

EUGÈNE ISABEY
1803—1886

40 Works on paper from one private collection

DEMISCH DANANT

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“Eugène Isabey 1803 – 1886
40 Works on paper from one private
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Previous page:
Pierre Petit, Portrait d'Eugène Isabey
Paris, private collection

EUGÈNE ISABEY

1803—1886

40 Works on paper from one private collection

SOMMAIRE

6 – 9
INTRODUCTION

10 – 13
CHRONOLOGY

14 – 145
CATALOGUE

EUGÈNE ISABEY 1803 – 1886 : 40 WORKS ON PAPER FROM ONE PRIVATE COLLECTION

This exhibition, held as part of the Salon du Dessin in March 2026, offers a wonderful opportunity to pay tribute to this artist, who died nearly 140 years ago, on April 25, 1886.

Since then, his work has slowly but irrevocably sunk into a form of oblivion, the darkness of which has very quickly cast a thick veil over the memory of his immense career as a painter who had been admired and celebrated during his lifetime.

Although Isabey was regarded as one of the greatest marine painters in Europe in the 19th century, his prestige has since inevitably waned, and one is entitled to wonder why his work has thus escaped the admiration of posterity. It is difficult to explain here precisely the many reasons that contributed to this gradual fading from memory, which was subsequently followed by a devaluation of his work by historians of 19th-century French painting, who reduced our artist's status to that of a minor Romantic master, when in fact he truly was a great painter.

Museum curators, for their part, have consigned most of his paintings to the depths of their storerooms and rarely display them. The Musée d'Orsay has never exhibited any works by Isabey, and the Louvre displays only one painting on a permanent basis, even though it owns dozens.

In the words of Christophe Leribault, in the preface to the catalogue of the exhibition he organised in 2012 on Eugène Isabey's watercolours in the Louvre, "Isabey's name has not been forgotten; it is simply somewhat neglected."¹

Neglected, yes, certainly; forgotten, he is too, and this is due to the lack of interest he aroused in the last century, the result of a lack of a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of his work and, consequently, a form of misunderstanding. I shall therefore quote here the statement by Pierre Miquel in the introduction to his monograph* on this artist: "No one took a real interest in Isabey."²

Miquel is indeed the only historian to have taken a serious interest in this artist, devoting some twenty years of research to writing the only monograph ever published on him, as well as a catalogue raisonné – admittedly not exhaustive, but one which has the great merit of existing. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to both of these historians and thank them for their work, which has been of great help and support to me throughout all these years spent discovering and coming to love Isabey's work.

¹ Christophe Leribault, *Eugène Isabey*, Paris: Louvre ed. le Passage, 2013, p. 9

² Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey – La Marine au XIX^e siècle*, tome I, Maurs-la-Jolie, éditions de la Martinelle, 1980, p. 13-14

This introductory statement now allows me to explain my intention to participate in the Salon du Dessin for the first time and to dedicate our stand to an exhibition on this artist who has absorbed and fascinated me in recent years, leading me to acquire a significant number of works in a relatively short timespan.

A collection has emerged from this passion, which I now wish to share with others. Forty works on paper are presented here, in all techniques and formats, covering all the subjects addressed by this artist and spanning all periods: our oldest watercolour dates from 1825, when Isabey was just 22, and the latest from 1878, when he was 75.

The aim of this exhibition is to demonstrate the full virtuosity and diversity of this prolific artist, who was associated with the Romantic movement but was above all regarded as one of the precursors of modern painting.

Eugène Isabey is undeniably one of the missing links in the history of mid-19th-century French painting: one of those who bridged the gap between the landscape school of the 1830s and the Impressionists of the 1870s. He was the teacher of Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819–1891), to whom he taught how to capture the luminosity of atmospheric effects, and he influenced Eugène Boudin (1824–1898), notably through his watercolours painted en plein air, which foreshadowed Impressionism.

Isabey was one of the first to explore the shores of Normandy and Brittany and to work *en plein air* in an attempt to capture the fleeting moment, quickly synthesising with minimal means what he wished to express about the landscape he was studying.

