

Wilhelm Leibl, *The Village Politicians (Peasants in Conversation)* (1877)

Abstract

Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900) originally planned to title this painting *Latest News*. As he wrote to his mother, “My painting shows five peasants who have huddled together in a small rustic room, apparently to discuss some matter of village politics because one of them holds in his hand a piece of paper that looks like an old land-registry notice. They are real peasants, whom I paint as true to nature as I can; the room is real too, because I paint the picture while I am in it.” (Götz Czymmek and Christian Lenz, eds., *Wilhelm Leibl zum 150. Geburtstag*. Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 1994, p. 67.) Leibl later titled his work *Peasants in Conversation* [*Bauern im Gespräch*], but it is best known under the name given to it by the contemporary art trade: *The Village Politicians* [*Die Dorfpolitiker*]. It was painted while Leibl was living in Unterschondorf am Ammersee in rural Bavaria. This painting contributed to a re-evaluation of Leibl among right-wing art critics of the 1870s. He went from a quasi-oppositional painter of “common” subjects (à la Gustave Courbet) to a “Holbein-like” chronicler of Germany’s rural essence.

Source



Source: Wilhelm Leibl, *Die Dorfpolitiker (Bauern im Gespräch)* [*The Village Politicians (Peasants in Conversation)*], oil paint on wood (1877). Original: Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Winterthur, Switzerland. Available online at: <https://kmw.zetcom.net/de/collection/item/16996/>
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