to the natural. This believable human quality is accessible and comprehensible. The believability of the expression is located in the precision with which the painting was rendered and the positioning of the figure within the space. As the viewer is prompted to think and reflect, he or she is able to relate to the action of the sitter. This portrait is not just about the representation of the figure's physical aspects, but also the quality of her character and what she experienced at that specific moment. Through the pensive effect that von der Lancken created, the viewer not only experiences a similar state of mind, but also understands the sitter as an intelligent, deep-thinking woman of the upper class.

1 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

2 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

3 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 4.

4 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

5 "Art in Daily Life," *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.

6 Ibid.

7 Michael Gormley. "John Singer Sargent: A World of Grace in Changing Times," *American Artist* 74 (June 2010): 48–55.

8 Trevor J. Fairbrother, *John Singer Sargent: The Sensualist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 47.

9 Arthur Upham Pope, "Research Methods of Muhammadan Art," *The Art Bulletin* 8, no. 1 (1925): 43–49.

10 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

by Sarah Howard

Before looking at the way in which Frank von der Lancken portrayed himself, perhaps a brief summary of his life and circumstances at the time he painted his own image c. 1912 would be useful as context.

Von der Lancken began his artistic education in 1888 at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. At the time, Pratt was one of New York's most progressive art schools, and many schools elsewhere in America modeled their programs based on its curriculum. In 1890, von der Lancken enrolled at New York's Art Students League where he studied with prominent artists of the day including John Henry Twachtman and J. Alden Weir. The next few years remain a mystery, although he may have worked as an illustrator; in 1896 von der Lancken went to Europe and enrolled in courses at the Academies Julien and Colarossi in Paris. After visiting several European capitals, von der Lancken returned to America and exhibited widely before accepting a job teaching at his alma mater, the Pratt Institute, in 1903. At Pratt, von der Lancken taught drawing and rendering of ornament and portraiture.¹

Beginning in the early twentieth century, von der Lancken worked in a summer studio in New Milford, Connecticut with the sculptor Willard Paddock. Many of his landscapes were painted in New Milford, where he kept a summer residence until the 1940s.² By 1912, when he painted his *Self-Portrait*, von der Lancken resided in Rochester, New York, where he had been teaching at the School of Applied and Fine Arts of the Mechanics Institute since 1904. At the time, the Mechanics Institute was in the process of incorporating the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement into their curriculum, based in large measure on the overall program and course offerings of the Pratt Institute. Both institutions shared a commitment to making the fine arts, such as painting and sculpture, as well as the decorative arts (or as they were then known as 'the applied arts'), such as pottery, metalwork, and woodwork, known to as wide an audience as possible.³ Von der Lancken had a broad range of teaching responsibilities at SAFA, including courses in life drawing, illustration, and art history.

Though he had shown his works in several exhibitions at such established venues as the National Academy of Design, the Boston Art Club, and the Architectural League of New York, von der Lancken had no formal gallery representation and relied solely on his reputation and personal contacts to sell and exhibit his works.⁴ As time went on, he became more focused on teaching and art education, rather than exhibiting his own work. By 1912 he was no longer a bachelor, as he



Self-Portrait, cat. 4.

married Guilia Ulbrich in 1909, and was a father of two sons, Carl and Julian. This switch from working primarily as an artist to an administrator and educator was partly out of necessity so he could provide for his family. While living in Rochester, von der Lancken worked on projects and art shows for the public. Exhibitions, such as the Rochester Industrial Exposition of 1912, were mounted in locations where they could be seen by all interested people, not just those who had the means to acquire works of art for their private collections and to decorate their homes. These sites were usually privately owned and operated, not funded using taxpayer money. In 1912, the same year that he painted his second *Self-Portrait* (he painted his first around 1898), von der Lancken designed a stained glass window, which was commissioned by the Church of Blessed Sacrament in Rochester.⁵

A photograph of von der Lancken at the Mechanics Institute is dated to c. 1912 (fig. 2). In this image, von der Lancken looks much like he does in this self-portrait; he is graying and looks to be middle aged. Yet, he is wearing the formal suit of an administrator rather than an art teacher. The similarities between the photograph and the self-portrait helped in dating this self-portrait to around 1912.⁶

Von der Lancken was influential in establishing and promoting art in Rochester. He was a founding member and

President of the Rochester Art League, as well as an invited member of the well-known Rochester Art Club, where he helped curate exhibitions of local and national artists.⁷ His involvement in such arts organizations and in education suggests that the farther von der Lancken moved from New York, the less focused he was in promoting his own art, and the more concerned he became with bringing art to the public. Nevertheless, he continued to paint and to accept commissions such as portrait paintings and stained glass windows. As he was now earning a steady income from his position as an arts administrator and educator, the payment for these works became a supplement to his income rather than his sole income.

In any self-portrait, the subject is unmistakable, though the autobiographical nature of the genre generally invites interpretations about the artist beyond his physical appearance. A self-portrait is a window into the artist's state of mind at the time when the work was painted. In his 1912 *Self-Portrait*, von der Lancken looks out at the viewer with his torso turned at nearly a three-quarter angle. His piercing blue eyes seem intense and serious and the combination of his pursed lips and narrowed eyes reveals his self-confidence. Yet, idealization is no longer as important as it was in his earlier self-portrait (discussed below), as the expression of his artistic ideas had evolved to include the broader importance of his educational values, for, by 1912, von der Lancken had made a name for himself in the education world as well as in the Rochester art scene. In 1909, he had been appointed Superintendent of SAFA, was chosen to be a member of the examination committee of the New York State Department of Education, and was a founding member of the American Federation of Arts.⁸

Von der Lancken created this *Self-Portrait* using a mirror, as artists had for centuries before him. Yet, he tricks the viewer. Although an avid *plein air* painter, it is most likely that von der Lancken painted this self-portrait in his studio, and added the landscape later, after he had finished the rendering of his own likeness. Von der Lancken's painting shows him in the act of studying himself. His expression is interrogative and confident; he is not questioning his own abilities, as he was by then an established artist.

Many artists, such as Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, the French Rococo painter, depicted themselves with painting implements or even in the act of painting. Frank von der Lancken did not follow this practice, and he didn't include such elements as a palette, or an easel, or paintbrushes, to suggest that he was an artist. The viewer only sees his torso and his head; he notably omitted his hands, which was of course crucial to his artistic practice. He portrays himself out-of-doors with a landscape behind him.

Von der Lancken used a cool palette of deep greens,



Figure 2. Frank von der Lancken at the Mechanics Institute, Rochester, New York, c. 1912. Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, Estate of Frank von der Lancken.

purples, and blues in the landscape. To render his own image, he used a warmer palette of peach tones but with areas that are darker, like lavender, to emphasize the shadows cast by the sunlight from above. The large grove of trees behind him is executed in forest green, and the impression it creates is of a dark and brooding space. The variation in the type of foliage from the meticulously rendered trees and leaves to the right of the sitter and the pine needles to his left, show that it is not a single tree but a grove of both different deciduous and evergreen trees. The dramatic juxtaposition of the dark grove in the background and the bright colors of the portrait itself, make him stand out in stark relief.

The partial landscape to the right of von der Lancken is also painted with cool colors—blues and purples—that depict a distant hill. His collared shirt is not just depicted using white but instead, through the use of colors like lavender, pink, and yellow, shows the shadows and areas of light so as to suggest the texture and the heft of the shirt's cloth. An example of one of these areas is seen under the collar of the shirt, where the shadow is a mixture of lavender and the edges are pink. In addition, the back of von der Lancken's shirt is bathed in light, suggesting that the scene

was perhaps painted on a warm summer afternoon. These gradual and subtle transitions of color are painted in an understated manner, demonstrating von der Lancken's mastery of painting light and shadow to suggest texture. The shadows are rendered with an obvious sense of control so that they appear to be completely natural.

Von der Lancken dramatically shows the play of light against skin and fabric. The sun shines straight down on the top of his head, creating a patch of light on his head and illuminating the entirety of the right side of his face, which is permeated with a golden light. The artist presents himself as the largest element in the composition; he dominates everything else, including the large tree behind him. To the right, a smaller tree with a narrower trunk serves as a framing agent, bringing the viewer's attention back to von der Lancken as the subject; he wants the viewer to acknowledge him. He made a deliberate choice to paint himself close-up so that the viewer has the impression that he or she is having a conversation, face-to-face with von der Lancken himself. The intensity of the artist's features and his stare, directly at the viewer, shows that he was not trying to shy away from the observer. Instead, von der Lancken challenges the viewer to look into his eyes, to try and understand him, and to consider his ideas about what art is and what the function of art should be.

Von der Lancken's brushstroke is not consistent, but rather alternates between the clear and precise in the details of his face and the small tree to his right, and the hurried and more expressive brushstrokes that suggest the movement of the tree to his left. In the portion of the landscape on the right side of the composition, he renders the thin tree in a detailed manner, where each individual branch and leaf stands out. The right portion of the large tree behind von der Lancken is also depicted in an exacting way; again, the leaves are painted with great attention to detail. In contrast, on the left side he uses a much more energetic and violent brushstroke to illustrate the movement of the tree. As an alternative to painting each leaf and branch, the brushstroke creates an impression of the wind blowing, thereby producing a blurred effect on the surface of the canvas.

A self-portrait is always a construction of identity; a portrait is a representation of how the artist wants the sitter to look. For example, in von der Lancken's painting, *Woman with Flower* (cat. 1), the artist chose to paint the sitter with great detail in close confines. The woman in the painting looks to be very comfortable, and von der Lancken must have painted and sketched her within an intimate distance in order to render her likeness with such a degree of detail.

In his *Self-Portrait*, von der Lancken took measures to render his face in a precise way. He does not idealize his features to make himself look younger but, instead, depicts

himself as a middle-aged man, one whose skin and features are beginning to show the effects of time as reflected in the wrinkles around his eyes. His hair is speckled with grey and white. To paint these signs of age, von der Lancken used an exacting brushstroke; he illustrates each wrinkle and grey hair, which convey the idea that he is wise in his years.

Frank von der Lancken's earlier *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* (cat. 6), painted around 1898, was made either at the end of his time in Paris or just after he returned to New York. During his study in Paris, von der Lancken received traditional academic training in figure drawing and painting, and he was further instructed by contemporary and Old Master painting and sculpture he encountered in museums in cities in Germany, Holland, and in England.⁹ There are many significant differences and similarities between this early self-portrait and his 1912 self-portrait.

In the earlier image, the young artist is dressed in a starched shirt and a stylish black suit, while in the later image he portrays himself informally in a simple, open-collared white shirt. In both paintings, von der Lancken looks out at the viewer with an intense expression, though in the later portrait he shows greater self-confidence in his stance and direct gaze.

The formal aspects of the two self-portraits show the development of von der Lancken's abilities and ideas about art during the fourteen-year period between their executions. In the earlier painting, the artist used a limited and somber palette of flat black for his suit and tie and plain white for his starched shirt. His skin is a peachy color, while shadows on his face and wrist are painted using a lavender grey tone. A dark shadow over his left eye is rendered somewhat awkwardly using a straight line, and an expanse of bright flat color on his forehead remains unblended with the other skin tones of his face. In addition, the setting of this earlier portrait is an interior created with broad expanses of unmodulated areas of blue and white behind him. This lack of regulation in the color, in addition to the lack of recession and perspective suggests that he was referencing the style of Japanese prints, such as those shown hanging on the wall behind him.

For his later self-portrait, von der Lancken created a more complex setting, with a more casual mood and used a brighter and more varied palette. Since he depicted himself outside, the sunlight highlights his head and his shirt. He now handles the face less as a series of intersecting planes, and more as a natural play of light across the face. The skin is manipulated in a much more naturalistic manner in which every crevice and wrinkle, such as those around and between his eyes, are closely observed and meticulously rendered. Though again dressed in a white shirt, instead of using a single shade of bright white, he now uses a more complex

blend of different shades of lavender, pink, and yellow to show the effects of sunlight. The shift in palette and blending of colors show that his understanding of color has developed, and that he is more aware of the complexities of natural light.

The settings and depictions of character in the two self-portraits are also quite different. In the first self-portrait, von der Lancken is seated indoors, possibly in his studio. He represents himself in front of a blue-and-white wall on which two Japanese prints are hung. Japanese woodcuts, in particular, had been a source of inspiration for Impressionist painters of the previous generation as they introduced new and different notions about color, form, and space. His inclusion of Japanese prints was also meant to suggest his awareness of contemporary trends in Europe, and thus his identity as a serious contemporary artist. Though only twenty-six years old when he painted this portrait, von der Lancken is dressed in the formal attire of a successful young artist with everything to prove. In addition, he shows himself as a deeply serious and brooding person, who, while seated and looking obliquely towards the viewer, seems also to be thinking, his hand raised to his head.

In his later self-portrait, von der Lancken places himself out-of-doors in a landscape and in front of what appears to be a meadow and a group of trees, alluding to the increasingly significant role of landscape in his work. Unlike the setting in which he placed himself in his first self-portrait, he here dominates his surroundings. The self-possessed artist we see in this later portrait had already been teaching for the better part of a decade and was an established member of the cultural milieu in Rochester.

Von der Lancken's skill as an artist developed significantly over the roughly fourteen years between his two self-portraits. His early self-portrait alludes to the academic training he received abroad as well as his encounter with Asian art. In his later portrait, his skill as a draftsman is shown by a meticulous attention to detail and a more sophisticated rendering of light and color. The earlier portrait suggests an artist contemplating his future, while the later portrait is a demonstration of his ability to convey personality as well as to render both highly naturalistic features and a scenic landscape, indicating his prowess in two genres.

1 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 12.

2 "Frank von der Lancken," typed biography, Hirschl & Adler Archives, 1.

3 Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 18.

4 Parker, 15.

5 *Ibid.*, 41.

6 From email correspondence with Eric Baumgartner.

7 Edward R. Foreman, "Art and Artists in Rochester," in *Publication Fund Series XIV* (Rochester, NY: Rochester Historical Society, 1936), 35, 46–47.

8 Parker, 41.

9 Parker, 13.

River Bank, Late Afternoon

by Sarah Howard

A landscape painting, by definition, is a representation of space and of a temporal moment, even though it often depicts a scene in nature that is not necessarily a factual or truthful visual record of the natural world. In short, like other paintings, landscapes are constructed images. Frank von der Lancken once stated that, “Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall...can be a source of pleasure from any point of view.”¹ Although von der Lancken was explicitly referring to mural paintings, his implication was that the function of landscape was to be beautiful or satisfying.

In *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, the formal elements of the composition, such as line, color, and form, all contribute to convey a sense of stillness and serenity. For von der Lancken, paintings recorded for the viewer a visual experience and presented an interpretation of that experience and when the fundamental elements of painting—line, shape, form, and color—were used successfully, they created an image that was harmonious, balanced, and rhythmic. To him, the goal of painting and drawing was to reveal the beauty of forms and to engage the viewer, not to replicate an exact image of his subject matter.² In 1925, von der Lancken declared his frustration that many individuals did not make room in their lives to discover beauty, which he also saw as a failure to appreciate art. Von der Lancken stated that, “The average business man of this country has no time in his busy schedule for the spiritual and beautiful things of life, that is, for art.”³ He further explained this idea saying, “Harmony, balance, and rhythm are not mere terms of art, but are governing principles related to life itself and to the whole universal system. Life sometimes becomes extremely artificial, and people cease to be keenly sensitive to these laws.”⁴ For von der Lancken, art related to all aspects of one’s life but also to the world around them. Von der Lancken also proposed a remedy for this lack of interest in beauty and art: “Their natural selves become submerged, and they no longer feel things directly from nature. It then becomes the mission of the artist and the teacher to bring people back to their human and natural selves.”⁵ Von der Lancken believed that the solution resided with artists. They could remedy this problem by making people again see beauty through nature in the form of harmony, balance, and rhythm.

Von der Lancken’s rather idealistic statement that, “Art to us is synonymous with beauty”⁶ suggests that, for him at least, art and beauty are always associated, and that the objective of art is to create beauty through a considered use of color, proportion, scale, and form. When these elements



River Bank, Late Afternoon, cat. 5.

are combined in the right manner, they present an effect of harmony, balance, and rhythm, which von der Lancken believed was the mission of art.⁷

River Bank, Late Afternoon, dated 1907, is one of many views of the Housatonic Valley painted by von der Lancken during the first decade of the century. Perhaps as early as 1900, the artist began to spend his summers in New Milford, Connecticut, where there was a small arts community and where he shared a studio and taught summer art classes with his Pratt colleague and friend, the sculptor Willard Paddock.⁸ Von der Lancken’s summers in New Milford, where he maintained a studio until a few years before his death, provided him with ample opportunity and a picturesque topography of rolling hills and open meadows along a river suitable for his interest in *plein-air* painting. A number of communities along the scenic Housatonic River attracted many artists, resulting in an active arts scene during the years in which von der Lancken summered there.

In *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, von der Lancken divided the composition into three, more or less equal bands of

foreground, middle ground, and far ground. Across the top of the canvas he offered a view of a brilliant blue sky; below this in the middle distance is a broad expanse of hill, the crest of which is densely forested above an expanse of an open and rolling meadow bordered on either side and at the center by mature trees, in full foliage, and smaller evergreens. The bottom of the sloped hill meets a wide river, which occupies the foreground. Each section is painted with great care and specificity—such as the brilliant blue of the sky, made more intense by the contrast with fine, thin horizontal clouds and a pale three-quarter moon, the meadow with alternating expanses of straw-colored and green-grasses, the dark saturated green of the trees atop the hill and the dark brown soil of the river bank. These clearly delineated sections also present three varied yet seemingly complementary zones suggesting three of the four elements of air, earth, and water. The distinct attributes of each are rendered with a high degree of specificity, and are clearly separated from one another by precise lines—the green tree line set abruptly against the blue sky, and the brown soil of the riverbank set in a distinct band against the dark edge of the water.

In von der Lancken's view, clarity of line and a sense of movement were, in and of themselves, beautiful. He preferred to eliminate all unnecessary and distracting parts of a composition in order to represent the beauty and simplicity of one elegant and refined line in the place of many unsightly and distracting lines. The beauty of a single uninterrupted line even took on an important meaning in reference to the quality of life one aspired to, as shown by his statement that "Beauty is synonymous with orderly living."⁹

The composition of *River Bank, Late Afternoon* is clearly organized and simple—there is no chaos. The brushstrokes are exacting, creating a sense of stillness and tranquility with no apparent movement. Foliage and trees are rendered with great care, emphasizing the lack of motion in the leaves. This idea of calm is shown most prominently in the water, which is presented without a single ripple. With all the elements working together to create a coherence, von der Lancken achieves his goal of artistic harmony.

The organization of the composition lends the painting a clear structure with each of its three areas juxtaposed in a believable, natural manner, which supports its relaxed mood while maintaining the dissimilar orders, thus creating a sense of balance. Von der Lancken's skill as a draftsman and painter is plainly evident as he renders the different elements with astonishing naturalism—the lightness of his cloud formations, the variations of foliage and the massing of trees, the alternating areas of golden brown and bright green of the meadow, and the shimmering stillness of the water of the river. Beyond his ability to render form and color, von der Lancken shows himself to be keenly sensitive to the play of

light and shade, illustrated by the long shadows cast by the trees across the slope of the hill and the brightness of the sun's reflection on the glassy surface of the water. The reflection of the hill on the still water heightens the scene of a pristine view of the natural world. Even the overhead clouds are subtly reflected onto the water's surface, accomplished with just a few short brushstrokes; they make the water look like its actual substance. These brushstrokes among the few horizontal lines von der Lancken used on the river, give a sense of a flat surface, thereby suggesting in addition to the reflection of the hill and trees, a body of water. The intermingling in the presence of discrete bands shows von der Lancken's ability to combine all the elements of the composition to create a single harmonious effect.

Von der Lancken's use of line to separate the different areas also helps to create a sense of balance between the three parts of the landscape. These lines are not loud and distracting, but are subtle. Much like a tool or an instrument becomes an integral extension or part of the craftsman or the musician who uses it, these lines are seamlessly integrated into the landscape. In speaking about the use of line, von der Lancken said, "There is one graceful line which runs though both the implement and the person who is wielding it. The implements themselves gradually evolve into beautiful forms."¹⁰

The quietude of the composition is emphasized by the fact that all aspects of the composition are parallel to the picture plane. There are no sharp corners or angles; instead, von der Lancken's accomplished use of perspective creates a believable depth of field and a gradual recession into space. The gauzy reflected image of the varied colors of the hill's meadow, and its tall, vertical tree trunks and areas of foliage are evidence of the close observation, controlled brushstroke, and extreme care taken by von der Lancken to create the characteristics he most valued—harmony, rhythm, and beauty. The idyllic stillness provides a momentary glimpse of a peaceful landscape that could, at any moment, be interrupted by visitors or a breeze. This peacefulness is also the result of a careful balance of elements.

Although the space is separated into three distinct parts, the composition of each section directs the viewer's gaze. The artist's implied position is clearly on the near (and unseen) bank of the river. The large scale of the trees in the foreground also reveals von der Lancken's understanding and mastery of perspective. Instead of focusing on something in the middle ground of the hill, the viewer's eye is drawn to the center of the canvas, to the sky, where von der Lancken has placed the moon, and below, to the hilltop. All of these effects are the result of von der Lancken's ability to depict both the play of light on water and land and the recession into space through perspective. Supported by his use of color,

von der Lancken is able to give the illusion of moving forward and backwards in the space.

In addition to line, von der Lancken also used color to divide the landscape into its three specific sections. Interestingly, the colors are not sharply contrasting dark and light tones; rather, they all rest in the middle of the tonal range. When an image of the painting is digitally converted into black and white, nearly all the colors become degrees of grey in the same range, with just a few occurrences of black.

The hill in the center of the composition is painted primarily in middle-green tones, with darker shades indicating shadows, and lighter shades indicating where the sunlight strikes the ground and trees. Yellow is used to differentiate the areas of grass from the trees and their shadows. The yellow grass and mature green foliage on the trees suggest that this is a summer scene. The grass is no longer fresh and new, as the sun and heat of the summer have taken their toll. The water, in which the hill is reflected, is painted with the same color palette as the land but in their reflected state, these colors are slightly more intense. Von der Lancken's limited range of colors and depiction of suffused light gives the scene a serene character.

During von der Lancken's career, the European and American art scenes were in the midst of great change. European artists such as Pablo Picasso and American artists such as Stuart Davis began to experiment with different forms and styles of representation. Their experiments and explorations included sources as varied as African sculpture for Picasso and contemporary American commercial design and popular culture for Davis and through these models, artists formed a new artistic vocabulary that enabled them to express a new and more modern view of the world. Although von der Lancken could not have seen it when he painted *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, Picasso's *Demaiselles d'Avignon*, also completed in 1907, changed art forever because of its radically different mode of conception and representation. In this painting, Picasso consciously abandoned the three-dimensional depiction of space, which von der Lancken clearly strove to achieve. Although *Demaiselles d'Avignon* is today considered one of the most revolutionary works in the history of art, at the time artists and critics alike criticized it. In 1922, von der Lancken himself derided Cubism saying

that it "opposed the flowing classical line, opposed color, and tries vainly to depict all sides of an object at once."¹¹ In contrast to von der Lancken, the goal of artists such as Picasso was not to show the possibilities of or to evoke beauty; instead, they sought a new form of visual and pictorial representation, such as depicting the front and back of an object simultaneously.

Several years before von der Lancken voiced his own critique of Cubism, other members of the Rochester arts community voiced a similar critique after seeing examples firsthand during a trip abroad. In his article titled, "The First Century of Art in Rochester—to 1925," Rochester historian Blake McKelvey noted that, "Two locals, G. Hamner-Croughton and H. Irving Marlatt sounded a warning in 1909 after returning from brief trips to Europe, on which they had been horrified by the new trends discovered there."¹² This account serves to highlight the fact that von der Lancken was not alone in his rejection of modernism. Rochester, where von der Lancken lived and taught during the academic year beginning in 1904, was a city that had been receptive to the Arts and Crafts movement. The first wave of modernism, however, was apparently incomprehensible to many.

Von der Lancken painted numerous locations in the New Milford area, but a comparison of *River Bank, Late Afternoon* with another landscape, *By the Shore* (cat. 23), offers an intriguing contrast since both are most likely representations of the same stretch of riverbank area along the Housatonic River. One of the essential differences between the two paintings is the vantage point of the painter. In *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, the artist looks straight ahead and up the hill, while in *By the Shore* von der Lancken appears to have been off to one side, looking up at an angle. Although the actual location is different, the similarities suggest that both paintings represent views of the Housatonic River.¹³

In *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, von der Lancken demonstrated that beauty can be realized in views of nature through the careful use of formal elements of art, which when used effectively, could create compositions that represent harmony, rhythm, and balance.

- 1 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.
- 2 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.
- 3 "Art in Daily Life," *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.
- 4 "The Intangible in Art," 1.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.
- 7 "The Intangible in Art," 4.
- 8 "Frank von der Lancken," typed biography, Hirschl & Adler Archives, 1.
- 9 "The Intangible in Art," 4.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 "Modernism in Art," 7.
- 12 Blake McKelvey, "The First Century of Art in Rochester—to 1912," *Rochester History* 17 (1955): 19.
- 13 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 18.

Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)

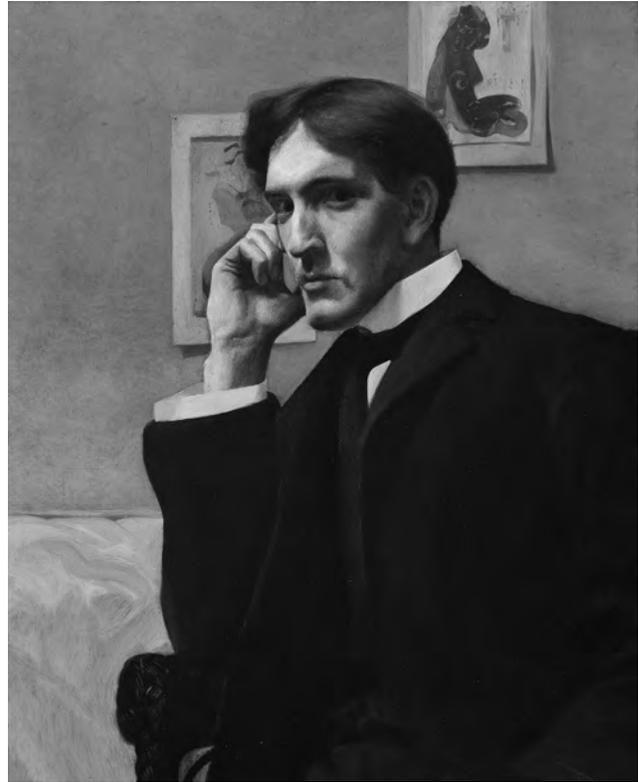
by Virginia Dudley

Self-portraiture is about self-presentation and it is a means by which an artist can illustrate himself in the way he desires to be seen by contemporaries, students, and future viewers. Frank von der Lancken's 1898 *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* is a perfect example of this kind of self-fashioning. His identity in this portrait is about perception. In other words, von der Lancken selected particular qualities, such as his dress and images upon the wall behind him, to fashion his character. The image relays a forceful presence of his constructed artistic identity in accordance with the values of simplicity and the fundamentality of formal elements, such as line and color.¹

Von der Lancken's forceful presence and his direct connection with the viewer are primary effects of this early self-portrait. A review in the *Tulsa Tribune* from October 30, 1932 reported that many of von der Lancken's portraits contained figures that "are convincing enough that one is ready to trust the artist's truthfulness of portrayal."² This observation suggests that von der Lancken persuaded viewers that his portraits were representatively convincing, while also showing sitters in a manner to which they aspired.

In addition to the artist's identity and connection with the viewer, simplicity and elemental forms are central to von der Lancken's *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)*. Von der Lancken expressed his interest in Japanese art and simplicity in his discussion, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home." In this essay, von der Lancken wrote, "[T]he general tendency is to a greater simplicity in the decoration of our home and the adoption of the best Japanese ideas."³ His juxtaposition of both "Japanese ideas" and "simplicity" within a single phrase suggests his direct association of the idea of simplicity with Japanese art. Thus, according to von der Lancken, the application of these aesthetic effects results in a scene or image with minimal but successful expression. Continuing with this statement on simplicity, von der Lancken proclaimed precisely what he defined as "the best Japanese ideas": "It is the reduction of the center of interest to one beautiful object, which is the Japanese idea, but has been also the idea in the past in Europe in the best periods in Art."⁴ Thus, the isolation of a single beautiful object as the central focus of an image was a positive quality of past periods in art, as opposed to much of contemporary art, and his reference here to the past and Europe signifies the history of art.

Von der Lancken's regard for the applicability of principles of past art to his art and to art of the present is also underscored in his 1929 discussion, "Modern Art," reported



Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait), cat. 6.

in a *Chautauquan Daily* newspaper article. Von der Lancken is reported to have said that, "[T]he artist is always going back to the past to express the present."⁵ He noted that both traditional and modern artists draw from past art to construct a current, contemporary image. However, he found the application of past models to vary, and found modern artists' abstract compilation of these elements to be distasteful. He expressed that the "Japanese idea," as well as past artistic periods, predominantly those periods in Europe, successfully demonstrated the basic, essential elements of art. Particularly, he found color, form, rhythm, and balance to be the expressive foundations of art. *The Chautauquan Daily* summary of his discussion on "Modern Art" also reports that von der Lancken asserted, "[T]he conscious return to the primitive is an attempt to get back to the elemental things, balance, rhythm, color, and form, which are at the basis of art."⁶ Von der Lancken was here referring to the work of early twentieth-century artists. Modern artists were using the same basic elements as was von der Lancken, but in a different construct that was not as convincing as can be seen in von

der Lancken's *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)*. He clearly favored a constructed, believably naturalistic image over an abstract one.

Moreover, von der Lancken's inclusion of Japanese prints in the background of his self-portrait immediately links these objects to the young artist's identity. Exhibitions of Japanese art were held in Paris between 1883 and 1900, and von der Lancken would have likely seen and studied Japanese prints during his time in Paris.⁷ The importance of Japanese prints to von der Lancken is not only suggested by their presence in this image, but also by the artist's choice to position the prints directly behind and framing his head. Each of the Japanese prints is minimally constructed with the essential qualities that von der Lancken argued to be the basis of all art. Both prints are monochromatic, composed of a variety of lines and washes, and each contains an asymmetrical figure in a tight, unadorned space. Von der Lancken directly tied his own image to the prints through these formal and organizational qualities.

Like the prints, von der Lancken's *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* contains a single, off-centered figure, monochromatic color palette, and plain, unadorned surroundings. The plain walls on which only the Japanese prints hang demonstrate von der Lancken's artistic value of minimal expression to his self-portrait. Within von der Lancken's work, the tan color that envelops the material on which the Japanese prints rest alludes to their age and formality, which, in turn, suggests the artist's reference for past art within his own image. The artist's large scale and rich tonality contrast with the emptiness and lighter tones of his surroundings, which enforce his purpose as the sole focal point of the image.

Von der Lancken not only imitated the stylistic qualities of the Japanese prints in his work, but he also organized the entirety of his self-portrait in accordance with the placement of these prints. The darker tones forming shadows beneath the prints give the illusion that they are loosely tacked on the wall. The asymmetrical placement of the prints is mirrored in the turn and position of his body outward towards the viewer. Von der Lancken chose to paint his self-portrait informed by a strong diagonal line that runs from the lower left-hand corner through the carefully placed images in the background to the upper right-hand corner. The diagonal organization of the image is firmly established by the placement of the prints, and the organization of the image more broadly is guided by the asymmetrically stacked prints.

As the viewer approaches von der Lancken's *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)*, he or she is directly met by the artist's outward gaze, which connects immediately with the viewer's. His eyes communicate his self-awareness, alertness, and his acknowledgement of being seen. The fixation of his gaze also

instills his presence, confrontation, and purposefulness. This notion of presence is manifested in the fact that von der Lancken appears to be extending himself actively into the space of the viewer through his outward stare beyond the parameters of the image. Markedly, American academic portraits of the late nineteenth century are generally characterized by their penetrating, present nature.⁸ The commonality of representing the sitter's presence in late nineteenth-century American portraiture reveals von der Lancken's expression of this quality and his willingness to remain within the popular constructs of academic, formal portrait painting of the time.

Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, who taught von der Lancken during his studies at the Académie Julian in Paris from 1896–1897, would have been a likely inspiration for von der Lancken in creating his *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)*.⁹ Constant's discussion, "My Portraits," published in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in May 1901, reports Constant's specific approach in making portraiture. Constant wrote that his proposition in portraiture was "to express, so to speak, a synthesis of resemblance; a resemblance, moreover, rather moral than physical; almost a historical vision."¹⁰ In this position, Constant directly communicated that he did not necessarily depict figures in his portraits as they physically appeared, but rather painted figures that resembled the sitters and focused on their idealized attributes. As regards the permanence and "historical vision," or an ideal image, of a portrait and in memory of his deceased son, Constant stated, "I have established thee for eternity in painting..."¹¹ Constant's perceptive approach to portraiture likely drew von der Lancken's attention through the idea of representing qualities that could be brought together to form meaning, and by which the young artist desired to be forever remembered.

Moreover, von der Lancken's 1898 *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* falls into a category of portraiture that was highly regarded and demanded during the late nineteenth century in both the United States and Europe. For example, Constant's international reputation as a high-society portrait painter is suggestive of the popularity of portraiture and the association of portraiture with those of elevated status during the turn of the nineteenth century.¹² The markedly prominent status and role associated with portraiture during the late nineteenth century is evident in Article V, Section 3 of the *Constitution and By-Laws* of the National Academy of Design in New York, which von der Lancken joined upon his return from Europe in 1898.¹³ The Academy's *Constitution and By-Laws*, amended in 1836, stated that "each artist fortunate enough to become a member must submit his own portrait upon admission":

Every Associate shall, during the first year after his election, present to the Academy his own portrait, to be the property of the Academy, and to be preserved in the gallery of the Institution. A failure to comply with this rule within the time specified shall make void the election of the candidate elect.¹⁴

The Academy's requirement of the submission of a self-portrait for admission draws attention to the significance of self-presentation. Such a requirement is also indicative of the formality and completeness of self-portraiture as the basis upon which an artist was evaluated not only for technique, but also for the way in which he delivered himself to the viewer.

In addition, von der Lancken's perception of himself as a developing young artist is signified in his serious facial expression within his self-portrait. The artist's face in this image communicates his ability to present his character most fully through the fashioning of his facial expression. Von der Lancken's precise consideration and rendering of his facial expression is revealed through the color palette, most intensely upon this part of his body. He manipulated tone to form pockets of strong light and dark shadow upon his face, which dramatizes and draws attention to his intense expression. Such dramatization is reminiscent of pictorial elements

of Romanticism that demonstrated the exaction of moods and expression within an image.¹⁵ Von der Lancken's clear, smooth, and rosy-cheeked face exemplifies his youthfulness and vibrancy when compared to his latter, more mature *Self-Portrait* (cat. 4) from 1912 in which he depicted himself with aged skin and gray hair.

The vibrant, dynamic, and driven character with which von der Lancken represented himself in his 1898 *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* can also be seen in his *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* (cat. 9) from about 1905, although in a somewhat different manner. Willard Paddock's direct, focused gaze, despite its direction away from the viewer and its continuation into a space beyond the image, is similar to the effect of von der Lancken in his self-portrait. The focus on a single figure placed within a plain, tight setting relates these two portraits to each other and to the fundamental qualities of Japanese prints. The small space within which each central figure is placed establishes an intimate setting. In terms of physical presentation, von der Lancken chose to wear dark, neatly pressed formal attire similar to that of Paddock rather than a painter's frock, which would directly associate him with the act of painting. As with von der Lancken's representation of presence, he also followed the norm of many late nineteenth-century American artists, such as Thomas Eakins, who represented themselves in formal attire in their self-portraits.¹⁶

1 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 13–15.

2 "Many Visitors See Portraits: Von der Lancken's Works Attract," *Tulsa Tribune* (October 30, 1932).

3 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 12.

4 Ibid.

5 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

6 Ibid.

7 Klaus Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse*, trans. David Britt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 33, 184.

8 National Academy of Design, *Artists by Themselves: Artists' Portraits from the National Academy of Design* (New York: National Academy of Design, 1983), 14.

9 Catherine Fehrer, *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868–1939* (New York: Shepherd Gallery, 1989), 16. Records indicate that von der Lancken studied under Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens at the Julian Academy. Specifically, it is recorded that von der Lancken took courses in painting, sculpting, and illustration while attending the Academy.

10 J. J. Benjamin-Constant, "My Portraits," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, no. 102 (May 1901): 821.

11 Ibid., 823. Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant's portrait of his two sons is titled "My Two Sons." Benjamin-Constant wrote that he created this portrait to honor his sons Emmanuel and André. This portrait serves as a memory for the artist of his son Emmanuel who passed away. Benjamin-Constant literally preserved his son Emmanuel's image and refers to this portrait as "an illusion of life."

12 Fehrer, 10–16.

13 Parker, 13.

14 National Academy of Design, 14.

15 Pierre Courthion, *Romanticism*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1986), 13. Von der Lancken's dramatic expression in his 1898 *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)* is very similar to Eugene Delacroix's *Self-Portrait* from 1837. In particular, von der Lancken's three-quarter view, serious, rigid expression, and dark, formal attire is very similar to Delacroix's 1837 *Self-Portrait*.

16 National Academy of Design, 18.

Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress

by Elizabeth Key

It is not the sitter of a portrait that is beautiful, it is the painting. A portrait is carefully created by the artist to serve a particular purpose. It could be to idealize the subject, commemorate an achievement, or to be a likeness of the sitter for his or her family. Frequently, the subject is posed with objects of identity or instruments of one's trade. In von der Lancken's *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*, a woman is posed within nature. Von der Lancken's portrait not only preserves this woman's identity, but it also renders her as art.

Von der Lancken believed that "harmony, balance, and rhythm are not mere terms of art, but are governing principles related to life itself and to the whole universal system."¹ Whether it be dance, cars, sculpture, or painting, everything should have a sense of grace, which then can translate into life. The tools and things people use are an extension of humankind. If an object has grace and beauty, so can its beholder. Art is no exception, for if people surround themselves with beautiful paintings, their lives will take on that beauty.

Von der Lancken said, "Life sometimes becomes extremely artificial, and people cease to be keenly sensitive to these laws. Their natural selves become submerged, and they no longer feel things directly from nature. It then becomes the mission of the artist and the teacher to bring people back to their human and natural selves."² Von der Lancken aims to bring wholesomeness back to humanity. Although each work can be complex, it can also have the simplicity of the familiar. Von der Lancken also remarked, "The true function of art education is to bring out in people what they feel naturally."³ Von der Lancken painted this woman naturalistically with harmony and balance, therefore ideally harmonizing the life of those who look upon the portrait.

The young woman is seated in the outdoors with flushed pink cheeks as if she had been in the sun. Von der Lancken's depiction of nature and the outdoor setting was not a random choice. This work has very tight brushwork and therefore it was most likely not painted in its entirety on site, en plein air. Von der Lancken seems to be attempting to connect this specific woman with nature. The effect of the sunspot on her shoulder increases the presence of the outdoors rather than an evenly lit studio. Nature makes the woman appear healthy and robust. She has color in her skin and plump full cheeks. Although she is well-dressed, she does not appear to be feeble. This woman's youth and health is exemplified by her placement in the outdoors.

Light articulates the entirety of this woman's appearance and shines through each twist and swirl of her brunette hair,



Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress, cat. 7.

capturing and illuminating highlights of gold and red, giving her hair a multidimensional color. Although there is no direct sunlight on her face, the light brings out a polished quality around her eye and down her nose. The sunlight also shines through the leaves of the vegetation behind her, and creates warmth and a sense of life in this portrait.

One of the most compelling passages in this portrait is the sunspot that rests on the woman's collarbone. This detail allows the audience to see the hue of the woman's dress and skin. This work has been titled *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*.⁴ The dress the young woman is wearing does indeed appear to be blue since she sits in shadow, but because of the sunspot the audience sees that she is actually dressed in white. Furthermore, this sunspot increases the understanding that the sitter is in nature. The light streaming in from behind her and the sunspot resting upon her shoulder represents the effect of temporality, a quality that appears in many of the works in this exhibition.

This portrait is intimately cropped and quite formal. Ordinarily, these details would suggest that this image could

have been a commission for a specific family. However, since the portrait remained in von der Lancken's personal collection, it could have represented someone he knew in some capacity. As for her age, the title suggests she is younger by the name of the work, *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*. However, the figure appears to be significantly older. Rather, she appears to be more in her early twenties, judging from her hair and style of dress.

The young woman is dressed formally in a light, white dress. The dress itself appears to be similar to an afternoon frock, and her hair is styled into an intricate bun at the back of her head, which balances the composition.⁵ Her appearance evokes what would be seen in a typical cameo pin or brooch. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cameo jewelry, the portrait of an idealized woman's face and shoulders was typically shown in profile. In most images, great detail was paid to the woman's hairstyle. Cameos would have been familiar during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, since they had begun to be mass-produced during the industrial age in a variety of precious or semiprecious stones and materials such as shell.⁶

A cameo as an object and image also has intimate implications. It is a small brooch with a portrait of a loved one or a scene with some meaning to the wearer. The wearer pins the brooch with the portrait onto her chest, symbolically holding the individual close. Although in an actual cameo the small scale is part of the intimacy, in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* it is the full-sized scale that creates intimacy. This woman is believably life-sized, and the audience stands directly in front of her at a very close range. Although the painting cannot be held or worn like a cameo, it can be gazed upon closely and with great detail.

The artist paints the subject in great detail to highlight every characteristic and every flaw. By highlighting both perfections and imperfections, von der Lancken creates an intimacy between the audience and the subject. In revealing all of the woman's imperfections, the audience is cast as if in an intimate conversation with the woman. Von der Lancken did not idealize the woman in the portrait. Her lips are thin, extenuated by her placement in profile, but they are also a very bright pink. The woman's cheeks are full and blushed, but that fullness also is seen in a slight sag under her chin. Her eyes are bright green with well-formed eyebrows framing the top and dark eyelashes drawing attention to her eyes, but her eyes are deeply set therefore casting them into shadow. These features do not take away from the figure's beauty, however, and she appears as a believable individual to the audience.

Von der Lancken applied oil paint thickly onto the canvas, and the paint itself has an intimate and sensual quality about it. The woman's skin is painted in a warm, creamy pink color and her hair is rendered in warm browns. The dark green leaves in the background create a contrast to her pale pink skin, making her profile more discernible. The thick quality and the gloss of the oil create a tangible softness to her skin. Mary Cassatt also created this effect in many of her images. This technique is seen in Mary Cassatt's 1883 painting, *Young Girl at a Window*. Cassatt's loose brushstrokes do not allow the detail that von der Lancken shows in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*.⁷ However, the warmth and thick quality of the paint create a depth and tangibility that both portraits share. Von der Lancken's tight brushstrokes create detail, but the thick paint creates texture and palpability. Von der Lancken's aesthetic idealism is formed through the viewer's intimacy with the young woman.

Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress is the only portrait from the works in this exhibition that shows a sitter in full profile. While *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* (cat. 9) is in partial profile, the composition is not solely focused on his face, as the majority of his body is also visible. Since the body of Paddock is also visible, the portrait is not framed as close to his body and therefore the audience seems farther away from the subject. Frank von der Lancken frames *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* closely around her face and upper torso. However, the woman looks to her right, and therefore the audience can look at her without ever making eye contact. The frame cuts her off through the bust and shoulders, leaving minimal space above her head and thus, her profile becomes the focal point of the image.

Reviews of von der Lancken's portraits noted a consistent theme: "Even in seeing the Von[sic] der Lancken portraits of persons totally unknown here, the figures are convincing enough that one is ready to trust the artist's truthfulness of portrayal."⁸ The images capture the essences of the subject in such a manner that although the audience does not know this person, there is no question about the sitter's presence and vitality. Von der Lancken successfully captures not only the beauty of the young woman in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*, but also her essence. The painting behaves almost like a photograph, as if von der Lancken caught her in a precise moment in time when she was looking away and the sun hits her body, creating luminous qualities.

- 1 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 45.
- 5 Marybelle S. Bigelow, *Fashion in History: Apparel in the Western World* (Minneapolis, MN: Burgess Publishing Company, 1970), 235.
- 6 Anna M. Miller, *Cameos Old and New* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinold, 1991), 60–65.
- 7 Jeffrey Meyers, *Impressionist Quartet: The Intimate Genius of Manet and Morisot, Degas and Cassatt* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2005), 259.
- 8 "Many Visitors See Portraits: Von der Lancken's Works Attract," *Tulsa Tribune* (October 30, 1932).

Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)

by Britton Chance, Virginia Dudley, Margot Eberle, Shayna Goodman, Sarah Howard, Elizabeth Key, Jessica Moran, Marie Petersen, Rachel Weber, and Christina Wolf

In 1908, von der Lancken returned to Europe for the second time with the goal of collecting visual materials for his classes.¹ While in Italy, von der Lancken met his future wife Giulia Ulbrich, the daughter of a prominent Italian general who had fought with Garibaldi, a central figure in the Italian *Risorgimento*, and considered one of the “founding fathers” of modern Italy.² Giulia was also an artist and received professional training at the prestigious *Accademia dell’Arte del Disegno* (National Academy of Art) in Florence. The couple married in 1909 in Brooklyn, and in 1910 they had their first son Carl, soon followed by their second son, Julian in 1912. The *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)* was completed around 1915, which would mean Carl was around five-years-old, the same age he was when von der Lancken made the *Portrait of Carl in a Sailor Suit* (cat. 18). In both works Carl is seen in the same outfit, which is a key element in determining the time frame for each image as neither is dated.

Von der Lancken portrayed the faces of Giulia and Carl in this painting differently from one another. Carl’s face and hands have a clear, basic outline with facial features, giving minimal definition and allowing for an understanding of his expression. In contrast, Giulia’s face and hand do not have this basic outline. Her face is completely blurred, with no definitive facial features. In addition, there is no separation between her face and the landscape, and the two overlap through a shared sense of line. Von der Lancken brought green lines from the landscape into the space of Giulia’s face, and there is no clear line delineating the difference.

This lack of definition in only certain aspects of the portraits could also relate to the idea of photography, which was becoming popular at this time. Giulia’s blurry face and hand, as well as the minimal definition in the outline of her dress, could be a technique that von der Lancken intended to show movement. The loose brushwork in these portraits could also refer to his desire to blend the figures with the landscape. Because this work is not a portrait in the traditional sense, he needed to devise a way to have them both stand out as well as blend into the background. Using the same style of brushwork as he would in a landscape, would have given von der Lancken this balance.

Frequently, portraits are shown with objects of importance to the sitter or instruments of a trade. Although the *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)* is not a traditional portrait, von der Lancken still casts his wife and son into art and into nature. Nature surrounds Giulia and



Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist), cat. 8.

Carl on all sides. They seem to be encompassed by lush greenery and flowers in full bloom. The effect of nature is increased by the dappled sunlight throughout the work, which moves the audience throughout the painting. The bright spots are reflected on the leaves of the trees and from openings in the canopy of the trees revealing the bright sky. The sun is also echoed on the petals and leaves of the magenta flowers and highlights the twisted vines moving vertically down the side of the image. The sunspots along the path add depth and contrast to the painting and without the bright yellow spots, the path would appear to be “flat.” Finally the sunspots along the path lead to Giulia and Carl who stand looking off into the distance. Similarly to the *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* (cat. 7), the effect of the sunlight on their clothes and skin makes them appear more naturalistic and the revelatory sunspot on the front of the sitter in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* is also seen on Giulia’s shoulder, revealing the color of her dress. The dress appears to be blue or purple since it is cast in shadow, but in actuality

Giulia's dress is white and it is only because of the sunspot that we can perceive that effect.

Temporality and light are also two of the defining qualities of this painting. The light shining onto the wooded trail where Giulia and Carl are walking seems to be coming through the tree line on the right from an open field that is beyond the scope of the painting. This dappled light that von der Lancken depicts around the feet of Giulia and Carl, as well as on their clothing, on parts of the foliage, and on the rocks that line the wooded path, suggests the time of day to be around late afternoon, a time when the sun has passed its highest position in the sky and is now creating an angled light source that sweeps over the setting from the upper left to the lower right. The smallest tree that lines the path on the right-hand side of the image stands in front of what seems to be an opening in the canopy of the woods. Because there are no other taller trees shading this small tree from the open sky, the light source shines directly onto the upper leaves of this tree. By creating the effect of soft, angled lighting in his painting, von der Lancken suggests a specific time of day in which this scene took place, highlighting temporality as a theme in this work.

In the background, von der Lancken used a cool color palette of greens, blues, and browns for the trees bathed in shadows. To render the images of his wife and son, he employed a warmer palette of peach tones for their skin. He mixed light and dark for the trees, painting the leaves on trees in the top central portion of the composition using dark and middle greens, with varying shades of blue to create shadows, while the leaves on the top left side of the composition display more yellow tones. These lighter colored leaves show the presence of light coming in from a clearing just beyond the right side of the canvas. The dark tones of the trees behind Giulia and Carl show the viewer that this area of the forest is densely planted with trees.

As in von der Lancken's *Self-Portrait* (cat. 4) from around 1912, both Carl and Giulia wear white clothing, though their attire is not painted using only white. Instead, von der Lancken used colors like lavender, blue, pink, and yellow to show the shadows and areas of light reflected on the cloth. An example of this effect can be seen on the skirt of Giulia's dress. Von der Lancken chose not to depict the skirt as a solid piece of white fabric but, instead, he painted the skirt with alternating lavender and blue tones, revealing the folds of the skirt and how it fits on her body.

One of the most intriguing elements of the composition is the bright pink, almost magenta, flowers on the left side of the composition. These flowers, painted with warm pink tones, create a contrast between the cool greens and browns in the forest background, and the viewer is drawn to the bright pinks and reds of the flowers that sweep across the

upper left-hand corner. This strong diagonal leads upward, even as the strong verticality of the trees in the right middle ground force movement back downward. This movement downward brings the focus to Giulia and Carl as figures depicted in the very center of the work, emphasizing their importance. Even as these figures are depicted within the center of the image, the path beneath their feet sweeps back behind them in a diagonal that intersects with the upward direction of the flowers. These diagonals seem to echo each other as the viewer follows them back and then up again and then back down with the trees to focus on Giulia and Carl once more.

