

Hermann Schlittgen, Venice, 1908, Watercolor, Pastel and pen on paper, mounted on cardboard, 50.6 x 39.3 cm, signed lower left and right "H. Schlittgen", inscribed recto lower left "Venedig 08", unframed.

The picture was provided – in museum quality – with a new passe-partout (90 x 70 cm) of the company HALBE. A fitting frame – in museum quality – with museum glass (anti-reflective, very high UV protection, anti-static, abrasion resistant) of the company HALBE can be provided on request.

Hermann Schlittgen (1859 Roitzsch – 1930 Wasserburg am Inn) grew up as an orphan with his uncle. His artistic talent was recognized early on, enabling him to begin studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig at the age of 14, graduating in 1876. He then trained at the Grand Ducal Saxon Art School in Weimar under Theodor Hagen (1842–1919) and subsequently moved to Munich, where he worked very successfully as one of the main illustrators and caricaturists for the well-known weekly magazine *Fliegende Blätter*. In 1884, he became a student at the private Académie Julian in Paris and spent the following years and decades commuting between Flanders, Paris, Munich, and Berlin. He received his first award as a painter at the 1889 Paris World's Fair.

In 1890, he settled back in Munich. He became acquainted with prominent figures such as Stefan George (1868–1933), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862–1946), and August Strindberg (1849–1912). From 1892 onwards, he became a close friend of Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900), about whom he wrote in a lengthy article entitled *Erinnerung an Wilhelm Leibl* (Memories of Wilhelm Leibl) in the magazine *Kunst und Künstler* (1.1902/03). In the same year, he also became one of the founding members of the Munich Secession. On the occasion of the VI International Art Exhibition in Munich, Julius Elias wrote in the magazine *Der Kunstwart*: "Schlittgen is a genius in his own way, and his way is very broad. He is one of the most tasteful and most determined among the German modernists" (6.1892/93).

In the years and decades that followed, the "unrivaled salon satirist Hermann Schlittgen" (*Illustrierte Welt* magazine, 42.1894) exhibited his work at venues including the Munich Secession, the Berlin Secession, and the Leipzig Art Association. His works can be found in the Museum of Fine Arts in Leipzig and the Lenbachhaus in Munich, among other places. His most famous painting is a portrait of Edvard Munch (1863–1944) from 1904, which is now in the Munch Museum in Oslo. Schlittgen had met Munch in Berlin, and a friendship developed between the two. In 1918, he moved to Wasserburg am Inn, where he died in 1930.

In 1906, Hermann Schlittgen was one of the first artists, along with Max Beckmann (1884–1950) and Dora Hitz (1853–1924), to receive the Villa Romana Prize, which is still highly prestigious today. The prize included 2,000 marks in prize money as well as a studio and apartment in the Villa Romana in Florence, which had been acquired by the sponsoring association at the instigation of Max Klinger (1857–1920), for a period of one and a half years. Schlittgen enjoyed his time in Italy with his wife and son, visiting museums and other cities.

The work offered here was created during this stay in Italy in 1908. In his extensive memoirs, Schlittgen also reports on Venice and writes from the artist's perspective: "Venice has been painted many times. 'It has been painted out,' say many artists, as if a picturesque city could ever be painted out. Venice was the city of Italian kitsch, of genre painting, the Venetian woman the model for so many touching and cheerful, sugar-sweet pictures; she played the

same role in Italy as Gretchen did in our country in the past.” Accordingly, he is particularly interested in contemporary Venice, the everyday life of its ordinary inhabitants, and the nightlife of the Venetians in the area around the Zattere, which he describes anecdotally and into which he immerses himself extensively with local and foreign artist colleagues.

The impression of such a nocturnal scene can be seen in this large-format work. A modernly dressed woman with a fashionable haircut—we don't know who she is—looks back at the busy nightlife taking place in the background from the intersection of two alleys. There, two silhouetted figures stand in front of a restaurant, which is marked on the outside by red lanterns. With hatching, quickly thrown down strokes, and partially wildly distributed, more expansive areas, Schlittgen masterfully shows us a contemporary Venice that has nothing in common with the usual kitsch and clichés of the vedute, which were also extremely popular at the time. An outstanding print!

It cannot be verified whether the work from Hermann Schlittgen's estate is the work *Venedig 1908* (No. 8) mentioned in the 1931 memorial exhibition at the Heinemann Gallery in Munich, as it is described as an oil painting in the catalog. Either this is an error, or it refers to another work created during Schlittgen's stay in Italy.