

Lot 1220

**Auction Fine Art****Date** 17.05.2024, ca. 16:45**Preview** 10.05.2024 - 10:00:00 bis
13.05.2024 - 18:00:00

CLARENBACH, MAX
1880 Neuss - 1952 Wittlaer/Düsseldorf

Title: "Abend im Wattenmeer".
The Sea at Low Tide near Sylt.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Measurement: 95 x 121cm.
Notation: Signed lower right: "M. Clarenbach".
Frame: Framed.

Verso:
On the stretcher studio stamp with details of the title as well as exhibition label from the Münchener Deutschen Kunstausstellung from 1938.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Germany.

With Max Clarenbach, the Düsseldorf School of Painting took a step towards Impressionism and more modern artistic concepts in the first years of the new century. In 1909, he was a co-founder of the Sonderbund, which brought together artists, collectors and museum experts who - similar to the Secessionists in Berlin - broke up the old academic structures and showed the new trends coming from Paris. Clarenbach was a decisive motor, who, in addition to his art, also pushed the organisation of the exhibitions in which the works of van Gogh, Monet and Gauguin were shown for the first time in Cologne and Düsseldorf.

He was by no means born with these visionary ideas. Clarenbach came from a very poor background and, orphaned at an early age, earned himself a place at the Düsseldorf Academy at the age of 13 with the help of patrons. Discovered by Andreas Achenbach, he was able to set off on study trips with the landscape painters at an early age. In 1899 he found the place that was to dominate his life and work: for the International Watercolour Exhibition, in which he was the only one of the Academy's students to take part, he lived in Wittlaer on the Rhine - he felt so connected to the Rhine and Erft meadows there that they became his predominant motif throughout his life and he built his studio house there ten years later.

His first artistic breakthrough came at the age of 22, when his expansive painting "Der Stille Tag" ("The Quiet Day")

was exhibited in 1902 and immediately acquired by the Düsseldorf Art Museum. This winter landscape with two boats on the water already shows the typical elements of his painting that characterise his later work and form the basis of his success: the simple but atmospheric ambience in a seemingly random and insignificant picture detail, the reduction of the drawing, combined with graphic elements and an equally reduced colour palette. Clarenbach's paintings are characterised by a striking horizon, which is given depth by diagonal shorelines, often contrasted with reflections of boats in the water. Figurative or narrative elements are rarely or never found.

In the years before 1910, he was influenced by Impressionism of the French school, which he became acquainted with during his stays in Paris, and the works of the Haag School, which he encountered on his travels to Holland. The colours of his garden and flower paintings of the time are correspondingly vibrant and the application of paint correspondingly impasto. This changed in the mid-1910s; he became a professor at the Düsseldorf Academy and increasingly turned back to the traditional views there. Clarenbach was firmly rooted in the academic and artistic life of the city. During the 1930s/40s, he was able to remain true to his style, which did not fundamentally contradict the ideal of the time, even if he was initially criticised for his impressionistic approach. It was not until around 1940 that he approached pathetic, monumental landscape painting for a while, until he left teaching after 1945 and returned to his successful winter landscapes and spring gardens in his late work.

Max Clarenbach was one of the most important figures in the Rhineland's art scene in the early 20th century, and his atmospherically dense depictions of the Lower Rhine characterise the image of this vast landscape.

Estimate: 12.000 € - 18.000 €

