

PERMANENCE DE L'ÉTÉ (1957)

ETERNAL SUMMER (1957)

BY

CORNEILLE (BELGIUM, 1922)

OIL ON CANVAS, SIGNED AT THE BOTTOM RIGHT: CORNEILLE 15-7-57



Painting before restoration

About the artist

In 2007 the artist Corneille, born Guillaume Corneille van Beverloo, is honored with a retrospective exhibition at the *Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst Amstelveen* (Cobra Museum for Modern Art Amstelveen in The Netherlands). At the occasion the painter is shown on national Dutch television, clearly enjoying the attention and proclaiming his own paintings from the Fifties and Sixties 'steengoed!' (extremely good). Corneille is, among others, the founder of the Dutch Reflex group (1947) and one of the founding members of CoBrA (1948-1951). Internationally he is considered one of the most important, and he certainly is the most popular Dutch artist of the second half of the 20th century. His popularity is still ongoing. In 1950 Corneille settles in Paris and in 1957 he starts to travel. In the first year of his travels Corneille has exhibitions in Caracas, Paramaribo and Curaçao.

May Henriquez and Corneille have a special friendship. They meet in Paris in the early fifties and after May returns to Curaçao they write to each other for many years and always keep in touch. In 1957, during his travels, Corneille visits the Henriquez' in Curaçao. He stays on the island for a short period and works in her studio at Landhuis Bloemhof. Some of the drawings and gouaches that he makes in the studio are later acquired by May and Max Henriquez and now form part of the private art collection of Landhuis Bloemhof.

Acquisition

The painting 'Permanence de l'été' is bought by May and Max Henriquez at Corneille's exposition in the Curaçao Museum. The title of the painting (Eternal Summer) may be a reference to, or his interpretation of, our local climate.

Condition Report

In 2008 the condition of the painting is diagnosed as urgent. The wood of the frame has to be replaced, the canvas needs repair, and damages to the paint itself (cracks and paint loss) have to be treated.

Conservation

Before starting with the conservation of the painting the acidity and ion -activity is defined. As can be seen on the photographs all the different colors are checked since different paint colors can have different measurements. The chemical solutions used for conservation and cleaning are mixed based on these measurements.



Cleaning. Dust and brownish spots like the one in the center of the photograph below are successfully removed.



The picture on the right is taken after cleaning. The original gloss is restored and the colors become vibrant once again.



The photo on the left shows the dust and dirt on the painting causing dullness. On the right the area has been cleaned, the original gloss of the painting is restored.

The framework. Although the wood of the framework appears good, the knife easily pierces through. The wood has been devoured from the inside by termites.



In this condition, the framework (below left) can no longer function as a support. It is therefore replaced with an exact copy (below middle). The only acceptable difference is that the new framework is made of a kind of wood that doesn't appeal to the termites, namely Mahogany. The old framework (below right) is not discarded but wrapped and stored. This is a requirement in the international guidelines for restoration; it may be important for future reference or research.



The condition of the canvas. Especially around the edges and around the nails the condition of the canvas is very poor as can be seen in the photographs below. The canvas has even partly been affected by termites.



As can be seen below, the canvas is carefully repaired with pieces of Japanese paper. After repairs and cleaning, the canvas can be stretched on the frame work (below left). New nails (stainless steel) are used and the canvas is extra protected from the nails by the use of small velvet pieces. This addition gives extra protection to the painting.



Condition of the frame. The original frame (above right) is devoured by termites. Although we are dealing with an original, it has to be replaced. The pieces of the old frame are not discarded but wrapped and stored for future reference and research.



Again an exact copy of the original frame is made and it is painted in exactly the same color. The following series shows how the new frame is carefully placed around the painting. As with the original frame, wooden pegs are used as nails.

