

PAN

AMSTERDAM

DAATSELAAR THE COLLECTION



Calm Sea

Oil on Mahogany Panel | 47,5 x 78 cm | Signed lower right | Date: 1875

Provenance: Kunsthandel M. Wolff, Amsterdam; Christies 27 Apr 1999 live auction 2411 Nineteenth century art, lot 154; Dutch private collection

Literature: Johan Poort, H.W. Mesdag, Oeuvre Catalogus 1989 nr. 1875.6. pg.201 (Afb. II)

"Calm Sea" is regarded as one of Hendrik Willem Mesdag's most beautiful and masterfully crafted paintings. Known for his profound love of the sea, Mesdag's intimate knowledge of marine life and atmospheric conditions shines in this piece. His ability to capture the stillness and quietude of the water, along with the subtle play of light on the horizon, is masterful in this painting.

Calm Sea captivates Mesdag's ability to evoke a feeling of tranquility, drawing viewers into its serene atmosphere. Mesdag's expert use of a restrained, almost monochromatic color palette creates a mood that is both calm and profound. The soft hues of the sky blend seamlessly into the glassy waters, enhancing the stillness of the scene.

His delicate brushstrokes and careful attention to detail — seen in the textured sails, the ropes, and the wooden hulls of the fishing boats — add a tangible realism, making the viewer feel as if they are present on the silent shore, witnessing the scene firsthand.

The boats are arranged in a balanced yet dynamic manner, creating depth and leading the eye gently from the foreground to the distant horizon, where faint silhouettes of other vessels emerge through the mist. This depth gives a sense of boundless space, inviting viewers to linger and explore every detail.