For Isabey was also a landscape painter, a painter of seashores and rugged coastlines, of fishing villages, depicting the life and work of those "workers of the sea" so dear to Victor Hugo, these men and women toiling along the coasts, at high tide as at low tide, who captivated our painter, who was, once again, one of the first to bear witness to their existence in these remote places before they became, from the 1870s onwards, the major destinations for Parisian summer holidays.

Stéphane Danant
on March 1st, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Studying the graphic work of an artist as ambitious as Eugène Isabey allows us to get as close as possible to the sincerity of his art. This is probably one of the most moving qualities of works on paper: the certainty that we are witnessing the creative spirit at work. Eugène Isabey’s drawings are particularly interesting to study in light of what immediately springs to mind when we think of his paintings: a preconceived notion, reducing him to his reputation as a painter of seascapes, storms and shipwrecks, risks overlooking the true place Eugène Isabey occupied in the evolution of French painting.

From this collection, which spans the full range of the artist’s work, we note the essential qualities of Eugène Isabey’s graphic practice: first of all its energy, then a generous, versatile touch and the remarkable precision of his details, whether they be highlights in white gouache or underlying pencil drawings, the shimmer of deep black charcoal, or watercolour clouds, as light and inspiring as they are in nature. His curiosity is insatiable, which means that his graphic work is difficult to quantify. Everything about him is intuitive; his style is both vigorous and refined, and he constantly invites us to get closer to his works through his precise, swift and supple draftsmanship.

As we explore this collection of works on paper, we journey through a century of painting, encompassing the rich and complex diversity of 19th-century France. Through this carefully curated selection, Isabey’s reflections on the art

of drawing and painting are revealed. He is a romantic young man under his father’s gaze, who caricatures him in a swift and masterful sketch; he is a silent traveller on the pages of a sketchbook; an ambitious painter preparing a shipwreck scene across several sheets of paper assembled together; he is a genre painter, a plein air painter, in Normandy or Brittany, working in watercolour, gouache or oil on paper. He is a studio master, but also a confidant, a guide to two masters of the pre-Impressionist landscape, namely Johan Barthold Jongkind and Eugène Boudin. He is, above all and at heart, an ever-inventive draughtsman who masters the elements and conveys, on the seashore, the natural light, the wind, the waves and the mist from the sea.

When one considers the world in which Eugène Isabey grew up—born in the Louvre apartments of his father, the miniaturist Jean-Baptiste Isabey, and surrounded daily by his parents’ circle of friends, comprising the elite of the artistic and intellectual world of the time— the universal nature of his work and his taste becomes apparent. This open-mindedness and the travels he undertook with his father and friends from a young age first led him to want to set sail as a sailor, and then to become a painter, largely self-taught.

His freedom, his spirit and his ambition were constantly encouraged by the praise of the aristocratic world to which he had been connected since birth.

He is a serene artist, despite the turbulent scenes he depicts. He masters the elements with a sure hand; he is the orchestrator of the storms and monumental paintings to which he aspires. The fact that he succeeds in concentrating all the energy of his compositions into a smaller format, through drawing, confirms his artistic talent and vision. He is, in the words of Christophe Leribault, “a painter, perhaps too virtuoso, behind whom lies an authentic artist, one of those who, armed with a simple brush, make us look at the spectacle of nature in a different light.”

When Eugène Isabey achieves his intended effect, he is an artist who captivates and completely enthrals his admirers, his historians and collectors. It is through his versatility and the variations in his style that he initially baffles the viewer, yet it is also through this quality, which he fully embraces, that he succeeds in convincing and charming those who take the time to look at and contemplate his work in detail, in silence.

The last exhibition devoted to Eugène Isabey’s works on paper took place in 2012, when the Louvre Museum presented a collection of watercolours and gouaches based on landscapes of Normandy and Brittany. A catalogue was published, which remains the most recent reference on the subject. Almost 15 years later, it seems important to take a fresh look at this artist by showcasing both his most ambitious works and those with a more personal style.

