

PETER ILSTED

1861–1933

46. *Mother and Child*, 1892

(*Interiør fra et fiskerhjem i Hornbæk*)

Oil on canvas, 22½ x 17⅔ in. (57 x 45 cm)

Signed and dated lower right: Peter Ilsted 92

PROVENANCE: The collection of Prince Georg and Princess Anne of Denmark; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 500, Part 1, 1987, lot 29, ill. p. 26 (described as *Interiør med moder*).

EXHIBITED: Charlottenborg 1893, no. 200; Bruce Museum of Art and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut, and The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, New York, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 2005, no. 20, ill.; Scandinavia House, New York, *Danish Paintings from the Golden Age to the Modern Breakthrough, Selections from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 2013, no. 20.

LITERATURE: S. Clod. Svensson, Peter Ilsted og Sortekunsten, in *Samleren*, 1933, pp. 48–56, *En Fiskerstue i Hornbæk*, 1932 (mezzotint black-and-white after the motif); Theodore B. Donson, *Peter Ilsted, Sunshine and Silent Rooms*, New York, 1990, no. 40, *Fisherman's Room in Hornbæk*, mezzotint in colors, 1932 (O/S 72), 19½ x 45¾ in. (49.2 x 45 cm); 19¾ x 17¾ in. signed in pencil, ill.; Patricia G. Berman, *In Another Light, Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, 2007, p. 244, ill. p. 246.

Over the span of his long career, Peter Ilsted returned most frequently to his favorite subject: interior domestic scenes with tranquil women framed by walls, windows, and sparse furnishings such as the stove, wooden dowry chest, and woven baby basket we see here.

Ilsted draws us into this modest home of a fisherman and his wife with tenderness as he captures a mother gazing serenely at her plump, contented baby. We are aware that it is summertime, with greenery visible just outside the window, as well as a sailboat and the ocean on the horizon, but ultimately it is the simplicity of the interior composition, the wonderful texture of the family's humble furnishings, and the play of light in the room that keep us returning for yet another infusion of Danish quietude.

This piece in the Loeb collection is unusual, for it is one of only a very few oil versions compared to the many etchings and mezzotints of domestic interiors for which Ilsted is best known. Not too surprisingly, this particularly gentle scene was painted the very year (1892) that Ilsted married Ingeborg Petersen.

It is worth noting that he was one of three contemporaneous Nordic artists who consistently chose interior scenes as favorite subjects, the other two being Carl Holsøe and Ilsted's brother-in-law, Vilhelm Hammershøi, who married his sister Ida in 1891, the year before Ilsted's own marriage.

The Ilsted and Holsøe styles of painting interiors, however, are markedly different from that of Hammershøi. Whereas Ilsted and Holsøe works are warm and inviting, Hammershøi's are formal and austere. Though differences exist in their styles, art scholars observe that Ilsted's artistry was influenced by his brother-in-law, Hammershøi, and that the interior studies produced by all three are reminiscent of work done by Dutch painters in the 17th century.

These three artists are all represented in the Loeb collection; all three enjoy a revitalized interest among today's collectors.

B.H.