In the second decade of von der Lancken's time in Rochester, New York there is distinct change in his landscape style. During his time at the Rochester Art Club, the technique and style of Impressionism became of great interest to the members of the Club after an exhibition of French Impressionist works in 1908.³ Von der Lancken was enrolled at the Art Students League, where prominent American Impressionist painters attended, such as William Merritt Chase. As a pupil at the Art Students League, von der Lancken would have had extensive knowledge of their works and techniques, the impact of which can be seen in his brushy technique in this painting.⁴ There is a clear contrast in the technique he used in *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)*, for example, from that in his earlier New Milford paintings. *River Bank, Late Afternoon* (cat. 5), a New Milford landscape painting in this exhibition, is painted with careful, much tighter brushstrokes.⁵ The brushstrokes in *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)* are apparent and emphasized by the colorful palette. The broken and visible brushwork technique used by Impressionist artists allowed them to depict their subjects under momentary conditions of light and atmosphere. The loose and choppy brushstrokes of sunlight filtering through the trees onto Giulia, Carl, and the landscape, successfully create the effect of a particular time of day, as discussed earlier. The brushwork in an Impressionist technique loses the meticulous rendering of detail, but gains vitality through its broken brushstrokes.⁶

The precise location of the landscape in von der Lancken's *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)* is unknown. Von der Lancken's visible, airy brushstrokes in the arborous background of *By the Shore* (cat. 23) (also a New Milford landscape) and *Winter in the Mountains* (cat. 14) are similar to the artist's treatment of the trees surrounding Giulia and Carl. Despite the variation in brushstroke, the color palettes of *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)*; *River Bank, Late Afternoon*; and *By the Shore* are predominately green, which is suggestive of growth associated with spring or early summer. We know

that von der Lancken owned an art studio in New Milford from 1903 to 1946, and he spent many summers in New Milford and produced a variety of painted landscapes there.⁷ The landscape paintings from von der Lancken's New Milford era vary dramatically in technique, particularly from meticulous to visible, relaxed brushstrokes. The fact that a large number of von der Lancken's painted landscapes were derived from scenes in New Milford, as well as the similarities present between *By the Shore* and *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)*, makes it reasonable to argue that this painting illustrates a New Milford landscape in approximately 1915.⁸

Von der Lancken's consideration of the effect of his paintings on the viewer is an integral part of the *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)*. In the image, the figures gaze off into the distance, disengaged with the viewer. The direction of the figures' line of vision suggests their interest in the lush nature that surrounds them and the eventual continuation of their walk along the path on which they stand. It appears that in this momentary pause in their journey, von der Lancken stepped aside and admired his wife and son and captured a candid image of this intimate moment with his family. The fact that Giulia and Carl do not look at von der Lancken makes them seem more natural, and not posed. Much like von der Lancken's *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* (cat. 3) and *At the Beach* (cat. 10), the viewer does not interact with the figures but rather is the beholder of the scene. While the audience does not engage in

a dialogue with the figures, they are able to admire them; the viewer is permitted to look at Giulia and Carl through von der Lancken's eyes and experience his deep affection for his wife and son.

Von der Lancken's *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)* is unique within the exhibition not only because of its Impressionist style, but also because of the integration of the concept of an imagined landscape into the painting itself. The imagined landscape is part of the whole paradox of the illusion of painting. Giulia and Carl are both shown within the landscape looking outwards onto a vista that the viewer of the painting cannot see. The viewer can see suggestions of what the imagined landscape could contain but there is no scenery depicted. The viewer can only see Giulia and Carl on the path with the trees in the background. Therefore, in this painting, von der Lancken creates a landscape that includes Giulia and Carl while the figures of Giulia and Carl are viewing another imagined landscape within the implied space of the painting. We can then say that Giulia and Carl are taking on the role of the artist—von der Lancken—and consequently reversing the role of the viewer. The viewer is looking at the “artist,” implied as Giulia and Carl, while they are looking elsewhere at a landscape outside the frame of our view, but within the world of the painting. Von der Lancken is thus cleverly incorporating elements of self-portraiture into this painting and into the figures of Giulia and Carl.

1 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 25.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 27.

4 Ibid., 12.

5 Ibid., 27.

6 David R. Brigham, *American Impressionism: Paintings of Promise* (California: Pomegranate, 1997), 9.

7 “Frank von der Lancken,” typed biography, Hirschl & Adler Archives, n.p.

8 Parker, 16.

Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock

by Rachel Weber

In *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator*, Thomas Parker describes the *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* as “combining two distinct styles that were von der Lancken’s trademark, the hard-edged precision of his figurative technique, and the blurred sparseness of his landscapes, to create a sort of hybrid genre with striking stylistic complexity.”¹ This portrait is set apart from von der Lancken’s other images because, as Parker noted, “few have the depth of feeling and obvious personal attachment of this work.”² Von der Lancken and Paddock became close friends in their years of study at the Pratt Institute (beginning c. 1888) and both went on to further their educations in Europe. Upon arriving back in the United States and working to establish themselves as artists, they founded a studio together in 1903 on the Housatonic River in New Milford, Connecticut.³ Von der Lancken became a painter with a focus on landscapes and portraits while Paddock focused his talents on becoming a sculptor. Both men believed in the importance of teaching and the need for the democratization of art. In 1922, von der Lancken wrote, “we must instill in our businessmen the responsibility by which is ours and theirs to have behind us art by which we are willing to have our civilization judged by future generations.”⁴ This quotation exemplifies the commitment von der Lancken had to bring about an understanding and appreciation of art and beauty.

To von der Lancken, making art seemed to play a secondary role to his position as a teacher. During his career, von der Lancken was not a well-known artist among the general public. He never self-promoted his art and only sold his works when he needed to make money, for example, during the Great Depression. To be an educator meant that he had the opportunity to teach the practice of art and about his particular theories and ideas. Von der Lancken was concerned about the present generation and the disconnection that he perceived to be forming between people and the world around them. Von der Lancken believed that to create beauty in art, one must synthesize the principles that constituted beauty in the natural world. These principles included harmony, balance, and rhythm. He wanted to instill a sense of responsibility within his students to produce beautiful art for future generations to appreciate and learn from. He shared this idea in 1922, stating “when we realize that we are all aiming for the same goal of beauty and the betterment of art, we will reach it and have a great national art.”⁵ Von der Lancken felt strongly about the creation of a cohesive “national art,” which was one of the reasons he disliked many qualities of what was then, modern art.



Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock, cat. 9.

One aspect of modern art, however, that von der Lancken appreciated was that it “stressed the importance of getting back to the principles,”⁶ yet by the same token, he disapproved of how modern artists employed these principles. He saw that they were “introducing brutality and coarseness into art.”⁷ This statement is primarily concerned with Cubism, because von der Lancken did not approve of how an object was depicted from various angles on a two-dimensional surface. This type of art was unnatural in his view, because it did not portray a subject representatively, or how it appeared in reality. Von der Lancken wanted art to be highly constructed so as to achieve order and balance, which were two important elements necessary to the construction of beauty. The more organized the image, the more easily an artist would be able to communicate his or her intention to the viewer.

The *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* was a work von der Lancken made to commemorate his close friend. The painting is as much about Paddock's personality as it is about the respect von der Lancken had for his friend's esteemed career. Paddock's talents were first recognized at the age of ten. A few years later, his parents enrolled him at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn where he later befriended von der Lancken. Paddock immediately gained attention at his new school and was the first man to be sent by Mr. Fredrick Pratt on a two-year scholarship to Europe. This scholarship happened in 1895, before Paddock had turned twenty.⁸ Sculpture was Paddock's first interest and in Europe he honed in on this medium, exhibiting a bas-relief at the Paris Salon in his first year.⁹ Like other artists of his generation, Paddock studied art of the Renaissance and the great collection at the Louvre. Like von der Lancken, "he nurtured his own ideals of beauty" and was "never caught up in the maelstrom of modernity, which was beginning on its rapid and often destructive course during the last decade of the nineteenth century."¹⁰ As an artist, Paddock often looked to the past. His style was very controlled and precise, sharing similarities with what was then termed "The Old Masters." Before returning to the United States, Paddock briefly studied at the Académie Julian where von der Lancken also received his education. In 1908, Paddock won another grant that allowed him to return to Europe, yet this time he stayed in Italy. In Italy, Paddock learned about patinas and discovered a formula for making his own that he would later use on his bronze sculptures.¹¹ When he returned to the United States for the second time, he was commissioned to make various sculptures that can still be seen around the United States today, such as his "Grant Memorial" fountain in Michigan and a large bronze bas-relief in the entrance hall of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

Paddock was a "keen observer of human nature, [and] he had a gift in producing a likeness in which the psychological traits of his sitter predominate."¹² It is not surprising that Paddock and von der Lancken became such close friends and colleagues, especially since they shared fundamental beliefs about what was "good" art and how to convey beauty in their work. Both artists thought that the best way to portray their subjects was in a realistic manner, recreating in their art what they saw visually. To Paddock and von der Lancken, art was not about abstract embellishment, and both men believed that less was more. For example, Paddock was convinced that "the finest draughtsmanship required the fewest lines, but that they must be telling ones."¹³

In October of 1914, Paddock made a memorial for Noah Webster at Amherst College. Art critic Anna Louise Wageman described this work as "a combination of the sculptor's best qualities: a rhythm in the fine seated figure

that harmonizes so well with architectural background, and the tout ensemble expresses balance, repose, and noble simplicity."¹⁴ This remark underscores how von der Lancken and Paddock represented similar artistic principles, principles that they considered to be central when it came to the representation of beauty. Part of what led to these shared artistic beliefs was that both men were supporters of the Arts and Crafts movement. This movement was formed to counter modernity and was not "so much a style as an approach to the making of objects." The group promoted ideas such as joy in labor, truth to materials, unity in design, and honesty in construction, all of which were exemplified in either the art or teachings of von der Lancken and Paddock.¹⁵

In the *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock*, beauty is created through the order within the image and the precise detail with which von der Lancken rendered his friend. In 1930, von der Lancken wrote, "beauty is synonymous with orderly living and we cannot dissociate beauty from life and from all that is great in the world."¹⁶ Lack of order leads to ugliness in von der Lancken's opinion. In the *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock*, the highly calculated style can be understood as von der Lancken's attempt to synthesize the natural beauty inherent in what can be seen. The careful attention von der Lancken gives to the rendering of Paddock's features is exemplified by the detail of Paddock's left ear and right hand. The meticulousness with which he rendered them must have been time consuming, and it serves as another way for von der Lancken to represent his respect for his friend. Von der Lancken captures the unique form of his friend's ear, such as each individual crease, the shape of his earlobe, and hollows of his inner ear. Paddock's right hand that grasps his cane is painted so tightly that the viewer is able to see veins, the lines of his knuckles, and the cleanliness of his fingernails. The focus on Paddock's hand was surely intentional, because it provides visual information for the viewer about Paddock's character. Even though Paddock used his hands daily to make sculptures, it is evident by the appearance of his clean nails and smooth skin that von der Lancken wanted him to be defined not just as a sculptor, but also as a gentleman and intellectual, which is suggested by his pensive stare.

Paddock was a worldly man, receiving an education in Europe along with the most acclaimed artists of his day. Paddock's pensive stare can be seen to represent his intelligence and his depth of thought. He is lost in a moment, unaware of the viewer or his immediate surroundings. His clothing communicates a similar message because he is portrayed not in the smock of an artist, but in an expensive wool suit worn by men of the upper class. It was not unusual for artists to be painted in this way, especially in the early 1900s when the position of artists within American society

had shifted. There was a “necessity for younger artists to create a new pattern of professionalism and gentlemanly status which came into sharp focus at the century’s end, when the art world was rapidly changing.”¹⁷ Artists like Paddock wanted to project a particular image and cared about how they were perceived. Paddock, more so than von der Lancken, was involved in the art market and relied on commissioned works to maintain his comfortable life style.

As Sara Burnes noted, “visual representation of artists tended to emphasize elegance, good grooming (connoting respectability, discipline, and conformity) and sometimes a certain aloofness.”¹⁸ Paddock stands poised and elegant in the center of the portrait. His erect stance shows his command over his surroundings. His skin is rendered so tightly that it looks almost idealized; Paddock has no blemishes or wrinkles. Through painterly precision, von der Lancken showcases Paddock’s youth and vitality, which is also reflected in his well-maintained beard that has not one hair out of place. By showing Paddock in profile, von der Lancken projects an aloof mood with respect to Paddock’s presence, whether intentional or not. Paddock is not engaging the viewer and the moment captured depicts a private moment for the sitter.

Von der Lancken owed much to Paddock. According to Thomas Parker, “through the simple acts of bringing him back to teach at the Pratt Institute, and introducing him to the unique countryside of New Milford, Paddock may have impacted von der Lancken’s art and career more than anyone.”¹⁹ Upon moving to New Milford, Connecticut and opening a studio together, von der Lancken began to focus more on landscapes and painted works such as *Housatonic Valley* and *Along the Housatonic River*. Von der Lancken’s landscapes define his career as much as his portraiture, and it seems that his move to the Connecticut countryside inspired him. As a professor in New Milford, von der Lancken held many of his painting classes outside, teaching his students the importance of forming a connection with nature. Von der Lancken’s paintings often have a convincing naturalistic appearance because he studied his subjects very carefully so as to paint every detail convincingly.

While it is hard to identify the interior within which Paddock was depicted, there is a possibility that he was painted within his studio. There is a photograph in the von der Lancken family archives that shows an older von der Lancken walking outside a large rectangular building with a series of large floor-to-ceiling windows (fig. 3). The window in the *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* seems strikingly similar in scale to the windows in this photograph. The building in the photograph is also surrounded by short grass similar to the grass in the middle ground of von der Lancken’s painting. To represent Paddock within the studio they shared would clearly have added meaning and intimacy



Figure 3. Von der Lancken walking outside building. Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, Estate of Frank von der Lancken.



Figure 4. Von der Lancken family at Willard Paddock’s house and studio, South Kent, Connecticut, 1928. Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, Estate of Frank von der Lancken.

to this image.

Another reason for the inclusion of landscape in this painting might have been for von der Lancken to share his gratitude with Paddock for introducing him to New Milford. Von der Lancken’s landscape style became established at this time and is characterized, as Parker noted, by a “unique treatment of seemingly infinite detail dissolving in soft silvery forms. The result is a blurred, even dreamy vision—a sort of ethereal reality.”²⁰ While the foreground of the painting is highly calculated and has tight, painstaking brushwork, the background is less formulaic and controlled. The landscape, instead, appears blurry and out of focus. Rather than individual blades of grass, von der Lancken chose to paint in a monochromatic fashion, creating a pale green mass that is defined in space only by the path that runs through the middle ground and into the background. While the middle ground of the painting lacks precision, the background with the trees is well rendered and it is easy to see and identify the different types of vegetation, from bushes to a more slender

tree on the far left. The more loosely painted background serves to highlight Paddock, who by comparison, is painted in sharp focus. To paint Paddock would have taken substantially more time and effort than any other aspect of the portrait, which communicates to the viewer his significance to von der Lancken.

Von der Lancken remained close to Paddock throughout his life. In fact, there is a photograph of von der Lancken's family vacationing at Paddock's house and studio in Connecticut more than fifteen years after this portrait was

completed (fig. 4). This portrait was about more than just representing a friend; it was also a way for von der Lancken to articulate his conceptions about beauty. The portrayal of beauty to von der Lancken was repeatable and depended on the proper use of artistic principles, compositional organization, and painterly control. Every visual element in the *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock* was highly calculated. Von der Lancken had very specific ideas of how best to paint his friend and communicate the respect and admiration he had for him.

1 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 21.

2 Ibid.

3 Frank von der Lancken, *Autobiography*, Hirschl & Adler Archives, n.p.

4 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 4.

5 Ibid.

6 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

7 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

8 Anna Wangeman, "Willard Dryden Paddock: Idealist," *American Magazine of Art* 7, no. 8 (1916): 328.

9 Ibid.

10 Wangeman, 329.

11 Ibid., 330.

12 Ibid.

13 Wangeman, 331.

14 Ibid.

15 Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2004), 11.

16 "The Intangible in Art," 4.

17 Sara Burnes, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 26–27.

18 Burnes, 35.

19 Parker, 18.

20 Ibid.

by Britton Chance, Virginia Dudley, Margot Eberle, Shayna Goodman, Sarah Howard, Elizabeth Key, Jessica Moran, Marie Petersen, Rachel Weber, and Christina Wolf

In *At the Beach*, von der Lancken depicts people casually enjoying leisure time and swimming. Genre painting, or representing scenes of everyday life, appears as a subject throughout American art and is most common during periods of economic and social change.¹ American painters represented scenes of life as it changed around them, often capturing the nature of their eras.² Though leisure time was rare in nineteenth-century America, at the turn of the twentieth century, many middle-class Americans had more leisure time and recreational sports become popular.³ As urbanization and industrialization grew, artists began investigating city surroundings, including new sites for leisure.⁴ *At the Beach* not only represents a familiar new trend in society, but it may also represent an atypical social commentary with a reference to the role of women in society, as Parker has suggested.⁵

In the drawing, people of the middle and lower middle classes can be seen leisurely relaxing together with children. The beach appears uncared for as seen by the refuse depicted in the left corner, indicating also that it is a public rather than a private beach. No one in the drawing is bothered by the newspapers, bottles, boxes, and driftwood that litter the foreground. The fact that the beachgoers are unbothered by the trash that surrounds them is further evidenced by the woman on the right who sits on a discarded soapbox. All of the beach's inhabitants are most likely from an urban area close by, as evidenced by their dress, and are only at the beach for a brief part of the day. Therefore, this beach is not a vacation spot that would be frequented by the upper class, but instead serves as a brief reprieve from the busy and bustling lives of these working-class people. This context can also be inferred from the lack of picnic baskets, blankets, or chairs. The beach is a meeting spot for the adults to casually get together for a few hours, as seen, for example, in the three women at the right of the image, while their children get a chance to play. The fact that the adults are still dressed in their day clothes and did not change into bathing suits or at least lighter clothing, further communicates the idea that their time at the beach is fleeting and that everyone has their busy lives to get back to.

There is a wide assortment of people bathing and enjoying the water in von der Lancken's *At the Beach*. Despite all of the particular attention to dress in this work, it does not have a date even though it is signed. Based on the articles of clothing represented in this drawing, this work might be dated to the mid-1940s. The forties brought a lot of change



At the Beach, cat. 10.

to clothing, in part due to World War II. There are a few key articles of clothing in *At the Beach* that point to the 1940s. First, the woman standing in the center left of the drawing is clearly wearing an "A" Silhouette coat.⁶ The "A" Silhouette coats were long and full-backed coats with straight sleeves, and they were not introduced until the late 1940s.⁷ This particular coat seems to be made of textured wool with four buttons on the back. Almost every adult in this drawing is wearing a hat. While there are a variety of hats shown, the predominate style is the straw sailor hat. For women there are two main versions of this hat: the pancake and cartwheel straw sailors.⁸ The cartwheel hat was a hat with a wide brim made of straw usually adorned with ribbon.⁹ This style of hat is seen both in the standing woman in the jacket and in more adorned versions in the seated women facing each other to the right of the image. The women are also wearing typical 1940s pumps with rounded toes and thick heels.¹⁰ Similarly, the men seated to the left of the image are dressed in suits typical to the 1940s; a panama hat can also be seen on the left and a straw boater hat on the right.¹¹ The straw boater hat is similar to the women's straw sailor hats, but with a smaller brim and a shorter crown.¹² Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the variety of bathing suits represented in this drawing. Von der Lancken depicts men, women, and children dressed to swim. Men are seen both in one-piece swimming suits with oval necklines and in swimming trunks with nothing on top, which were first introduced in the 1930s.¹³ Children appear to be wearing one-piece suits or trunks and tank tops. The only woman in a bathing suit is pictured in the middle ground to the center right. She

appears to be wearing a 1920s style suit. Women's bathing suits did not change dramatically, and still consisted of a top with 'U' shaped back and front with short trunks worn low on hips during the 1940s.¹⁴

At the Beach reads as a "snap-shot" type image, comprised of multiple figures that appear frozen in time even as they are engaged in a multitude of activities. Frozen motion dominates the image, as children run into the water to play; a mother turns her head toward her friends while trying to free her child of his clothes. The direction of these figures' heads seems to imply movement and with this implication, von der Lancken creates the effect of a particular moment in time just barely captured, as if by a camera. This photographic effect is further emphasized with the artificial frame that surrounds the entire image, which von der Lancken drew around the scene in the same medium. The articulated frame contains the figures, even as the figures are contained by their previous actions. Even the steamship depicted in the background adds to this emphasis on temporality within the work, as it is frozen in its movement across the water as smoke in the air next to it indicates that another ship has just floated by before the image was created.

Von der Lancken depicts a variety of figures and demonstrates their relation to one another through their interactions and gestures. In the foreground, a group of women huddle together and engage in a dialogue. Through the positioning of their forms, the viewer is able to comprehend the nature of their interaction. The two figures on the far right lean forward and direct their gaze at the figure on the soapbox, indicating their attentiveness to the conversation. The conversation between the women seems casual as if they are friends or co-workers chatting about recent events. On the far right, the figure leans into the conversation as she nonchalantly grabs a boy by the back of his shirt as he attempts to run towards others beyond our view, perhaps changing into or out of his clothes. This interaction between woman and child suggests their relationship as mother and son, as she demonstrates her affection for him by preventing him from running off by himself. Beyond this cluster of figures, a man and a woman stand face-to-face along the water's edge, and their close proximity could imply their intimate relationship to one another. In addition, the casual nature of their stances, with their hands on their hips and slumped body language, indicates their comfort with each other. As von der Lancken depicts the gesture and actions of these figures, he allows the viewer to understand the nature of their relationships and become a witness to the scene. Von der Lancken placed the viewer at ground level as an onlooker. The viewer does not engage in a dialogue with the figures, as their backs are turned and they do not direct their line of sight toward the viewer. Thus, the viewer is placed in the

position of von der Lancken, observing the scene but not participating.

At the Beach appears familiar and accessible to the viewer as already encountered in everyday life, connecting with the viewer in an experiential way through this notion of familiarity and accessibility. However, the viewer is met with a scene that is artificially constructed and manipulated by the artist. Von der Lancken convincingly fashioned forms to evoke naturalistic, visual qualities in this image. In terms of the relationship of the viewer and the framed landscape, von der Lancken expressed the necessity of the isolation of the viewer and the image. Specifically, in his essay entitled, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," von der Lancken wrote, "With very rare exceptions these pictures are to be considered by themselves. The observer standing before one becomes in his interest of the subject depicted quite oblivious of his surroundings."¹⁵ The isolation of the viewer in front of *At the Beach* places the viewer on the same visual plane as the figures, thus increasing the accessibility of the image by creating the illusion that the viewer is within the scene.

One of the key elements in von der Lancken's drawing, that is not seen in any of his other works in this exhibition, is the element of humor. Von der Lancken seems to capture the lighthearted and even playful ambiance of a day at the beach in this particular drawing. An article written about von der Lancken in the *Tulsa Tribune* in 1932, mentions the artist's sense of humor in some of his works. Although it is unknown which of von der Lancken's works this article is referencing, the author writes of von der Lancken's humor in portrait drawings which were similar in technique to *At the Beach*, stating, "...the portrait drawings at the end of the room attract much attention, serving as they do to emphasize the humor which von der Lancken is reputed to bring out where there is a spark of it to be developed."¹⁶ Von der Lancken took advantage of the potential "spark" of humor in *At the Beach*, developing the lighthearted nature of a day spent along the shore through the actions of the children. Beginning on the left-hand side of the drawing, the viewer first encounters a young boy who seems to be hopping up and down in excitement, or perhaps because he's caught a chill from swimming, as he talks to a woman that one can assume is his mother. The image of a bouncing child in front of a parent, speaking excitedly, is one not unfamiliar to parents, and as one continues to look at the image, the child on the far right-hand side of the scene undoubtedly attracts attention. This young boy struggles to get away from his mother, as mentioned earlier, with his arms flailing and one foot firmly on the ground while the other pushes away as his mother adjusts his clothing, clearly unfazed. These two boys act as antonyms to one another as do their mothers, furthering the understated sense of humor in the scene. The boy on

the left is talking to his mother eagerly and her attention is clearly on him, while the boy on the right is trying in earnest to escape from his mother while she is much more interested in the gossiping women over her shoulder than in the actions of her child. Through the actions of the children in this scene, von der Lancken creates a sense of lightheartedness within the drawing, contrasting with the sensibility of many of the softly rendered but serious faces seen in many of his other portraits.

In *At the Beach*, von der Lancken divided the composition into three horizontal bands, clearly visible as foreground, middle ground, and background. Across the top of his composition, von der Lancken presented a view of the sky with large white clouds; below, in the middle distance, is the water, most likely a lake, with a boardwalk leading to a docked steamship and small figures swimming in front. The white clouds in the sky were outlined and the sky filled using lightly-drawn and intersecting hatched lines to show the lightness of the sky and to differentiate it from the clouds. The sky and the lake are separated by a thick line to the right side of the drawing, which flows into the steamship and eventually the boardwalk. Finally, the darker grey of the water is made discrete from the white of the sand using the faint line of the shore. These clearly delineated sections also present three diverse yet compatible zones, indicating three of the four elements of air, water, and earth. The separate are zones rendered with a high degree of detail, to create differences both in tone and the physical sphere.

