



Van Elten, Hendrik-Dirk Kruseman (1829 - 1904)

Field Point, Greenwich, Connecticut, circa 1875

signed "K. Van Elten" lower right and

inscribed with title on stretcher

oil on canvas

15 ½" x 23"

The Dutchman in America

Hendrik-Dirk Kruseman Van Elten was already an established landscapist in his native Holland before debuting on the American scene at the National Academy of Design in 1866. Having helped organize at least one exhibition among European artists eager to enter the American market, Van Elten parlayed his influence into a successful career from the moment he arrived in New York.¹ He rented a studio in the famed 10th Street Studio Building for thirty-one years, during which time he continued to exhibit extensively at the National Academy and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. He gradually shed his identity as a European artist come to market foreign pictures to Americans in favor of being identified as a wholly American artist preoccupied by the varied splendors of the northeast.²

Working in the 10th Street Studio Building gave Van Elten access to native-born artists more familiar with the regional landscape and he counted among his friends Jervis McEntee (1828-1891) and James D. Smillie (1833-1909). Van Elten followed his colleagues into upstate New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Litchfield Hills, and along the Long Island Sound shoreline. His detailed landscapes frequently carried much of the Pre-Raphaelite tradition and he was celebrated specifically for his leaf detail, as evidenced in the present picture. *Field Point, Greenwich, Connecticut* demonstrates Van Elten's dedication to realism, his mastery of varied geological forms, and his ability to create perspective, even with less than half the canvas remaining open to him. The viewer understands that Van Elten's primary objective was to offer a visual respite; even so, one of the young fishermen stands and gestures toward the bedlam of New York City.

Though he complained to McEntee that sales were difficult in America and suffered a failed return to Holland in 1873, Van Elten participated in two of the great American exhibitions of the late 19th century – the 1876 Universal Exhibition in Philadelphia and the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago.³ He was a member of the Royal Academies in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and was also a member of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors. In addition to his oil paintings, he achieved great fame as an etcher. After his death in 1904, the American Art Guild in New York held a landmark auction of his work in 1905.

-JFN

Provenance: From the trade to the gallery.

Presentation Notes: In a 4" reproduction fluted cove gilt frame with leaf and berry surround.

