

PAN

AMSTERDAM

DOUWES FINE ART



Baigneuse à Trouville

oil on canvas: 53.3 by 32.8 cm; Framed: 79 by 57 cm.
signed van Dongen. (lower right)
Executed circa 1925.

Expertise

This work will be included in the forthcoming van Dongen Digital Catalogue Raisonné, currently being prepared under the sponsorship of the Wildenstein Plattner Institute, Inc.

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Provenance

Madame Van der Velde, Le Havre (by 1928)

Pierre Samuel and Emma Céline (née Bayeux) Van der Velde, Le Havre

Jeanne (née Van de Velde) Réquin, Le Havre (acquired by descent circa 1952)

Jeanne (née Van de Velde) and Edouard Réquin, Le Havre (acquired circa 1952 and until 1970)

(Possibly) Galerie Beaux Arts, Paris

Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris, 4 April 1973, lot 16

(Possibly) Collection Lieury, Le Havre

Alain Lesieutre, Paris (acquired by 1983 and until at least 1992)

De Quay-Lombrail, Paris, 22 June 1995, lot 68

Michelle Rosenfeld Gallery, New York (acquired circa 1999)

Kunsthandel Frans Jacobs, Amsterdam

Acquired from the above in 2000 by Jan-Dirk Paarlberg, Amsterdam.

Sotheby's London

Private collection, The Netherlands

Literature

Yvonne Brunhammer, *Art Deco Style*, Paris, 1983, no. 86, p. 48, illustrated in a photograph

Béatrice de Rochebouet, "Vente de la collection Lesieutre: Fin d'un règne", *Le Figaro*, 2 October 1992, n.n., n.p., illustrated (titled *Femme au bord de la mer*)

Christel Aaftink, "Kees Van Dongen", In *Detail: peridieke uitgave van Kunsthandel Frans Jacobs*, February 2000, no. 10, p. 7, illustrated in colour

Notes:

Kees van Dongen was a Dutch-born French painter and printmaker who was one of the leading Fauvists and was particularly renowned for his stylized, sensuously rendered portraits of women.

Executed circa 1925, *Baigneuse à Trouville* is an exquisite example from Kees van Dongen's society period – a period known as the 'cocktail age', during which he became widely recognised for his sensuous portraits of women, personalities from the arts, entertainment, and European aristocracy. It was at this time when Van Dongen's name became synonymous with fame and success and, in the aftermath of the First World War, his Fauvist style softens, and he went on to become one of the greatest chroniclers of the twentieth-century high life.

Upon returning to Paris after the WWI, amidst the background of rapid economic recovery, the vanguard Dutch artist adopted a new 'zest for life'. From exhibiting at Galerie d'Antin in 1917, which was housed in the premises of Paul Poiret, following a successful joint exhibition by Matisse and Picasso at Paul Guillaume's gallery in 1918, van Dongen was almost ubiquitous. 1919 saw the first post-war Salon d'Automne, whereby Anita Hopmans describes his submission as 'a manifesto for the new ages, consisting of portraits of young women with short hair, looking self-confident and attractive [...]. The artist made his models look elegant, their bodies elongated, their jewellery prominent, their eyes looking large and heavily outlined and their legs bare.' (ibid) In essence, by the 1920's, when the present work was executed, van Dongen was not only bombarded with portrait commissions, but was listed by the press as 'one of the greatest living masters in France'. (ibid, p. 14).

Trouville was made famous by Eugène Boudin, with his beautifully detailed depictions of the burgeoning middle classes enjoying a day at the beach in their crinolines and with their umbrellas. Claude Monet followed Boudin's path: some of his most well-known en plein air paintings were made at Trouville - famously *The Beach at Trouville* has sand from the beach imbedded within the oil paint on the canvas surface.

In *Baigneuse à Trouville*, van Dongen presents his bather with a sinuous elegance: like a modern-day Venus arising from the water, her contrapposto pose echoes Botticelli's Venus; even her arms and hands are an exact mirror to the iconic Early Renaissance painting. A certain suggestive humour is evident in Van Dongen's painting - even this reference to such a masterpiece in Western art historical canon seems tongue-in-cheek - and the clear outline of the heart between her thighs is a knowing nod to Botticelli as well, where the Venus grasps her hair to cover herself. Van Dongen's bather is the quintessential modern-day woman, with bathing hat and flapper-esque bathing suit, the modernity underscored by van Dongen's typical style.