

WILLEM VAN KONIJNENBURG

1868–The Hague–1943

Praedestinatie (Dance of Fate)

Black and colored chalk on paper

47½ by 31½ inches (120 by 80 cm.)

Signed with the artist initials and dated: 'WAvK 1918'

In the original artist's frame

Paedestinatie is one of the finest drawings by Willem van Konijnenburg. It belongs to a program of six dances: *Dans der jonkheid (Dance of Youth)*; *Rituele dans (Ritual Dance)*; *Fatalisme (Fatalism)*; *Heksendans (Witch Dance)*; and *Krijgsdans (War Dance)*, all executed between 1917 and 1919 (fig. 1).

Willem van Konijnenburg is an important representative of Dutch Modernism. He developed his own classical idiom using an invented system of rules in which symmetry and mathematical pattern play an important role. With this idiom, the artist created harmonious compositions which won him considerable fame. His theme was the idealized individual human form, and Konijnenburg's unique interpretation of modern art was considered highly innovative at the time.

When the well-respected art critic Albert Plasschaert announced in 1912 that Van Konijnenburgh was a better draughtsman than his contemporary Jan Toorop, a true rivalry ensued. In 1919 when the present series was first exhibited at Pulchri Studio in The Hague, Van Konijnenburg demanded to be exhibited next to Toorop, surely to enable a comparison. While Toorop was represented with eleven drawings, Van Konijnenburg contributed two series: the present large format pastels and five slightly smaller anatomical studies. Toorop and Van Konijnenburg could not have been more different in their choice of color scheme and rendering of line. Whereas Toorop's interest in the Flemish Primitives was evident in his work, Van Konijnenburg was considered the modern Renaissance artist and esthetic intellectual. The fact that all six drawings were presented in monumental frames designed by the artist surely helped solidify his reputation.

Van Konijnenburg was an avid dancer. The present *Predestinatie* and all of the other drawings of the series, have ecstatic dance as their theme. Five of the six drawings exhibited at Pulchri Studio in 1919 were acquired by Frits van Kooten Kok and remained together until offered for sale at auction in 1994.

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