

# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

## KUNST



LOVIS CORINTH

1858 Tapiau, East Prussia - Zandvoort, Netherlands 1925

*Self-Portrait*

Black chalk on wove paper

Signed and dated lower right: *Januar 1924 Lovis Corinth.*

500 x 310 mm

PROVENANCE: Allan Frumkin, Chicago – Thence by descent

Literature:

Lovis Corinth was a talented history, genre and landscape painter. He was also an accomplished portraitist, producing numerous portraits of family members and close friends as well as a large number of self-portraits. In his work he set out to attain a level of perception beyond pure representation. His artistic achievement is based on an intensely personal meditation on ageing and dying, and how life shapes the individual's appearance and outlook. As he grew older these themes assumed ever greater importance.

Corinth suffered a stroke on 19 December 1911. His left hand was partially paralysed and his right hand subject to intermittent tremors. He became increasingly preoccupied with the threat of senility and death and this despair infuses his late writings.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, he went on to produce an important group of self-portraits using the genre as a vehicle to express his self-observation. After the stroke his own facial features served him as a veritable laboratory of perpetual painterly experimentation. He would tirelessly scrutinise his own physiognomy in the mirror and recorded what he saw with increasingly vehement, frenzied near-abstraction as the years advanced.<sup>2</sup>

Lovis Corinth is a perfect example of a stroke patient who achieved, by continuing his work, a perfect social and vocational reintegration. He thus became not only an outstanding representant of German Impressionism but he also triggered the Expressionistic era.<sup>3</sup>

Joachim Heusinger von Waldegg has written: *In their immediacy and spontaneity, his self-portraits are the crystallization of a transient mood or situation, a mirror of visual perception. Compared with the self-portraits in oil, there is greater emphasis on the constant flux and changeability of facial expression and the textural qualities of the powerfully emphasized head, often almost over proportioned (in relation to the body) and emphatically modelled in starkly juxtaposed areas of light and dark. The medium itself be it chalk, pencil, etching needle or watercolour, is of secondary importance. Of prime concern is the gradually achieved definition of physiognomic characteristics – 'Gesichtslandschaften'.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lovis Corinth, *Selbstbiographie*, Leipzig 1926, p.185.

<sup>2</sup> Mathias Mühling, 'Krankheit und Genie. Muster der Künstlerselbstdarstellungen in der Moderne', in *Ich, Lovis Corinth. Die Selbstbildnisse*, exhib. cat., Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg 2004, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Stephan Hesse und M. Krause-Schäfer, *Die Selbstbildnisse des Malers Lovis Corinth und sein Schlaganfall*, Neuro Geriatrie, 7 (2\_3) 2010, Hippocampus Verlag, 2010, S. 65-69.

<sup>4</sup> Joachim Heusinger von Waldegg, 'Tradition und Aktualität – Über Corinths Selbstbildnisse und einige andere Motive' in Felix Zdenek (ed.), *Lovis Corinth 1858-1925*, Cologne 1985, pp. 59 ff.

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This drawing has an interesting provenance. Its former owner was Allan Frumkin (1927-2002), a leading American gallerist who introduced Corinth's work to the American art world and promoted it in the late 1950s and 1960s<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See: *Louis Corinth: Landscape. Still Life*, exhib. cat., Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York, 1960.