



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

SAMUEL COLMAN (1832-1920)

Governors Island, New York Harbor, 1875

Oil on canvas

11 ½ x 14 ½ inches

Signed and dated 1875, lower right

PROVENANCE: Private Collection, Wethersfield, CT

In 1867, prominent critic Henry Tuckerman wrote that, “to the eye of refined taste, to the quiet lover of nature, there is a peculiar charm in Colman’s style which, sooner or later, will be greatly appreciated.”¹ Tuckerman was correct—today, Colman, a second-generation Hudson River School painter, is greatly admired for his quiet, sensitive and poetic approach to the depiction of landscape.

Born in Portland, Maine, Colman moved to New York City at an early age. His father, a publisher of and dealer in fine art books, was instrumental in introducing Colman to many of the leading artists and writers of his day. Colman’s early style was very much influenced by Asher B. Durand, with whom he studied. At the age of eighteen, the young artist had already exhibited at the National Academy of Design and by age twenty-two had become one of its Associates. Colman was also one of the founders and the first president of the American Society of Watercolor Painters. Today, his work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, New York Public Library, and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

After traveling extensively in Europe during the early 1860s, Colman’s style underwent an important shift as he moved away from the archetypal Hudson River School style associated with Durand and toward a more personal, evocative approach. Colman painted throughout the United States (including in the West) as well as in Canada, Mexico, Europe, and North Africa. He penned two books on art, titled *Nature's Harmonic Unity and Proportional Form*, and was also an

1 Henry Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1867), 560.



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etcher, art collector, authority on oriental art and porcelains, and, collaborating with John La Farge and Louis Tiffany, an interior designer.

Like most painters associated with the Hudson River School, Colman devoted a great deal of his time to painting the Hudson River and its environs. In *Governors Island, New York Harbor*, a painting composed almost entirely of cloud-filled sky and calm water, Colman has created an image of New York harbor that, while full of life—sailboats cluster along the horizon line—is nonetheless extremely serene. The painting's atmospheric style is very reminiscent of J. M. W. Turner's seascapes.