The bold charcoal outlines of the figures in the foreground of the drawing create a clearer image than those figures in the middle ground of the drawing, thus suggesting depth and texture. For example, the cluster of women with a child in the front right section of the drawing is depicted with heavier, darker charcoal lines. Von der Lancken uses these darker lines to portray the women in a definitive way, highlighting the details of the folds and creases in their garments as well as defining their intent facial expressions.

On the other hand, the figures to the left, depicted in the middle ground of the drawing, are composed of less

refined lines with less detail than those in the front. The two men sitting on the left-most side of the frame, for example, lack the definitive lines of the cluster of women. Instead, these men were drawn with lightly drawn lines, which create a hazier, less defined depiction than those in the foreground. Furthermore, the people swimming in the water even farther into the middle ground appear as small heads, with minimal detail and shading, continuing the progression from the foreground.

At the Beach is a unique work within the exhibition that exemplifies the stylistic bridge between von der Lancken's charcoal portraits and his large-scale drawing, *The Enthusiasts* (cat. 19). The work has the tighter, refined application of charcoal to the portraits while retaining the character-esque forms found in *The Enthusiasts*. *At the Beach* most closely resembles *The Enthusiasts* in terms of style and technique, but is very different in terms of content and composition. *At the Beach* is a much more calm and placid depiction of working-class people as opposed to the sense of motion and energy in *The Enthusiasts*. Von der Lancken's figures in *At the Beach* are much more geometric and angular, which creates the mood of a peaceful day. While there are figures moving and interacting with each other, there is not much movement within the lines and forms of the drawing. There are very few curving, energetic lines and the majority of the lines are either vertical or horizontal, which adds to the angularity and the emphasis on the geometry of the forms. For example, the form of the larger woman, wearing the overcoat, is strongly triangular while still retaining her human form. Her form is heavily outlined and fairly two-dimensional but she registers as believable within the drawing. Von der Lancken also chose to add a drawn frame within the work, which ties into the medium because it gives the drawing a more focused and tight appearance. Rather than let the image bleed off to the edge of the paper, von der Lancken confines the scene to fit neatly within the drawn frame. This frame also makes the viewer concentrate solely on the imagery within the frame rather than imagining what could be going on beyond it.

1 Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 2.

2 Barbara H. Weinberg and Carrie Rebora Barratt, "American Scenes of Everyday Life, 1840–1910" in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/scen/hd_scen.htm.

3 *Eakins' Vision of American Recreation—"In the Good Old Summer Time"* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, <http://edsitement.neh.gov/eakins-vision-american-recreation-good-old-summer-time#0>).

4 Weinberg & Barratt.

5 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 37.

6 Jonathan Walford, *Forties Fashion: From Siren Suits to the New Look* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 14.

7 Marybelle S. Bigelow, *Fashion in History: Apparel in the Western World* (Minneapolis, MN: Burgess Publishing Company, 1970), 264.

8 *Ibid.*, 266.

9 Valerie Cumming, C. W. Cunnington and P. E. Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (New York: Berg, 2010), 41.

10 Bigelow, 267.

11 Ibid., 147, 178.

12 Ibid., 274.

13 Ibid., 250.

14 Ibid., 245, 264.

15 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 10.

16 "Many Visitors See Portraits: Von der Lancken's Works Attract," *Tulsa Tribune* (October 30, 1932).

11 and 12

Portrait of a Woman in a Window and Autumn

by Margot Eberle

Enclosed in a circular and decorative painted frame, a woman looks out and towards the viewer, her face tilted slightly upward. The frame, though painted as part of the image, has a three-dimensional appearance. Four trefoil-shaped decorative details on the frame appear open, revealing the same bright red that is behind the figure. These details add to the illusion of three-dimensionality of the frame itself.

Meanwhile, light softly outlines the left side of her face and picks up the highlights in her loosely pinned up hair. And even as the light enhances the contours of her face, she is outlined in the lightest shade of black, giving her a more linear quality. This outline continues along the hair and seems to attach her ear, neck, and hair all together as one solid form. The pink of her ear, while darker, works with the shades of pink in her face to give her a healthy, almost robust appearance. She seems robust and healthy, and the closely-cropped element of the frame adds to that effect. The cropping brings her into the forefront, and the green of her top against the bright red of the background projects her forward and confronts the viewer with an intimate presence.

Despite being oil on board, the work projects the effect of a watercolor, with the softness of her face and the delicate flowing quality of her hair. The woman in the work is beautiful, and yet her depiction is also a simple one. She wears her hair up and has a plain dark green top of indeterminate style, and is set against a bright red background. While the work is simple in its design, the portrayal of this woman remains poignant in its intimate emphasis on her face and eyes. The viewer follows her gaze out of the frame and then is drawn back in through the effect created by the bright red background and illusion of three-dimensionality. The portrait challenges the viewer as one tries to determine what is truly three-dimensional and what is not.

As unique as this painting is when compared to von der Lancken's other portraits in this exhibition, it does not stand alone. The painting, *Autumn*, is arguably a portrait of the exact same woman depicted in *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*, just shown in a slightly different context. Closely cropped in a similar way, the woman in *Autumn* is not enclosed within a circular frame. However, the autumn leaves in the background of the work almost seem a circle around her, framing her in a way that recalls the framing elements in *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*. These works remain connected as well by their physical frames. Though the frames are reproductions, their style refers to an Arts and Crafts aesthetic, which was one of simplicity and functionality.



Portrait of a Woman in a Window, cat. 11.



Autumn, cat. 12.

Even as the leaves frame the area behind the woman, light is represented in much the same way as it is in *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*, which enhances the oval shape of her face and the angle of her nose. The outline in *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* is also visible in *Autumn*, outlining the

throat of the figure as well as the shape of her ear. Colors are repeated as well, as the green of her blouse projects the woman forward and the pinks in her cheeks add to the robust quality of her presence.

The direction of the gaze of the woman in both of the works is the same; she looks out toward the viewer and the artist, with her head tilted delicately upward to expose the left side of her face and her throat and the light coming in mysteriously from the upper right-hand corner of the picture plane from an unseen source. Both works are intimately cropped, and even their size underscores an intimacy meant for the benefit of the artist alone. These works are small and contained within simple frames, leading one to believe that they were meant not for public viewing, but instead for the private contemplation of a certain individual, namely von der Lancken himself.

However, while these works project moods of intimacy as well as beauty, they also reflect von der Lancken's beliefs about art for the masses. His beliefs can be associated with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement and these works themselves can be seen as referencing those ideals as well. The portraits date to c. 1900, and it was during this time that a group of artists formed the Rochester Arts and Crafts Society; Rochester was one of the many places where von der Lancken worked and taught during his career as an artist.¹

By 1900, the Arts and Crafts movement had spread throughout Europe and into North America, and it is around this time that *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* and *Autumn* may have been informed by the ideals of that movement.² The concept of completely integrating art and life was a fundamental premise of Arts and Crafts idealism.³ As an educator at the Chautauqua School of Arts and Crafts, Frank von der Lancken promoted and encouraged the idea of art for the masses.⁴

To Arts and Crafts artists and designers, art was to be widely available to all people, and not just an elite class of buyers or patrons.⁵ Similarly, von der Lancken proposed that the wealthy must be "prevailed upon to combine in the securing of paintings by local artists and others, these works of art to be rented to different offices in turn on a sort of circulating library system."⁶ In doing so, art would be readily available, and the average person would be more likely to be interested in art and benefit from it.⁷ The idea of a "democratic design" within the Arts and Crafts movement also parallels von der Lancken's call for a "democratization of American art."⁸ To von der Lancken, this democratization could only occur if those more fortunate than most worked to make art available to be seen by all.⁹ And, without this democratization, there could be no hope for a unified art movement or style within America.¹⁰

While von der Lancken did not create art that was

similar to the Arts and Crafts media of embroidery, ceramics, or even tile work, there are stylistic elements within both *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* and *Autumn* that arguably reflect his shared ideals with the Arts and Crafts movement. The first work, *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*, consists of a woman looking out from an artificially painted frame that has a three-dimensional appearance. This painted frame contains a repeated trefoil pattern, resembling leaves. The presence of the painted frame and its decorative role can be traced back to the Arts and Crafts movement as these stylistic conventions reflect its artists' tendency to borrow from British styles in a way that is both innovative and effective.¹¹ The trefoil shape found within the painted frame, for example, can be linked to British medieval church decoration.¹²

This similar leaf motif is repeated within *Autumn*, though it manifests itself as a background decorative effect as opposed to appearing as a painted frame. Leaves in bright oranges and reds form the background behind the female figure, yet they frame her as they move behind her in a circular manner that echoes the frame of *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*.

The cropping and focus on the figure is almost the same in both works, and the woman appears to be the same in both images. In a similar manner, the woman depicted in *Autumn* is projected forward by the effect of her green, billowing outfit, which is juxtaposed with the red and orange leaves behind her. However, she is also connected to the color of the leaves with the addition of the gold in her undershirt. A brown surface beneath the leaves in the background also serves to connect her further to what is happening visually behind her, as it also reflects the color of her hair. She is connected to the natural elements in the background, even as she is projected forward away from them.

While this repeated leaf motif is decorative within both works, it also seems to reflect a particular Arts and Crafts idea. An Arts and Crafts theory that can be suggested here is the "motif rhythm theory."¹³ Proposed by George Washington Maher, motif rhythm theory "involved the constant repetition of a motif drawn from nature, preferably one unique to the site, or one particularly meaningful to the client. This motif would 'bind the design together.'"¹⁴ The autumn leaf pattern is repeated behind the figure in the background, and as the leaves repeat, they also seem to frame her.

This framing by the leaves brings the focus back to the figure, but it also recalls the effect of the painted frame in *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*. Thus, the leaf motif in both works emphasizes the importance of the figure, as well as binding the two works together in a cohesive way that may be central to meaning. Whether that meaning is particular to

an Arts and Crafts sensibility or to the identity of the female figure, or even both, is uncertain.

The close-cropped qualities of the portraits imply a state of intimacy, and the frontal gaze as her head is turned to the side adds to this effect. This sense of intimacy also implies a relationship between sitter and artist beyond that of an impersonal commissioned work, as one realizes that while the sitter now looks out at a third party (the viewer), it is initially the artist toward which this gaze is directed. As the artist observes and depicts the sitter, the sitter observes and poses for the artist. Also, with such an active gaze on behalf of the sitter in these portraits, the sitter becomes less of something to be looked upon and gains more agency as a subject within the frame by looking out.

The relationship that exists between sitter and artist within these works is vastly different from some of the other portraits by von der Lancken in this exhibition. For example, in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* (cat. 7), the same sort of intimate cropping is used, and yet the projection of intimacy is absent. This lack of intimacy is because the female figure depicted within this work is presented completely in profile. While the woman in both *Autumn* and *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* is active within the image because of her direct

gaze, the figure in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* remains passive, allowing artist and viewer both to act the part of the voyeur. One is free to observe the figure in *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress* without any confrontation from the sitter.

Most likely, the woman depicted in *Autumn* and *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* was someone close to the artist. All three of these works were kept by von der Lancken for the entirety of his life and were neither commissioned nor sold.

Autumn and *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* stand out among Frank von der Lancken's other works not only because of their unusual style, but also because of their symbolic qualities in relation to his ideals as an artist and educator. These works can easily be tied to the Arts and Crafts movement which increased in popularity in North America at a time contemporary to von der Lancken's career. And, not only was the Arts and Crafts movement rising in popularity within America, more generally during von der Lancken's time, but there was also a prominent group of Arts and Crafts in Rochester, a place where von der Lancken spent part of his career. Not only do these works reflect von der Lancken's philosophy and ideals about art for the masses, but they also show his ability to create a sense of intimacy in portraiture.

1 Coy L. Ludwig, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New York State 1890–1920* (New York: Gallery Association of New York State, 1984), 16, 34, 83. "It is the purpose of the Rochester Arts and Crafts society to stimulate endeavor, not only in every branch of the arts proper, but in the application of art to industry...."

2 Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 18, 258–261.

3 Ibid., 18.

4 "Art in Daily Life," *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.

5 Kaplan, 18.

6 "Art in Daily Life," 2.

7 Ibid. "The average business man of this country has no time in his busy schedule for the spiritual and the beautiful things of life, that is, for art."

8 "Art in Daily Life," 2. "We must somehow cooperate in the cause of a democratization of American art."

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid. "...it is something that must be remedied before we can have anything worthy of the name of a national art in this country."

11 Kaplan, 258.

12 "Trefoil," University of Pennsylvania Glossary of Medieval Art and Architecture, <http://www.pitt.edu/~medart/menu/glossary/TREFOIL.HTM>.

13 Kaplan, 261.

14 Ibid.

Portrait of a Young Girl

by Marie Petersen

Frank von der Lancken's career as an artist was largely defined by his interest in art education and by his role as teacher of the arts. The impact of this facet of his life on his style as an artist can be seen in his drawing, *Portrait of a Young Girl*. Techniques such as line and shading in this medium-sized portrait drawing highlight von der Lancken's definition of beauty in art, and through these qualities it is possible to relate this portrait directly to his role as an educator through its artistic methods and suggested function.

Von der Lancken's choice of charcoal as a medium is not uncommon for portraits like the *Portrait of a Young Girl*. Charcoal is a powerful medium that can be used to create a wide variety of visual depth and shading in a stylistic drama, which can be seen in the hair and shadows on the face of this girl. Von der Lancken carefully dictated the form and contour of the face in this portrait through clean and controlled lines. A subtle shading of the charcoal produces shadows on the hair and head, giving the head of the sitter believably lifelike features. However, in general, the figure is clean and simple, creating a visual clarity of form. The head and face were carefully and deliberately composed with these thoughtful lines to produce a clean image.

On the other hand, the body of the sitter in *Portrait of a Young Girl* is loosely formed and lightly drawn with an informal bodily structure that does not fit proportionally with her head. Her body appears much smaller than her head, and is delicate and fragile with thin, weak lines. The importance of line and shading to create a believably lifelike image, which is seen so vividly in the head, appears to disappear in the body of the portrait. It is possible that von der Lancken did not have an interest in portraying the body accurately as the head and face of the sitter are the most expressive in representing character. It is also possible that von der Lancken used the contrasting techniques between the head and body of the sitter to portray youth and innocence. Von der Lancken de-emphasized the body as a way to keep the innocence of the sitter, focusing instead on the facial features, expression, and personality rather than the body. In this portrait of a young girl, the gender of the sitter is distinguished not by the features of a female body, but rather through the hairstyle and delicate features of the girl's face. This neutralization of the body keeps the portrait childlike and innocent, fitting the personality of the sitter.

In *Portrait of a Young Girl*, the sitter is looking passively into the distance, not acknowledging either the artist or the viewer. She has a small smile indicated by her slightly upturned lips, an unmoving face, and serene eyes. However,



Portrait of a Young Girl, cat. 13.

the expression does not appear to be a reaction to the artist. The pose of her body is formal, with a straight back and her hands resting passively in her lap. There is no potential motion in her body and it appears to the viewer that she has no interest in interacting with either the viewer, the artist, or her surroundings. It is likely that von der Lancken used this sitter as technical practice for a youthful portrait.

While he was teaching art classes in Chautauqua, New York, von der Lancken used examples of charcoal drawings like this *Portrait of a Young Girl* to show his students examples of how to avoid the quality that he considered “primitive,” a style which he considered necessary to understand in order to comprehend the timeline of the various styles of art. The word “primitive,” was commonly used during the early twentieth century to describe a “limitation in the knowledge of technique,” resulting in a “peculiar flatness, due to the lack of mastery of perspective.”¹ The word was also used to refer to the time before artists understood the techniques necessary

to produce naturalistic works. Von der Lancken believed that many modern artists of his time were returning to this “primitive” idea in order to return to the elemental ideas of art such as balance, rhythm, color, and form, and as a rejection of more recent artistic styles. An example of “primitive” but “modern,” for von der Lancken, can be seen in the art of Henri Matisse, who used bold, primary colors and broad, sweeping lines to portray his figures. Instead of this “primitive” style, von der Lancken believed one “could get back to the elemental without sacrificing all technical knowledge.”²² Von der Lancken wanted art to follow a return to a focus on balance, rhythm, color, and form through precise technical skill, which he perceived as the fundamentals of all art. Von der Lancken believed that when art strayed from its fundamentals, such as that art he viewed as “modern,” the result was “preposterous and often seemingly ugly.”²³ Through a return to these fundamentals, but adherence to technical skill, artists would be able to portray beauty in art. This idea was at the crux of von der Lancken’s pedagogical beliefs, and it was the essential idea he taught as an educator.

It is possible that this charcoal drawing of the young girl could have been shown in an instructive lecture similar to one he gave in 1929 on modern art, and which was documented in the newspaper, *The Chautauquan Daily*, only one year after the date of this drawing. The portrait as an educational tool could explain the unfinished quality of the work, seen in the loosely-formed body and lack of background. This portrait is a good example of the idea of a focus on the fundamentals of technical knowledge he was discussing as an educator at this time, as the lines, form, and other important qualities in the figure create a harmonious and aesthetically appealing image through simplicity and directness.

Von der Lancken further expanded on his belief in the importance of fundamentals by arguing, “if we can give to art the finish of detail characteristic of modern machinery, and yet retain the fundamental elements of beauty, we will create a truly modern art.”²⁴ As far as von der Lancken was concerned, “there is no reason for a work of art being badly executed from a technical standpoint.”²⁵ Von der Lancken is here addressing the belief that traditional technical details of art need to be retained as the modern artist works towards a new style. The new importance of science and mechanics that was prominent during the time that von der Lancken was working as an artist and educator, could contribute to art through an analogous precision and skill. For example, von der Lancken’s interest in the fundamentals of line and structure are seen in the head and hair of the young girl, which are portrayed with fine detail and believable forms. Von der Lancken pays strict attention to the line, shading, and shape of the figure in order to achieve the visual effects

of balance, rhythm, and form that he saw as the foundation of beauty.

For example, the close attention to detail through tight lines and defined shading can be identified in a variety of passages in the portrait, including in the sitter’s hair, which shows the detail of individual hairs as well as a reflection of the light source through highlights and shading. Von der Lancken manipulated the shadows cast in her hair by removing charcoal depth in specific areas, causing a rhythmic play of light, and bringing dynamism and playfulness to the work. He also paid close attention to the shadows cast on her face, as well as the way in which the light interacts with her eyes, creating a bright reflection enhanced by the surrounding shadows. The movement between the shadows on the sitter’s face follows von der Lancken’s adherence to the fundamental depictions of light and rhythm.

This interest in the reaction of light in a portrait can also be seen in other works in this exhibition, for example, in the large-scale portrait *Woman with Flower* (cat. 1). Although the viewer cannot see the source of the light in her portrait, the light is implied through color and shading on the woman’s face and neck. Von der Lancken casts half of her face in shadow, distinctly representing the changes in light through his range of color choices. This depiction of light cast onto the sitter is comparable to the light source in *Portrait of a Young Girl*, which is cast from behind the artist onto the sitter’s face. Because of the monochromatic nature of charcoal as a medium, the shadows are depicted through variance in shading rather than color. However, the same notion of dramatic lighting and shadow can be seen in his works throughout his career.

As discussed above, this drawing was likely to have been a demonstration work, either for von der Lancken’s students or for his clients. He may have used it in classes or lectures to expand upon his teaching, or he may have produced it for students to demonstrate the importance of the fundamental ideas of line, balance, and harmony. While he was still actively moving around the country and teaching at the time in his life during which this work was produced, in 1928, he was also focused on portraiture.⁶

Comparisons can be drawn between this drawing of a young girl and another portrait in this exhibition, the undated *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* (cat. 3). The techniques such as balance and form that von der Lancken highlighted in the charcoal drawing appear in the *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* as well, such as tight and clear lines to show clarity, deep and dramatic facial shadows created by an external light source, and attention to the harmonious relationships of the forms. In both portraits, the sitters look passively into the distance beyond the artist and viewer, with a slight smile, calm expression, and an

immobile body. While these features in the *Portrait of a Young Girl* highlight the sitter's youth and innocence as discussed above, in *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, the expression suggests more the personality of an absent-minded adult. In both works, von der Lancken paid close attention to the psychological implications portrayed by the sitter.

During the years in which von der Lancken taught at the Chautauqua School, he asserted that art was a language of sensation, and that instead of directly verbalizing the message of a work, the image should speak naturally for the viewer, giving one an expressed sensation: "The true function of art education is to bring out in people what they feel naturally."⁷ Von der Lancken goes on to say that the principles of art relate to life itself, such as balance, harmony, and rhythm. This idea of sensation can be seen in the *Portrait of a Young Girl*, in which von der Lancken attempts to imply the personality of the sitter to the viewer. This effect is achieved through von der Lancken's stylistic choices, such as the

dramatic shading of the clean, charcoal lines, as well as in the idea of the contrast between the head and the body discussed previously. When von der Lancken refers to art as a language of sensation, he is referring to this idea of using the principle techniques of balance, harmony, and rhythm to create a specific sensation for the viewer.

This portrait draws attention to von der Lancken as a teacher, the activity that he considered one of the most important facets of his life as an artist. He was once quoted as saying, "the record of my life work is more to be found in the influence, character and achievements, of the hundreds of students I have had, and also the thousands I have preached my gospel of art to."⁸ He taught for many years at art schools in New York, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, but his emphasis on the importance of fundamental skills such as balance, rhythm, color, and form to the modern artist remained an important aspect of his pedagogy throughout his career.

1 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

2 Ibid.

3 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

4 "Modern Art," 4.

5 Ibid.

6 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 41.

7 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

8 Parker, 37.

by Virginia Dudley

In his essay entitled, “On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home,” Frank von der Lancken wrote, “[N]othing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view, literally as well as figuratively.”¹ Von der Lancken never explicitly stated how he defined beauty. However, from this quotation one can deduce that von der Lancken found beauty in the clear and basic expression of fundamental imagery in an elegant, representational manner. The connection of the image with the viewer in an experiential way could also characterize von der Lancken’s notion of beauty. He drew on memory and perception to create this experiential connection between the viewer and his landscapes, as these vistas appear familiar and accessible as scenes the viewer has encountered in life. The fact that von der Lancken did not attribute beauty to a particular type of landscape implies that he found striking beauty in any pictorial landscape. We can interpret *Winter in the Mountains*, along with each landscape von der Lancken painted, as a representation of what he conceived to be inherently beautiful.

Von der Lancken asserted that the framed landscape became a part of the wall on which it was placed, which suggests he believed that paintings of landscapes formed an inseparable part of the physical context in which they were displayed. He also reflected on the notion of permanence associated with framed landscapes in the domestic setting. Von der Lancken explained that into the early twentieth century, there was a newly-found permanence in the United States as people began to settle where they moved: “It is only now that a man in this country feels that his home of stone, and more permanent building material than wood, will remain long enough a family possession for him to have pictures made to order and painted on his walls, or mounted on them to stay there until the walls crumble with age.”² This statement reveals that von der Lancken sought to integrate works of art with domestic life permanently. His reference to painted works remaining on the walls of the home until the foundations crumble reinforces his association of stability and newly-found permanence with the importance of beauty. The integration of painted landscapes representative of an ideal of beauty suggests that von der Lancken saw art as essential to daily life, for those living in the home would be confronted with these images on a daily basis.

The notion of constructed beauty as a painted landscape, specifically in *Winter in the Mountains*, exemplifies that von der Lancken’s landscapes are an abstraction. In other



Winter in the Mountains, cat. 14.

words, the viewer is met with an image that is artificial and manipulated by the artist, despite its naturalistic visual qualities. The painted landscapes in which he found beauty were constructed, or fashioned, in following his visual ideals. Therefore, his framed landscapes cannot be understood simply as copied. The same is true of von der Lancken’s figural images, such as his *Self-Portrait* (cat. 4) from 1912, in which the artist methodically drew together particular visual references to establish his identity. Throughout his many years spent in teaching of art, von der Lancken directly placed the governing terms of art, which for him consisted of harmony, balance, and rhythm, within the realm of human life. In the artist’s discussion on “The Intangible in Art,” delivered on July 12, 1930 in Chautauqua, New York, von der Lancken explained: “[L]ife sometimes becomes completely artificial, and people cease to be keenly sensitive to these laws. Their natural selves become submerged, and they no longer feel things directly from nature.”³ For von der Lancken, artificiality can be overbearing not only in art, but also in life. Such artificiality could have resulted from the rapid modernization of the United States both in technology and art that had begun to captivate people. Continuing in this discussion, von der Lancken asserted, “The automobile is a striking example of good structural design.”⁴ The artist’s reference to the constructed automobile establishes the argument for the dominant presence of mechanized, manmade objects, as opposed to the natural, unconstructed

aspects of life. In von der Lancken's terms, art is an ideal means to foster and communicate beauty in the lives of ordinary people.

Von der Lancken then mentioned in his discussion, "The Intangible in Art," that, "[I]t then becomes the mission of the artist and the teacher to bring people back to their human and natural selves."⁵ This statement highlights von der Lancken's belief that the role of an artist and educator is to work to integrate life and art by evoking what one would experience naturally. This natural experience refers to innate, unlearned sensations. Notably, this phrase introduces a portion of von der Lancken's educative philosophy that enforced the responsibility of the artist to integrate art into everyday life in order to communicate sensations and experiences that were inherent, rather than learned. *Winter in the Mountains* serves as an example of a work that introduces a "natural experience" and sensation for the viewer that results from forms that are convincingly fashioned together to create a landscape that one believes could exist in the natural world.

