

AUGUST FISCHER

1854–1921

31. *Canal View, Küterwallsfleeth, Hamburg*

(*Kanalparti, Küterwallsfleeth, Hamburg*)

Oil on canvas, 24³/₄ x 17²/₃ in. (63 x 45 cm)

Signed lower left: Aug. Fischer

PROVENANCE: Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 532, 1989, lot 533, ill. p. 238; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 538, 1990, lot 611, ill. p. 204.

According to an inscription on the reverse, this idyllic painting represents Küterwallsfleeth at the heart of Hamburg, a canal that continues Admiralitetsfleeth close to the old city wall and the Binnenalster, and is situated about halfway between the old city churches dedicated to St. Nicholas and St. Michael. We are looking toward Alsterfleeth, and the tall building in the background is probably the city hall. In this part of Europe it is the traditional custom to place the houses with their gables facing toward the street. As one of the Hanseatic cities, Hamburg has since the Middle Ages been an important center for trade and transshipment. Later, too, the city was characterized by merchants' houses like these, with space for the storage of goods.

During World War II, Hamburg harbor and the central parts of the city were destroyed by Allied bombing, which was at its worst in 1943. Rebuilding after the war meant a radical replanning of the city, with the establishment of wide streets, the filling of canals, and the construction of huge office blocks. Meanwhile, it seems from older maps that the houses in Küterwallsfleeth were already demolished sometime before this. The name exists today as a street name.

E.F.