



PAUL SIGNAC

(1863 Paris 1935)

Saint-Malo, trois-mâts jaune. 1931.

Watercolour and black pencil on paper (two sheets).

Signed, inscribed and dated lower right: P. Signac / St. Malo 1931.

28 x 75 cm.

The authenticity of the work has been confirmed by Marina Ferretti, Paris, 19 October 2015 (certificate available in copy). Provenance: - Private collection, France. - Auction Sotheby's, Paris, 10 December 2015, lot 64. - Swiss private collection, acquired at the above auction Exhibited: Pont-Aven 2008, La Bretagne de Paul Signac, Musée de Pont-Aven, 7 June–6 October 2008, no. 20 (with ill. p. 82/83; label on the reverse). Paul Signac has masterfully

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captured the atmosphere at the port of St. Malo. The popular town in Brittany lies on the Atlantic Ocean and is known for its large and important port. Historically considered an important trading and seafaring town, St. Malo today has become a popular tourist destination due to its long sandy beach, seaside location and beautiful old town surrounded by a city wall. Born in Paris in 1863, Paul Signac loved the sea and was a keen yachtsman himself. From 1892 onwards he regularly travelled to the Côte d'Azur and eventually bought a holiday house near St. Tropez. As Françoise Cachin described Signac's passion for seafaring: "Les rapports de Signac avec la mer ont dépassé la simple relation visuelle, et elle a été pour lui plus qu'un simple motif: les paysages marins qu'il aimait peindre, il y était, il 'en' était" (Françoise Cachin, Paris 2000, p. 71). In 1915 Signac was also appointed the title of 'Peintre officiel de la Marine'. Paul Signac's fascination for the sea can be seen in many of his works — including the watercolour from 1931 offered here. Large, three-masted sailing ships lie at anchor in the harbour waters before St. Malo. The sails of the two boats in the centre of the picture are stretched — as if just returning from a tour or setting sails for departure. The bright, vibrant colours of the sails are reflected in the clear surface of the water, the warm yellow of the textile mixing with the cool blue of the water. The rest of the scene is also reflected in the water. While Signac has created a dynamic sense of movement within the composition, he has nonetheless imparted the scene with a sense of harmony. Thus the artist has successfully captured the Mediterranean mood of the moment and artistically transferred it onto the paper through energetic brushstrokes and fresh watercolours. Although maritime scenes are a popular subject in Signac's oeuvre, the Post-Impressionist's late work offered here, with its special format, stands out among the artist's body of work. By arranging two sheets in a row, the artist has created a picture width of 75 cm, lending the scene a sense of impact and further underscoring Signac's love of the sea.

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