

Koller Auktionen - Lot 3206*

A182 19th Century Paintings - Friday 22 September 2017, 05.00 PM



IVAN KONSTANTINOVICH AIVAZOVSKY

(1817 Feodosia 1900)

View of a steep, rocky coast and a rough sea at sunset. 1883.

Oil on canvas.

Signed in Cyrillic and dated lower left: 1883. Also signed in Cyrillic and dated twice on the reverse: 1882/1883.

66 x 103 cm.

Provenance: - Auction Sotheby's, 17 July 1996, lot 100. - Private collection, Germany.

Literature: - Caffiero, Gianni / Samarine, Ivan: Light, Water and Sky: The Paintings of Ivan Aivazovsky, London 2012, p. 238 und 320, Tafel 171, cat. no. CS-1893-0008. - Caffiero, Gianni / Samarine, Ivan: Unknown Aivazovsky, Moskau 2016, p. 270 and 412, cat.-no. CS-1893-0008. - Caffiero, Gianni / Samarine,

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Ivan: Aivazovsky *Denizler Sehirler ve Dusler, Isik su ve Gokyuzu*, Boyut Yayincilik Istanbul 2016, p. 372. The painting will be included in the new catalogue raisonné of the paintings of I. K. Aivazovsky currently in preparation by Gianni Caffiero and Ivan Samarine. On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Aivasovsky's birth, we are particularly pleased to be able to offer two important works by this Russian landscape artist in our March following auction (lots 3206 and 3214). This seascape at sunset from 1883 is characterised by an intensity of colour and spatial depth, and although Aivasovsky remains true to the spirit of Romanticism in this work, certain elements of dramatic Realism are also evident here. For him, painting was not simply a matter of transferring a scene to canvas with brush and colour, but was rather an expression of one's own recollections. The artist once described this process, particularly relevant to the intensity of the present work: "The power of crashing waves cannot be rendered by brushstrokes alone: painting in the midst of lightning, wind or pounding waves is unthinkable. In order to render these effects, the artist must be able to precisely recall them and to enhance his painting with them, exactly as he does with impressions of light and shadow. [...] A painter who merely copies nature will forever remain a slave to this technique, bound hand and foot." [cf. Nowouspendski, Nikolai: Iwan Aiwazovski. *Maler des Meeres*, Bournemouth 1995, p. 20.] His atmospheric seascapes and harbour views caused Aivasovsky to be considered already in the 1860s as one of the most important Russian painters of his time, and also allowed him to take Europe by storm. His marine paintings enjoyed great popularity in his lifetime, much as they do today. While in the beginning of his career Aivasovsky tended to depict the sea in calm and harmonious moments, in his later works there is a distinct tendency towards seascapes subjected to the forces of nature. And although he consistently declined to adopt the emerging Impressionist principles for himself and for his work, from the early 1890s he shows certain artistic tendencies in this direction, manifested by intense colouration and rapid brushstrokes. This can be seen in the painting sold at Koller in March 2017, "A Stormy Sea at Sunset" [sale A180, lot 3218, sold for CHF 825 000], and is also evident in the work offered here. X-rays have

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revealed another composition beneath the finished one, in which the outline of a ship to the left of the painting is visible. This first version was painted by Aivasovsky in 1882 and he signed and dated it on the reverse. It is unknown why Aivasovsky painted over the earlier composition. The final version, as seen in the present work, was finished in 1883 and was once again signed and dated on the reverse by the artist. Through a play of light and shadow, Aivazovsky manages to capture the atmosphere of an evening in a particularly impressive manner, and employs his artistic process to draw the viewer under his spell.

CHF 460 000 / 560 000

€ 403 510 / 491 230

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