

Lot 1139



Auction	Fine Art
Date	17.05.2024, ca. 15:45
Preview	10.05.2024 - 10:00:00 bis 13.05.2024 - 18:00:00

ACHENBACH, OSWALD
Düsseldorf 1827 - 1905

Title: Feast of Santa Lucia in Naples.
Date: 1886.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 139 x 197cm.
Notation: Signed and dated lower right: "Osw. Achenbach 1886".
Frame: Framed.

Cf. literature:
F.v. Boetticher: Malerwerke des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, vol. I.1, p. 13, no. 120.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Germany, acquired in the 1950s from Galerie Paffrath, Düsseldorf.

Andreas and Oswald Achenbach were among the most important European landscape painters of the 19th century. As restless travellers, the brothers portrayed the places they visited and captured the feelings and impressions that the elements of nature awakened in them on canvas. Even during their lifetime, their paintings were in demand on the art market; the brothers even competed with each other as they both painted Italian landscapes. This led to a joint agreement to divide up the market: Oswald would henceforth remain faithful to Italian subjects while Andreas specialised in Nordic motifs. Our two large-format paintings - owned by the same family for two generations - vividly reflect this division and bear witness to the extraordinary mastery of two exceptional artists.

The painting "Wild Stream with Watermill" by Andreas Achenbach (lot 1138) is extraordinarily powerful and intense. The scene of this spotlight is Scandinavia, one of the artist's favourite regions, and shares a torrent that rushes down a hill with force and speed, carrying debris with it. The surrounding bushes are shaken as it flows past and it seems as if the boulders have to make an effort not to be swept away by the impetuous current. Raw, powerful nature with its cool colours dominates this northern land, in which man plays a marginal role and appears on the right of the picture as a marginal figure subordinate to the elements.

In contrast, the following lot 1139, Oswald Achenbach's "Feast of Santa Lucia in Naples", has a completely different effect: here, man in harmony with his surroundings takes centre stage. The painting shares a special, seafaring-inspired festival celebrated in honour of the Madonna of the church of Santa Maria della Catena in the old city centre of Naples, in the Borgo Santa Lucia. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood wear their best clothes on the occasion of the feast day and remain, on water and on land, in spellbound contemplation in front of the fireworks on the quay. The spectacle spirals upwards and rages over the promenade like a fire-breathing monster. Achenbach has achieved a masterful depiction of light and shadow here: with soft, darting brushstrokes, he renders the backdrop-like illuminated façades and the reflections on the water. The atmospheric scenery reveals his passion for the theatre and his former profession as a director, actor, and stage decorator. Two further versions of this work from 1874 and 1875, but here with reduced staffing of the centre and foreground respectively, can be found in the Neue Galerie of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Kassel and in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

Estimate: 80.000 € - 120.000 €; Hammer: 75.000 €