Most of France’s major museums hold a wealth of works by Isabey, ranging from monumental paintings to collections of graphic works, oils on paper, drawings and lithographs, which demonstrate the full extent of his talent and his passion. While waiting for a major institutional exhibition to fully showcase Eugène Isabey, the Salon du Dessin offers a wonderful opportunity to share and highlight his art, starting with what is most immediate and sincere: the works on paper.



Félix Nadar
Portrait d'Eugène Isabey, vers 1880
source : BNF - Gallica

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1803 Louis-Eugène-Gabriel Isabey was born in Paris on July 22, the son of the miniaturist painter Jean-Baptiste Isabey, who was then living at the Louvre.</p> <p>1820–23 First trips to Normandy, notably to Dieppe and Le Havre. Meets Victor Hugo, thanks to his father's circle of friends.</p> <p>1821 Eugène Isabey travels to England, in direct contact with the country's artistic tradition: he discovers London and Oxford. In Scotland, he visits Edinburgh and Glasgow.</p> <p>1822 First stay in Étretat.</p> <p>1824 Travels along the Normandy coast, and possibly to Brittany. First-class medal at the Salon, where he exhibited for the first time. Death of Théodore Géricault, to whom he was very close.</p> <p>1825 Travels to England, notably to Cornwall, where he meets with Delacroix, Richard Parkes Bonington and Alexandre Colin.</p> <p>1826 Trip to Le Havre, Dieppe, Honfleur and Étretat.</p> <p>1827 Another First-class medal at the Salon, where he exhibited views of Honfleur, Trouville and <i>Ouragan devant Dieppe en 1826</i>. This medal established him as one of the leading figures in marine painting in Europe.</p> <p>1828 Trip to Rouen, Le Havre, Mont-Saint-Michel and Trouville, where he painted with Paul Huet.</p> <p>1829 Trip to Auvergne to produce illustrations for Taylor and Nodier's <i>Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France</i>.</p> | <p>1830 Appointed official painter of the Algiers expedition, he sets sail from Toulon on May 17. He witnesses the surrender of Algiers on July 4 and returns to Marseille on August 5.</p> <p>1831 Trip to Normandy. He exhibited seven paintings at the Salon, including <i>l'Alchimiste</i> and a large <i>Vue du port de Dunkerque</i>, acquired by Louis-Philippe. He declined the Count of Mornay's invitation to accompany him on a mission to Morocco and ceded his place to Delacroix.</p> <p>1832 Married in Paris to Laure Lebreton. Isabey is appointed Knight of the Legion of Honour. Trip to Dieppe.</p> <p>1834 Among his entries for the Salon are views of Normandy and Brittany.</p> <p>1835 Trip to the south of France and the Rhône Valley. He submits only one lithograph to the Salon, <i>Vue du cap Finistère</i>.</p> <p>1837 Trip to Falaise and Brittany. Isabey opens his own studio in Paris, in the Nouvelle Athènes district. He kept it until his death and taught many pupils there, including, over the years, Eugène Le Poittevin, Eugène Ciceri, Adolphe Hervier, Jongkind and Eugène Boudin.</p> <p>1839 Trip to Belgium and Holland. He exhibits <i>La Bataille du Texel, 26 juin 1694</i> at the Salon.</p> <p>1840 Trip to Cherbourg to witness the landing of Napoleon's ashes. Exhibits <i>Vue de l'entrée du port de Marseille</i> at the Salon.</p> |
|--|--|

1841 Trip to Dieppe, Le Tréport and Varengeville.

1843 In September, he witnesses Queen Victoria's arrival at Le Tréport, where she is welcomed by Louis-Philippe.
He exhibits *Vue du port de Boulogne* at the Salon.

1844 He forms part of Louis-Philippe's entourage during his trip to England (stay at Windsor).
He exhibits at the Salon *La Reine Victoria recevant Louis-Philippe à bord de son yacht royal au Tréport*.

