

Richard Pietzsch

(1872 Dresden - 1960 München)

Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch

(1875 Yxe / Lindesberg - 1958 München)

Swedish Paintings

Galerie von Abercron
München

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Richard Pietzsch and Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch: a German-Swedish love affair

Richard Pietzsch

23 March 1872 Dresden –
28 January 1960 München

Richard Pietzsch, born on March 23rd 1872 in Dresden, came from a bourgeois family with cultural and scientific interests. His father founded a then famous private school for boys. Of the five children of the family, four entered on an artistic career. Best known is Martin Pietzsch, an architect, whose modernistic cinema buildings and private residences are distinctive for the villa quarters of Dresden. His daughter, Sybille Pietzsch, was the second wife of Bauhaus artist Laszlo Moholy Nagy. Richard Pietzsch studied first in Dresden, from 1894 on at the „Akademie der Bildenden Künste“ in München with Höcker and Raab. In 1895 he was personally chosen by *Franz von Stuck*, the famous „prince of



Richard Pietzsch in his studio with his paintings, photography around 1900

painters“ of the fin de siècle, to be one of the first nine pupils Franz von Stuck undertook to teach. In 1897 Richard Pietzsch moved in his first studio in Schwabing. Among his patrons were renowned painters like Fritz von Uhde (who arranged for a special exhibition of Pietzsch’s paintings on the exhibition of the Münchner Secession.) Berlin based impressionists *Max Liebermann*

and *Walter Leistikow* showed his paintings in the metropolis during the exhibitions of the „Berliner Secession“. From 1900 on, Pietzsch was a regular collaborator for leading vanguard journals like „Kunst“ and „**Jugend**“ (eponym of the „Jugendstil“, the German art nouveau). In 1905 he was the first awardee of a stipend that granted him a one-year-long stay at Florence in the Villa Romana. After having travelled in Italy and Corsica, Pietzsch returned to Germany in 1907.

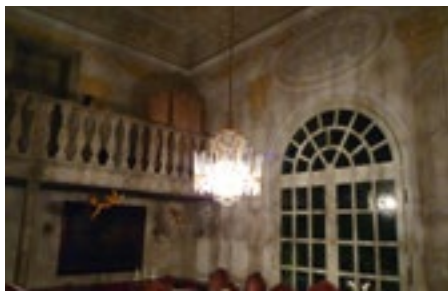
In 1904, he had married the **Swedish painter Fanny Westberg**, whose acquaintanceship he had made during his regular painting trips to Sweden. She accompanied him during his travels to Sweden and also to his stay in the **Villa Romana in Florence**. In 1907 she helped him to open a private painting academy in Grünwald near Munich.

Since then his success was firmly established. Regularly, he took part in the exhibitions of the „**Münchner Secession**“ (members e.g.: Behrens, Corinth, Hölzel, Liebermann, Stuck, Trübner) and the „Münchner Glaspalast“ and also in major exhibitions in Bremen, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Leipzig. Museums like the Frankfurter Städel, the Neue Pinakothek in Munich or the Gemäldesammlung neuer Meister in Dresden bought his paintings directly during the exhibitions. He was guest exhibitor at the „**Berliner Secession**“ (members e.g.: Barlach, Feininger, Hodler, Klinger, Kollwitz, Modersohn, Munch, Slevogt, Ury) one of the most im-

portant artist's association in Germany. In 1908 he organized the first exhibition of the "Münchner Secession" in **Stockholm**. This intercultural commitment was rewarded in 1909 with the award of the "Knight's Cross, First Class, of the Vasa Order" by King Oscar II.

Between 1905 and 1926 Richard Pietzsch represented with fellow artists like Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, Oskar Kokoschka and Max Slevogt the German art at the Biennale of Venice. In 1924 he received the „Premio Dreber“ for his painting „Autumn in the Isar valley“(his predecessor in prize winning was Max Liebermann in 1922). In 1925 he was nominated honorary professor of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts (together with *Edvard Munch* and *Olaf Gulbransson*).

