

HENRY MORET

Cherbourg 1856 - 1913 Paris

Ref: CD 161

Côte rocheuse



Signed and dated lower left: *Henry Moret / 1901*
Oil on canvas: 25 ³/₄ x 32 in / 65.4 x 81.3 cm
Frame size: 33 x 39 in / 83.8 x 99.1 cm



RICHARD GREEN

Provenance:

Private collector, UK;
from whom acquired in the 1990s by a private collector, UK

To be included in the catalogue raisonné of the work of Henry Moret being prepared by Jean-Yves Rolland

Henry Moret's earlier work was influenced by Gauguin, whom he met in Pont-Aven, Brittany in 1888. Later he developed his own personal, powerful style which fused elements of Gauguin's Synthetism – flat areas of colour, bold contrasts, the power of colour to evoke emotion – with the more naturalistic approach to space and light of the Impressionists. Emile Bernard wrote of Moret: 'He was a very gentle, likeable character; a peaceable, sincere revolutionary. I lost sight of him when I left Pont-Aven....He had turned away from our developments in synthesis and gone over to the *plein air* school of Monet....So far from weakening his talent he had strengthened it, rejecting theories, keeping in touch with life itself, with nature'¹.

Of all the members of the Pont-Aven School, Moret was the most faithful to the area. He had first visited there in the 1880s and in 1896 settled permanently in the small fishing village of Doëlan. Thereafter he divided his time mostly between Brittany and Paris, where a contract with Durand-Ruel in 1895 relieved him of financial worries. Moret was enraptured by the rugged, breezy coast of Brittany, with its sparkling and fleeting light. 'An indefatigable fisherman and huntsman, a real seadog, a first-rate shot'², Moret got on well with Brittany's dignified, hardy inhabitants.

This richly-impasted work vividly evokes the dramatic Breton coastline with the jagged rocks and treacherous currents so ably mastered by Breton seafarers. The turquoise and sapphire blue of the channel, flecked with restless foam, is contrasted with the warm tones of seaweed-wrapped rocks and the bright, emerald green of the clifftops.

¹ Quoted in Wladyslawa Jaworska, *Gauguin and the Pont-Aven School*, London 1972, pp.183-4.

² Moret's landlord Monsieur Tonnerre, quoted in Judy Le Paul, *Gauguin and the Impressionists at Pont-Aven*, New York 1983, p.208.

Artworks are sold subject to our Terms and Conditions of Sale; copies are available upon request

www.richardgreen.com

RICHARD GREEN

HENRY MORET

Cherbourg 1856 - 1913 Paris

Henry Moret was born in Cherbourg, Normandy, the son of a garrison officer. A gentle, thoughtful man and an indefatigable worker, Henry Moret discovered Brittany during his military service in 1875. Having trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and in the studios of Gérôme and Laurens in Paris, Moret went to Brittany in 1881, staying at Le Pouldu near Pont Aven. For the rest of his life he divided his time mostly between Paris and Brittany, painting the landscape and rugged coastline. In 1888, while living in Pont Aven, he met Gauguin and the circle of painters who gathered around him in L'Auberge Gloanec. Moret was influenced by Gauguin's philosophy of Synthetism, summarized in 1890 by Maurice Denis: 'It is well to remember that a picture before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order'. Moret's Breton landscapes of the early 1890s have often been mistaken for those of Gauguin. In his later work Moret re-explored the more naturalistic approach of the Impressionists, using a palette dominated by blues, greens and pinks.

In 1893 Moret fell in love with Céline Chatenet, a dressmaker who became his wife in 1910. She helped to support him financially until a contract with Durand-Ruel in 1895 freed Moret from money worries. He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. In 1900 and 1902 Durand-Ruel showed his work in New York, along with that of Maufra and Loiseau. Following Moret's death in 1913, Durand-Ruel held a number of posthumous exhibitions and in one catalogue Moret was described as having the ability 'to express the Breton landscape exactly... he occupies a unique place in the evolution of art at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as he has been able to fuse together two fundamentally opposing styles: the Synthetism of Pont Aven and Impressionism'.

The work of Henry Moret is represented in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris; the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper; Southampton City Art Gallery; the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff; the Hermitage, St Petersburg; the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Artworks are sold subject to our Terms and Conditions of Sale; copies are available upon request

www.richardgreen.com