

WILLOW GALLERY



La Route Sous la Neige

Maurice de Vlaminck (1876 – 1958)

Oil on canvas, signed. Painted c.1930

Canvas size: 32 x 39.5in / 81 x 100cm

Frame size: 42.5 x 50in / 108 x 127cm

PROVENANCE

Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 June 1933, lot 98.

(probably) Mme Arpels, by whom acquired at the above sale.

Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 12 December 1936, lot 72.

Maître Martin, Versailles, 6 June 1971.

Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 November 1994, lot 32.

LITERATURE

This painting is sold with a certificate ref. no. 19-00027 from the Archives Vlaminck

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Maurice de Vlaminck was born in Paris into a musical family. He himself achieved a high standard in playing the violin and double-bass. He spent part of his childhood in Le Vésinet near Paris and later in Chatou on the Seine. In 1892 he bought his first racing bicycle, planning to make a living as a professional racing cyclist. However, in 1893 he was driven by the urge to paint and took drawing lessons from Henri Regal. A year later Vlaminck married Suzanne Berly and became a racing cyclist to support his family. His career as a cyclist ended in 1896 after contracting typhoid fever. In the same year he began his military service in Brittany.

The turning point in his life was meeting the young artist André Derain who supported Vlaminck's artistic ambitions. Both artists set up studio together on the Ile-de-Chatou which was later recognised as the birthplace of the Fauve movement. At the same time Vlaminck discovered he could write, and several of his novels were illustrated by Derain.

At the Van Gogh exhibition in 1900, Derain introduced Vlaminck to Henri Matisse, but it was the exuberant paint application and vibrant use of colour displayed in Van Gogh's paintings that inspired Vlaminck the most. He poured this new inspiration into his work.

Vlaminck was proud of not having had an academic art training. Primitive artifacts from Africa and elsewhere at the Paris Trocadéro (today it is part of the Musée de l'Homme) excited him as works of art, an interest he shared with Matisse and Picasso.

Violent and sharp colours reflected the new insecure art, a mirror of modern man's instability and desperate search for a new ideal in painting and life. It was the Fauvist movement, of which Vlaminck was an integral part, that was perhaps one of the most radical and impatient movements to complete the transformation of painting, to arrive at a simpler and more direct way of expression.

In 1904 Vlaminck exhibited his work for the first time at the Gallery Berthe Weill in Paris, followed by an exhibition at the Salon des Independents in 1905 and in the same year he was included in the Cage aux Fauves at the Salon d'Automne in the company of Matisse, Derain, Roualt, Manguin and others. During the Fauve years Vlaminck stayed mostly in Chatou, exhibiting with the other Fauves. After 1908 he was more and more influenced by Cezanne's work, harmonising his compositions, simplifying form, and leaning briefly towards Cubism. Acting on a suggestion of the art dealer Ambrose Vollard, Vlaminck made his first trip to London in 1911 to paint along the Thames.

Maurice Vlaminck served in World War I in the reserves. During that time he began writing poetry. After the war ended he settled in Ruel-la Gadeliere with his second wife Berthe Combes. He travelled extensively in France but the majority of his work was painted

around Paris. His work was represented in numerous exhibitions. The Second-Post-Impressionist Exhibition in London and the Blaue Reiter exhibition in Munich included his work, both taking place in 1912. Increasing interest in his work prompted further exhibitions in France. An exhibition devoted to the Fauves at Druet in 1919 included many of his paintings.

From 1917 at Valmondois, where he bought a house, Vlaminck painted canvases that summarized his whole way of seeing. They show his favourite subjects under a violent light: a road, a few houses, trees tossed in the wind. The same country roads appear repeatedly in his paintings, executed in Ile-de-France and later in the Perche region. He consistently accentuated their lyrical character, loading his skies with the threat of a storm or a tempest. It is in its dramatic representation of nature that Vlaminck's painting of the period can be characterized as landscape Expressionism, evident also in its equally vehement use of gouache and watercolour,

His late work is dominated by colorful and brooding still lifes and landscapes. His palette became darker, punctuated by contrasting strokes charged with pure emotions.

Vlaminck continued to travel with Derain during the later years of his life and published dozens of autobiographical accounts of his life and his experiences with other artists. In addition to painting, he produced some fine lithographs, etchings and woodcuts, and authored and illustrated a number of books. Maurice de Vlaminck died on the 11th of October 1958.

The interest into his work has not diminished to this day and most leading museums and galleries in the world pride themselves in including his work in their collection.

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Monday - Friday 9:30am - 6pm or by appointment

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