In 1915 and the first months of 1916 he lived in Laon (northern France), where he was acted as an inofficial war painter, observing the civil and martial life. From 1916 to 1930 he took his abode in the little town of Tölz in Upper Bavaria. His impressionistic painting style is fully developed. He also continued his traveling, especially to Sweden and through Germany. In 1930, Pietzsch and



The former studio of Richard Pietzsch in the Asamschlössl

his wife returned to Munich, after the city council had allocated him the ancient artist's residence, the so called Asam-Schlössl, formerly inhabited by the baroque architects and painters Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam, as his life time studio and domicile. He

also was a skilful drawer: the drawings of the artist's estate show that he was a shrewd observer of every day life and a bold experimenter with various techniques and styles of expression. In 1944, the Asam-Schlössl was severely damaged during a bomb raid, Pietzsch lost many of his paintings and drawings. From 1944 till 1952 he lived in the little village of Beuerberg; in 1952 he and his family came back to Munich. He seems to have been disappointed and disillusioned after the loss of the old world he had once loved and painted. But he still continued to show his paintings on exhibitions, was awarded several prizes and his works were discussed in journals and books. He died in Munich the 28th January 1960.

Paintings are owned by public and private collections, e.g.:

- Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Dresden
- Villa Romana, Florenz
- Städels-Museum, Frankfurt am Main
- Bayerisches Armeemuseum Ingolstadt
- Allgäu-Museum Kempten
- Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Neue Pinakothek München
- Stadtmuseum München
- Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus München
- Deutsches Theatermuseum München
- Asamschlössl München
- Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg
- Oberhaus-Museum Passau
- Schloss Reichersbeuern
- Landkreis, Kunstverein und Stadtmuseum Bad Tölz

Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch

Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch, née Westberg

19 September 1875 Castle of Yxe –
1958 Munich

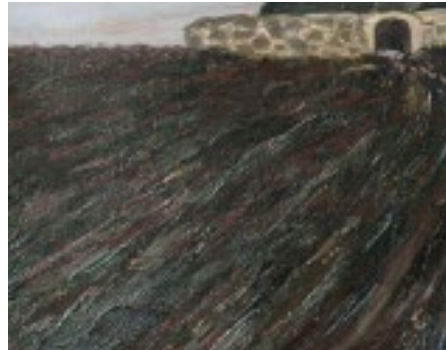
Fanny Westberg was born as the third daughter of an art loving officer of the board of mines. From 1895 till 1901 she studied painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm; till 1906 she showed her works on various Swedish art exhibitions. In 1904 she made the acquaintance of the German painter Richard Pietzsch, who travelled through Sweden. In 1905, they married. Two children descended from this union: Harald Pietzsch (1910-1944, architect) and Ingeborg Pietzsch (1913-1969, painter and illustrator). In 1906, Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch (as she signed herself) accompanied her husband to Florence in the Villa Romana and in 1907 on a study trip through Italy and Corsica. They returned to Germany in 1907 and settled in Grünwald, near Munich. There she helped her husband to run a private painting academy. From a letter by Richard Pietzsch to the painter Hugo von Habermann, one gathers that the southern climate of Italy did not agree with Fanny Westberg, so that they decided to return to Sweden for their annual painting trips. The following years the couple spent a certain amount of the time in Sweden.

The family duties were paramount, but nevertheless Fanny Westberg continued to paint. The development of her painting style from Art Nouveau to a more impressionistic, brightened style can be traced back to the collaboration with her husband who

also began to turn towards impressionism. Unlike other gifted female artists of her time who abandoned their painting careers after the marriage, like Mathilde Vollmoeller-Purmann, Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch never ceased painting, even if her output was reduced. Her work comprehends landscapes, still lifes and portraits of her family.



*Richard Pietzsch:
Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch
reading, oil on canvas,
1915, Private Collection
(detail)*



The painting shows the historical windmill "Bräcke Mölla" near the castle of Krapperup. The original building was destroyed by a fire in 1946 and reconstructed in the 1980ies.