Von der Lancken's central focus in *Winter in the Mountains* is rhythm and movement through space. He straightforwardly voiced the necessity of movement and rhythm within art in his outward respect for the methods of teaching dance at the Noyes School of Rhythm in New York. In his lecture, "The Intangible in Art," it is noted that, "[H]e declared that the right basic idea in the teaching of art is being developed there. The dance is used to bring out the innate sense of rhythm."⁶ Dance is emblematic of movement and rhythm, and von der Lancken's admiration for teaching through movement and rhythm reveals another important aspect of his educative philosophy. Education through physical, familiar motions resonated with von der Lancken. His statement on dance suggests that he believed the sensibility of rhythm to be intrinsic, while the expression of rhythm through movement must be taught. Through this form of rhythmic and motion-filled education, he argued, "[T]he students are taught to do things spontaneously in a natural, graceful manner."⁷ Von der Lancken evidently favored spontaneity governed by impulsive, familiar movement as a model for visual art, for he implied that such impulsiveness is met with the grace of natural movement and the rhythm that accompanies it. It is significant that von der Lancken praised teaching students to express their innate rhythm through movement, for such a statement coincides with his mission to bring forth images and lessons that would create a familiar experience that one would have naturally in everyday life.

The dominant presence of movement and rhythm in *Winter in the Mountains* adheres to his aesthetic values and confirms that he applied his teachings to his own works, such

as those in which he constructed a landscape that represented what he considered to be an ideal of beauty. Every formal quality in *Winter in the Mountains* supports von der Lancken's focus on rhythm and movement. He established a rhythmic, motion-filled, and balanced space through sweeping back and forth from left to right for the entirety of the image without interruption. Von der Lancken's spatial organization through clear divisions constitutes the visible movement of the scene. He separated his landscape in *Winter in the Mountains* into triangular sections to form a clear foreground, middle ground, and background. The three main triangular divisions are composed of a thick grouping of trees in the foreground, pale green sparse land placed at the mid-right side, and bluish wooded mountains in the distance. These triangular segments overlap and form oblique angles that join to create an expansive landscape. The overlapping of these divisions not only creates the sense of motion, but also suggests both dynamism and energy as the triangular segments cross over one another. Also, the undulation of forms from the trees at approximately eye-level, down to the pale green declining valley, back up to the steep blue mountain, and finally out into the expansive right corner adds to the ceaseless, energetic movement of the image.

The expansiveness of the landscape in *Winter in the Mountains* is suggestive of the treatment of the natural, open space found in many of the large-scale American landscape paintings from the nineteenth century that are generally considered a part of the Hudson River School. Specifically, the great distance represented in *Winter in the Mountains* through the decrease in size and clarity of forms moving into a faint, infinitely continuous space off into the right-hand corner of the image is similar to the way in which Hudson River artists, such as Asher B. Durand, treated space in pictorial landscapes.⁸ Von der Lancken's other landscape, *Valley in Summer* (cat. 15), also expresses vast distance as the forms fade and shrink into the distance beyond the image. The relatively large scale of *Winter in the Mountains* also contributes to the implied distance and vastness of space for the viewer. A smaller-scaled canvas of this same image could still express expansive space, but would be much less physically powerful for the viewer than when depicted in a larger scale.

Furthermore, in using a restricted color scheme amidst this energetic undulation, von der Lancken created a steady, unbroken rhythm. Numerous clashing colors would result in a much less uniformly rhythmic image, for the opposition of color would overpower the image and cause interruptions in the movement within the scene. The even dispersal of overhead illumination also contributes to the constancy of the uninterrupted rhythm. The bright, direct overhead light

leaves a few pockets of light and dark among the landscape in *Winter in the Mountains*, such as on the light tips of the trees in the foreground, but does not cause intense, attention-drawing shadows. The soft, visible brushstrokes are evenly applied throughout the landscape and contribute to the stability of rhythm as well. The absence of extreme variation in these qualities creates a consistent rhythm for the viewer. By contrast, von der Lancken emphasized the stillness, or lack of movement, in an evenly lit, primarily green landscape in his *River Bank, Late Afternoon* (cat. 5), in which he built the scene upon a simple, steady upward slope. The nearly undetectable brushstrokes in *River Bank, Late Afternoon* establish a tight, seemingly immobile image.

Von der Lancken's abstract construct of a beautiful rhythmic landscape in *Winter in the Mountains* is enhanced by a notion of temporality. Von der Lancken formulated an image that convinces the viewer of a particular, captured moment in this landscape. Von der Lancken's attention to color, light, and shadow throughout *Winter in the Mountains* allowed him to create the effect of a specific moment in time in which a period of rhythmic movement was captured. The precise tones indicating light and shadow suggest a specific time of day, while the greenness of the land suggests a time of year. However, the color scheme of *Winter in the Mountains* implies lushness and growth, which makes it reasonable to question whether von der Lancken was depicting a mountain range during the winter season at all, for typically such growth is characteristic of spring. This idea of temporality is firmly reinforced by the bird, frozen in flight at the center of the painting and parallel with the eye level of the viewer. The construct of temporality corresponds with the

ideal of beauty in *Winter in the Mountains*, as each visual element is abstract and artificial in its nature.

In particular, von der Lancken's focus on light and color to create a seemingly natural, temporal atmosphere is evocative of American Impressionist images produced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹ The visible haze in von der Lancken's landscape is suggestive of atmospheric effects one would observe if looking across a vast distance. These atmospheric effects consist in the blurred, less-defined forms as the image recedes into the distance. In 1922, von der Lancken remarked that American artists have gained the greatest and most useful insight from French Impressionism: "We have gained more from this school of impressionism than from any other 'ism.'"¹⁰ He argued that pre-Impressionist and Impressionist artists, such as Manet and Monet, have provided useful explorations into the representation of light and color.¹¹ The idea of temporality within *Winter in the Mountains* confronts the viewer with a specific location, time of day, and time of year, which helps to create an abstract yet believable and familiar image.

Von der Lancken favored the complete isolation of the viewer and the framed work of art.¹² The isolation of a single viewer with *Winter in the Mountains* draws attention to von der Lancken's deliberate and implied placement of the viewer upon an adjacent hilltop looking out on a scene that he would have argued exemplified beauty. The elusive presence of the viewer within the scene contributes to the artist's artificial construct of an ideally beautiful landscape that one should encounter in everyday life, thus contributing to his valued notion of familiarity and experience.

1 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.

2 Ibid., 12.

3 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

4 Ibid., 4.

5 Ibid., 1.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Linda S. Ferber, *The Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision* (New York: The New York Historical Society, 2009), 13. "Their mission, as they saw it, was to create an "American" landscape vision and literary voice based on the exploration of Nature—the natural world defined as a resource for spiritual renewal and as an expression of cultural and national identity."

9 William H. Gerds, *American Impressionism* (New York: Cross River Press, Ltd., 1984), 15.

10 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

11 Ibid.

12 Von der Lancken, 12.

by Britton Chance

Frank von der Lancken painted many landscapes and he considered them vital components of everyday life. In one of his writings, he states that, “Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view, literally as well as figuratively.”¹ This statement reveals von der Lancken’s philosophy about art and its manifestation as landscape painting. Rather than just occasionally visiting the museum or a gallery to experience art, von der Lancken believed it should be incorporated in everyday life because it can actively enhance one’s life by being present in the home. Since von der Lancken did not just teach or lecture about his philosophy, his principles about art and beauty can be found in his work. Therefore, examining von der Lancken’s landscapes through the lens of his aesthetic philosophy reveals the practical application of his aesthetic philosophy as well as his basic ideas about beauty in art and its connection to life. *Valley in Summer* is one of von der Lancken’s best examples of these aesthetic ideals as manifested through landscape painting.

First, we must understand these aesthetic ideals before we examine them in the context of *Valley in Summer*. Von der Lancken was an educator and he undertook a great number of talks, lectures, and essays in which he discussed art, beauty, life, and the connection between all three. The fundamental goal of a landscape painting and, by extension, all painting is to guide the viewer to contemplate a higher realm through the image and the technique by which it was represented. Von der Lancken believed that the best way to lead the viewer to have these experiences was to represent beauty within the work: “Art to us is synonymous with beauty. If the goal of all the ‘isms’ is Art then it is beauty as well.”² Von der Lancken incorporates a surprisingly large amount of information about his personal beliefs in this short quotation. First, on a basic level, art and beauty were equivalent and interlocking concepts and neither could be analyzed separately. Therefore, when beauty is discussed by von der Lancken or is present in his art, then his goal is the creation of art through beauty as well as beauty through art. The two concepts are one and the same. Von der Lancken believed that you could not have successful art without foregrounding beauty in the work. So, if we follow von der Lancken’s progression that if beauty is synonymous with art, and if nothing is more beautiful than a landscape, then one could say that a landscape is the epitome of creating art, the goal of which is beauty. All of these concepts were interrelated to von der Lancken and progress in a circular fashion. Since von der



Valley in Summer, cat. 15.

Lancken stated that he considered a landscape painting to be the most beautiful form of art, these statements would imply that it is the epitome of art itself.

Contemporaries of von der Lancken were not as interested in placing much emphasis on beauty in their work. For example, Picasso’s Cubist paintings were not created to explore beauty, but were focused on deconstructing the illusion of painting by breaking the rules of perspective and figural representation. An artist like von der Lancken uses various illusions to convince the viewer of the believability of the image and attempts to capture this abstract notion of beauty on a canvas. For a painter to deconstruct and reveal this illusion, as well as de-emphasize beauty, was antithetical to what von der Lancken believed. Therefore, when examining any of von der Lancken’s paintings, and especially his landscapes, discussing the effect of beauty within the painting is extremely pertinent.

Another key component as to why von der Lancken considered landscape painting to be so vital ties into his theories about art and its relation to everyday life. Landscape painting can be the most accessible genre to a viewer of any social class and background because of the familiarity of the subject matter. The importance of accessibility underscores von der Lancken’s belief in the democratization of art and his desire to incorporate art into everyday life, which was stated in the earlier quotation. His desire to democratize art derived from his belief that art is a fundamental right and that society would be improved through constant exposure to art.

But how do all of these concepts of beauty, art, and society apply to *Valley in Summer* and lead the viewer to a higher realm? Von der Lancken creates the illusion of the presence of a beautiful landscape for the audience, which soon forgets the fact that it is only seeing paint on a canvas. The point of the illusion is to guide the viewer to ponder the image and hopefully be guided to higher realms of thought. This is a pastoral scene in which von der Lancken framed the space so that the viewer is placed within the meadow rather than at a higher vantage point, such as is the case in *River Bank, Late Afternoon* (cat. 5). The landscape is idealized, but the idealization does not detract from its naturalism. For example, in such a lush and thriving meadow, there should be insects and animals but not a single object capable of independent motion is depicted. Time has been slowed down for a small moment because von der Lancken wants the viewer to be able to rest within the moment and allow for solitude. Another important element is that the viewer is placed within the landscape rather than removed from it. In addition, von der Lancken incorporates the wooden and stone fences to lead the viewer along very slow, shallow diagonals into the background. This slow movement lets the viewer linger on the details of the landscape, which are precisely and skillfully rendered. Once again, this gesture brings the viewer into the landscape by allowing him/her to linger and move at a leisurely pace because the painting is not confrontational.

Von der Lancken deliberately chose to have elements of the landscape be cut off by the frame so that the viewer is reminded that the landscape extends out beyond what is depicted. The viewer is constricted, but one can easily imagine elements beyond the frame. Also, by carefully detailing and framing a portion of the meadow, von der Lancken invites the viewer to step into the landscape. Every flower and stalk of grass is distinct but collectively forms a harmonious whole with no single element competing for the viewer's attention. In fact, every part of the landscape is in harmony with every other part. The color progresses smoothly and elegantly from the bright green-yellows in the foreground meadow to the dusky purple-greens of the hills in the background. While the colors are very saturated and intense, there is nothing garish about the color palette. The color palette and harmony of the painting are further examples of von der Lancken creating mood of calm and tranquility. Von der Lancken used all of these elements to incorporate beauty into the art he produced and thus, hoped to improve people's lives through his art.

This exhibition contains a large number of von der Lancken's landscapes, which initially seem very similar but when examined closely reveal nuances in mood and tone. There are some differences in the formal elements between

the landscapes, but they are different much more in mood and effect. While none of the landscapes in the exhibition are especially dramatic, *Valley in Summer* presents a more placid and tranquil scene than *The Hill at Twilight* (cat. 24) or *The Old Barn* (cat. 2). Those two landscapes have a much more expansive view of space, which gives those scenes a slightly more dramatic effect with the presence of soaring vistas. In *Valley in Summer*, von der Lancken achieves tranquility by downplaying any human presence, which immediately removes any narrative or social commentary from the work. All is calm in the meadow and there is nothing that could cause potential harm or anxiety. While these paintings vary in tone and formal elements, one thing they have in common is reference to the Luminist movement as well as the second generation of the Hudson River School.

Von der Lancken clearly references the Luminist movement in many of his landscapes because of his emphasis on idealizing the landscape and light. The Luminist movement occurred within American landscape painting from approximately 1850–1875 and was very influential on landscape painting in America. *Valley in Summer* is dated somewhere between 1902–1911, approximately thirty years after the “end” of the Luminist movement, so von der Lancken would have been aware of this group of famous American painters. Some of the general hallmarks of Luminism were an emphasis on horizontality (specifically a subtle horizontal alignment of planes receding into the background), mathematical precision over organic irregularities (idealization of the space and objects), a silent or crystalline stillness where “everything happens while nothing does” (a mood of timelessness or removal from time), and most importantly, “luminist” light and radiance.³ The major artists of this movement include Frederic Erwin Church, Robert Salmon, and Fitz Hugh Lane. While *Valley in Summer* represents a number of the elements seen in Luminist painting, such as an emphasis on receding planes and the depiction of light, this is not an explicitly Luminist work.

When *Valley in Summer* is compared to the work of Frederic Erwin Church and Robert Salmon, for example, stylistic differences become readily apparent. *Valley in Summer* does not have the same perfect crystal stillness found in landscapes such as *Twilight “Short Arbiter Twixt Day and Night”* (1850) by Frederic Erwin Church. Unlike the Frederic Erwin Church painting, *Valley in Summer* projects a mood and tone of serenity and calm rather than one of drama and intensity. *Twilight “Short Arbiter Twixt Day and Night”* is an intense dramatic landscape that depicts a spectacular red sunset over a mountain range, whereas *Valley in Summer* is a placid view of a meadow. However, while *Twilight* is more dramatic and intense, it is also a much more inert painting. The viewer cannot imagine the scene before or after the

painting because the imagery is too remarkable to imagine. With *Valley in Summer*, the viewer can imagine what the meadow looked like a moment before and what it will look like a moment after. That is, with *Valley in Summer*, we can place the painting in a temporal chronology while in *Twilight* “*Short Arbiter Twixt Day and Night*,” the viewer struggles to place the scene in a precise temporal moment. This difficulty in placing the scene in a precise temporal moment makes the image more universal, but simultaneously more inaccessible to the viewer.

Temporality is an important feature within von der Lancken’s work because it is one of the only stylistic elements tying a large number of works together. Von der Lancken was very interested in depicting a precise moment in his works whether in landscapes, portraits, or drawings. So, while Luminist artists prize beauty, they did so at the expense of a degree of accessibility and interaction with the viewer. In von der Lancken’s other landscapes, this temporal chronology is found as well in works such as *Clouds (Landscape with Trees on a Hill)* (cat. 25) or *The Hill at Twilight* where the viewer can imagine the past and future of the scene and then can more easily relate to the image. Even in a painting that is quite different from *Valley in Summer*, we can still see this concept of temporality. Von der Lancken’s portrait, *Portrait of a Woman With a Magnifying Glass* (cat. 3), contains no landscape elements, but a sense of temporality is still present. Von der Lancken depicted the woman in a certain moment when the subject was in a precise emotional state. The viewer can imagine what has happened in the recent past and soon-to-be-future in the context of the image. Rather than remove his subjects from time and the world they inhabit, von der Lancken paints these people and landscapes as they

were in a naturalistic, believable world that the viewer can easily access and relate to.

Many other stylistic differences between Luminist works and *Valley in Summer* are readily apparent. In *Valley in Summer*, the meadow, trees, and mountain are painted with great detail but appear softer and do not contain the emphasis on geometry and precision that a work such as *Brace’s Rock, Brace’s Cove* (1864) by Fitz Hugh Lane contains. Also, *Valley in Summer* does not have the same emphasis on horizontality as seen in many other Luminist works. Von der Lancken focuses more on the elements of nature (the trees and meadow) rather than the entirety of the space. However, I would argue that von der Lancken expresses the famed “Luminist” light within this landscape, because even in the shadows, every object seems to have a idealized glow. Von der Lancken has taken every object and presented it in its ideal light. The idealization is subtle, as with everything in the painting, but every flower in the meadow has a full, rich light that produces a radiant effect. Von der Lancken selectively chose elements of Luminism that would be most effective to create a beautiful landscape that would be accessible to a wide range of viewers. Every formal and stylistic element in the scene has been fine-tuned to create a scene of tranquil beauty that invites the viewer in.

Von der Lancken had a very optimistic and idealistic view of what the world should be like. He believed in a world that was filled with art, and that every person in society might interact with and experience art on a daily basis in work environments and homes. Art and beauty were concepts that von der Lancken devoted his artistic career to exploring and representing.

1 Frank von der Lancken, “On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home,” *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.

2 “Modernism in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

3 Barbara Novak, “On Defining Luminism,” in *American Light*, ed. John Wilmerding (Washington, DC: Harper & Row, 1980), 23–29.

by Elizabeth Key

“Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape....” said Frank von der Lancken in a 1909 essay.¹ However, in making this statement von der Lancken did not mean that a landscape in nature itself is the most beautiful, he meant a landscape painting is the most beautiful. Von der Lancken believed that art should be a part of everyday life, and this is a philosophy that the Arts and Crafts movement firmly stood for. Arts and Crafts artists aimed to bring art to the masses by bringing art into daily life, not just into museums and galleries.

Frank von der Lancken also believed that, “...a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view....”² Objects in our life need to contain grace and beauty. Whether it is a car, tools, dance, or sports equipment, anything a person picks up becomes an extension of the body. Von der Lancken said in a 1930 lecture at the Chautauqua School of Arts and Crafts, “harmony, balance, and rhythm are not mere terms of art, but are governing principles related to life itself and to the whole universal system.”³ The beauty and grace of the objects incorporated into everyday life translate into the degree of beauty and grace in humanity. If beautiful art is integrated into people’s environments, human life will take on that beauty around them.

Von der Lancken also wrote, “The average businessman does not have time for spiritual or beautiful things.”⁴ Part of the goal of the Arts and Crafts movement was to bring art to the masses. In *The Chautauquan Daily*, von der Lancken mentions a man named Theodore Pool, who initiated what he called the Dayton Plan, which von der Lancken supported. This plan worked to get businessmen to place art within their workspaces and then circulate the art between different offices.⁵ This arrangement would allow businessmen to have beautiful art around them all day in their lives and workspaces. Von der Lancken also said, “We must instill in our businessmen the responsibility which is ours and theirs to leave behind us an art which we are willing to have our civilization judged by future generations.”⁶ There needs to be a combination of both women’s sense of idealism with men’s sense of logic in art. It is only through this combination that we will reach the democratization of art and produce a form of art that exemplifies the early twentieth century, according to von der Lancken.

Like all of the landscapes in this exhibition, in both *The Hill at Twilight* (cat. 24) and *Sunset Across the Valley*, von der Lancken depicts great spatial depth. Von der Lancken moved further and further west as his career progressed. He began



Sunset Across the Valley, cat. 16.

his career in New York and then moved to Rochester, Chautauqua, and finally to Tulsa.⁷ Von der Lancken lived during the early 1900s where the phrases, “Go West Young Man” and “Manifest Destiny” were commonplace. Whether or not he believed in these ideas is not known, but he did show an interest in painting large open spaces. In all of his landscapes, he shows stretches of open earth, with no human figures in sight. These landscapes have the quality of seeming accessible to everyone. They are places that appear as if they are only a short walk from home.

The sky is the most dynamic part of *Sunset Across the Valley*. Von der Lancken used blue and purple hues, but also gold, grey, yellow, green, and orange, which are visible in the sky. The focal point of this landscape is the sun. The sun is painted in a bright orange color and has a dark grayish-blue line cutting across it, which most likely represents a thin wisp of clouds. The sun breaks the nearly monotone sky and creates a bright spot which draws the attention of the viewer. Von der Lancken said, “It is the reduction of the center of interest to one beautiful object, which is the Japanese idea, but has been also the idea in the past in Europe in the best periods of Art.”⁸ Von der Lancken believed in simplifying life down to one beautiful object, but this idea also translates into the composition and subject matter of his paintings. Although there are many elements and details in this landscape painting, the main focus of this painting is clearly the sun.

The hills of the valley are designed to move the audience’s attention, slowly, from the large tree in the foreground

to the left, to the farmhouse, and then diagonally along the road past the plowed fields in the center of the image, and finally along the glow on the horizon on the left to the sun. The surrounding landscape supports the sun as the focal point by illustrating the sun's effect on nature. The sun is just about to dip down behind the horizon and is emitting its final glow of the day, creating a sense of warmth and casting highlights and shadows over the landscape.

Sunset Across the Valley, like many of Frank von der Lancken's landscapes, has a very gentle, slow-moving composition. The planes are parallel to the frame and each plane, as it becomes more and more distant, is layered over one another and directly in front of the viewer. Softly undulating hills and winding roads are composed to move fluidly beginning at the right of the painting and gently meander back to the left and end at the focal point, the sun. The landscape is not dynamic or angular; there is nothing "sublime" about it. The subject itself is a small valley that could be anywhere in a rural American town.

Sunset Across the Valley is dated between 1902–1911 by Hirschl & Adler.⁹ During this time in von der Lancken's life, he was painting in New Milford, Connecticut. It is most likely that von der Lancken painted this work in New Milford. Thomas Parker describes von der Lancken's time in New Milford as a revelation to the artist. Furthermore he states that, "The surrounding region of this sleepy village became the subject for dozens of von der Lancken's finest landscapes...."¹⁰ Many of von der Lancken's landscapes, including *The Hill at Twilight*, have similar topographies to that of *Sunset Across the Valley*. These topographies fit the description of New Milford as Parker relates: "New Milford's distinctive topography consists, even today, of dense tree lines bordering open fields of grass and wildflowers. In a superb example of an aesthetic goal dictated by local topography, von der Lancken takes the gently rolling hills and pares them down into horizontal bands of land, sky, and water... They are unpopulated scenes that only occasionally incorporate architectural elements..."¹¹ In *Sunset Across the Valley*, von der Lancken depicts almost all of these elements. There are wildflowers in the foreground and the rolling hills become parallel planes, as the scene is unpopulated with only some evidence of human existence.

Sunset Across the Valley looks very similar to the works produced within the American Tonalism movement. Tonalism flourished between 1880 and 1915, and although there were only a few core followers, its innovations were important in poetry, photography, and the Arts and Crafts movement.¹² Tonalist artists most often depict landscapes that are void of people but frequently have evidence of human inhabitation. In the introduction of "The Poetic Vision: American Tonalism," Ralph Sessions describes the

landscapes and style most frequently associated with the Tonalist movement. Tonalists frequently illustrate "a clearing, fence, or path, but are not concerned with activity in and of itself...they strove for unified tonal values, subtle graduations of color and subdued harmonies."¹³ Frank von der Lancken's *Sunset Across the Valley* fits well into the ideas expressed by the artists most often associated with Tonalism. Artists such as George Inness, J. Francis Murphy, and Dwight William Tyron all depict landscapes with brilliant light effects, void of humans.¹⁴ Von der Lancken depicts here a landscape void of human activity, but with evidence of human life including the road, plowed fields, and a farmhouse.

The sky encompasses nearly half of the image in *Sunset Across the Valley*. As previously mentioned, von der Lancken used a variety of colors in the sunset itself. Each color blends into the other and has a range of shades. Although the hues vary, the sky is primarily monochromatic in tone. This effect is best demonstrated by viewing the painting in black and white. When the painting is void of hues, the limited tones, seen especially in the sky, are most visible. This monochromatic method is also frequently seen in the work of Inness, Murphy, and Tyron as well as other Tonalist artists.¹⁵ The Tonalist artists also emphasize the sky and the presence of light within their landscapes, and made images that emphasized the light source and how it interacts with the landscape around it.¹⁶

Many of von der Lancken's other works in this exhibition represent light as it interacts with a surrounding landscape. In *The Hill at Twilight*, for example, von der Lancken depicts a landscape after it has disappeared beneath the horizon, although there is still light emanating from behind the hills. Similar to *Sunset Across the Valley*, the disappearing sunlight in *The Hill at Twilight* casts a variety of shadows and highlights. Furthermore, the subject matter itself is similar; both landscapes depict accessible scenery. The rolling grassy hills with trees and wild flowers shroud the foreground and middle ground of these works, as the sky dominates the background. Both skies have thin wispy clouds and soft glows from the setting or set sun. Both depictions of the sky contain a variety of hues including purples, oranges, and gold. Each landscape is carefully composed to be beautiful but accessible. Von der Lancken believed that harmony, rhythm, and balance are vital for life, and that art is also vital to life.