1845 Travels to Le Havre, Honfleur, Eu and La Haye (Normandy).
He exhibits at the Salon *le Départ de la reine Victoria* and *un Alchimiste*.

1846 Trip to Belgium and Holland.

1847 Trip to Le Havre, Fécamp, Yport and Saint-Valery-en-Caux, notably in the company of Jongkind. He exhibited *Une cérémonie dans l'église de Delft* at the Salon.

1850 Trips to Normandy and Brittany. He exhibits at the Salon an *Épisode du mariage d'Henri IV* and *L'Embarquement de Ruyter et William de Witt*. Meets Eugène Boudin: "Isabey encouraged Boudin during the many stays he made in Honfleur and it was he who, in 1862, advised him to paint the fashionable beaches that were beginning to come into vogue." (Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey – La Marine au XIX^e siècle*, volume I, Maurs-la-Jolie, éditions de la Martinelle, 1980, p.122)

1851 Travels in Brittany, Le Havre and Étretat.

1852 Isabey is promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honour.

1855 Death of his father.
He is represented mainly by historical paintings at the Universal Exhibition.

1862 On Isabey's advice, Boudin settles in Trouville.
He then introduces his two favourite pupils, Jongkind and Boudin, to one another.

1864 Isabey remarries Marie-Emma Morizot, widow of Chastel.
The State purchases, from the budget of Napoleon III's civil list, the 64 watercolours now held at the Louvre Museum.

1865 At the Salon, *Nauffrage du trois-mats L'Emily en 1823* and *L'Alchimiste*.

1869 He exhibits *La Tentation de saint Antoine* at the Salon.
A severe critical failure.

1870 He flees to England, via Dieppe.

1871 Return to France.
A long stay in Varengeville, where he returns every year until 1874.

1877 Last appearance at the Salon, where he exhibits two watercolours, including *Un alchimiste*.

1878 He presents four paintings at the Great Exhibition, including *La Saint-Barthélemy*.
From then on, he makes regular visits to Nice.

1886 Death of Eugène Isabey on April 25 at his estate in Montévrain, near Lagny. His funeral takes place in Paris on May 6.

1887 Posthumous studio sale March 30 and 31 at Galerie Georges Petit, in Paris.

List of artworks

1. Jean-Baptiste Isabey, Portrait charge de son fils Eugène Isabey
2. Jean-Baptiste Isabey (attr. to), Eugène Isabey en jeune homme
3. Eugène Isabey, Bateaux par temps calme
4. Pêcheurs à marée basse
5. Caricatures
6. Vue de village
7. Maison « visitée »
8. Chaumière dans une clairière
9. La Rade de Toulon
10. Village de pêcheurs en bord d'estuaire
11. Pieux fichés dans le sable
12. Les Naufragés
13. Clocher au bord de l'eau
14. Voiliers au port au clair de lune
15. Vue d'un port avec phare en bout de jetée
16. Rue de village
17. Village en bord de mer
18. Pêcheurs sur la grève
19. Bateau échoué près d'une falaise
20. Maisons et bateaux à marée basse
21. Bateau sur la côte au pied des falaises
22. Étretat
23. Côtes rocheuses en Bretagne
24. Rue à Saint-Servan, Bretagne
25. Ruelle à Honfleur
26. Port normand à marée basse
27. Bateau sur la grève
28. Le départ pour la pêche
29. L'Estuaire à Saint-Brieuc
30. Paysage vallonné en Bretagne
31. Fermes à Varengeville
32. Une Ferme en Normandie
33. Nature morte à l'aiguière, aux livres et aux raisins
34. Chevalier en visite
35. La Cour de l'Auberge du Soleil d'Or
36. Le couronnement de la Reine
37. Invocation à la Vierge
38. Procession
39. Chez l'armurier
40. Prisonniers escortés par des soldats

CATALOGUE

1. JEAN BAPTISTE ISABEY 1767 – 1855
PORTRAIT CHARGE DE SON FILS EUGÈNE ISABEY, C. 1821

Pen and brown ink wash,
pencil on paper
220 x 155 mm
8.66 H x 6.1 inches
Framed :
43,5 x 35 cm
17.13H x 13.78 inches

