

## LUDVIG SKRAMSTAD

Hamar, 1855 – 1912, Munich

### *A Norwegian river in winter*



Early 1880s

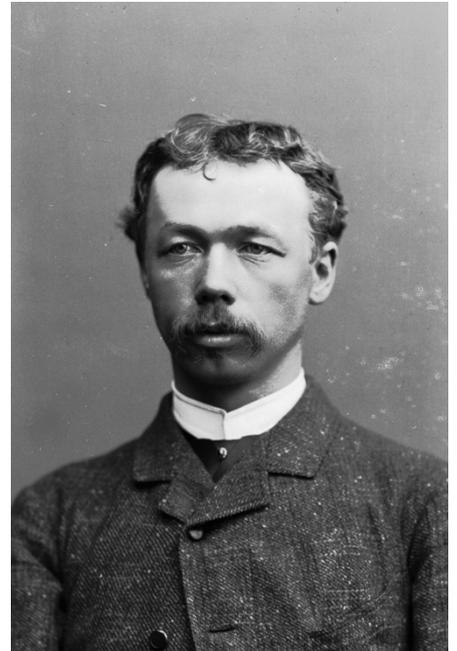
Oil on canvas, 121 x 245 cm, signed: 'Ludv. Skramstad'

#### **Provenance:**

Private collection, Norway

## Ludvig Skramstad | *A Norwegian river in winter*

Ludvig Skramstad enrolled at the Royal Drawing School in Christiania in 1870, at the age of fifteen. After one year of study he attended the private art school of the prominent Norwegian landscape and history painters, Morten Müller and Knud Bergslien. In 1874 he ventured to Düsseldorf, where he was taught by Sophus Jacobsen. His first major exhibition was at the Christiana Kunstforening (Christiana Arts Association) in 1875, having spent much of that year travelling the Rhine for inspiration. His works were well received, and the next fifteen years would be the most successful of his career, with the Kunstforening alone buying ten of his pictures over this period. With this commercial success came travel grants, including to London and Paris in 1878, and a government funded travel scholarship enabling him to spend 1885 and 1886 in Munich. He was also a prominent member of the strike by young naturalist painters against the Kunstforeningen in Christiania, working with the leader of the movement Erik Werenskiöld.



Photograph of Ludvig Skramstad by Hans Emil Erichsen, c.1890

Skramstad's landscapes of Norway, celebrating the fjords, waterfall and forests, were extremely popular during these early years of his career, however he was perhaps best known for his winter motifs. Our painting presented here is one of his true masterpieces, a tour de force in painterly expression, combined with a consummate attention to the natural world and the study of winter light. The shimmering water, golden light and frosted snow creates a calming atmosphere that enables the viewer to step into a unique winter experience, as if momentarily transported to the river's edge.

Skramstad was clearly a well-respected artist during his early career, a committee member of the Nordic Exhibition in Copenhagen in 1883 and 1888, as well as exhibiting regularly at home and abroad, including the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878 and 1889. However, due to financial

issues during the early 1900s, Skramstad left his family and moved from Norway to Munich in 1902. He would remain in the Bavarian capital for the rest of his life, rising early to finish one painting each day which would then be sold very moderately to German art dealers. These later works, painted quickly and with much less attention compared to his acclaimed earlier paintings, is the reason that Skramstad has not received the recognition or standing in Norwegian art history that he deserves. The painting presented here stands as a pinnacle of his much-praised early career and illustrates his true talent.