

Basic Detail Report



At the Seaside

Date

1867

Primary Maker

Eugène Boudin

Medium

Oil on panel

Dimensions

31.4 x 48 cm

Description

'At the Seaside' is unusual amidst Boudin's large body of beachscenes in that it includes figures in the water, surprisingly here in view of the darkening clouds and the breeze which lifts the ladies' hair ribbons and stirs their huge skirts. Painted in 1867, just when Boudin's talent was about to be recognized by the public, it was probably executed at Trouville, where he worked every year, although since he had discovered Brittany a short time previously, he was to find the bourgeois visitors to the Norman seaside resorts increasingly unattractive. Nevertheless, his insistence on their equal right to be painted with the peasant subjects of Millet and Courbet helped to pave the way for the Impressionists' paintings of modern life. In his drawing-books and sketchpads, Boudin frequently scribbled notes to himself about the direction of the breeze, the time of day and the date. That careful recording can be seen here in the returning swimmer on the left and the accurate rendering of the overcast atmosphere. Corot considered Boudin a king amongst those artists who painted the sky, however he must also be recognised as a master of sandy beaches which he usually painted with luminous glowing blonde tones, thrown into relief, as here, by the costumes of the strollers who inhabit them. 'Anything painted directly from nature and on the spot has always a force, power and vivacity of touch that one cannot find in the studio,' he wrote in his notebooks. It was the way he lived up to that belief in paintings like 'At the Seaside' that was to influence the Impressionists. (Extract from 'Images and Insights', Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, 1993, p. 196)