

Pamela Kort Diefenbach and his Time

In 1872 Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach moved from Hadamar to Munich, where he entered the Akademie der Bildenden Künste. Hampered by an operation that impaired his painting arm, he began to ascribe to the views of Eduard Baltzer, who had made vegetarianism into a new religion. Ten years later Diefenbach ascended the Hohenpeissenberg, where he had a revelation that changed his life forever. When he came down he donned a robe and began to go barefoot, becoming Germany's first artist-prophet. Thereafter with the help of his disciple Fidus (Hugo Höppener) Diefenbach began to show his paintings in Munich. Soon his works garnered the attention of Moritz Terke, then director of the Österreichischer Kunst-Verein. He invited Diefenbach to mount a large exhibition of his paintings there in the spring of 1892. The show was so popular that it remained on view until November, by which time at least 78.000 people had seen it. Two years later Diefenbach and his followers moved into an empty villa in Hütteldorf, on the edge of Vienna. František Kupka and Arthur Roessler the future promoter of Egon Schiele, joined him

there. In 1897 Diefenbach established a new commune – the Himmelhof, in Ober-St.-Veit. Some twenty-four members lived there, Gusto Gräser, who would later help to found Monte Verità among them. Diefenbach left Austria in 1898, leaving behind him a trail of debts. In 1900 he took up residence on Capri. He remained there until his death thirteen years later, painting such stunning landscapes views as „Nächtliches Bad bei den Faraglioni“. While the colors and motifs of this large-format painting convey the artists' fascination with the natural beauty of the coastline of Capri, the painting's misty-like atmospheric character bespeak the mysteriousness of nature. It would be left though to such painters as Kupka to break through to a style that articulates such sentiments abstractly. Still, according to the Emil Szittya, who visited Diefenbach on Capri, even if "the form" of his painting remained representational, "in idea they anticipated the whole of abstract painting".



Diefenbach vor der Felsküste von Capri, um 1910

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Hadamar 1851 – 1913 Capri

Nächtliches Bad bei den Faraglioni. 1907

Öl auf Leinwand. 42 × 130,5 cm (16 ½ × 51 ⅝ in.).

Unten links signiert und datiert: Diefenbach 1907.

Werkverzeichnis: Nicht bei Wagner (vgl. Wagner 4.39).

[3229] Im mit Kieselsteinen besetzten Künstlerrahmen.

Provenienz

Privatsammlung, Nordrhein-Westfalen (wohl direkt beim Künstler auf Capri erworben)

EUR 10.000–15.000

USD 11,000–16,500