



On the Edge of the World: Masterworks by Laurits Andersen Ring from SMK— the National Gallery of Denmark

Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut
February 1 – May 24, 2020



Laurits Andersen Ring (Danish, 1854-1933),
At the French Windows: The Artist's Wife, 1897.
Oil on canvas, 75.2 x 56.7 in. KMS 3716.



Laurits Andersen Ring (Danish, 1854-1933),
Has It Stopped Raining? 1922. Oil on canvas,
25.4 x 21.9 in. KMS 3636.

GREENWICH, CT, December 23, 2019 – Following a five-month construction project, the Bruce Museum is pleased to reopen its newly expanded main art gallery with a major international exhibition: *On the Edge of the World: Masterworks by Laurits Andersen Ring from SMK—the National Gallery of Denmark*. Initiated by the American Friends of Statens Museum for Kunst, the national gallery of Denmark, the exhibition opens on Saturday, February 1, 2020, and will be on view through Sunday, May 24, 2020.

L.A. Ring (1854-1933), a Realist and Symbolist painter, ranks among the most significant figures in Danish art. The national gallery of Denmark holds the largest collection of Ring's paintings and drawings. *On the Edge of the World* showcases 25 of his most important paintings, which represent the key themes, sheer variety, and complexity of his work. The



exhibition travels to only two U.S. venues. The Bruce Museum is the only one on the East Coast.

Speaking about this first exhibition outside Scandinavia to be solely devoted to L.A. Ring, Mikkel Bogh, Director of SMK, says: “It is part of our mission at SMK to inspire and spark creative thinking by making the art of our collection known to a wider audience, which includes audiences outside the Nordic region. L.A. Ring was a sensitive and profound interpreter of the changing conditions of human existence at the threshold of modernity, in Denmark and elsewhere. We believe his painting has an appeal to U.S. audiences and that his works, while embedded within specific geographic and historical circumstances, speak to us today in a powerful artistic language that matters as never before.”

Laurits Andersen Ring was born into a smallholder family in the village of Ring in Southern Zealand, Denmark. As an artist, he never distanced himself from his humble origins. The two central themes of his art were the everyday struggles of ordinary people and the Danish landscape. Ring’s work reflects the great upheavals taking place in society and art in the decades around 1900. The processes of industrialization caused major changes in the labor market; new enterprises flourished, and people moved from the country to the cities, especially the burgeoning capital, Copenhagen. Denmark was on the way to becoming a modern society, and Ring was part of a larger effort by painters, authors, and theorists to create a uniquely Danish language of modernism.



Laurits Andersen Ring (Danish, 1854-1933), *The Painter in the Village*, 1897. Oil on canvas, 50 x 63.4 in. DEP 537.

Ring’s paintings capture this changing world, poised between traditional values and modernism. His early Symbolist paintings of people at work in the landscape are quiet and still, meticulously organized, and yet charged with a strong feeling of spirituality.

By the 1890s, Ring was regarded as Denmark’s greatest landscape painter. Landscape had deep symbolic associations at the time. Redistribution of the land at mid-century meant that Denmark changed from a society dominated by powerful landowners whose fields were tilled by serfs to one of smallholders who owned their own land. The land came to be seen as belonging to the people, and therefore to have an almost sacred, national aspect. Ring’s landscapes, rendered in a reduced color palette, capture a vast sense of space with remarkable precision and detail, bathed in crystalline northern light. His paintings of the Zealand topography come to form personal, atmospheric landscapes of the soul.



Ring's paintings also tell of the joys and sorrows of his own life. His early work often has intimations of death, hovering just beyond the travails of this world. Happier themes, of closeness and intimacy, find their way into his work after 1896 when he marries the love of his life: Sigrid, eldest daughter of master potter Herman Kähler.

Finally, in the first decades of the 20th century, Ring painted a series of masterworks with large figures pushed close to the picture plane, often in postures of waiting. They seem trapped in a geometric web of modern signs – telegraph poles, the diagonal lines of fences, or receding railroad tracks – poised uneasily before an unknown future.

Although Ring lived in Denmark all his life, aspects of his art find parallels in the work of America's great realists Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, and Andrew Wyeth. All these artists combined a rigorous precision of design with a sense that deeper meaning lies just beneath the surface. All were keenly interested in how individual man handled the existential challenges arising as a result of the modern world.

On the Edge of the World: Masterworks by Laurits Andersen Ring from SMK—the National Gallery of Denmark provides an unprecedented opportunity for U.S. audiences to see the work of this great Nordic artist.

On the Edge of the World will be accompanied by a series of lectures and special programs, beginning with a **Conservator's Talk: Aspects of L.A. Ring's Working Methods**, on Sunday, February 2, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm. **Dr. Jørgen Wadum**, former Director of Conservation at SMK and current Director of the Centre for Art Technological Studies and Conservation in Denmark, will discuss how an examination of the complex structure of materials and techniques beneath the visible "skin" of Ring's paintings reveals fascinating details of the artist's intent. This talk is free to Museum members and visitors with paid admission. Reservations are required; visit brucemuseum.org or call 203-869-0376.



Conservator and L.A. Ring authority Dr. Jørgen Wadum.

