

HOLGER LÜBBERS

1850–1931

83. *Freighters in the Sound Outside Copenhagen Harbour*, 1920

(*Fragtskibe i Øresund ud for Københavns Havn*)

Oil on canvas, 40½ x 49¼ in. (103 x 125 cm)

Signed and dated lower left: H. Lübbers 1920

PROVENANCE: Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 525, 1989, lot 212, ill.p.27

The changeable weather in Denmark has always been a welcome challenge to marine artists and in the course of time has given rise to very different motifs within the relatively narrow range of subjects available to marine painting. The weather plays a crucial role in Lübbers' work, and he often chooses a cloudy day. It is also typical of him that he should portray very early or very late times of day.

Here we are in the Sound at some distance from Copenhagen; the profile of the city forms the background of the picture. A storm cloud is gathering over the artist, and close to the coast the surface of the water is dramatically illuminated by sunbeams falling through a gap in the clouds. Lübbers has taken great care in his portrayal of the foremost ship, a schooner-rigged ketch with flying foresail, while the two in the background are a ketch and probably a yacht respectively. This painting may well have been a work commissioned by a shipowner.

In former times, the sea was the most frequently used means of transport in Denmark, and freighters lay tightly packed in harbours and fjords. Even after the establishment of the railway network small craft continued to be used by the shipping trade, and freighters of the size seen in the picture were common until about 1960, though in time they were driven by machinery. About 1920, when the present picture was painted, this kind of shipping was experiencing difficulties as a result of World War I.

E.F.