Another effect that Frank von der Lancken depicts in all of his works, is the idea of temporality. Each work captures a seemingly precise moment in time. In *Sunset Across the Valley*, the sun is about to set below the horizon line and is emitting its final glow of the day. In a few moments, the sun will be gone and the scene will be cast into darkness. Furthermore, the colors in the sky itself are subject to great amounts of

change. Sunsets vary greatly as the sun sinks lower and lower. This particular sunset is very dark, but also very dynamic. The sky changes from a deep blue, to grey, to purple, to orange as it gets closer to the sun, and there are golden wispy clouds running throughout the sky. A few moments before or after, the sky would appear very differently. This effect of temporality gives the viewer a sense that he or she is looking at a photographic image of an exact moment in time. Life is

temporal and changes at all times, and this quality can be seen through the light in this landscape.

Although von der Lancken shows temporality in the moment of time through the sun, the land he depicts is old land. The valley we see has been smoothed out into rolling hills over time. There are large trees and patches of forest, which have matured to their full height.

1 Frank von der Lancken, "On The Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.

2 Ibid.

3 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

4 "Art in Daily Life," *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 9–37.

8 Von der Lancken, 12.

9 Parker, 42.

10 Ibid., 16.

11 Ibid., 16–18.

12 Ralph Sessions, *The Poetic Vision: American Tonalism* (New York: Spanierman Gallery, 2005), 9.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 146–147, 152–153, 166–167.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

The Home at Twilight

by Shayna Goodman

The Home at Twilight is a unique painting in this exhibition as it is a landscape painting with a dominant figure and structure in the composition. Von der Lancken is cleverly able to depict three elements in one intimate composition, while incorporating his ideas about beauty, art, and a return to the natural self through the fundamentals of art.

In a publication, entitled *The Institute Breeze*, von der Lancken wrote an essay, entitled “On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home,” in which he discussed how changing conditions contributed to the misuse of pictures. He explains, “This country being new, there has been a constant and rapid immigration westward, our houses have been but temporary structures and all our possessions had to be such that we could easily transport them.”¹ He described the decline in the idea of living the lives of nomads or pioneers, and beginning to settle down, as the idea of permanence becomes common: “It is only now that a man in this country feels that his home of stone, and more permanent building material than wood, will remain long enough a family possession for him to have pictures made to order and painted on his walls, or mounted on them to stay there until the walls crumble with age.”² This statement relates well to the home in *The Home at Twilight*, as von der Lancken paints a working man posing in front of his home. The home’s permanence is seen in the landscape where plants and trees grow around the structure, suggesting age.

In “On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home,” von der Lancken also discussed the ability to beautify a home with a painting that is well-placed on a wall. He specifically uses an example of an owner who mounted an “excellent” autumn landscape against complementary wallpaper that matched the rich yellows and browns in the painting. Landscape paintings can add beauty to the home as they can work hand-in-hand with decorative qualities. He concludes his discussion in stating, “Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view, literally as well as figuratively.”³ It can be suggested that von der Lancken believes a landscape painting is the epitome of beauty because it is constructed through the fundamentals of art. Harmony, balance, and rhythm are not only the fundamentals of art, but they relate to life itself and von der Lancken believes that beauty cannot be dissociated from life.⁴ Landscape paintings from a literal point of view are familiar, natural scenes, which audiences can find accessible. From a figurative point of view a landscape painting can evoke a certain mood, depending on subject,



The Home at Twilight, cat. 17.

color scheme, and composition. In *The Home at Twilight*, the scene of a working man casually leaning in the doorway of his presumed home can be familiar to an audience, as this man can be found in this scene on an ordinary evening. The contrasting dark color scheme of the painting with the warm light within the home adds a quality of life to the painting. Von der Lancken is cleverly able to incorporate a figure, structure, and landscape into one intimate scene. Diagonal lines, the figure, home, and landscape capture the audience’s attention.

The Home at Twilight embodies the fundamentals of art through harmony, balance, and rhythm, and these qualities are achieved primarily through diagonal lines. The home’s roof creates a diagonal line that separates the entire composition into two halves. On one half, the diagonal separates the sky from the home and landscape. The sky makes up half of the composition and allows the viewer to observe the light’s effect on the clouds. The plants and trees surrounding the home are relatively balanced on both sides, and the home is nearly centered in the middle and is the largest object in the composition. Diagonal lines and the home and figure’s central placement draw the viewer’s attention. Above the home rests a turkey, which is emphasized by the two diagonal lines created by the roof. The turkey’s presence on the roof adds a playful and endearing effect to the composition. The turkey also emphasizes the home’s permanence, as metaphorically this is the turkey’s home as well. Rhythm is created in a balanced composition, though the home and figure are the

focal point, the landscape and sky equally hold the viewer's eye.

Landscape painting can be considered a form of abstraction, as it is an image constructed through line, form, and color. A viewer can appreciate the familiarity of a landscape scene, unlike other non-representational art, which is by contrast inaccessible in the natural world. In *The Chautauquan Daily*, von der Lancken's views about art as existing in balance, rhythm, color, and form is discussed.⁵ He explains that Modern art stresses an important return back to the basic first principles, but returning back to these principles does not require sacrificing technical knowledge and introducing "brutality and coarseness" into art.⁶ Artists, he says, should not abandon technique, but rather they should reduce their work to regain balance, rhythm, color, and form. Balance, rhythm, color, and form are also qualities that comprise a landscape painting.

Von der Lancken draws a connection between beauty and technique, explaining, "Beauty is not something with all the characters smothered out like an over-retouched photograph, therefore the reaction toward what might be called ugly, is thoroughly understandable."⁷ Beauty is about the totality of the details, how all the elements of the painting work together. The technique in brushstroke, color scheme, composition, and subject can all work together to create a beautiful painting. In *The Home at Twilight*, the brushstrokes vary from visible choppy strokes to tight brushstrokes that are not visible. The man in the doorway is painted with visible brushstrokes; his arms, legs, and face show little detail. The home is painted with smooth strokes that can be seen when viewed closely. A wooden fence is seen on the right side, and seems to extend out of the frame, suggesting the extent of the land. Under the fence, visible textured layers of yellow and white, representing light in the distance, peek out above the landscape. On the roof sits an opaquely-painted turkey, which appears silhouetted from the low lighting. The turkey's presence against the clear sky and central position in the composition lends him greater emphasis. Von der Lancken paints choppy strokes in the sky to show scattered clouds and light passing through them, and the landscape in this painting is rendered with attention to portraying the effects of a falling sun on plants and trees.

Von der Lancken is reported to have said the following in an article entitled "The Intangible in Art," in which he discussed his philosophy on the fundamentals of Modern Art: "Harmony, balance, and rhythm are not mere terms of art but are governing principles related to life itself and to the whole universal system."⁸ These fundamentals, harmony, balance, and rhythm are related to the whole universal system or life, as he argues for a return to the natural self because modern life can be "extremely artificial." This idea of reviving

the natural self becomes the mission for the artist and teacher.⁹ Art gives the artist and audience the opportunity to "become sane, wholesome human beings" by returning to first principles. An artist who returns to visual fundamentals can produce work that brings audiences back to a natural state, with a simple foundation.¹⁰ In *The Home at Twilight*, the subject of the home and working man revives life in art through representation of a scene that audiences would generally recognize. A working man, dressed in overalls, with his arms loosely hanging, his legs crossed, and leaning casually against the home's frame has a generic familiarity. According to A. J. Downing, author of *The Architecture of Country Homes*, this home can be classified as a cottage, and was most likely owned by an industrious, working man.¹¹ Simplicity is a predominant character of a cottage, and it facilitates a simple manner of living. In a cottage, the kitchen is usually on the first floor, and in this painting a stove is seen in the doorway, which is most likely the kitchen area. Regularity, uniformity, proportion, and symmetry are consistent with the simple forms of a cottage.¹² The working man in *The Home at Twilight* is not idealized or perfected, and the figure is portrayed as someone would find him on an evening. Von der Lancken's landscape paintings are not artificial looking, as he consciously endeavors to depict landscapes as they might naturally appear. His choice in scenes, such as *The Home at Twilight*, represents his attempts to bring an audience back to "their human and natural selves."¹³ Von der Lancken includes details in the home that show age and poor upkeep, such as the discolored white surface of the home. He includes a plant on the left that covers a portion of the home, which shows the home's long existence in that location. The wooden stairs leading to the home also show age, as the surface of each step is uneven and the landscape in front of the home is not manicured and it appears unkempt.

Von der Lancken's philosophy of art's return to the fundamentals contrasts with his views on Modernism. In an article in *The Chautauquan Daily*, entitled "Modernism in Art," von der Lancken is reported as discussing his disapproval for Modernism, as it relieves the artist of all precedent. The article states, "The result of modernism in art has been to relieve the artist of all responsibility or precedent. In the old days, art was prescribed by the church. Since the Reformation there have been the beginnings of modern art, with the freedom of the artist."¹⁴ In Modern Art, artists were free to return back to the fundamentals of art. In an article, entitled "The Intangible in Art" published in 1930, von der Lancken is said to have explained why he appreciated Modern Art. The article states, "Modern Art is not a detriment, but a real help, because it stresses the importance of getting back to first principles."¹⁵ Von der Lancken's

philosophy of the importance of the fundamentals of Modern Art contrasts with Modernism's combination of "isms" that are too abstract as they manipulate and distort. He further discusses Modern Art's "...conscious return to the primitive is an attempt to get back to the elemental things, balance, rhythm, color, and form which are at the basis of art."¹⁶ He explains that Modern Art "...is necessary for us to become sane, wholesome human beings."¹⁷ Von der Lancken

believed in restoring life in art, as "Life sometimes becomes extremely artificial, and people cease to be keenly sensitive to these laws."¹⁸ *The Home at Twilight* provides an example of a return to the fundamentals of art, and the goal of restoring life in art by not painting an idealized scene of a working man in front of his home, but rather as he would be found naturally on any evening.

1 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 12.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 13.

4 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

5 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

6 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

7 Ibid.

8 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 A. J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses: Including Designs for Cottages, Farmhouses, and Villas, with Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best Modes of Warming and Ventilating* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 40.

12 Ibid., 46.

13 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

14 "Modernism in Art," 7.

15 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

16 "Modern Art," 4.

17 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

18 Ibid.

Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit

by Rachel Weber

Von der Lancken was an outstanding portrait painter, and while he painted landscapes, we are of the opinion that his best work was in the field of portraiture.¹

In July of 1930, Frank von der Lancken gave a lecture on the “Intangible in Art” at the Chautauqua School of Arts and Crafts. He started his address by talking about the construction of beauty through the use of artistic principles, such as harmony, balance, and rhythm. These principles were not only present in art, he argued, but could also be seen in the natural world. Art therefore, should mirror the beauty present in everyday life. In the age in which he lived, von der Lancken noticed a growing disconnect between people and nature, stating that “their natural selves become submerged and they no longer feel things directly from nature.”² Through his art, he wanted to provide the missing link that would allow people to reconnect with nature and their innermost selves. He recognized that life had the ability to become artificial. For example, new technologies lead to the mass production of goods. Anything a person wanted was easily accessible, and life was no longer about what a person needed and instead, became about what they desired. Von der Lancken wanted to counter this development by “bringing people back to their human and natural selves.”³ He saw his art as serving as a reminder about the importance of maintaining balance in life by getting back to basic principles, which were analogous to his artistic principles.

Von der Lancken continued his lecture by providing examples of beauty in everyday life such as seen in dance, sports, and music. He observed that dancers created beauty through the rhythmic movements of their bodies. Athletes, like dancers, were also familiar with rhythm and grace in movement, but athletes used specific objects in conjunction with their movements such as a golf club or baseball bat. These objects “form a graceful line which runs through both the implement and person wielding it. The implements gradually evolve into beautiful forms.”⁴ The repetition of line appears throughout nature and is beautiful because it is one of the simplest forms, which leads to a sense of refinement and order. When a person holds an object, that object becomes part of the human form, like a musician and her instrument. There is no clear end to the object and start to the individual; instead, they are unified. Von der Lancken concluded his lecture by stating, “beauty is synonymous with orderly living and we cannot dissociate beauty from life and from all that is great in the world.”⁵ To exemplify his ideas



Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit, cat. 18.

with visual examples, von der Lancken displayed three charcoal portraits.

The purpose of von der Lancken’s lecture, especially the last quotation mentioned, was to explain that beauty is present everywhere, which was then supported by the visual examples he provided. Von der Lancken was concerned that society as a whole was becoming significantly less interested in art and beauty. In his opinion, if a person knew how to recognize and appreciate beauty, then that person would be able to see it almost anywhere. For example, beauty could be seen in the shape and design of the new technology, like the automobile, which he thought was attractive in “its fitness for its purpose.”⁶ Beauty, in his mind, was about precision, organization, and control. Therefore, beauty also transcended art and was “related to life itself and the whole universal

system.”⁷ What von der Lancken was trying to demonstrate was that the beauty artists portrayed was found in nature. Von der Lancken considered lack of artistic restraint and organization to be ugly. As an artist, von der Lancken endeavored to imitate the beauty in the world around him and as a professor, he taught his students how best to appreciate and understand this beauty.

In von der Lancken’s view, charcoal portraiture was a medium that allowed for the communication of beauty. The *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* (1915–1917) demonstrates an artistic rendering of the natural beauty of the human form. The aesthetic principles of line, balance, and harmony interact in an organized way, forming a cohesive composition. One of von der Lancken’s main strengths as an artist was his ability to convey an immediacy and presence within his works. This effect was achieved in this drawing through the meticulous manner in which Carl is rendered. Every feature is drawn as accurately as possible, to give the illusion that Carl is sitting before the viewer. In all of von der Lancken’s art, especially his portraits, it is evident that he studied every aspect of his subjects to portray them as convincingly as possible. The connection between viewer and artwork was crucial to von der Lancken, who made it his mission to spread his opinions about what constituted “good” art through his own portraits and landscapes. Art should be for the masses and not just for the elite upper class, since everyone deserved to be reconnected with nature and the world around them.

The *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit*, like the three other charcoal portraits von der Lancken displayed during his lecture, epitomizes von der Lancken’s idea of beauty. In this portrait, linearity and the compositional construction work together to form a controlled and elegant image. The repetition of line within the drawing simulates the beauty of line found in nature and can be seen in the vertical striations of the background, the verticality of the portrait, and the dynamic diagonals of Carl’s scalp and tie on his sailor suit.⁸ The background of this portrait lacks detail, and it is the inclusion of a Japanese print that provides the viewer with enough information to understand that Carl is seated in a domestic interior. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many artists studied Japanese prints. The appeal of Japanese prints makes particular sense in von der Lancken’s case, however, because they included many of the same artistic elements that he favored. Japanese aesthetics are generally defined by “elongated pictorial formats, asymmetrical composition, spaces emptied of all but abstract color and line, and a focus on singularly decorative motifs.”⁹ Interestingly, many of these same characteristics are echoed in von der Lancken’s own theories of what constituted “good” art.

What was likely most appealing to von der Lancken about Japanese art was its organized structure. This idea is supported by the fact that von der Lancken was adamantly against contemporary modern art because of the absence of artistic principles and lack of compositional order, in his view, which he thought led to a sense of “brutality and coarseness.”¹⁰ The construction of an image and its parts should be arranged in a harmonious fashion, and all of von der Lancken’s art was calculated and demonstrated with the same artistic principles as a foundation. Similarly, Japanese prints were highly structured and in almost every case, the same characteristics are present, such as two-dimensionality, diagonal planes, linearity, and outlined forms. There are many corresponding compositional elements between Japanese prints and von der Lancken’s *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit*, such as the asymmetry created by Carl in the bottom right corner and the print in the top left corner. Also, Carl is outlined thickly in pencil, which flattens him against the tinted paper, making him look two-dimensional.

More specifically, von der Lancken suggests allusions for the viewer between the *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* and the Japanese print in the top left corner of the image. Both drawings share a vertical orientation and the same lightly drawn vertical pencil marks in the background. Also, each work is contained by a hand-drawn frame and has a large degree of open space. The print has the most detail in the upper half of the image where a heavily drawn crow sits on a branch. Similarly, the upper half of the *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* is very detailed, while the bottom half with his sailor suit is reduced to an outline. Finally, Carl is oriented facing the left while the crow is facing towards the right, as if von der Lancken is showing that the two works are mirror images of each other.

Line throughout the work conveys a quality of calmness and control, while at the same time making the drawing appear more cohesive. The pencil striations in the background unify the image and situate Carl. He does not seem as if he is going to jump off the paper and into the viewers’ space. This grounding allows the viewer a more relaxed setting in which to view the image. Carl is not meant to challenge the viewer, but instead engages him or her in a silent, non-threatening dialogue. Von der Lancken wanted the viewer to interact with his art, providing a specific message about his sitter or, more broadly, about beauty in the world around him as he saw and experienced it.

Instead of always representing straight lines, von der Lancken included diagonals in the portrait to make it appear more dynamic and lively. The diagonal line that forms the part in Carl’s hair starts a larger diagonal across the entire portrait that runs over the bridge of Carl’s nose and down the

front of his sailor suit. The diagonals guide the viewers' eyes around the image in a controlled manner. If the line of Carl's back was extended, it would intersect with the Japanese print. The undulating curve of his bangs sweeps one's eyes in the direction of the print as well. This gesture helps the viewer to understand the print's importance within the image and also to see the parallels von der Lancken intentionally made between the *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* and the Japanese print.

In the *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit*, lines form the foundation of the many geometric shapes. The folds of Carl's sailor suit create a soft triangle over his left

shoulder, which is perpendicular to a triangle of empty space behind his head. Also, Carl's body as a whole is a triangle, inscribed within the rectangle of the portrait. Carl's head is a smoothly rounded oval separated from the surrounding space by a defined outline. It is these geometric shapes that lead to compositional balance, simultaneously exposing the fundamentals of art.

All of the different artistic elements within the *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* can be identified individually, yet they easily flow together in a harmonious fashion to create an image that can be easily navigated by the viewer.

1 Nan Sheets, "Art," *The Daily Oklahoman* (November 1, 1953): n.p.

2 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 "The Intangible in Art," 4.

6 Ibid.

7 "The Intangible in Art," 1.

8 Jo Paoletti, "Children and Adolescents in the US," *Berg World Fashion* 3 (2010): n.p. In 1846, Queen Victoria commissioned to have a portrait painting done of

her nephew in the uniform of the Royal Navy. At that time, the work might have had a deeper meaning connected to patriotism of the British Royal Navy. It was after this particular painting that a trend began in which young children, especially princes of other countries, were depicted wearing sailor suits. This trend reached its peak when sailor suits became popular in the United States in the early 1900s. Women read about children's fashion trends in magazines and were eager to stay up-to-date on modern fashions.

9 Ives Colta, "Japonisme," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jpon/hd_jpon.htm (October 2004).

10 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

by Britton Chance

Frank von der Lancken had a long and prolific career, and throughout his life he gave many lectures on his philosophy about art and beauty. What is distinctive about his art is the reflection of these philosophical principles in the works themselves, and especially his enthusiasm about integrating art into daily life and exploring the deeper connection between art and life. In his large drawing, *The Enthusiasts*, von der Lancken expresses many of these philosophical principles in the depiction of urban working-class people. Von der Lancken aimed to create art that could be appreciated and understood by both individuals in the art world as well as the common person. Accessibility and the widespread distribution of art were very important concepts to von der Lancken and were key to understanding why and how he conceived this drawing. This essay will examine how von der Lancken represents his knowledge of previous and contemporary art movements by referencing stylistic techniques from the Ash Can school, as well as the contemporary tradition of narrative political artwork from the Regionalist movement.

Within the exhibition, this drawing is the only work containing clear narrative elements in contrast to the portraits and landscapes. In this drawing, von der Lancken explores issues of style, content, and a politicized message. The fact that von der Lancken explicitly titled the work and kept it within his personal collection suggests that the work was important to him. Titling the work, *The Enthusiasts*, is suggestive of von der Lancken's own mindset about art and its placement in everyday life. Von der Lancken repeatedly emphasized the importance of art and beauty to everyday life; he felt strongly about both and gave many lectures that examined the topic from multiple angles. In one of his lectures, "The Intangible in Art," von der Lancken stated that, "harmony, balance, and rhythm are not mere terms of art but are governing principles to life itself."¹ In this quotation, von der Lancken connects the creation and presence of art to life itself. When he says that harmony, balance, and rhythm are governing principles of life as well as necessary to art, it can be understood that art itself is fundamental to life if these three concepts are so important to both.

These three principles are readily evident in *The Enthusiasts* in both the expression of harmony, balance, and rhythm within the bodies in motion in the drawing and in a more metaphysical application. In the charcoal marks themselves, we can imagine von der Lancken in his studio infused with energy and passion as he created this work. The enthusiasm and restless energy within every line of the



The Enthusiasts, cat. 19.

drawing suggest vitality, excitement, and inner life, which are reflected in the figures. The range of emotions in the facial features runs from boyish enthusiasm on the newspaper boy, to thoughtfulness on the woman, to stoic determination on the middle-age workman. The figures are drawn in primarily diagonal lines, which give the image a sense of urgency and action. Also, none of the figures are standing upright; all of them are leaning forward, which adds to the momentum and energy of the image. In addition, all of these diagonal elements lead the viewer to understand that the drawing is capturing these people in a moment of drama and motion. It is clear that this scene is set in an urban environment because of the large buildings quickly sketched in the lower left corner. Von der Lancken believed that people from all socioeconomic classes should participate and interact with art on a daily basis and every figure in the drawing contains this enthusiasm for life, and by extension, for art.

Von der Lancken had many finished drawings, several of which are prominently featured in this exhibition, and none of them resemble *The Enthusiasts*. Among all of the drawings in the exhibition, *The Enthusiasts* is the least subtle in expressing his philosophy on the connection between harmony, balance, and rhythm and the creation of art. For instance, in the figure of the workman, the lines that make up his shirt are undulating much like a dancer or athlete in motion. These concepts are present within the other works, but von der Lancken incorporates them much more indirectly and typically emphasizes harmony and balance over rhythm. *The Enthusiasts* is neither a highly refined, tight

portrait like *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit* (cat. 18) or *Portrait of a Young Girl* (cat. 13), nor is it a group scene like *At the Beach* (cat. 10). *At the Beach* is the only other drawing that is similar to *The Enthusiasts* in terms of medium, scale, and content. Both works are large in scale and rendered on paper with charcoal, showing scenes of contemporary life. Beyond those comparisons, there is little else in common with these two drawings. *At the Beach* is rendered in a tighter, more angular style with a greater emphasis on geometry and composition. It is a much more placid and calm drawing than *The Enthusiasts*, which by contrast, shows energy and motion. One of the main differences between all of the other charcoal drawings in the exhibition and *The Enthusiasts* is von der Lancken's emphasis on outline and his use of a curving line. All of the figures in the drawing are outlined in thick lines while details are added sparingly and with either a single line or subtle gradation of the charcoal. For example, to create the facial details of the teenaged boy, von der Lancken only used a single line for the chin, a faint touch of charcoal on the cheek to create concavity, and then three lines to delineate the eye and eye socket. Only one of the faces in the drawing contains a significant amount of detail, while the other faces contain few refined details, but are still very expressive and naturalistic.

Determining the stylistic model for *The Enthusiasts* is a much trickier endeavor than it initially appears. Von der Lancken draws from the tradition of Robert Henri and the Ash Can school, and Regionalists such as Reginald Marsh and Thomas Hart Benton to create the unique style of *The Enthusiasts*. In terms of subject matter, the work contains reference to the American Realist style because of the urban setting and depiction of working-class people, which directly links it to the Ash Can school. Like many of the members of the Ash Can school such as Robert Henri and John Sloan, von der Lancken worked as an illustrator when he was young and had completed his studies at the Art Students League in New York.² The loose handling of form is evocative of Robert Henri, such as seen in his drawing, *La Vie Bohème* (1899), which contains the same repetitive curving lines that create the suggestion of form and mass rather than clearly and precisely delineating form. In his lecture, "Modernism in Art," von der Lancken linked major movements in French art to the Ash Can school, and stated his admiration of the work produced by its artists: "Manet, Courbet and other painters sought to paint unadulterated truth from the standpoint that truth and beauty are synonymous. In America the particular exponents of this school are Robert Henri and George Bellows."³ This quotation contains insight into von der Lancken's views about contemporary artists of merit and also what styles of art von der Lancken admired. Von der Lancken

clearly admired Manet's and Courbet's particular styles of Impressionism and Realism.

Von der Lancken chose to create *The Enthusiasts* in this Realist style because he believed that it would be the most effective at conveying his philosophical concepts. Also, when von der Lancken says, "unadulterated truth," he is not saying that one should paint in a necessarily realistic fashion, but rather that while these four artists had radically different styles, Manet, Courbet, Bellows, and Henri all painted with the goal of representing the life that surrounded them. For these artists, truth and beauty were synonymous, and by painting truth, they were attempting to capture beauty from that particular perspective. In *The Enthusiasts*, we see the culmination of these different philosophies with the harmony, rhythm, and balance present in every charcoal mark of the drawing, while the unadulterated truth informed the subject matter and general style. Therefore, with this perspective in mind, we can place *The Enthusiasts* squarely within the style of American Realism that began with the Ash Can school and stretched to the end of the 1940s.

