

Charles Ebert (1873 - 1959)

Spring in Lyme, circa 1920

Unsigned

oil on canvas

20" x 27"

Charles Ebert and his wife, artist Mary Roberts Ebert (1873-1956), were active members of the Cos Cob art colony in Greenwich before moving to Old Lyme in 1919. During his early years in Connecticut, Ebert stayed frequently at the Bush-Holley House in Cos Cob, where he studied with John Henry Twachtman (1853-1902), and was introduced to Childe Hassam (1859-1935) and Julian Alden Weir (1852-1919).

With flecked brushwork and a rich palette that describes the hazy tones of the countryside, *Spring in Lyme* reflects both the influence of American Impressionism and the unique atmospheric effects of his former teacher, Twachtman. A stream runs through the foreground of the painting behind a group of firmly planted but seemingly fragile trees. Warm tones of browns, tans and russets contrast the radiance of nature's blues and greens. Jeffrey Andersen notes:

Bathing his subjects in a soft, delicate light, landscape forms are dematerialized into drifting, amorphous areas of color ... Ebert freely sacrificed form and detail in order to capture the ethereal, fleeting qualities of light and atmosphere of the familiar Old Lyme landscape (1).

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and raised mostly in Kansas City, Missouri, Ebert began his studies at the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1892, followed by a year at the Art Students League in New York. In 1894, he went off to Paris, where he studied at the Academie Julian under Benjamin Constant (1845-1902) and Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921). Returning to New York in 1896, he opened a studio and worked as a freelance illustrator before landing a full-time position as *Life Magazine's* chief political cartoonist. After four years, he began to devote himself entirely to painting. About 1900, Ebert moved to Greenwich and earned his first one-man show at the Madison Art Gallery, New York City, in December of 1909. Reviewed by *New York Mail*, one of his Monhegan Island landscapes was lauded as "a superb revelation of an aspect of nature which none but an artist of rare insight and skill could have painted" (2).

Like so many of his Old Lyme contemporaries, Ebert took winter sojourns to Florida, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, as well as annual summer trips to Monhegan Island, Maine, where he worked in both watercolor and oil.

Provenance: From a private Pennsylvania collection to the gallery.

Bibliography:

1. Jeffrey W. Andersen, "Charles and Mary Ebert: Color, Light, and Atmosphere" in *American Art Review*, Vol. 13 No. 4 (September and October, 1996), 121.
2. *New York Mail*, January 1910 as cited by The Lyman Allyn Museum, Exhibition Catalogue of "Charles H. Ebert" (New London: Lyman Allyn Museum, 1979).