

An impressionistic oil painting of an autumnal landscape. The scene is dominated by warm, golden-brown and ochre tones, suggesting dense foliage in peak fall. A large, dark green tree stands on the left side, its form rendered with thick, expressive brushstrokes. In the lower-left foreground, a small, dark-roofed structure, possibly a gazebo or a small house, is partially visible. The ground is a mix of earthy browns and greens, with a path or stream winding through the scene. The overall style is characterized by visible, energetic brushwork and a rich, textured surface. The word 'COLNAGHI' is printed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters at the top center of the image.

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Magnus Ecknell
Autumnal Scene, 1912

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MAGNUS ENCKELL

Hamina 1870 - 1925 Stockholm

Autumnal Scene, 1912

Oil on canvas

54 x 42 cm

21 1/4 x 16 1/2 in.

Signed and dated lower right

Provenance

Private Collection, Finland.

Literature

Possibly in: Jaakko Puokka, "Magnus Enckell-Ihminen ja taiteilija", Otava, Helsinki 1949

Painted in 1912, this luminous autumn landscape exemplifies Magnus Enckell's remarkable sensitivity to atmosphere, colour, and the emotional resonance of nature.

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Executed during the period in which Enckell emerged as a leading figure of the progressive Finnish artist group *Septem* (1912 - 1920), the work reflects the movement's embrace of heightened colour and painterly luminosity.

The composition unfolds around a still body of water, its mirrored surface reflecting flashes of violet, ochre, and deep green with a softness that dissolves the boundary between land and reflection. Towering trees, rendered in fluid and expressive brushwork, envelop the scene in a golden haze, while the central evergreen anchors the composition with a quiet monumentality. In both palette and atmosphere, the painting also anticipates Enckell's later *Syysmaisema* (fig. 1), suggesting an early exploration of the lyrical autumnal motifs that would come to define some of his most evocative landscape compositions.



Fig. 1. Magnus Enckell, *Syysmaisema (Autumn Landscape)*, c. 1915, oil on canvas, 53.5 x 65 cm, Wäinö Walli Collection, Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki

Enckell's handling of paint is notably delicate yet confident. Thin washes of colour and broken, almost shimmering strokes create a sense of transience, capturing the fleeting instability of autumn light. The palette moves between warm amber and cool lilac tones, producing a subtle chromatic tension that animates the otherwise tranquil setting. Rather than pursuing strict naturalism, Enckell evokes the sensation of landscape as remembered or emotionally experienced.

The work reflects the artist's mature engagement with colourism and Symbolist-inflected lyricism, transforming an intimate woodland view into a meditative study of light, seasonality, and reflection. Both atmospheric and deeply painterly, the composition demonstrates Enckell's ability to fuse Nordic landscape traditions with a distinctly modern sensitivity to mood and surface.

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Knut Magnus Enckell (1870 - 1925)

Born in Hamina in 1870, Magnus Enckell (fig.2) emerged as one of the defining figures of Finnish modernism and is today regarded as “one of the most significant names of the golden age of Finnish art” by the Ateneum Art Museum. Enckell began his artistic training at the age of sixteen at the Drawing School of the Finnish Art Society in Helsinki, where his earliest works were deeply informed by Symbolism, often exploring themes of death, spirituality, and the afterlife through darker palettes and solemn, introspective compositions (fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Magnus Enckell, *Omakuva (Self Portrait)*, c. 1918, oil on canvas, 42 x 33.5 cm, Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki

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Fig. 3. Magnus Enckell, *Death's Walk*, c. 1896, pencil and watercolour on paper, 50.5 x 67.5 cm, Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki

This early Symbolist sensibility was gradually transformed through Enckell's later studies in Paris at the Académie Colarossi and subsequently the École des Beaux-Arts. Exposure to French artistic circles proved transformative, introducing him to Art Nouveau, and the French ideals of *peinture décorative*,¹ all of which would shape the lyrical and highly atmospheric quality of his mature work.

By the 1910s, his style, informed by Post-Impressionism and Fauvism, had evolved toward a more luminous and colour-driven mode of painting. As the leader of *Septem* (exhibiting 1912 - 1920), its name derived as a synonym for Finnish post-impressionism,² Enckell played a central role in introducing a brighter, more expressive chromatic language into Finnish art. The group brought together some of the most important Finnish artists of the early twentieth century, including Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Hugo Simberg, positioning Enckell at the forefront of Finland's transition toward a more modern, colourist mode of painting. This shift is particularly evident in his landscapes of the period, such as this painting, where colour becomes both descriptive and emotionally evocative.

Alongside his easel paintings, Enckell was deeply engaged with decorative and public art. He designed stained-glass windows, illustrated works by authors including Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire, and executed monumental commissions for churches and public institutions. Art historian Riikka Stewen described the celebrated interiors of Tampere Cathedral, decorated by Enckell and Simberg in 1907, as "a dream world" that envelops the viewer entirely,³ a fitting description for the immersive, atmospheric sensibility that also permeates his landscapes (fig. 4). Even in intimate compositions such as the present work, Enckell transforms nature into something poetic and emotionally charged, balancing decorative surfaces with profound sensitivity to mood and light. f

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Though he died prematurely in 1925 at the age of 55 from acute pneumonia, Enckell left a lasting impact on Nordic art history, celebrated for his ability to unite Symbolist introspection with the radiant modernity of early twentieth-century colourism.



Fig. 4. Magnus Enckell, *Resurrection*, altar fresco, 1906-07, Tempere Cathedral, Finland

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