Louis Émile Adan (French, 1839-1937)
Anxious Moments (not dated)
Oil on canvas

The following description of Adan’s Anxious Moments was written by John Getz, curator for Alfred O. Deshong, in the catalogue he prepared for Deshong’s collection: “Shows a Normandy Coast scene during a storm with watchers anxious for the fisherman’s return.”

Born in Paris in 1839, Louis Émile Adan began his artistic training at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was a participant in the annual Paris Salons beginning in 1863 until the year of his death in 1937. Anxious Moments was exhibited in the Salon of 1893.

Adan was a realist painter whose main subject was women, represented singly or in groups. His subjects were frequently placed in agrarian settings. The somber tone of Anxious Moments places it in a period of the artist’s work that dates from the late 1880s through the turn of the century. It was during this period that the artist found his voice.

Prior to this period, Adan had established his reputation on pleasing images of women in everyday life or elegant young women dressed in fashionable attire. However, toward the end of the 1880s, after some book illustrating projects, a significant change in his style occurred. He began a series of paintings, somber in tone, in which he rendered scenes of women enduring the rigors of rural life. He empathetically captured, not their physical beauty, but their dignity in toil and duress.

La Sortie de l’église de Ciboure (Leaving the Church of Ciboure) of 1887, heralded the change in his approach. In this painting, black-clad Basque parishioners walk across a stone place outside a foreboding stone church. In 1889, he painted Le Soir (Evening) which depicts women and children laboring in the fields.

With Les Bruleurs d’herbe (Grass Burners) painted three years before Anxious Moments, Adan came to the attention of the American collector Charles Warren Cram and was introduced into the American art market where the paintings of this distinctive period were admired and purchased.

In Anxious Moments, fishermen’s wives ascend steep steps up a rocky cliff to view the distant boats in hopes that they husbands will return safely. The grey clouds move across the heavens, the wind sweeps the landscape so that one woman holds her head scarf. The women are looking eagerly out to sea, pointing or peering. One peers through what appears to be a telescope. A child kneels at the rail, his hands raised as if in prayer. At this high point there is a crucifix which faces out to sea, referring to the faith that undergirds these simple and strong families of fishermen. The setting closely resembles a cliff with a cross at Le Tréport, a small fishing port town in the Normandy region suggesting Adan may have based his narrative on an actual location.

Adan has empathetically created an epic drama based on the theme of survival at sea. His realistic treatment of the theme calls to mind the American painter Winslow Homer who painted such masterpieces of Summer Night (1890) at this time.

Following his depictions of women enduring hardships, Adan turned to images marked by tenderness and intimacy, believed to have perhaps stemmed from a personal change in his own life. Motherhood (1898) shows a gentle domestic interaction of a woman with her baby. Little is known about what he painted in his last years.

Nancy Miller Batty
ARTISTS
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
AND THEIR WORKS.

A HANDBOOK
CONTAINING TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTY BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCHES.

BY
CLARA ERSKINE CLEMENT
AND
LAURENCE HUTTON.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.
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Aflinger, Bernard. (Ger.) Born at Nuremberg, 1813. His father was a weaver, and intended the son for a trade, but the boy gave all his leisure to drawing, and in early youth attracted attention by a copy of the Madonna of Nuremberg which he made. He was then sent to Berlin to study the antique. He devoted himself to religious subjects, and executed works for churches, following the traditions of the Middle Ages. In 1850 he executed a statue of Rachel; thus commenced his portraits, which have established his German reputation. Among them are those of Humboldt, Rauch, Cornelius, Kaulbach, Ritschel, Dahlmann, Kugler, etc. One of his largest works is a monument for the University of Grieswald, on which there are four statues. At times Aflinger has returned to religious subjects. His "Madonna and Child" is in the Leipzig Museum. At Berlin, in 1876, he exhibited a group, "Spring Awakened," and a portrait bust (in plaster models). [Died, 1883.]

Agouègue, Eugène. (Ital.) Born at Sutri, 1819. A favorite pupil of Coghetto. During the revolution of 1848 this artist became a soldier, and for political reasons afterwards exiled himself, settling in Paris in 1833. He had already executed several works for churches in Rome, Sutri, and Savona, in which last place he worked with his master in the church of the Mission. In 1855 he sent to the Exposition six sketches representing phases of human life, and a picture of "Eve terrified at the Sight of a Serpent, which recalled to her her first Sin." In 1857 he exhibited at the Salon "The Dream of an Exile," "Zampieri, called Domenichino," and "The Shades of the Great Florentines." Aflinger, Joachim. (Span.) Born at Orihuela. Pupil of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Valencia and of Martinez. Medal at Philadelphia, where he exhibited "The Two Friends." At Paris, 1877, "Gypsies and Peasants at a Fair; Spain." "A Wounded Soldier" (1871), in water-color, by this artist, is in the collection of Mr. Samuel V. Wright of New York.

Agricola, Filippo. (Ital.) Born in Rome (1795 - 1857). Member of various academies. In 1812 he gained the first prize at the Capitoline for a picture of "Marinus contemplating the Ruins of Carthage," which is in the Academy of St. Luke, at Rome, where it is also, in a position of honor, his "Assumption of the Virgin." It was his last work, and was a commission from Gregory XVI. Two other famous pictures of his are in Rome, "Dante and Beatrice" and "Tasso and Eleonora." His "Heroida" is in Russia; "Pygmalion" in England; his "Christ" was painted for the Duchess of Devonshire; and the "Madonna" for Count Manzoni of Parli.

Adlorn, August Wilhelm Julius. (Ger.) Born at Hanover (1796 - 1857). Studied at the Academy of Berlin, of which he is now
ADAM (Emile), peintre, au xx° siècle, à Biarritz. (Le Fig.).

Emile Adan a illustré les Fables de La Fontaine, les Fables de Flaubert, les Fables de l'Aigle et de l'Ours, les Fables de La Fontaine. Il a collaboré à de nombreuses publications, et ses dessins ont été distribués sous forme de cartes postales.

Prix : Prix Bonnat en 1921.

ADAME, Alphonse, o. n. de la direction, à l'École des arts et métiers. (Le Fig.).

Alphonse Adame a été directeur de l'École des arts et métiers. Il a joué un rôle important dans la formation des artistes de la seconde moitié du xixe siècle.

Prix : Prix Adame en 1880.