

Emil Keyser, Sitting old peasant woman with a basket, c. 1900, oil on cardboard, signed lower right "E. Keyser.", recto i.a. diverse auction numbers

The Swiss Emil Keyser (1846 Stans/Nidwalden - 1923 Munich), son of the painter Heinrich Keyser (1813-1900), initially received his artistic training at the Grand Ducal Baden School of Art in Karlsruhe under the important teachers Karl Friedrich Schick (1826-1875) and Ludwig Des Coudres (1820-1878), before studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under Wilhelm von Diez (1839-1907) from 1866 to 1869. After several subsequent trips throughout Europe, he settled permanently in Munich, where he became a member of the Münchner Künstlergenossenschaft. He was related by marriage to the painters Martin von Feuerstein (1856-1931) and Ernst Zimmermann (1852-1901).

Keyser was known above all for his genre-like depictions of children, which today seem somewhat cloying, and which he often placed in a landscape setting. However, these were very popular at the time and were often reproduced in popular art magazines such as *Die Gartenlaube* or *Über Land und Meer*. His works can be found in collections in Basel and Munich's Pinakothek museums, among others. Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria (1821-1912) also once owned three of Keyser's paintings.

The oil study on cardboard on offer, which first appeared on the art market in 1991, is special in that it stands out thematically from the oeuvre described above. It shows an old peasant woman who has settled down on a chair for a brief moment of rest. She is marked by a life of hard work and privation, which is reflected, for example, in the exhausted posture of her head and the large, ossified hands that Keyser places at the center of the painting. An empty basket is visible in front of her, the background is formed by a colorful green meadow and a grey wall behind it. The depiction has nothing idealizing about it, but rather corresponds to the realism of the Barbizon school, which Keyser must have come into contact with on his travels. The loose, pastose painting style also points in this direction.