

Chauncey Foster Ryder (1868 - 1949)

Gathering Clouds

signed, Chauncey F. Ryder, lower right

oil on panel

12" x 16"

Chauncey Foster Ryder was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1868 and raised in New Haven. He eventually relocated to Chicago, where he studied at the Art Institute. He married Mary Dole Keith in 1891, and a decade later, he and his wife deaccessioned the bulk of their possessions, including their Chicago home, in order to fund a trip to Paris so that Ryder might finish his art education. He joined the Académie Julian and studied under Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921) and Raphael Collin (1850-1916). By 1907, he was represented by Macbeth Galleries of New York.

Ryder enjoyed a brief but productive residency as a member of the art colony that had gathered around the Florence Griswold mansion in Old Lyme. "He exhibited with the Lyme artists' group in both 1910 and 1911, stayed in Miss Florence Griswold's house, and painted one of the panels in her dining room. He must have been looked up to by the artists in Old Lyme, because participation in the annual exhibition was by invitation, and permission to stay in the Griswold House was far from automatic. Most important, to be asked to paint one of the panels was considered a rare privilege" (2). After 1911, Ryder began to spend the warmer months near his recently purchased home in Wilton, New Hampshire, where he lived for the rest of his life.

Gathering Clouds depicts an area of hilly New England terrain, and shows evidence of an early winter snowfall. The landscape is composed of flattened, puzzle-like forms that are both identifiable and abstract. Paint has been applied thickly, allowing the colors to merge into one another with the freshness of an artwork executed *en plein air*. By cropping the landscape and ignoring rules of perspective, the artist brings the billowing clouds in the sky closer to the viewer and enhances the visual ambiguity of the space.

Ryder amassed an impressive number of awards and club associations during his career. He received the silver medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915, the Salmagundi Club Show Prize in 1926, the National Academy of Design O'Brig Prize in 1933, and the gold medal at the Paris International Exposition in 1937. He was a member of the Salmagundi Club, the Lotus Club, and the National Arts Club.

Provenance: From the trade to the gallery.

Bibliography:

1. Jeffrey W. Anderson, et al, Connecticut and American Impressionism (Storrs: University of Connecticut, 1980; second printing, 1984), 172.
2. Anderson, et al, 172.