



The Water, Monaco

Date

c. 1913

Primary Maker

William John Leech

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

61 x 50.2 cm

Description

'The Water, Monaco' invites comparison with the later 'Un Matin' (see Object Number 228). In both paintings we see Leech's interest in the landscape, and a similar concern for pattern, decorative values, colour, and for contrasts of

light and shade. Leech has simplified the scene, the promenaders on the pier are loosely suggested and boats on the far shore are sketched with dashes of white. This simplification of particulars emphasises the decorative effect of the silhouetted trees. The curving arabesques of their branches create a screen through which, from a striking viewpoint, one looks down on the waterfront and across the bay to a stretch of Monaco seafront. A diversity of techniques is apparent as Leech produces a contrast between the flat treatment and subdued tones of the foreground, and the broken brushwork and vibrant colours, reminiscent of Impressionism, evident in the rendering of the water and town beyond. 'The Water, Monaco' was painted during Leech's frequent visits to France prior to the outbreak of the First World War and it was exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1913. Though he spent the greater part of his career abroad Leech considered himself an Irish painter. He maintained close contacts with Ireland, exhibiting regularly at the Royal Hibernian Academy, and his work was chosen to represent Ireland in Paris [1922] and Brussels [1930]. A retrospective of his work was held in Dublin in 1947 and more recently, in 1996, a further retrospective was shown at the National Gallery of Ireland before travelling to Belfast and Quimper in France. (Catalogue Entry [37], 'A Century of Irish Painting: Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin', The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Japan Association of Art Museums, 1997, p. 153)