

PEDER MØNSTED

1859–1941

93. *Summer's Day Opposite Hammeren, Bornholm, 1882*

(*Sommerdag ud for Hammeren. Bornholm*)

Oil on canvas, 24½ x 37½ in. (62 x 95 cm)

Signed with initials and dated lower right: PM 1882

PROVENANCE: Kunsthallen, Auction 311, 1975, lot 36, ill. p. 51; Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 452, 1983, lot 167, ill. p. 67 (described as *Bornholmsk landskab med Hammershus ruiner og blomstrende lyng*).

LITERATURE: Patricia G. Berman, *In Another Light, Danish Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York 2007, ill. p. 116.

We do not know all of the reasons Mønsted was attracted to Bornholm, but from the titles of his exhibitions we can see that he was painting there in 1882 and 1883, returning to the island in 1887, 1917, and 1921, and perhaps on still more occasions. Other artists also found it a rich source of motifs somewhat earlier. In the 1860s Kristian Zahrtmann (1843–1917), who was born in Bornholm, traveled around the island with artist Otto Haslund (1842–1917), painting landscapes and scenes of everyday life, though Michael Ancher, who was born on the island, did not often paint there.

The ruined castle of Hammershus, at the northern tip of Bornholm, fascinated to the artist because of the bright light resulting from its being surrounded by water on all sides. Mønsted has portrayed a quiet, late summer's day in the light of afternoon with a clear blue sky. The ruins of the castle provide a calm, romantic interruption to the horizon; a mother carrying a child in her arms comes toward the artist along a path leading to him, and we see a ship with its sails set, a glimpse of a lighthouse in the distance. We note that a huge bank of heather is in full flower.

Mønsted perhaps liked the island because it gave him the possibility of portraying the broad sweep of a landscape in undisturbed peace. He gives Janus la Cour (1837–1909), who also painted around Aarhus, and Godfred Christensen (1845–1928) as the sources of his inspiration. Together with Vilhelm Kyhn, Thorvald Niss (1842–1905), and Harald Foss (1843–1922), the four artists created a late Romantic landscape painting in Denmark, a kind of Danish Barbizon school. Unlike the others, Mønsted was not a member of Kyhn's so-called "cave academy," an informal gathering of modern young painters studying together in Kyhn's garden. Mønsted insisted on nature, and explored parts of the cultural landscape, as well as the village environment as the basis for his art. He never became a modernist.

A painting described as *Hammershus Ruiner* (*Hammershus Ruins*) was sold as lot no. 12 in an auction held in the artist's studio on 7 February 1887. The dimensions of the painting (23⅔ x 6 in. or 60 x 14 cm) do not correspond to those in this Loeb collection work. Mønsted writes in the catalogue that the auction was held in order to finance his next journey abroad.¹

In the Bruun Rasmussen auction no. 613, 1995, a picture entitled *Parti fra Hammershus* (View of Hammershus), signed "P.M. 1882," was sold as lot no. 351; this is a smaller replica of the version in the Loeb collection measuring 8⅔ x 13 in. (22 x 33 cm). As early as 1881, Mønsted had painted the *Parti fra Hammershus* in an almost identical version measuring 18⅘ x 27½ in. (48 x 70 cm). This was sold in the Bruun Rasmussen auction no. 500, 1987, as lot no. 108, ill. p. 151, and was sold again in the Bruun Rasmussen auction 505, 1988, lot no. 102, ill. p. 59.

M. T.

¹Peder Mønsted auction catalogue February 7, 1887, Copenhagen.