



Liljefors, Bruno. *Moose Family Entering a Clearing*, 1930. 2009.64

### Moose Family Entering a Clearing: Gallery Label - Current

Bruno Liljefors was probably the most influential animal painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, at a time when wildlife art was still emerging from its association with scientific depiction and taxidermy. Liljefors's lifelong activities as a hunter motivated his close study of animal life, and in his art he approached his subject not as a descriptive narrator, but as an ecologist, seeking to show animals in interaction with their environmental setting in the landscape. *Moose Family Entering a Clearing* is a strong example of Liljefors's late work. Through its convincing sense of immediacy, shimmering light effects, and accurately rendered subjects, the painting demonstrates the fine line between impressionism and painterly realism.

Medium: Paintings, Oil on canvas

Size: 22 5/8 x 26 3/8 in. (57.47 x 66.99 cm), (outer frame)33 x 37 5/8 in. (83.82 x 95.57 cm)

Creation Place: Europe, Sweden

Culture: Europe, Sweden

Style: 20th century

Inscriptions: Signature, Date, Inscription and Stamped back, in black: untranslated inscription LLC, in black: [Bruno Liljefors. / 1930.] on back, in blue: untranslated stamp

Physical Description: three moose of varying sizes at left; Impressionistic landscape with grey-white sky; grey and green trees and golden-orange grass

Credit: Collection Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Gift of the estate of Paul Upcraft in his memory

Accession Number: 2009.64

Artist: Bruno Liljefors, Swedish, 1860 - 1939

Role: Artist

Nationality: Swedish

Life Dates: Swedish, 1860 - 1939

## Biography

Liljefors was born in Uppsala, Sweden and began to draw as a young child during an extended illness. He explored the outdoors and was an accomplished falconer. He studied art at the Stockholm Royal Academy of Art under K. G. Holmgren. Traveling extensively, he arrived in Paris and learned from the Impressionists although he did not adapt their style completely. He studied briefly with noted animal painter Carl F. Deiker. He returned to Sweden and remained there throughout his career, first as a wildlife illustrator and later as a more stylistic painter of nature. He died in 1939.

## Art Historical Context

"I paint animal portraits." said Bruno Liljefors in 1902 describing his work. Liljefors' painting combines realism and Impressionism. (Notice the brushwork on the painting.) Liljefors knew and appreciated how critical an animal's ecological environment was to the total picture. The habitat was just as important as the animal and blended with it. Liljefors had a eye for detail which can be seen in his illustrations. As a sportsman, he appreciated the nuances of an animal's coloring and its camouflage. He said " My earlier notions of ugly and beautiful colors were turned upside down by these wonderful combinations[of greens and browns] which seemed to come from the predawn of history and told of the forest." As his career progressed, the mood of the environment gained more prominence in his work. (Notice how the grays of the trees mirror the darker gray/browns of the moose.) His later paintings become more painterly, but never abstract. He said, "What appeals to me is their expressive form, a picture of balance and perfection, and their organic connection to the surrounding terrain." Liljefors painted outdoors whenever possible. His work bridges scientific depictions of animals to animal portraits that give the environment important emphasis.

## Tour Questions

1. Look at this painting from a distance. What do you see at first? What do you sense: hear, smell, feel, touch?
2. How has the artist made the background look misty? Take a look at the brushstrokes. How has the artist arranged this picture? Does that affect the mood?
3. Have you ever seen a moose in the wild? What was it like? How does your sighting compare with how this artist has portrayed this moose family?

## Useful for Tours

Cityscapes, Landscapes, Escapes

Safari

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Art and the Environment

Fun Facts about Moose(kids of all ages will love these-:)

"Moos" is an Algonquin word that means "twig-eater".

The Algonquin say that if you dream of moose often, you will live a very long time.

One of the biggest racks of antlers ever found was 81 inches across!

One of the heaviest racks of antlers ever found weighed 77 pounds!

A bull moose loses his antlers each and every year!

A moose can dive up to 20 feet under water!

A moose can run up to 35 miles an hour!

A moose can swim up to 6 miles an hour!

A moose can run as far as 15 miles without stopping!

A moose can swim as far as 10 miles without stopping!

Moose only have front teeth on the bottom.

A full-grown adult moose only has a 3 inch tail!

Moose have hollow hair which helps them to float.

The same animal which is called a moose in North America is called an elk in Europe and Asia.

Sue once saw two hunters walk into the Post Office in Park City, Utah with a large rack of moose or elk antlers and ask if they could mail it home! (Answer: Go to the UPS Store and have them box it and ship it freight rate.)

Enjoy the picture on the next page!



Mirror Lake Highway, near Kamas, Utah. May 2006

We saw these young moose during a late snowstorm on the way to Mirror Lake in the Uinta Mountains near the Utah-Wyoming border.

Sue Hamburge, June 2011