



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

CHILDE HASSAM (1859-1935)

Twilight After Rain, c. 1887-89

Oil on board

8 x 6 inches

Signed lower left

Inscribed in the artist's hand *Twilight after Rain / (The rue Royal and the Church of the Madeleine Paris) / Childe Hassam / 95 5th Ave New York* on paper affixed to the reverse

Note: This painting will be included in Kathleen M. Burnside's and Stuart P. Feld's forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's work.

PROVENANCE

Richard Harding Davis, Mount Kisco, New York

Mrs. Cecil Clark Davis, Marion, Massachusetts

Miss M. Campbell-Hutchinson, New York (sold: Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, November 13, 1957,

lot 4)

Estate of Joseph Katz, Baltimore, Maryland, until 1959

Babcock Galleries, New York

Acquired by the prior owner from the above, 1959

Private Collection, CT

(Frederick) Childe Hassam (1859-1935) was a pioneer of the American Impressionist movement. His body of work comprises over 2,000 oils, watercolors, pastels and illustrations and after 1912, over 400 etchings and prints. Today, he is perhaps best known for his paintings that capture the excitement of New York City at the turn of century, such as his famous depictions of flag-studded Fifth Avenue during World War I, but his unparalleled skill at portraying the tranquility and beauty of the countryside with his bright, tonal palette and descriptive brushwork are considered to be some of his most sophisticated work.

Hassam was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts (now a part of Boston) to a prominent merchant family descended from the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He initially trained as an apprentice to a wood engraver, and from the late 1870s to the mid-1880s created drawings for book illustrations—largely children's stories—as well as illustrations for periodicals such as *Century* and *Harper's* magazines. Beginning in the early 1880s, he attended evening classes at the Boston Art Club, where he studied under William Rimmer (1816-1879), an artist whose work would posthumously be shown in the groundbreaking 1913 Armory Show. Hassam had his first one-man show at Boston's William & Everett Galleries in 1882, in which he exhibited his first body of non-graphic work, mostly bright watercolors strongly influenced by the Barbizon school. In 1883, Hassam opened his studio on Tremont Street and took his first trip to Europe accompanied by the American illustrator Edmund C. Garrett (1853-1929). Hassam painted many bright, illustrative



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watercolors during this trip, over 60 of which he exhibited in Boston upon his return to the city in 1884. By the mid-1880s, Hassam had established his reputation in Boston as a painter of urban street scenes in a tonal, atmospheric style.

In late 1886, Hassam and his wife, Kathleen Maud (née Doane), left Boston and travelled abroad for three years. The couple settled in Paris, and Hassam began classes with Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888) and Jules Lefebvre (1834-1912) at the Académie Julian. This period had great implications for Hassam's artistic development; somewhat unusual in the circle of American artists there at the time, Hassam was attracted to the work of the French Impressionists, which was only beginning to find favor among American collectors at the time.

Twilight After Rain, painted in Paris around 1887-89, is an excellent early example of what was to become Hassam's signature style. He adopted a lighter palette, as well as the French Impressionist technique of broken, descriptive brushstrokes, which he began to apply to his signature urban scenes. Here, Hassam captures the unique misty atmospheric quality of dusk after a rainfall, where the hazy gray monumental Neoclassical façade of the Church of the Madeleine rises majestically from the glistening wet pavement of the rue Royal against a dull pink sky. Long captivated by the light effects caused by changing weather conditions, Hassam produced several works emphasizing the warm glow and calming effect produced by rain on a bustling urban landscape. He stated, "I used to think it very pretty when [the road] was wet and shining, and caught the reflections of passing people and vehicles." The muted palette depicting the overcast sky and soft pearly light that enshrouds the buildings, figures and carriages, unifies the composition.

Twilight After Rain also emphasizes the new spacious boulevards that dominated the Parisian cityscape after the municipal improvements initiated by Baron Haussmann under Napoleon III. Indeed, the rue Royal, located in the 8th arrondissement, was strategically designed to allow the Church of the Madeleine to occupy a commanding position at the end of the boulevard, maintaining a clear sightline to the nearby Place de la Concorde to the south. Though the structure was originally designed as a temple to the glory of Napoleon's army, the plans were modified during the Restoration, and the Madeleine is now a Roman Catholic church. The painting's wide angle of vision and deep perspective may also reflect the influence of the relatively new medium of photography, which Hassam would have been exposed to in Paris.

Twilight After Rain demonstrates the skill Hassam exercised over his craft, with a masterful capturing of the atmospheric effects of light on a scene of urban daily life executed through boldly descriptive brushwork. This painting is slated to be included in forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Hassam's work by Stuart P. Feld and Katherine M. Burnside.



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Childe Hassam, *Rainy Day, Boston*, 1885, oil on canvas, 26 1/8 x 48 inches. The Toledo Museum of Art.



Childe Hassam, *Une Averse—rue Bonaparte*, 1887, oil on canvas, 40 3/8 x 77 7/16 in, Terra Foundation for American Art.

When he and his wife returned to the United States in 1889, this time taking up residency in New York City, he continued to paint in the French Impressionist style. Hassam was a widely acclaimed artist by the 1890s. His oeuvre, which had previously been dominated by urban scenes, now included pictures of the countryside inspired by his trips to New England during the summer seasons. He received recognition from several exhibitions held at major art institutions in the United States, 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. With his work, as Barbara Weinberg, formerly of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, stated, “he achieved critical acclaim and commercial success, riding the great wave of enthusiasm for American Impressionism to fame and fortune.”

Hassam and his wife returned to Europe in 1896, visiting England and Italy in addition to France. The artist further developed his style during this trip, which at this point was generally regarded as American Impressionist, increasing the brightness of his colors and further agitating his brushstrokes in the style of the French Post-Impressionists such as George Seurat who were gaining dominance at the time. When Hassam and his wife returned to New York City in 1897, he had reached his mature style that remained loyal to the Impressionist desire to depict the energy of the burgeoning industrial life, but also incorporated the vivid palette and aggressive, descriptive brushwork of the Post-Impressionists and Symbolists, a hybridity of expression that would solidify his legacy as an outstanding American artist.

In the following decade, Hassam became increasingly distrustful of modern 20th century art. He helped organize the exhibition *Ten American Painters* at the Durand-Ruel Galleries in New York in 1898, which sought to exhibit work of contemporary artists in an environment that was less constrictive and more aesthetically diverse than that found in the academy. He explored more Symbolist and anti-naturalistic subject matter in his own work during this time, and although he considered these canvasses to be among his finest work, they were not as well received as his more naturalistic paintings. He travelled to Europe for the last time in 1910-11, during which he executed



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paintings that captured the energy of Bastille Day in Paris, works that would be precursors of his pictures of patriotic celebrations held in New York City during World War I.



Childe Hassam, *July Fourteenth, Rue Daunou, 1910*, 1910, oil on canvas, 29x20 inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Childe Hassam, *Avenue of the Allies, Great Britain, 1918*, 1918, oil on canvas, 36x28 inches, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

In 1914, at the age of 55, Hassam took up printmaking; he executed over 350 etchings and 40 lithographs, works that still adhered to the energetic and descriptive markings that characterize his paintings. He did not, however, give up oil painting.

Hassam spent the remainder of his life in New York City and East Hampton, where he purchased a summer cottage in 1919. Upon his death, his estate was left to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York. The artist's instructions dictated that his works were to be sold to establish a fund for the purchase of American and Canadian artists' works for museum collections. 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* show of 1898, Hassam exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1889, bronze medal), and with 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 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 is in the collections of dozens of museums around the world, including: the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.



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