Jules Noël (1810-1881) - Fishing in heavy weather



1857 Salon

Oil on original canvas, signed and dated 1857 lower right

Dimensions : H. 106 cm x W. 160 cm (with original frame: H. 137 cm x W. 190 cm)

In the mid-19th century, Jules Noël was undoubtedly the best-known painter of seascapes of Brittany and Normandy. A large number of national museums preserve his works, including the Louvre, the National Maritime Museum in London, the Château de Versailles, Brest, Marseille, Briançon, Dieppe, Rennes, Dijon, Angers, Castres, Chantilly, Chartres, Chaumont, la Rochelle, Mulhouse, Nancy, Nantes, Reims, Tours...

Jules Noël's painting lies at the crossroads between the official, romantic line and the naturalist painting that prefigured Impressionism. He was inspired by his predecessor Jean-Baptiste Isabey, but his vision heralded the arrival of Johan Jongkind and Eugène Boudin. Like Camille Corot, Jules Noël was already painting from the motif long before Impressionism.

Born in 1810, Jules Noël spent his childhood in Brittany, where his father passed on his passion for drawing. He completed his training in Paris with the painter Jean-Victor Bertin. Working with a naval artillery lieutenant, Jules Noël also acquired a solid maritime knowledge, which enabled him to meticulously create ship sails. In 1836, he exhibited two paintings at the Salon des Beaux-Arts in Nantes. He became a drawing teacher in Brest, before taking up the chair of drawing at the prestigious Lycée Henri IV in Paris. As a painter, it was in his maritime views that Jules Noël found his calling. He received his first official commission with a painting depicting "the Duke and Duchess of Nemours embarking in a rowboat at Brest on August 10, 1843". In Paris, this artist exhibited at almost every Salon until 1879. From 1850 onwards, the painter turned his attention to atmospheric effects, changing skies and the movement of the sea. Without abandoning a certain romanticism, Jules Noël participated

in the naturalist movement.

Jules Noël left us a large number of works, whose prices have generally fallen over the last twenty years. But even if certain medium-sized subjects are repetitive and no longer attract the same number of enthusiasts, the fact remains that this painter produced masterpieces, most of which have been deservedly acquired by the greatest museums.

Our painting:

This painting made by Jules Noel for the 1857 Salon, is one of his major works, for which he commissioned an important frame. To take part in the Salon, the artist began work on a large canvas as early as 1856, wishing to give the dramatic scene instant force, and thus translate the resilience of men in a raging sea. Jules Noel's meticulous technique can be seen in this extraordinary painting: the power of the wind is rendered by the heavy, shifting clouds, the crashing waves, the flapping sails and the blue-black horizon. The transparency of the water and the details of the boat and rigging are admirable. The composition is organized around the ship, in a moment suspended in time, as the sailors struggle to save their boat.

The painting, on its original canvas, has just been perfectly restored and is in an excellent state of preservation. The original wood and gilded stucco frame is richly decorated and has just been restored to its original state.