



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

F. CHILDE HASSAM (1859—1935)

Along the Coast [Perros-Guirec, Cotes du Nord, France], 1910

Oil on panel

7 x 10 inches

Signed and dated 'Childe Hassam/1910,' lower right. Inscribed with artist's device, verso.

PROVENANCE: The artist; to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, by bequest (1935); with Milch Galleries, New York (1944); to Parke Bernet, New York (31 March 1949); to Private Collection (1950s); by descent to the present owner, Private Collection, CT

EXHIBITIONS: (Possibly) New York, Macbeth Galleries, *Second Exhibition of "Intimate Paintings,"* December 1918, no. 37 (as *Beach in France*).

“ ... few of our native painters have succeeded in so many directions. Sea, landscape, architecture, flowers, still-life, animals and figures ... He seems able to paint anything his fancy dictates. He can be as finished, as broad, as impressionist, as colorful as the best of them, and all at will.”¹

Frederick Childe Hassam, the son of a prominent Boston merchant, was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Largely remembered as an American painter and printmaker, Hassam originally trained in wood engraving and book illustration—which he practiced largely during the 1870s through the mid-1880s—illustrating for such periodicals and *Century* and *Harper's* magazines. In the early 1880s, Hassam began attending evening classes at the Boston Art Club, where he studied with William Rimmer (1816—1879), and retained his first studio on Tremont Street. His first one-man show in 1882—at the Williams & Everett Galleries in Boston—featured a collection dominated by bright watercolors, and represented Hassam's first forays into non-graphic work. Generally speaking, Hassam's early work was characterized by Barbizon-influenced watercolor—as opposed to oil—paintings.

In 1883, Hassam made his first trip to Europe, accompanied by the American illustrator Edmund Henry Garrett (1853—1929). Hassam executed a great number of watercolors on this trip, many of which were exhibited upon his return to Boston in 1884. Following his illuminative journey,

1 “Pictures by Childe Hassam,” *The New York Times*, 2 February 1896, p. 21.



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Hassam resumed his artistic practice in Boston. He became known as an urban painter of street scenes, favoring a Tonalist style in the expression of atmospheric effects.

Hassam traveled again to France in 1886, accompanied by his wife; the couple would spend the next three years living in Paris. Hassam studied drawing at the Académie Julian under the tutelage of the figure painters Gustave Boulanger (1824—1888) and Jules Joseph Lefebvre (1834—1912). This period of time had great implications for Hassam's artistic practice. While he continued to paint urban scenes as he had done in Boston, Hassam's exposure to the work of the French Impressionists brightened his palette and feathered his brushstrokes. It is during this time that he began to use oil paints with greater frequency. Though he resisted the label of “Impressionist” throughout his career, the French influence on Hassam's production is clear.

Upon their return to the United States, Hassam and his wife settled in New York City. Urban scenes continued to dominate his *oeuvre*, though summer excursions outside of the city and throughout New England—to the coast of Maine and New Hampshire, largely—offered significant diversity of subject matter. By the early 1890s, Hassam had become highly accomplished painter—both in terms of notoriety and financial success. Major exhibitions of his work were conducted at institutions such as the Philadelphia and Boston Art Clubs, the American Water Color Society, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the National Academy of Design, among others.

In 1896, Hassam and his wife returned again to Europe, where they visited England, Italy and France. Furthering his artistic development—which at this time could be generally classified as an American-Impressionist style—Hassam's work began to take on the increasingly bright colors and agitated brushstrokes of Post-Impressionist painting, with incorporated elements of Symbolism. This trip marked a pivotal moment in the development of Hassam's signature style, in which he assimilated aspects of Impressionism and modernism to generate a hybridity of expression that would ultimately identify him as a standout talent among American artists.