With fiery brush strokes and glowing colours the artist gives the mill hill the quality of an archaic mound, reminiscent of prehistoric forces.

The tints and the reduction of the space to colourful surfaces, bathing in the Nordic light, remind somewhat of the landscape painting of Pietzsch's near contemporary, Karl Nordström.



The Windmill of Krapperup, 1903

"Windmühle von Krapprupp in Schweden"

Oil on canvas, c. 77 x 78 cm

Signed and dated down left, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 152 **(No. 1)**



*ill. top and middle: details from Richard Pietzsch: Windmill at Krapperup
ath the very left: detail from: Eugène Jansson: Hornsgattan, 1902, Thielska Gallieret, Stockholm
down: detail from: Karl Nordström: Blue Water*





The Mansion of Prince Eugene of Sweden, 1906

“Die Villa des Prinzen Eugen von Schweden“

Oil on canvas, c. 124 x 84 cm

Signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archiv: 43

(No. 2)

*This early painting shows the villa of the painter prince Eugene of Sweden (1865-1947), **Waldemarsudde**. As Richard Pietzsch spent regularly some time in Sweden and was bestowed in 1909 the “ Knight's Cross, First class of the Vasa Order” by the King (honoring his responsibility for the first exhibition of the Munich Secession in the National Academy of Stockholm), it is perhaps not far fetched to imagine that he had also made the acquaintanceship of Prince Eugene.*

The painting is outstanding in the forcefulness of expression: the harsh blue tints and the tormented surface of the ice floe covered sea convey a sense of forsakenness, that is emphasized by the abandoned ship and the leafless trees. In spirit and form a really modern painting.

The colour studies made by the artist of the wintery sea (as example: see the drawing top left) show that he was exploring the expressive possibilities of the Nordic landscape.



Swedish Farm in Gotland, 1905

“Schwedischer Bauernhof auf Gotland“

Oil on canvas, c. 68 x 83 cm

Signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archiv: 114 **(No. 3)**



The artist avoids the idealization often seen in the rural paintings of his time. Instead, he gives an impression of the unadorned vitality and force of the rural life. The line of farmyards closes the horizon like a castle wall.

The firm tautness of the composition emphasizes the idea of the rural life as the backbone of the country.



Bathers at the Beach, Sweden 1913

“Strandbad Schweden“

Oil on canvas, c. 89 x 137 cm

Signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled

Full page reproduction in: „Richard Pietzsch. Gemälde als Zeitgeschichte, Ausstellungskatalog der Galerie von Abercron, München 1987“, S. 30

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archiv: 287

(No. 4)

The glory of a perfect summer day:

In the mid-1910ies and 1920ies the artist had reached the heyday of his artistic means. The sumptuous, yet delicat colours, the agitated brush strokes and the unrestrained colour application render congenially the brilliant atmosphere of a sunny day at the sea. Alongside with Max Liebermann, Richard Pietzsch discovered the charms of the northern beachscapes. A chief work of late impressionistic landscape painting.



