

Talcott, Allen Butler, 1867 - 1908

In the Fields, 1894

signed and dated, lower right

oil on canvas

32" x 40"

Allen Butler Talcott was born on April 8th, 1867, to Seth and Sarah Talcott of Hartford, Connecticut. Contemporaneous with his enrollment at Trinity College, Talcott began taking classes at the Hartford Art Society and enjoyed lessons with the esteemed Dwight W. Tryon (1849-1925), a fellow Hartford native (Ferguson). After a short stint at the Art Students League and perhaps inspired by Tryon's similar experience, in 1890 Talcott left for France seeking further study. After a brief return to the United States, he returned in 1891 for a four-year sojourn that would become, as it was for so many, the pinnacle of his artistic education.

He attended the Academie Julian and studied under Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921) and Benjamin Constant (1845-1902) (Fink). His sketch work from this period includes, as might be expected, far more urban scenes, including the Arc de Triomphe de Carrousel and market scenes done in Bruges. Meanwhile, he was making great strides working in oil. This culmination in interests materialized into paintings such as *In the Fields* from 1894, and other artworks that represent everyday habits of the working class in the Third Republic.

In the Fields is a candid genre scene of two young working class girls. Talcott separates the viewer from the figures with an abundance of varicolored leaves in the immediate foreground, and the lack of an avenue "into" the scene. The high-keyed greens, shadowy blues, and dark yellows of the vegetation are tempered by scattered earth tones and a blue-grey, hazy sky. It is compositionally well-balanced and presents a prime example of Talcott's early 1890's Salon period, which remained his most impressionistic. With the exception of a few examples, Talcott continued in this style throughout his final trip to Europe, a spin through Spain and southern France in 1897 (Ferguson)

Talcott had often portrayed trees in early sketchbooks and in paintings he had done while studying in France. However, he loved the trees and the landscape at Old Lyme, a place he began to visit in early 1901 to reside in Florence Griswold's mansion. He and his wife settled into a home on a rise of land overlooking the Connecticut river, where, sadly, he died in 1908, at the premature age of 41.

Provenance: From a private collection to the gallery.

Exhibitions:

Art Institute of Chicago

Boston Art Club (1908)

Lotos Club

National Academy of Design (1898)

Panama Pacific Exhibition (1915)

Paris Salon (1893, 1895)

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1895, 1902-1909)

St. Louis Exposition, World's Fair (1904)

Cooley Gallery (1991, 1995, 2007)

Bibliography:

Charles B. Ferguson, *Allen Butler Talcott (1867-1908): Painter of Landscapes*, exhibition catalogue (New Britain and Old Lyme: New Britain Museum of American Art and Lyme Historical Society, 1983), 3-4.

Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). 395.

Joseph F. Newman, *Allen Butler Talcott (1867-1908): A Life Unfinished*, exhibition catalogue (Old Lyme: The Cooley Gallery, 2008).