After returning to the United States in 1897, Hassam and his wife settled again in New York City. Hassam participated in the noted 1898 exhibition, *Ten American Painters* at the Durand-Ruel Galleries in Manhattan. The exhibition itself reflected a growing, modernist desire on the part of its exhibitors to distinguish themselves from the dominant, academic modes of artistic production. Hassam's work of this time reflects his conflicting interest in modernist trends,



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illustrating his exploration into principles of subtle abstraction, symbolism, and anti-naturalism. Though, generally speaking, these works were not well-received by the public, Hassam himself thought highly of these endeavors, and they represent a pivotal moment in his development.

Over the course of the following decade—from 1900 until 1910—Hassam remained in New York City, often venturing outside the city during the summer months to visit points across New England, as well as (in 1904) west to Oregon.

In 1910, Hassam traveled to Europe for the last time. Beginning in London in June, he and his wife traveled throughout the Netherlands before arriving in France in July, where they remained through October. Hassam painted actively, and his output from this time reflects his ventures—to Nemours, La Clarté, Grez-sur-Loing, Côte du Nord, Lannion, Brélévenez, Paris and, of course, the beaches of Perros-Guirec.

It was during this trip, at the height of his career, that Hassam painted *Along the Coast*. This inviting resort scene—lined with ambling beach-goers and dotted with colorful cabanas—is painted in a clamor of vibrant tones, illustrative light effects and an utter mastery of atmospheric representation. The Breton location was a popular one for French artists at this time. The beach and its habitants were immortalized by a number of other painters, such as the Symbolist Maurice Denis (1870—1943), as well as by Jules-Émile Zingg (1882—1942).



Maurice Denis, *Female Bathers at Perros-Guirec*, 1912, oil on canvas, 39 x 48 inches, Petit Palais Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris



Jules-Émile Zingg, *La côte, ciel mer et terre près de Perros Guirec*, n.d., Private Collection



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In many ways reminiscent of the nuanced, sweeping beach scenes that appear in the *oeuvre* of the American Impressionist Edward Henry Potthast (1857—1927)—such as his now-iconic rendering of Coney Island (1914)—*Along the Coast* is an exemplar of Hassam's mature style, indicating the final influences of European modernism on his methodology.



Edward Henry Potthast, *Coney Island*, 1914, oil on panel, 11 ¼ x 16 inches, Private Collection



Childe Hassam, *Perros-Guirec, Cotes du Nord, France*, 1910, oil on panel, 7 x 10 inches, Hawthorne Fine Art

During this trip Hassam adopted a more abbreviated shorthand. The palettes from this time period are more bold, his shapes increasingly simplified, slightly abstracted, and his renderings more decorative. Vertical brushstrokes are juxtaposed with horizontal to indicate planes of distance and movement. Colors merge and blend to form a rich tapestry of pastels that underscore the warmth and vibrancy of Perros-Guirec on a warm summer day. *Along the Coast* is slated to be included in the upcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Hassam's work by Stuart P. Feld and Kathleen M. Burnside (as *Perros-Guirec, Cotes du Nord, France*).

Following their French travels, the couple moved on to Spain, before departing for New York on October 17. Hassam returned to his depictions of urban life in New York City, but around 1914 began to favor printmaking—working largely with etchings and lithography—while still favoring an Impressionistic technique. By 1919 he had purchased a cottage in East Hampton, New York, where he spent his summers for the remainder of his life. Upon his death, Hassam's estate was left to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York. The artist's instructions dictated that his works be sold to establish an artists' fund for purchase of American and Canadian artists' works for museum collections.



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Hassam was a member of the National Academy of Design, the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and the Munich Secessionists. In addition to the noted *Ten American Painters* exhibition of 1898, Hassam exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1889, bronze medal), with the Munich Secessionists (1905), at the inaugural Armory Show in New York (1913), and regularly at the Salon des Artistes Français and the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Since his death, there have been at least five large-scale solo exhibitions of Hassam's work mounted. Today, Hassam's work remains in the collections of dozens of museums and galleries across the world, including: the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Smithsonian, Washington D.C.