However, analyzing the stylistic qualities of the drawing alone without attention to the political symbolism would do a disservice to both the drawing and von der Lancken's intentions. *The Enthusiasts* implies philosophical and political similarities to the Regionalist movement, which swept across America in the 1920s and 1930s. Regionalism had no specific style or subject matter associated with it, but rather its artists aimed to "emphasize the importance of an American art that came from, and could speak to all Americans" which dovetails with von der Lancken's own thoughts about the democratization of art and the state of European painting.⁴ Von der Lancken believed that art needed to be brought to the common people and that people needed to make "time...for the beautiful and the spiritual things of life, that is, for art."⁵ Von der Lancken also was very committed to growing American art and developing a distinctly American aesthetic. Von der Lancken studied abroad in France, but he firmly rejected the European avant-garde and stated that, "the rank ugly stuff which is being turned out now in the name of art by a few eccentric individuals is neither representative of nor worthy of our age."⁶ We should notice the emphasis that von der Lancken puts on the word "ugly" in this quote and connect it back to von der Lancken's thoughts on beauty.

Regionalist artists reacted against the European avant-garde and attempted to develop a style that was distinctly American and independent of the styles and trends that were sweeping across Europe. Von der Lancken's philosophy fits perfectly with the movement of creating a populist American style. Also, von der Lancken accepted a commission by the WPA to create a large mural while he lived in Tulsa (1930),

and the WPA financed a good deal of Regionalist art.⁷ The primary Regionalists were Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Stuart Curry, but many other artists also fall under this stylistic category. While there was no “universal” style among the Regionalists, the underlying philosophy of depicting America and creating an American style was the same. The Regionalist movement had some of its roots in the Ash Can school and the revolutionary art that was created by those artists at the turn of the century. However, the Regionalists much more actively incorporated nationalistic political messages into their work, celebrating the archetype of the proud and noble working-class citizens of America. The Ash Can school was less interested integrating explicit political messages into their art, preferring to more simply present life without commenting on it as well.⁸

While a political message is suggested within the drawing, it is problematic to attempt to discern a precise political meaning. The message within *The Enthusiasts* is purposely subtle and not enough is known about von der Lancken’s political thoughts to formulate a complete analysis. However, we can examine how the style and subject matter of the drawing, when juxtaposed within quotations from von der Lancken himself, suggest political ideas within the drawing. The most obviously political element is the bright red banner juxtaposed against a crowd of working-class people. The red banner is the only pigmented element within the drawing, and it stretches behind every single figure. We also know that the individuals are working-class people because, rather than individualize the figures, von der Lancken chose to depict them as archetypes. For example, the middle-aged man in the center of the drawing is detailed in such a way so that he appears to be the ideal of what a middle-aged working-class man should look like. He is stylized and almost cartoon-like, but von der Lancken refrained from completely exaggerating his features. He is thus an idealized figure, just as are the teenaged boy and woman with glasses. Von der Lancken includes just enough detail in the facial features to render them as individuals, but they also read as heroic figures. In addition, von der Lancken made a deliberate choice to depict these working-class individuals as present in America, rather than choosing to make a drawing of middle- or upper-class people enjoying

leisure time and socioeconomic privilege. The political message, therefore, begins to take on leftist, possibly socialist overtones. However, there is nothing explicit or concrete within the drawing that would definitively point to a radical socialist message.

As was mentioned before, the figures are heroic and idealized and von der Lancken’s stylistic choices are relevant to the political message. The drawing is full of movement, excitement, and enthusiasm because the lines themselves are restless and full of energy. For instance, the hat of the woman is shaded with exclusively rough, diagonal lines so that the woman’s head appears to be in motion and that von der Lancken captured her in the act of abruptly turning her head. Also, the presence of the exaggerated, curving lines in the shirt of the middle-class man give his figure a restless, fluid energy. The lines create confidence and determination, especially in the stoic expression on his face. The figures move with purpose and determination and press onward to some clear goal or destination. Also, since von der Lancken chose to idealize the figures in the drawing to heroic types, it connects back to his earlier statement about truth and beauty. The figures in the painting are idealized and beautified to a certain degree. Von der Lancken could thus be seen as attempting to add elements of truth and beauty that would not have been present had he not idealized the figures. The figure of the workman is a heroic, masculine figure and is representative of not a specific workman but of the idea of a workman. The same characterization holds with the woman with glasses, as she is an idealized version of an intellectual woman and therefore representative of an idea. So in a way, the drawing could be representative of von der Lancken himself, that is, von der Lancken’s ideas and philosophies and his enthusiasm, and his ceaseless intellectual pursuit.

It is clear that von der Lancken endeavored to incorporate a multitude of philosophical and stylistic ideals into *The Enthusiasts* and that he was immensely successful in rendering these ideas within a single image. While the image itself is visually exciting, the viewer is not immediately aware of the underlying messages and stylistic gestures. This drawing is unique within the exhibition and is illustrative of von der Lancken’s exploration of American aesthetic as well as his technical skill as an artist and teacher.

1 “The Intangible in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

2 Thomas B. Parker, *Frank von der Lancken: Artist and Educator* exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 2001), 13, 37.

3 “Modernism in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

4 Nancy Heller & Julia Williams, *The Regionalists* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1976), 17.

5 “Art in Daily Life,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 50, no. 11 (July 15, 1925): 2.

6 “Modern Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

7 Parker, 34.

8 William Innes Homer, “The Exhibition of ‘The Eight’: Its History and Significance,” *American Art Journal* 1 (1969): 61–62.

by Shayna Goodman

Many of von der Lancken's landscape paintings show similar compositions of expansive landscape scenes, various vantage points of the artist, and the effects of temporality. *The Elm* is unique in its vertical framing and gouache medium, which create a different visual effect from that of the many other landscapes in this exhibition.

Von der Lancken is credited by Nan Sheets, an artist, teacher, and museum director during the 1950s, with meticulously executing beautiful portraits that are reminiscent of old Flemish masters.¹ In a 1953 article entitled "Art," for the newspaper *The Daily Oklahoman*, Sheets declared, "Frank von der Lancken was an outstanding portrait painter, and while he painted landscapes, we are of the opinion that his best work was in the field of portraiture."² Though von der Lancken is considered to be a very skilled portraitist, his aesthetic philosophies about art and beauty are mentioned in several publications during the early twentieth century, and specifically the fact that beauty lies within a landscape painting. In a publication, entitled *The Institute Breeze*, von der Lancken wrote an essay entitled, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home." In the essay he discussed the effect of a framed picture within a home, and "...the manner in which such pictures form part of the beautifying of our homes..."³ After discussing the place of a painting within a home and the effects of certain frames on a painting, he closes his discussion with the statement: "Nothing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view, literally as well as figuratively."⁴

It can be suggested that von der Lancken equates a landscape painting with beauty as it embodies the fundamental principles of art and life. A landscape painting is constructed through harmony, balance, and rhythm, which are also the basic fundamentals of art and life and he believes we cannot dissociate beauty from life.⁵ A painting forming part of a wall can, as von der Lancken explains, add beauty to a home. To further develop his ideal of beauty in a landscape painting, he uses the example of an autumn landscape that the owner successfully matches with complementary wallpaper, then adding, "This is to illustrate the possibility of using an object of great value that we possess and making it the controlling force in the scheme of decoration."⁶ Landscape painting can give pleasure, from either a literal or figurative view. From a literal point of view, landscape painting is accessible and familiar, and from a figurative point of view, landscapes are natural and an audience can admire



The Elm, cat. 20.

what nature has created. An appreciation of beauty is created from both a figurative and literal point of view as a landscape can be seen as a form of abstraction, and we are fooled by the accessibility and familiarity of its subject.

The Elm is visually different from some of von der Lancken's larger landscape paintings in this exhibition. *The Elm's* intimate scene allows for the viewer to observe the beauty of a landscape closely. Von der Lancken's landscapes share similar qualities of movement and temporality. It can be argued that von der Lancken's idea of landscape painting must visually include spatial movement and temporality. The vantage point of *The Elm* and the horizontal composition of the painting draw the viewer's eye into the distant space. Von der Lancken is able to create the visual effect of distance in his landscapes and in this case, the trees and stone wall in the

foreground are painted with tighter brushstrokes than the objects in the distance. A newspaper review of the 37th Annual Rochester Art Club remarked the following about his landscape painting, *The River Seen from under the Oak*: “The person who views the first cannot help but feel how cunningly the painter has given the effect of distance to his landscape, which is emphasized by a low hanging branch of oak across the foreground.”⁷ This observation is comparable to *The Elm*, as two trees are placed in the foreground and an elm is painted in the distance. Parallel lines created by the two foreground trees frame the space and draw the viewer’s eye towards the elm in the center. The elm tree in the center is painted in a smaller scale to illustrate the distance. The loose brushstrokes that make up the rolling hills and vegetation in the distance also create the illusion of spatial expanse. The stone wall in the foreground and skyline in the background are horizontally parallel to each other, which shortens the appearance of the height of the frame, while von der Lancken cleverly creates a successful space in a tight frame through the use of vertical and horizontal parallel lines. Parallel lines work together to pull this landscape into a tightly cropped composition, yet space is still effectively represented through variations in brushstroke and compositional choices. More than a depiction of a natural scene, a landscape painting can be seen as abstract since the artist is reshaping a natural subject. All of the elements in this painting result from von der Lancken’s choices to reshape nature into the image he wants the viewer to see. The composition of the landscape is visibly divided into land and sky, and the land occupies more than half of the composition. The rising hills in the distance draw the viewer’s eye upwards. The vertical frame of this painting is a unique choice for a landscape painting, as it does not allow for the ability to depict horizontal expansion, as many of his other landscape paintings show. The vertical frame can be compared to another of von der Lancken’s landscape paintings in this exhibition, *River Bank, Late Afternoon* (cat. 5). In these two paintings, parallel lines break the composition into three sections and the vertical frame emphasizes the illusion of distance. In *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, a rising hill draws the eye of the viewer up to the sky.

Von der Lancken chooses to use certain stylistic devices such as framing, vantage point, composition, and temporality, to portray beauty. Vertical and horizontal frames can create entirely different visual effects. Horizontal frames are common among von der Lancken’s landscape paintings because they allow the viewer to observe a greater visual expanse. Vertical framing may not be ideal for a landscape painting that shows an expansive horizontal view, though vertical framing is effective in *The Elm* through the use of parallel lines in the trees, the stone wall, and the skyline. The

elm tree in the center of the composition is in the distance, drawing the eye of the viewer into the composition and creating the illusion of depth. The vantage point of *The Elm* places von der Lancken in a position slightly diagonal to the stone wall. Because of a tighter vertical frame in *The Elm*, von der Lancken’s vantage point allows the viewer the opportunity to observe the effects of light. Temporality, or depicting a certain point in time, is a theme in his landscape paintings through his manipulation of light. Von der Lancken achieves the illusion of temporality through color, light, vantage point, and composition. In von der Lancken’s other landscape paintings in this exhibition, the audience will notice that many of the paintings suggest a specific time of day. In *The Elm*, the left tree in the foreground is lined with opaque white creating the illusion of sunlight. Opaque white is applied to the leaves to show sunlight against the center elm tree, and two shadows are painted behind the foreground trees, which also imply a high, strong sun. Depicting temporality may be one element that defines what von der Lancken would consider to be beautiful about landscape painting, as many of his paintings consistently show the effects of light on a landscape.

In *The Chautauquan Daily* from 1922, an article titled “Modernism in Art,” presented von der Lancken’s ideas about beauty in art. The writer recounts that he began his lecture by discussing Modernism and all the “ism’s” or movements, including, impressionism, neo-impressionism, cubism, futurism, and synchronism as falling under the umbrella of Modernism, along with the artistic goals of each movement.⁸ Von der Lancken describes each “ism” beginning with Impressionism, which he defines as the “parent.” He draws attention to Cubism and describes the movement as “...the most notorious of the isms, is generally attributed to Picasso. Tho the best known it is least understood.”⁹ He uses the example of Cubism as “vainly” trying to depict all sides of an object. Though abstraction breaks down an object into color, line, shape, and into something beautiful, Cubism exceeds this idea by distorting broken down objects: “It takes the rounded form and shapes it into planes like facets of a diamond.”¹⁰ This idea is different from abstraction, according to von der Lancken, which simply breaks down elements into color, line, and shape. Rather than deconstructing an object, Cubism alters the shape as he describes artists would reshape a rounded form. He explains further, “Cubism opposed the flowing classical line, opposed color, and the laws of perspective.”¹¹ Flowing line, color, and perspective are all fundamental to von der Lancken’s ideal of landscape painting. However, a landscape painting can also be seen as a form of abstraction as it ultimately consists of color, line, and shape.

In a lecture entitled “Modernism in Art,” von der Lancken is said to have stated, “Art to us is synonymous with

beauty, if the goal of all the 'isms' is art, then it is beauty too."¹² Although von der Lancken has made different statements about what beauty is, he does not settle on one example of beauty, but rather draws on multiple examples. In the article entitled "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," he specifically links landscapes with beauty, and in "Modernism in Art," he connects beauty with art more generally. Von der Lancken also made a more specific connection between beauty and technique. Von der Lancken is recorded to have said that, "Beauty is not something with all the characters smoothed out like an over-retouched photograph, therefore the reaction toward what might be called ugly, is thoroughly understandable."¹³ Von der Lancken believed that beauty is about the totality of the details, and how each detail works together in a painting. The connection between technique and beauty is seen in the brushstrokes with which von der Lancken portrays a scene.

Von der Lancken paints his landscapes with attention to the handling of brushstrokes, and the brushstrokes in *The Elm* appear visually different from those of his other landscape paintings rendered in oil. In *The Elm*, an analogy can be made between abstraction and the strong effect that occurs from the opaque contrasted colors. *The Elm* is painted in a medium not used in any other works in the exhibition. Gouache looks visually different from oil paint, as the opaque watercolors give the painting visual solidity. This medium has the same pigmentation as watercolors, but the paints are made opaque by adding precipitated chalk.¹⁴ In *The Elm*, lighter tones are layered over darker tones creating a flat appearance. Though gouache creates a solid and flat appearance, the parallel lines and vertical frame of the painting give

the viewer a distant perspective into the landscape. The sunny afternoon is shown in an opaque white line of sunlight along the thin tree, and the distant elm in the center is also outlined with sunlight from behind it. Two shadows are cast from the foreground trees, indicating the high position of the sun. The slightly diagonal vantage point allows for shadows to be visible, which gives the viewer an indication of the quality of light. The medium of gouache in combination with a loose technique also create the illusion of movement, as the loose brushstrokes in the leaves of the elm and plants appear to be in movement.

In *The Elm*, the entire landscape is painted in loose brushstrokes, though some areas have different degrees of brushwork, and the loose brushwork gives the illusion of movement. Scattered thin, short brushstrokes of white and black charcoal cover the landscape, creating the illusion of terrain. The topography of the distant landscape is illustrated with loose washes of color painted horizontally. Von der Lancken's philosophy is that beauty exists in connection with technique, though "Beauty is not something with all the characters smoothed out like an over-retouched photograph."¹⁵ Von der Lancken depicts unkempt vegetation along the stone wall, which is painted with tighter brushstrokes that show the delicate details of nature. The stones in the wall are not neatly cut, but appear to be broken naturally, and shading and highlighting on each stone shows the uneven angles of each individual rock. The natural cut of the stones complements the unkempt appearance of the plants and weeds. Von der Lancken's choice in medium and color scheme work hand-in-hand in creating a unique landscape painting in comparison to his other works.

1. Jayne Hazleton Campbell, *Nannine Jane Quick Sheets*, Oklahoma Historical Society, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/S/SH021.html>.
 2. Nan Sheets, "Art," *The Daily Oklahoman* (November 1, 1953).
 3. Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 10.
 4. *Ibid.*, 13.
 5. "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 4.
 6. Von der Lancken, 12.
 7. "Art Club Exhibition Open for Final Day," in *Assorted Rochester Newspaper Clippings*, Hirschl & Adler Archives.

8. "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. *Ibid.*
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.
 14. Mark D. Gottsegen, *The Painter's Handbook* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1993), 247.
 15. "Modern Art," 4.

Portrait of a Young Woman

by Marie Petersen

Frank von der Lancken spent a large portion of his artistic career discussing and defining his own aesthetic ideal and analysis of beauty, as well as aesthetics of beauty with which he disagreed. Von der Lancken was interested in the fundamentals of technique, such as the appropriate use of line, balance, rhythm, and form. On the other hand, he rejected artistic styles and techniques that were both extraneously detailed and those that sacrificed technical knowledge with a resulting flatness of form.¹ These ideas about aesthetics and beauty can be seen in the style and composition of the small drawing, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, which is an undated work. The portrait appears unfinished, displaying only the sitter's head and neck, but is in fact a completed work, evidenced by von der Lancken's signature below the face. The purpose of this work was not to serve as a fully-formed portrait, but instead to showcase von der Lancken's ideals of technical skill and knowledge, which I discuss more fully throughout this essay.

For von der Lancken, beauty in art centered on the form, shape, line, and balance in an image. He avoids representing "modernism" in art, which he views as an unfortunate test caused by a newfound interest in the scientific method and experimentation that was prevalent during the turn of the twentieth century when von der Lancken was studying and teaching. He once said, "these experiments have not the completeness of great works of art," by which he meant that great works must instead follow a more distinct and ordered creative process through fundamental techniques.² He argues that "modernism" is the style that ignores old standards of art such as line, form, and balance, those that von der Lancken believed could create the most significant art, and instead "modern" artists experimented with other styles and techniques such as Cezanne's exaggeration or Matisse's "picture painting."³ Instead of these experiments in art, von der Lancken believed art should pursue a beautiful and visually harmonious aesthetic based on the fundamentals of line, color, balance, and rhythm, because art was synonymous with the idea of beauty itself.⁴

The importance of balance and harmony in line and form can be seen in the subtle beauty of the figure in *Portrait of a Young Woman*. The sitter's face appears visually soft in both line and shape. There is no clear line between her head and neck on the side facing the viewer, which can be partly attributed to the angle at which her head is directed, creating a less-defined visual separation. The viewer can also see this softness in the left and lower sides of the sitter's chin, which are delicately defined by the combination of a slight line as



Portrait of a Young Woman, cat. 21.

well as the arc of shading from her lower cheekbone that continues through her chin. There is simplicity to the portrait as well as a command of line that highlights von der Lancken's belief in the importance of fundamental technical knowledge of composition through line. This style of technically sound drawing to achieve a soft and delicate portrait was a conscious choice by von der Lancken to demonstrate his principles of beauty.

It is difficult to determine at which moment in his life he may have created this work. Without documentation or a date on the work, it would be impossible to know for certain. However, in examining the style of the portrait and understanding his interest in simple and clear form and line as ideals that he taught as an art teacher, it can be suggested that this *Portrait of a Young Woman* was profoundly impacted by his educational career and the fundamental ideas that he was teaching specifically at the Chautauqua School. While working as a teacher at this school, von der Lancken discussed in at least one documented lecture the idea of

decadence in the arts that he vehemently opposed: “Exaggerated action or weak sentimentality and sweetness, is characteristic of decadence...” as well as the idea of “insipid prettiness.”⁵ For von der Lancken, decadence refers to art with extraneous detailing and unnecessary stylistic qualities. He argues that there is no purpose behind decadent works, that the message and ideological unity of the works produced by artists who follow this decadent style are lost in visual detail and extravagance, and that the viewer’s response becomes lost as well.⁶ Instead of this decadent style, von der Lancken asserts, the modern artist should return to the fundamental, elemental ideas in art, which he argues are balance, rhythm, color, and form, those structural techniques that make up the idea of fundamental pictorial skill. Following these technical ideas will return art, in von der Lancken’s opinion, to the most visually effective and ideologically sound design.⁷ Artists have to get back to the most basic principles of artistic design in order to depict the most clarified and naturalistic form of expression.⁸

This movement away from the decadent ideas of egotism and exaggeration, towards the fundamental ideas of the creation of art, can be seen distinctly in the *Portrait of a Young Woman*, which follows the basic principles of line, balance, rhythm, and form. Her face is depicted in clear line and form, with a proportional balance and the soft, delicate style resulting from the elements of fundamental design discussed above. The lines of her face and neck are tightly drawn, with believably naturalistic definition and detail of shape and contour. The idea of rhythm can be seen in the forward momentum of her head, as it appears to emerge from the empty background into an absent light source. The relationship between the tightly drawn lines of the woman’s face and the looser lines of her hair behind her head gives the viewer a sense of von der Lancken’s purpose in the clarity of the face against the small amount of loose, shadowy background behind her head. This portrait is technically simple and well-constructed—clear in focus and intent.

This idea of simplicity in style and straightforward portraiture is common in von der Lancken’s oeuvre, and can be seen in various other portraits in this exhibition. For example, *Woman with Flower* (cat. 1) is a portrayal of a tightly rendered female form, with the same stylistic precision in line and contour as the *Portrait of a Young Woman*. Her expression is portrayed clearly through the use of tight brushstrokes and detailed facial features comparable to the tight lines and clarity of the face of the young woman. Von der Lancken used this simple and technically precise style to give all of his portraiture the clarity that he believed was the appropriate depiction of form.

The ethereal aspect of the drawing, seen in the dreamy expression of the woman’s face as well as the smooth

transition between the sitter’s head and the plain paper, can be compared to another painting in this exhibition, *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree* (cat. 22). In both portraits, *Portrait of a Young Woman* and *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree*, the female sitters appear to have a hazy appearance and a wistful gaze. These expressive effects in *Portrait of a Young Woman* can be attributed to a few key choices made by von der Lancken. The hazy appearance is created through the medium of pencil in the young woman, specifically in the back of the head and hair, and the almost indistinguishable blending of the form into the shadow behind the figure. Her head and neck appear to blend back into the paper while her face projects forward into space. The wistful gaze of both sitters is achieved through the blank, emotionless expressions of both women as well as the choice to have both sitters looking away from the viewer. Both appear as uninterested subjects, not wanting to engage with either the artist or the viewer. This blank appearance is an element in many of von der Lancken’s portraits of women in this exhibition, including *Portrait of a Woman in a Window* (cat. 11) and *Woman with Flower*.

Von der Lancken used similar techniques in other works in this exhibition, showing continuity in his style throughout his career. The lighting in this portrait is similar to that in the *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass* (cat. 3). Both sitters have a broad contrast of illumination and shadow on their face, cast by a light source exterior to the portrait. For *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, von der Lancken used a variance in color range to portray the changes in light and shadow on the woman’s face. However, in *Portrait of a Young Woman*, because it is a drawing in pencil, the shadow is depicted through shading of pencil lines, and by a contrast of light lines and empty spaces to darker, more full lines. He achieves the same goal, however, in both works, demonstrating his ability to portray light, shadow, and atmosphere.

The art of portraiture has been described as representing “not beauty...but either character, charm or yet another quality.”⁹ Von der Lancken used choices such as form and shading to depict this “other” quality. This *Portrait of a Young Woman* has that other quality, a passive indifference, in her facial expression. This expression then becomes the focal point of the image rather than von der Lancken using an extraneous detail in order to depict an idea. The viewer is able to read the sitter’s eyes as passive because of the relaxed shaping of the eyelids, lack of motion, and the bright reflection on the eyes. The face is still, and the head does not appear to be in motion, furthering the assertion that the sitter is a passive figure constructed by von der Lancken.

These soft elements of line, harmonious relationships, and ethereal beauty create a visually enticing, albeit incomplete portrait. Von der Lancken expressed his idea of the

aesthetic of beauty through this small but significant portrait, seen in the clean lines, rhythm of the figure, and a well-defined form. This work can be seen as a clear opposition to

“modernism,” as it instead follows the fundamentals of pictorial style to achieve the aesthetic that von der Lancken valued.

1 “Modern Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

2 “Modernism in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 “Modern Art,” 4.

6 “Modernism in Art,” 7.

7 Ibid.

8 “The Intangible in Art,” *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

9 Herbert Furst, *Portrait Painting: Its Nature and Function* (London: The Bodley Head, 1927), 65.

Portrait of a Woman by a Tree

by Margot Eberle

A young woman of indiscernible age stares off to the left, away from the viewer, and away from the artist depicting her. With elongated arms and an almost shapeless somber black dress, she appears to be almost as tall as the tree behind her. Similar in height and proportion to the tree, she seems further connected to the landscape behind, with her dark clothing and posture. She even seems to bend with the tree's trunk. As her skirt flows downward, so too the tree's trunk almost echoes that movement.

The tree itself is a point of inquiry for the viewer, as its bark is heavily embellished by large brushstrokes, visible as they rise up from the canvas. Highly textural, they emphasize the roughness of the bark, creating the illusion of a three-dimensional object. The tree, despite its strange proportions, is highly believable because of its bark. Meanwhile, the branches project up and around the female figure, almost framing her and bringing the viewer's eye back around to focus on her face, even though her gaze is turned away.

The viewer is free to look upon the figure, and in so doing, it can be seen that there is something "spur-of-the-moment," almost disheveled about her appearance. The identity of the woman is unknown, and one wonders if this painting is in fact an allegory, some kind of romanticized subject. Her dress, suitable to the proposed date of the portrait c. 1900, is extremely formal and incongruous with the setting of the work. Long, dark, and perhaps even too somber for a woman who looks quite young, one is led to wonder about the amount of staging that went into the conception of this image and its subject.

Not only is the nineteenth-century dress out of place with its somber, dark color in contrast to the bright landscape, but the pearl necklace around the neck of the woman appears to be askew, emphasizing her unkempt and haphazard appearance. The necklace is awkwardly looped around her neck in a standard double strand appropriate to the time period, yet as one loop is extremely long, the other is especially tight around her throat. The longer loop of the pearl necklace is also pulled awkwardly around the black bow on her dress. Even the woman's hair seems haphazardly thrown together, mostly up but with a few strands flowing down over her shoulder. The pink bow barely seems to hold it all together.