*Max Liebermann:
Badende Knaben
am Strand,
Museum der Kunst
der Westküste,
Föhr*



Swedish Forest, 1912

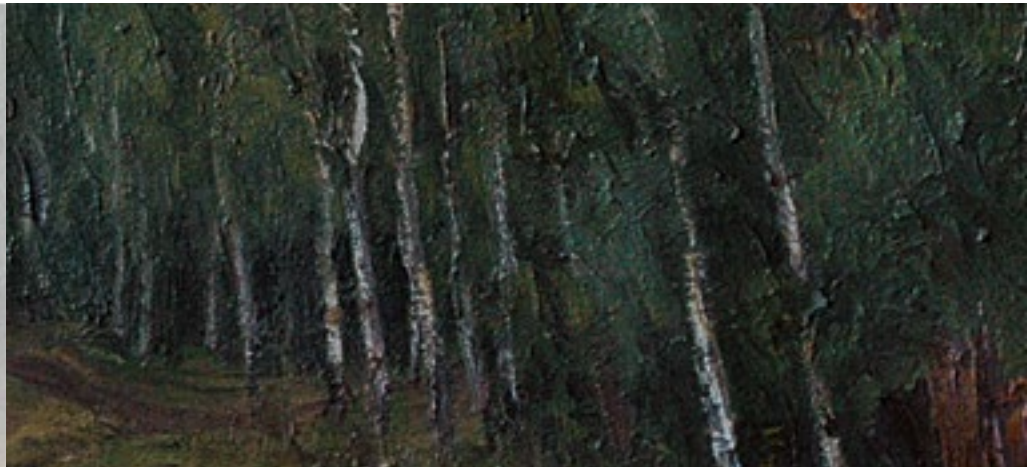
“Schwedischer Wald”

Oil on canvas, c. 84 x 66 cm

Signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 83 **(No. 5)**





Villa near the Rönna, 1912

“Villa an der Rönna“

Oil on canvas, c. 74 x 71 cm

Signed and dated down right

verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 183

(No. 6)



End of a summer day:

The leaves at the left and the water are still glowing from the light of the setting sun, under the park trees the dusk has already settled in.

With masterful strokes the artist conveys the peaceful mood of the closing day.



Brickyard near the Rönna, 1912

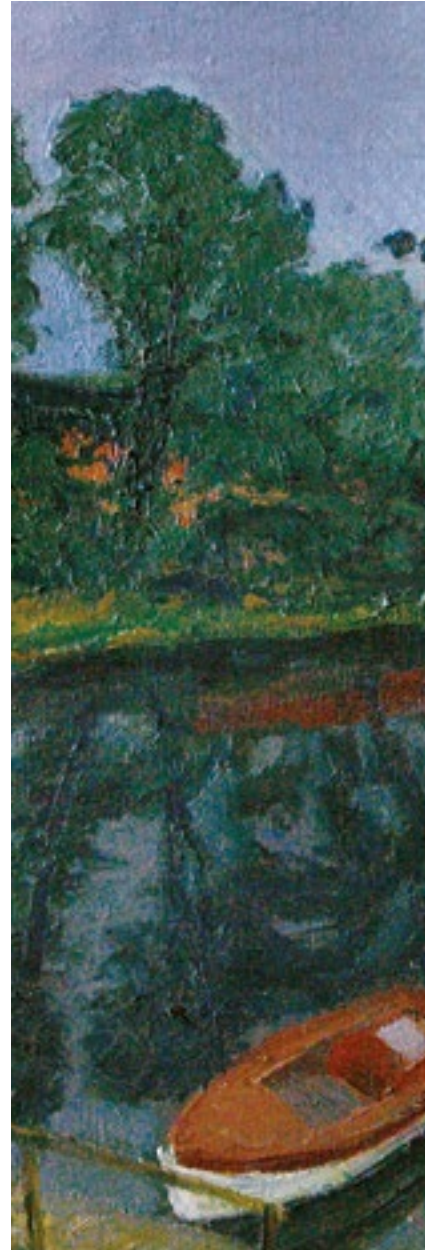
“Ziegelei an der Rönna (Schweden)“

Oil on canvas, c. 73 x 86 cm

Signed and dated down left, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 192 **(No. 7)**



Basking in the sun light and reflected in the water of the Rönna, the brick yard buildings are integrated in the representation of the evening of a perfect summer day.





This early painting combines the influence of the national romantic movement and the art nouveau.

It is both attentive to the naturalistic details and the atmospheric mood, as in the horizon where sea and clouded sky are blurred with delicate nuances. As in the paintings of the romantic era, the promontory over the sea becomes the symbol of wistfulness and yearning for the infinite, veiled like the clouded sky.

