

C. F. SØRENSEN

1818–1879

115. *Coast with Steep Cliffs; in the Foreground, a Fisher Boy*

(*Kystparti med stejle klinter, i forgrunden fiskerdreng*)

Oil on panel, 9¾ x 16¼ in. (25 x 41 cm)

Signed with initials lower left: C.F.S.

PROVENANCE: Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 427, 1981, lot 252; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 526, 1989, lot 439, ill. p. 103.

EXHIBITED: Marienlyst, Elsinore, *Marinemaleren C.F. Sørensen*, 1991, no. IIII.

LITERATURE: Mona Christensen and Jan Faye, *Marinemaleren C. F. Sørensen*, Marienlyst, Elsinore 1991, p. 171.

*O, well, it's not so bad; but you must still go out,
still go out into nature; first on the shore, then in a boat. . . .*

These were the words of encouragement once uttered by Carl Frederik Sørensen to one of his pupils, the poet and painter Holger Drachmann (1846–1908), from whose hand we have a lively description of Sørensen as both man and artist.¹ The exhortation originally came from C. W. Eckersberg, who had taught his pupils to work out in nature directly in front of their motifs. With him, marine painting in Danish art had gotten seriously underway. On the basis of a large number of drawn sketches and through intensive studies of available construction calculations, he acquainted himself with the structure of the ships down to the least detail. Then, on the basis of meticulous perspective measurements, he calculated the precise positions in which to place the vessels in his composition, taking into account the direction of the winds, the water currents, and the sea floor conditions in the relevant places. Only after this could the process of painting commence.

But Sørensen's painting style developed in a very different way from that of Eckersberg, who executed his brilliant and strictly composed idealized portrayals of life at sea methodically and with scientific thoroughness; C. F. Sørensen worked spontaneously. For him it was a matter of capturing the character of the sea and its many moods. With his quick brush and often very broad strokes, he caught the ever-changing movements on the surface of the sea, the play of light on the waves, and the vagaries of the weather.

It is not known where this wonderful plein air study was painted, and the dating also appears to be uncertain. The scene with the lone fisher boy watching on a wet shore one radiant morning at ebb tide could have been painted in southern England (the artist spent the summer of 1854 at Dover and Hastings).

S.L.

¹Holger Drachmann, *Nogle Erindringsord in Ude og Hjemme*, no. 70, 1879.