Signed lower right : "Isabey"

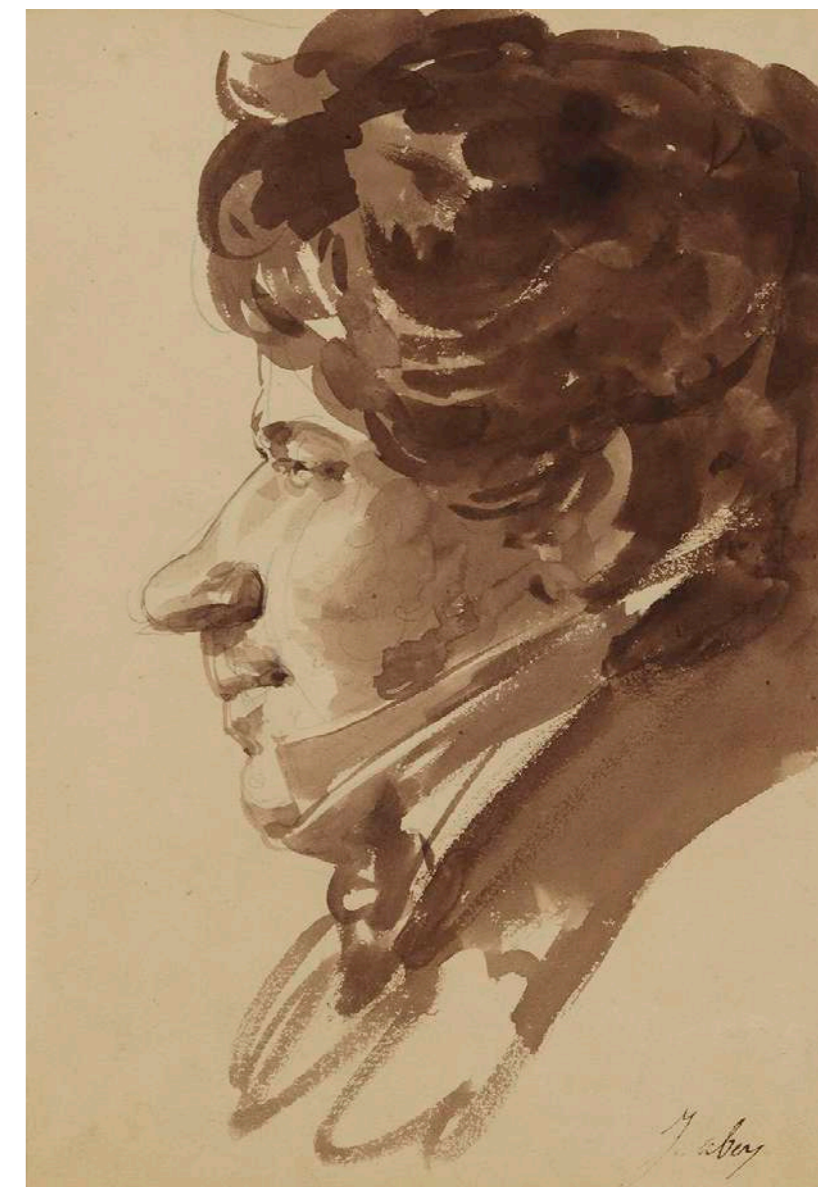
PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Boisgirard,
March 18, 1988, lot 19b

Paris, Brooks Beaulieu collection

sale Paris, Artcurial, November 10, 2022,
lot 99

Paris, private collection



2. JEAN BAPTISTE ISABEY 1767 – 1855 (ATTRIBUTED TO)
PORTRAIT D'EUGÈNE ISABEY EN JEUNE HOMME, C. 1825

Watercolor and gum arabic,
pencil on paper
210 x 160 cm
8.27 x 6.3 inches
Framed :
51 x 38 cm
20H x 14.96 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Frayssé et associés,
November 29, 2023, lot 23
Paris, private collection



3. BATEAUX PAR TEMPS CALME, C. 1821

Watercolor on paper

135 x 168 mm

5.31H x 6.6 inches

Framed :

28 x 31,5 cm

11H x 12.4 inches

Signed with the monogram lower right :

“EL.”