Kullen (Swedish West-Coast), around 1904-1910

“Kullen (Schwedische Westküste)“

Oil on canvas, c. 135 x 250 cm

verso signed and titled

verso remainders of three old exhibition labels

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 65

(No. 8)



The painting was for some years in the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen München (Bavarian State Collections, Pinakotheken)



Evening Sun at the Rönna, 1923

“Abendsonne an der Rönna (Schweden)”

Oil on cardboard, c. 55 x 44 cm

signed and dated down left, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate,

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 240 **(No. 9)**







Farewell to Sweden, 1923

“Abschied von Schweden”

Oil on cardboard, c. 30 x 39 cm
signed and dated down left, verso signed, titled and dated

Provenance: From the artist's estate

No. of the Richard-Pietzsch-Archive: 128

(No. 10)

*Nearing abstraction, the painting dissolves the shape of the trees, the river bank and the landing stage in a mosaic of scattered forms and reflexions of light. The forceful brush strokes and the impasto infuse a strong vitality in the painting.
(top: details from: “Farewell to Sweden”)*



Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch: Swedish landscapes



Evening Mood in Skattungbyn (Dalarne), 1900

“Abendstimmung in Skattungbyn (Dalarne)”

Oil on canvas, c. 78 x 90 cm

signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate

(No. 11)



Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch: Swedish landscapes

Swedish Night (Darlecarlien), about 1904/1908

“Schwedische Nacht (Darlecarlien)”

Oil on canvas, c. 50 x 110 cm

signed down right, titled and signed verso on the stretcher frame

Provenance: From the artist's estate

(No. 12)





Mrs. Chief Engineer Ellen Carlquist

“Frau Oberingenieur Ellen Carlquist”

Oil strong cardboard, c. 40 x 28.5 cm

verso titled and certified by Richard Pietzsch, repeated on a second cardboard, used as cover (titled: “Frau Oberingenieur Carlquist”)

Provenance: From the artist’s estate (*ill.: next page, left*)

(No. 13)

Still life

Oil on cardboard, c. 50.5 x 37.5 cm, signed and dated down right

Provenance: From the artist’s estate (*ill.: next page, right*)

(No. 14)

*cf the painting
by Rudolf Thygesen
(1880 Kristiania - 1953
Oslo): Flowers,
1917, 69 x 66 cm,
Oslo, National Gallery*







Dusk in the broadleaved forest, 1908

“Laubwalddunkel”

Oil on canvas, c. 51 x 65 cm

signed down right and dated, verso titled and signed

Provenance: From the artist's estate (*ill.: top left*)

(No. 15)



Red Swedish Houses in the Forest, about 1905-1910

“Schwedische Rote Häuser im Walde”

Oil on canvas on cardboard, c. 33 x 37 cm

signed down right, verso titled

Provenance: From the artist's estate (*ill.: top right*)

(No. 16)



Bank, Front garden of the Villa (Romana) in Florence, 1906

“Bank, Vorgarten der Villa zu Florenz”

Oil on cardboard, c. 16.5 x 29 cm, signed, dated down right; verso titled and dated

Provenance: From the artist's estate (*ill.: top left*)

In 1904, Max Klinger founded the institution of the Villa Romana: an artist's grant with a sojourn in the historical Villa. Nominee of the very first year 1905 was Richard Pietzsch. In 1906 he and his wife Fanny Westberg took their abode in the Villa Romana. So Swedish painter Fanny Westberg became the first female artist to live in the soon to be famous artist's residence. Among the very few female artists to follow was Käthe Kollwitz. The correspondent painting by Richard Pietzsch of the garden has recently been acquired by the Villa Romana. **(No. 17)**

Beech grove, 1908 “Laubwald”

Oil on canvas, c. 44 x 71 cm, signed and dated down right, verso signed and titled on the stretcher frame

Provenance: From the artist's estate (*ill.: top right*) **(No. 18)**



Another Swedish-German couple in artistic activity:
Ingeborg and Harald Pietzsch,
children of Richard and Fanny Westberg-Pietzsch
(char coal drawing by Richard Pietzsch, 1919)