When compared to von der Lancken's other landscape paintings and portraits in this exhibition, the landscape in the background of this work seems completely out of place. Soft and almost washed out, it has a dream-like, hazy quality unlike anything in his other works. A layer of dark green



Portrait of a Woman by a Tree, cat. 22.

under the canopy of the tree is juxtaposed with an almost mint green in the middle ground. Then, a slightly darker brown tint shifts to a green to a bluish green in the furthest plane of the background. Even the two trees hinted at in the left-side middle ground seem strange, almost like cotton candy and nothing at all arboreal. And yet, von der Lancken's attention to light and its effects on color are very present within the work, even as patches of light illuminate the woman's face and hair and echo on the highly textured bark

behind her. This luminous effect is repeated in the dark green grass around and behind the tree, as the light filters through the tree's canopy and lightens the dark green of the grass almost to the same shade as the mint green grass in the middle ground.

The English Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, led by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, can be associated with this unusual work by von der Lancken. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed in response to the Royal Academy's inability to "keep pace with the growth of demand for artistic training" in the midst of an influx of ambitious young artists.¹ As a result of this lack of adequate educational opportunities, more motivated artists formed sketching clubs and societies, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was one such society.² In style and in composition, *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree* may have been inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, particularly Rossetti's works, in which he depicted solo female figures throughout his career.

Portrait of a Woman by a Tree is confusing as to whether it is in fact a portrait or an allegory. Prevalent in the Pre-Raphaelite focus on realistic depiction of models within their art, was the dominant convention of the "typecast model."³ The typecast model is a Pre-Raphaelite convention initiated by Rossetti's tendency to use the same model to portray several different allegorical subjects with the identity of the sitter still highly recognizable within the work.⁴ As is possibly the case with von der Lancken's *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree*, the "typecast model" ideal "exerts a double demand on the painted figure: it must be simultaneously a faithful representation of the model, and a truthful presentment of the imagined character."⁵ There is something constructed about the work, and yet it also has characteristics of a portrait.

If this convention is operative within *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree*, then it would explain the seemingly bizarre visual nature of the work caused by the confusion between allegory and portrait. The painting appears to be staged, and yet it also reads as a portrait, much like Rossetti's *Veronica Veronese* or *The Bower Meadow*. Rossetti used models from life to create his allegorical paintings, and yet the identity of the sitter was still present enough to pose a dichotomy between the real and imagined within the image.⁶ If this work is staged, there is still also an effort on von der Lancken's part to project something about the sitter's character. And this presentation of character is perhaps most convincingly created through the disheveled appearance of the woman.

However, von der Lancken's *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree* not only resembles Rossetti's works in his possible reference to the ideas of the "typecast model" and the "quasi-double," but also the lone female figure is a construct particular within Rossetti's later works. Long-limbed to the

point of graceful exaggeration, she resembles what Susan B. Casteras has dubbed the "Rossettian figure," which is characterized by that of "a tall, of queenly figure and superb pose; the face shadowed by the abundant waves of crisped black hair, the bone of the face clearly marked...the eyes large, spiritual, and dreamy, the mouth full, Sphinx-lipped."⁷

The woman in von der Lancken's work is presented in a similar way to the women in Rossetti's paintings; she is tall enough to rival the tree, giving her a distinct and powerful presence within the image. And, even as she dominates the space in size, her dark dress projects her forward as well as ties her to the tree. She is a part of the landscape through her relationship with the tree, but she also stands out from it because of the lightness of the grass around and behind her.

While this painting can be associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood because of its stylistic elements, it can also be seen to represent von der Lancken's own ideas about art and what art should be. To von der Lancken, art must be "synonymous with beauty."⁸ And for von der Lancken, the beautiful came from the elemental components of art through technique. Art must be beautiful in order to be successful, and this concept was of the utmost importance to von der Lancken. As he was quoted in *The Chautauquan Daily* of 1929, "the conscious return to the primitive is an attempt to get back to the elemental things, balance, rhythm, color, and form, which are at the basis of art."⁹ These elemental things refer to visual components within an image, and it is those visual components and their effects that create the beautiful in art. A painting is beautiful not in the sense that it is merely pleasing to look at, but it becomes a metaphor for what is beautiful because of its formal elements.

There is indeed balance within the composition, as even with the darkly clothed figure and dark tree that she stands in front of, the distribution of lights and darks in the grass varies from darker to light into the background. The left side of the image is more shape heavy, as hazy trees appear in the background, and yet this effect seems to be balanced out, as there is more variation in color and tone in the background landscape.

To von der Lancken, "beauty is not something with all of the character smoothed out like an untouched photograph," and this idea is highly visible within this work.¹⁰ By this idea, von der Lancken means that it is not just about having a beautiful thing to look at, it is about the material and visual effect of the image. And even as the background remains hazy and almost washed out because of the light colors used, there is still great attention paid to the detail of not only the tree's back, but also the way that the woman's jewelry is strewn about and pulled around the bow on her dress. Even as the background appears dreamlike, the woman has an undeniable presence.

In terms of color as an element that contributes to beauty, this work also can be said to be representative of that particular quality. Light, coming in through the leaves of the tree, illuminates the woman's hair, giving it a golden appearance in places that make her stand out even more from the tree. Light reflects off the pink bow, barely keeping her hair contained in a bun. This detail not only contributes to the haphazard appearance of the figure, but it also emphasizes the somberness of the rest of her outfit. She is beautiful in her gravity, but a sense of innocence also contributes to her beauty with the powerful presence of the pink of the bow in her hair.

While light adds to the evocative quality of color within the work, it also contributes to the success of the depiction of

the tree within the landscape. The light that filters through the leaves highlights the figure's hair, but it also emphasizes the bark of the tree adjacent to the figure's face. This luminous effect highlights the colors within the tree that would not be apparent otherwise. Meanwhile, the lightness of the color in the background emphasizes the tree as a prominent presence within the portrait as well as the figure herself.

Frank von der Lancken's *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree* is a work that not only can be associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's allegorical portraits of women, particularly later works done by Rossetti, but also can be seen as a representation of von der Lancken's ideas about beauty and art.

1 Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing Limited, 2000), 17, 193–205.

2 Ibid., 17.

3 Ibid., 193.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 205.

7 Susan P. Casteras, *English Pre-Raphaelitism and its Reception in America in the Nineteenth Century* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990), 133.

8 "Modernism in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 47, no. 49 (August 18, 1922): 7.

9 "Modern Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 53, no. 46 (August 20, 1929): 4.

10 Ibid.

The Hill at Twilight

by Christina Wolf

Frank von der Lancken's oil on paperboard painting, entitled *The Hill at Twilight*, combines color and brushstroke to create light and temporality, linking this particular work to aspects of the Luminist movement. Although *The Hill at Twilight* is a small painting, measuring only nine by eleven inches, von der Lancken's ideal of beauty as a goal of painting is apparent.

As stated by von der Lancken in *The Institute Breeze*, "nothing is more beautiful than a landscape and a single beautiful landscape well placed on a wall forming part of it can be a source of pleasure from any point of view, literally as well as figuratively."¹ This statement is very telling not only in terms of what von der Lancken thought beauty was, but also why he valued landscape painting in particular. Beginning with the idea of beauty, von der Lancken finds a landscape beautiful because it is the perfect combination of the elements of painting itself—line, color, and shape—that create a recognizable, but at the same time, artificial scene for the viewer. Because the elements that create a landscape painting are formulated by the artist, the image in its final form is not a representation of reality. Instead, the landscape painting is a synthesized product of the artist's hand and imagination. Line, color, and shape work together in a way so that when a viewer looks at the canvas, he or she does not see line, color, and shape, but the illusion of a location with dimension, depth, objects, and light.

In *The Hill at Twilight*, von der Lancken uses color and the combination of colors to create the illusion of light. For example, the dim, hazy lighting of the twilight sky is created through a mixture of colors. Orange, yellow, pink, peach, purple, and even touches of maroon in horizontal bands produce the illusion of a setting sun in the evening sky. In the center of the painting, partly hidden behind the silhouette of a tree, the sun is partly visible, painted in a light yellow. Von der Lancken successfully creates the illusion that the setting sun is illuminating the sky and casting the hillside in shadow through his use of color. The soft evening light is further exemplified through the reflection of the pink light from the setting sun on white wildflowers in the foreground. The viewer understands that the flowers are naturally white in color because of the few flecks of white paint in the foreground that represent select flowers. Von der Lancken paints the majority of the flowers in a light pink, creating an instant understanding with the viewer that the light from the sunset is reflected off the flowers' petals. By creating the effect of reflection, the artist establishes a direct connection between the immediate foreground and background in this landscape,



The Hill at Twilight, cat. 24.

quickly moving the eye of the viewer between the two.

Many of the techniques von der Lancken uses in *The Hill at Twilight*, specifically seen in his representation of light, can be connected to the art movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s known as Luminism. John Wilmerding defines Luminism according to "its most distinguishing features," such as "spacious landscape compositions, often emphatically horizontal in format, with conscious attention to serenity of mood, glowing effects of atmosphere and light, and thin, tight brushwork suitable to their crystalline visions of nature."² Although *The Hill at Twilight* does not display all of these characteristics, many of them are nonetheless visible. Wilmerding's first characterization of a Luminist painting as spacious in composition can readily be seen in von der Lancken's landscape. In *The Hill at Twilight*, the viewer is not only able to observe the wild flowers in the immediate foreground, but he or she is also able to look to the top of the hill that divides the painting and then further on to the rolling mountain in the distance that completes the second half of the skyline.

Continuing with Wilmerding's characterization, von der Lancken's painting is also extremely horizontal. There are three distinctive sections at the lower half of the painting: the immediate foreground with the wildflowers that run straight across the painting left to right; the hill closest to the viewer topped with the dark green tree line that slopes across the painting right to left; and the mountainside located in the

middle of the canvas that slopes left to right. Moving from the countryside to the sky, the horizontal format continues in the low-lying dark purple clouds and then up the canvas with bands of lightly-colored clouds depicted in warm shades of oranges, pinks, and yellows, and light purples.

The warm colors of the sky aid in creating a mood of serenity that Wilmerding mentions as an important aspect in Luminist painting. This mood of serenity can be associated with von der Lancken's ability to capture an exact moment in time in his landscapes. In other words, temporality plays an important role in creating an effective landscape following the standards von der Lancken creates within his own works. Von der Lancken's landscapes are not stagnant, stiff works, but instead represent movement through lines and angles, creating atmosphere. His use of color in this landscape, in particular, creates light. Since the scene represents a sunset, the combination of color creates the illusion of glowing light—one of the main qualities of Luminist paintings.

In contrast to Wilmerding's statement on Luminism, *The Hill at Twilight* does not contain brushstrokes that are extremely thin and tight, as that is not von der Lancken's style. Instead, the viewer sees varying types of brushstrokes throughout. The trees that rim the hill nearest the viewer are the most tightly painted, and even from a distance, one can make out parts of the branches of the largest tree that reach up into the sky. The dark clouds that sit lowest in the sky are also precisely painted, as it is easy to see where one cloud ends and the sky begins. By contrast, the clouds at the top of the painting, closest to the viewer, are painted with light strokes. Looking closely at the painting, one can easily make out the slight upward motion of the artist's hand as he painted this part of the scene. Similarly, the clouds leading from the foreground into the background are also painted in long, easy brushstrokes. Although von der Lancken does not use extremely tight brushstrokes to create a "crystalline" representation of nature, his technique creates depth and dimension and highlights the representation of atmosphere.

It was not only painters during this time period that were captivated by the Luminist movement. The ideals of Luminism also surfaced in literature, serving as "intellectual and literary parallels to luminism."³ Von der Lancken writes that "the language of art is a language of sensation: and the verbal description of a sensation is very difficult."⁴ However, intellectuals and writers such as Henry David Thoreau, who wrote about Luminism, analogously captured the essence of the sensation conveyed to a viewer by these paintings through literature. We can suggest a parallel here to the effects of von der Lancken's *The Hill at Twilight*. As previously mentioned, reflection is an effect that von der Lancken creates to

emphasize light within this landscape. Wilmerding underscores the quality of reflection in art as he writes of the atmosphere it creates: "Reflection took on an especially reverent air at evening. Twilight was a poignant period of time's passage.... Thoreau wondered, 'What shall we name this season? This very late afternoon, or very early evening, this severe and placid season of the day, most favorable for reflection after the insufferable heat and the bustle of the day are over and before the dampness and twilight of evening! The serene hour, the Muses' hour, the season of reflection!'"⁵ In referring to twilight as a particularly reflective period of the day, both Wilmerding and Thoreau are discussing "reflection" as the mental activity of pondering one's thoughts and actions. Although "reflection"—in the physical sense of reflective light from the setting sun—as portrayed in *The Hill at Twilight*, is not the type of reflection discussed in the previously quoted statements, these quotations suggest a connection between the ideas in Thoreau's literature and von der Lancken's painting.

Visually, *The Hill at Twilight* demonstrates reflective light through the pink sky reflected in the white flower petals. As Thoreau stated, twilight is a unique time of day when everything is "serene" and "placid."⁶ The landscape in *The Hill at Twilight* is also calm and quiet, translating the notion to the viewer that he or she is looking at an exact moment in time, a moment, according to Thoreau, that one can draw upon to contemplate the busyness of the recently concluded day as well as enjoy the quietness and stillness of the hour. Wilmerding's and Thoreau's definition of twilight as a time in which mental reflection is prevalent can also be connected to von der Lancken's *The Hill at Twilight* through the visual qualities of the painting. The temporality created through the setting sun and illustrating the fact another day has come to a close, creates the notion of personal, mental reflection, which enforces both Wilmerding's and Thoreau's ideas as well as the impression of privacy suggested in viewing such a tranquil scene.

In von der Lancken's statement that a landscape is the most beautiful pictorial form, he also mentions that when well placed on a wall in the home, a landscape can prove to be a source of pleasure to all those who view it.⁷ Von der Lancken continues to argue his ideas about framed paintings as an essential part of the home, writing, "This is to illustrate the possibility of using an object of great value (a painting) that we possess and making it the controlling force in a general scheme of decoration."⁸ Be it a framed landscape von der Lancken is referencing, or simply any framed work of art, this statement can apply to all of the works in this exhibition as they were all meant for private use.

- 1 Frank von der Lancken, "On the Use of Framed Pictures in the Home," *The Institute Breeze* (May 1909): 13.
- 2 John Wilmerding, *American Views: Essays on American Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 123.
- 3 Wilmerding, 73.
- 4 "The Intangible in Art," *The Chautauquan Daily* 54, no. 15 (July 14, 1930): 1.

- 5 Wilmerding, 72.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Von der Lancken, 13.
- 8 Ibid., 12.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Frank von der Lancken
(1872–1950)

Works courtesy of Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York,
Estate of Frank von der Lancken.



1. *Woman with Flower*, 1938

Oil on canvas, 42 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Signed and dated (at lower left): F. von der Lancken 1938



2. *The Old Barn*, n.d.

Oil on paperboard, 25 x 30 in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



3. *Portrait of a Woman with a Magnifying Glass*, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 35 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.



4. *Self-Portrait*, c. 1912

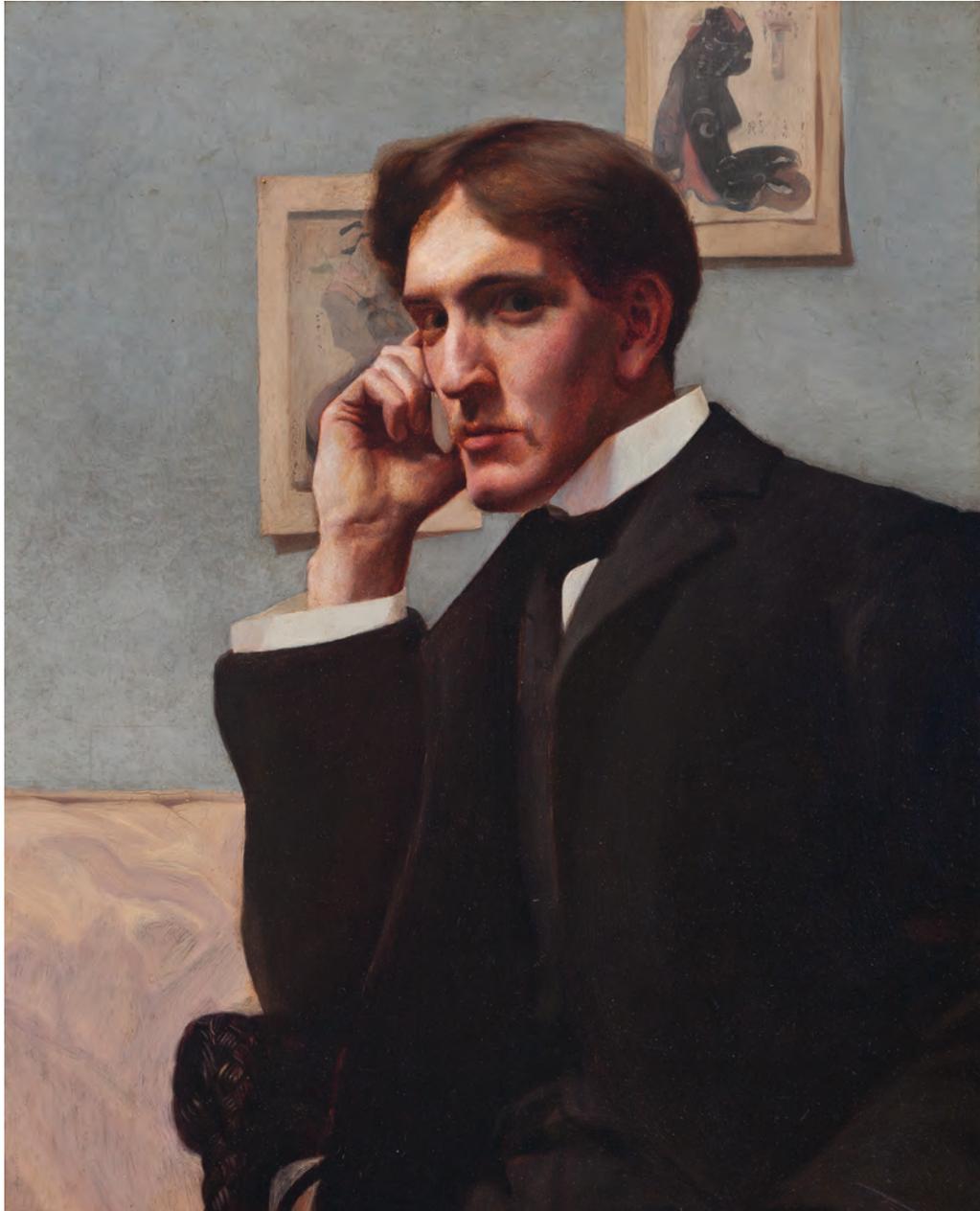
Oil on canvas, 19 x 19 in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



5. *River Bank, Late Afternoon*, 1907

Oil on canvas, 22 x 18 in.

Signed and dated (at lower right): F. von der Lancken 1907



6. *Portrait of an Artist (Self-Portrait)*, c. 1898

Oil on academy board, 16 x 13 in.
Signed (at lower left): F. von der Lancken



7. *Portrait of a Girl in Blue Dress*, c. 1905

Oil on canvas board, 15 ½ x 13 ⅛ in.



8. *Portrait of Giulia and Carl (Wife and Son of the Artist)*, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 27 x 22 1/8 in.



9. *Portrait of the Sculptor Willard Paddock*, c. 1905

Oil on canvas, 41 ½ x 30 in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



10. *At the Beach*, n.d.

Charcoal on paper, 17 x 28 ¼ in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



11. *Portrait of a Woman in a Window*, c. 1900

Oil on paperboard, 11 x 11 in.



12. *Autumn*, c. 1900
Oil on paperboard, 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



13. *Portrait of a Young Girl*, 1928

Charcoal on paper, 26 x 20 in.
Signed and dated (at lower left): F. von der Lancken / 1928



14. *Winter in the Mountains*, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 25 ¼ x 30 in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



15. *Valley in Summer*, 1907

Oil on canvas, 20 x 25 in.

Signed and dated (at lower right): F. von der Lancken / 1907



16. *Sunset Across the Valley*, c. 1902–1911

Oil on canvas, 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



17. *The Home at Twilight*, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 18 x 22 1/8 in.
Signed and dated (at lower right): F. von der Lancken / 19[?]



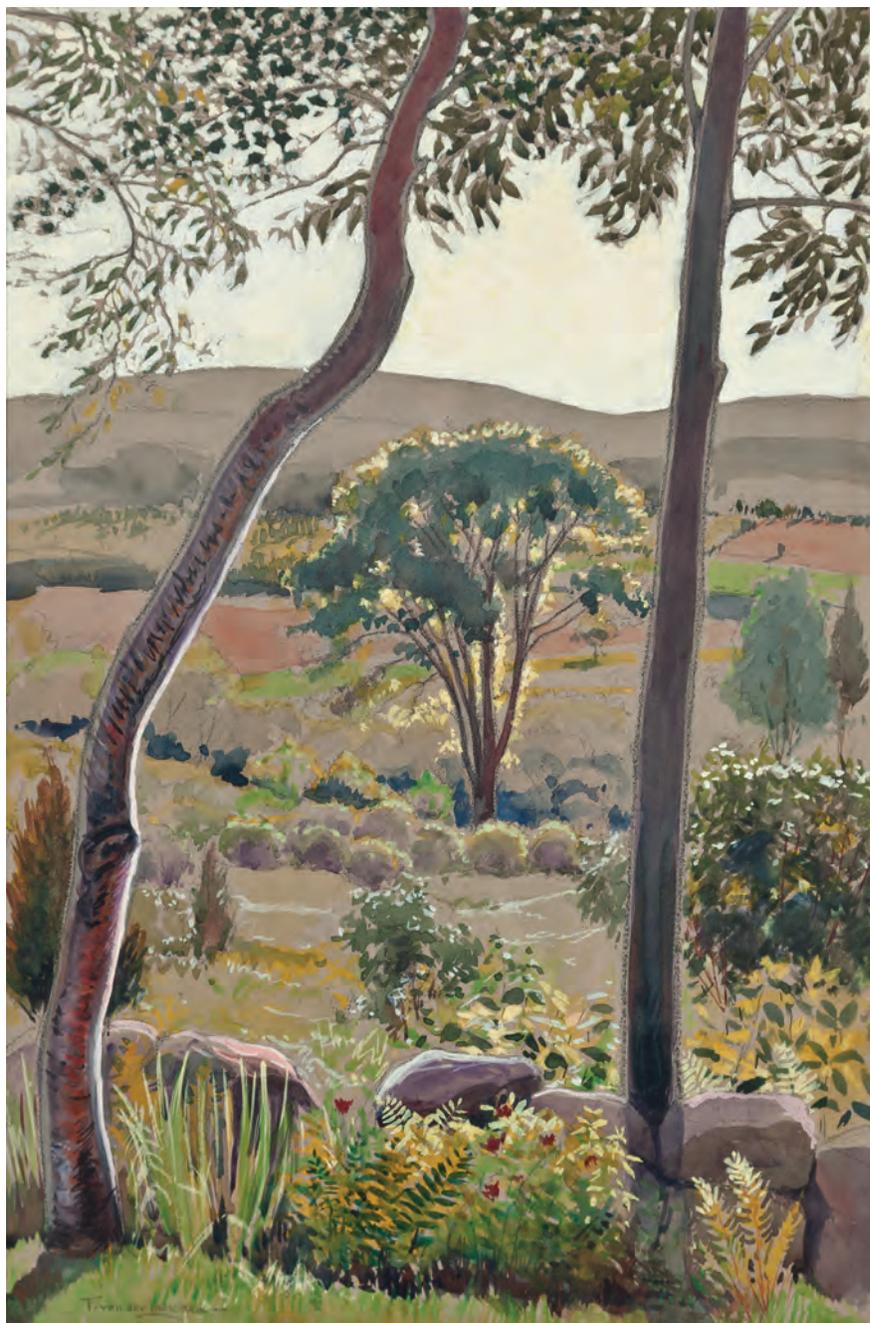
18. *Portrait of Carl (Son of the Artist) in a Sailor Suit*, c. 1915–1917

Charcoal on paper, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Signed (at lower left): F. von der Lancken



19. *The Enthusiasts*, n.d.

Charcoal on paper, 22 x 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Signed and inscribed (at lower left): *The Enthusiasts*;
(at lower right): *F. von der Lancken*



20. *The Elm*, c. 1910–1915

Gouache on board, 16 ½ x 10 ¾ in.
Signed (at lower left): F. von der Lancken



21. *Portrait of a Young Woman*, n.d.

Pencil on paper, 11 x 9 in.

Signed (at lower center): F. von der Lancken



22. *Portrait of a Woman by a Tree*, c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 42 1/8 x 23 3/4 in.
Signed (at lower right): F. von der Lancken



23. *By the Shore*, c. 1907–1911

Oil on canvas, 9 ¼ x 16 in.
Signed and inscribed (on back): #108 F. von der Lancken



24. *The Hill at Twilight*, c. 1902–1911

Oil on paperboard, 9 x 11 in.



25. *Clouds (Landscape with Trees on a Hill)*, c. 1902–1911

Oil on canvas board, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 in.



26. *Landscape with House*, c. 1902–1911

Oil on canvas, 9 x 12 in.

Dickinson

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