

Carl Larsson

The Swedish artist Carl Larsson was born in 'Gamla stan', the old town in Stockholm, on May 28, 1853. His parents were extremely poor and his childhood sad and miserable. However, at the age of thirteen his teacher at the school for poor children urged him to seek entry into the 'principskola' of the Stockholm Academy of Fine Arts where he also got accepted. The first years at the 'principskola' he felt socially inferior, confused and shy. In 1869, sixteen years old, he got promoted to the 'antique school' of the same academy. There Carl Larsson became more sure of himself and he even became a central figure in student life. After several years as illustrator for books, magazines and newspapers Carl Larsson also spent several rather frustrating years in Paris as a hardworking artist without any success.

The turning point in Carl Larsson's life came the year 1882 when he in Grez, a Scandinavian artist colony outside Paris, met Karin Bergöö (1859-1928), who soon should be his wife. One could almost call it a metamorphose in Carl Larsson's life. In Grez Carl Larsson painted some of his most important works - now in water-colour and very different from the more pretentious oilpainting technique.

Carl and Karin Larsson reared eight children and Karin and the children became Carl Larsson's favourite models and many of those watercolours are now loved and cherished all over the world.

In 1888 the young family by gift got a little house, named Little Hyttnäs in Sundborn from Karin's father Adolf Bergöö. Carl and Karin formed and furnished this house after their own very special artistic taste and also for the needs of the growing family. Through Carl Larsson's paintings and his books this house has been one of the most famous artist-homes in the world. The descendants of Carl and Karin Larsson now own this house and they are happy to be able to keep the house open for tourists each summer from May until October.

Carl Larsson considered his monumental works, for instance the frescos in schools, museums and other public buildings, to be his most important works. His last monumental work 'Midvinterblot' (Midwinter Sacrifice) signed in 1915 and intended for the last wall in the staircase of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm - which was not yet decorated by Carl Larsson - was refused by the board of the Nationalmuseum. In his memoirs 'Jag' (I)-published after Carl Larsson's death - he declared his bitterness and disappointment with this reverse against the painting he himself considered to be the crown on his work as an artist. In his memoirs 'Jag' Carl Larsson wrote: "The fate of 'Midwinter Sacrifice' broke me ! This I admit with a dark anger. And still, it was probably the best thing that could happen, for now my intuition tells me -again- that with all its weakness, this painting will once be honoured with far better placement after my death."

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