The Museum is also hosting a series of **art workshops** related to the exhibition. Geared to seniors over the age of 55, the workshops will be led by teaching artist **Eddie Nino** and will include in-gallery introductory remarks by **Corinne Flax**, Manager of School and Community Partnerships, focused on each workshop topic: "Value," on Monday, February 24; "Color," on Monday, March 16; and "Composition," on Monday, April 20. The workshops will take place 1:30 – 3:30 pm; all materials will be provided, and light refreshments will be served. Visit brucemuseum.org or call 203-869-0376 for details and to register.



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Press Release

World-renowned pianist and improvisational artist **Nikolaj Hess** will compose and perform music in the gallery written in direct response to the works in the show. In a unique concert reflecting on the themes in L.A. Ring's artistic universe, ***Impressions of L.A. Ring: On a Threshold***, Hess will paint a modern impression of one of Denmark's most celebrated artists.

Based in both New York and Denmark, Hess is known through works produced in connection with the Nikolaj Hess Trio, Marc Mommaas, Hess/AC/Hess Spacelab, Caroline Henderson, Hess is More, and Etta Cameron. He has played and recorded with a long list of international jazz legends in Europe, the U.S., Canada, Israel, and Asia. Further details about the performance and schedule will be shared on brucemuseum.org.

Additionally, the Danish actor **Lars Mikkelsen** has been appointed as the ambassador for the exhibition. Regarded as one of Denmark's most talented actors, Mikkelsen is known for his portrayals of a range of edgy, seductive, and historic characters. International audiences will know him from the American Netflix series "House of Cards," which he joined in the third season to play Russian President Petrov.

In five small films incorporated in the exhibition, Mikkelsen reflects on the work of L.A. Ring and key themes that represent the painter's oeuvre. Visit brucemuseum.org to view the films.

The exhibition opens to the public on Saturday, February 1. Museum members at the Patron level and above are invited to an **Opening Celebration** on Friday, January 31, 2020, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. An **All Members Reception** will take place on Tuesday, February 4, 5:30 – 7:00 pm. To RSVP or to join, contact Membership Manager Laura Freeman at 203-413-6764 or lfreeman@brucemuseum.org.

Presentation of the exhibition at the Nordic Museum and the Bruce Museum has been made possible by the generous support of Mary & Greg Moga. Additional support has been provided by Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, Queen Margrethe's and Prince Henrik's Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Scan|Design Foundation, the Jon and Mary Shirley Foundation, Arne V. Schleschs Foundation, Hermod Lannung Museum Foundation, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Meltwater, SAS Cargo, Bruun Rasmussen Auctioneers, ArcusGruppen, Fritz Hansen, Ilse Jacobsen Hornbæk, International Flight Support ApS, Beck Global Consulting, Embassy of Denmark in Washington D.C., The Consulate General of Denmark in New York, and board & patrons of the AFSMK – American Friends of Statens Museum for Kunst.

The Bruce Museum is grateful for exhibition support from Amica Insurance and a Committee of Honor Co-Chaired by Ellen Flanagan, Simone McEntire, Betsey Ruprecht, Patricia W. Chadwick, and Susan and Torben Weis. Honorary Chair is John L. Loeb Jr., former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark. Additional exhibition support is provided by the Charles M. and Deborah G. Royce Exhibition Fund and the Connecticut Office of the Arts.

For more information about the Bruce Museum's transformative renovation and expansion project, including updates about the renovation under way and a virtual tour of the building addition, please visit NewBruce.org.

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About the Bruce Museum

The Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution highlighting art and science in more than a dozen changing exhibitions annually. The permanent galleries feature the natural sciences that encompass regional to global perspectives. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years, the Bruce plays an integral role in the cultural life of area residents and attracts approximately 70,000 visitors annually, including 24,000 schoolchildren, reaching out to families, seniors, students, and community organizations. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Museum is also a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. The Bruce Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit brucemuseum.org.

SMK - Statens Museum for Kunst

Situated in the heart of Copenhagen, SMK— Statens Museum for Kunst/the national gallery of Denmark is Denmark's largest art museum, displaying international art from the early Renaissance to the present day. The SMK collections originate from the holdings of 17th- and 18th-century Danish kings, particularly those of King Frederik V who, in the 1760s, established a large collection of Old Masters which he housed at Christiansborg Castle. In 1827, this Royal Picture Gallery was opened to the public. The Gallery had an obligation to collect contemporary Danish art, buying several paintings directly from the artists. Christiansborg Castle burned in 1884, but nearly all of the paintings were miraculously saved. The surviving collections became the foundation of SMK, which opened to the public in 1896. SMK now presents three to four special exhibitions a year, always based on new research.

AFSMK

The American Friends of Statens Museum for Kunst—the national gallery of Denmark is a charitable foundation (501c3) established to strengthen the ties between the National Gallery of Denmark and the Gallery's American friends and audiences. The AFSMK promotes cultural and artistic exchanges between SMK and American institutions of art within the areas of transnational exhibitions, educational programs, and professional and scholarly exchanges. The organization helps fund the SMK's work on building ever-stronger links between the heritage it safeguards and contemporary art and culture—work that takes the form of exhibitions, acquisitions of artworks, rehangs of the collections, and art conservation. AFSMK welcomes new members, patrons, and corporate supporters to join the organization and to help further connect Danish art and the world of art today! To learn more about the organization, visit www.afsmk.org or contact Executive Director Hanne Støvring Hanne.afsmk@smk.dk.

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