

Charles Ebert (1873 - 1959)

Monhegan

signed lower right

oil on board

8" x 10"

Ebert and his wife, artist Mary Roberts Ebert (1873-1956), were active members of the Cos Cob art colony in Greenwich before moving to Old Lyme in 1919. During his early years in Connecticut, Ebert stayed frequently at the Bush-Holley House in Cos Cob, where he studied with John Henry Twachtman (1853-1902), and was introduced to Childe Hassam (1859-1935) and Julian Alden Weir (1852-1919).

Like so many of his Old Lyme contemporaries, Ebert took winter sojourns to Florida, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, as well as annual summer trips to Monhegan Island, Maine. He first visited Monhegan in 1909 at a time when both American Impressionists and Robert Henri's circle of Realists painted side-by-side on the remote fishing island. In December of the same year, he earned his first one-man show at the Madison Art Gallery, New York City. Reviewed by *New York Mail*, one of his Monhegan Island landscapes was lauded as "a superb revelation of an aspect of nature which none but an artist of rare insight and skill could have painted" (1).

This small-scale seascape entitled *Monhegan* is an intimate, *plein air* portrayal of island life, and exemplifies Ebert's concern with the observed relationship between color and light as an Impressionist painter. Broad brushstrokes are laid down beside shorter daubs of paint, and rich pastel hues evoke the visceral qualities of sunlight and warmth. Form and detail of the headlands and cove are sacrificed in order to capture the fleeting, radiant effects of nature.

The Eberts built a house on Monhegan in 1914, and in the same year Charles served as a juror and exhibitor for the Monhegan Tercentenary Exhibition. The exhibition consisted of works in a wide range of styles from the Henri and Impressionist groups, and celebrated the many moods of the island as well as its diversity of artists. A contemporary article credited the exhibitors with Monhegan's newfound familiarity among art lovers, stating enthusiastically that "tho the world may not come to Monhegan, the inner life and beauty of the place have gone forth upon the canvas to fascinate and enthrall men here and abroad" (2).

Provenance: From the trade to the gallery.

Bibliography:

1. *New York Mail*, January 1910.
2. "Following the Trail of Three Centuries on Monhegan" in the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 5 August 1914.