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Marie-Saint Germain,
December 10, 2021, lot 142

Paris, private collection



4. PÊCHEURS À MARÉE BASSE, 1825

Watercolor and pencil on paper

155 x 220 mm

6.1 x 8.66 inches

Framed

28,5 x 35 cm

11.22H x 13.78 inches

Signed and dated lower right :

“Eugène Isabey / 1825”

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Benoît Choné

Paris, private collection





5. CARICATURES, 1820s

Pen and brown ink on paper

220 x 160 mm

8.66 x 6.3 inches

Framed :

37 x 30 cm

14.57H x 11.8 inches

Unsigned

Stamp of the studio sale lower left

(Lugt 1401b)

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Atelier Eugène Isabey,

Galerie Georges Petit, Paris,

March 30-31, 1887, lot 258

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Drouot Estimations,

December 1, 2021, lot 22

Paris, private collection



6. VUE DE VILLAGE, C. 1830

Pen, ink and charcoal on paper

190 x 120 mm

7,5 x 4,72 inches

Framed :

46 x 37,5 cm

18.11H x 14.76 inches

Signed with the monogram lower right:
"EI"

PROVENANCE

Paris, Alfred Normand collection

Paris, galerie Nathalie Motte Masselink

Paris, private collection





7. MAISON « VISITÉE »

Charcoal and stump on paper

270 x 237 mm

10.63 x 9.33 inches

Framed :

72 x 63 cm

28.35H x 24.80 inches

Signed and situated on the back :

“Eug. Isabey, Paris”

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey
La Marine au XIX^e siècle*, tome II,
Mauris-la-Jolie, éditions de la Martinelle,
1980, n°338, p.115 (reproduit)

Arnoldi-Livie, *Master Drawings
1500 – 1950*, catalogue no. 32,
Salon du Dessin 2021, no. 21

EXHIBITION

“Die campe'sche historische
Kunststiftung erwerbungen seit 1945”,
juin – août 1964, n°258 (catalogue
d'exposition, p. 25, non reproduit)

PROVENANCE

Dresde/Vienne, Boguslaw Jolles
collection (Lugt 381a)

sale Munich, Hugo Helbing,
October 28-31, 1895

Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany),
Michael Berolzheimer collection

sale Munich, Adolf Weinmüller,
March 9-10, 1939, lot 665

Kunsthalle Hamburg (stamp on the back,
Lugt 1234, inventory number 1954/111)

drawing given back to the heirs of Michael
Berolzheimer, 2015

Munich, Arnoldi-Livie

Paris, private collection





8. CHAUMIÈRE DANS UNE CLAIRIÈRE, C. 1832

Charcoal, stump, red chalk and white
chalk highlights on brown paper

265 x 255 mm
10.43 x 10 inches

Framed :
55 x 43 cm
21.65H x 16.93 inches

Unsigned

LITERATURE

Related work :
Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*,
cat. rais. tome II, 1980, n°1724, p. 276
(preparatory drawing for the lithograph
titled *Deux chaumières dans le bois*
(Curtis 47), dated 1831-1832)

PROVENANCE

Descendants of the artist
sale Paris, Sotheby's,
June 27, 2002, lot 183
(part of an album of 191 sketch studies)

Paris, galerie Paul Prouté
Paris, private collection





9. LA RADE DE TOULON, 1830

Oil on paper laid down on canvas

30 x 43 cm

11.8 x 16.92 inches

Framed :

38 x 51,5 cm

15H x 20.28 inches

Unsigned

An old label on the back :

“Collection H. Daré,
Eugène Isabey, Port de Toulon”

PROVENANCE

France, André Giroux collection

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Lair-Dubreuil,

March 25, 1904, part of lot 152

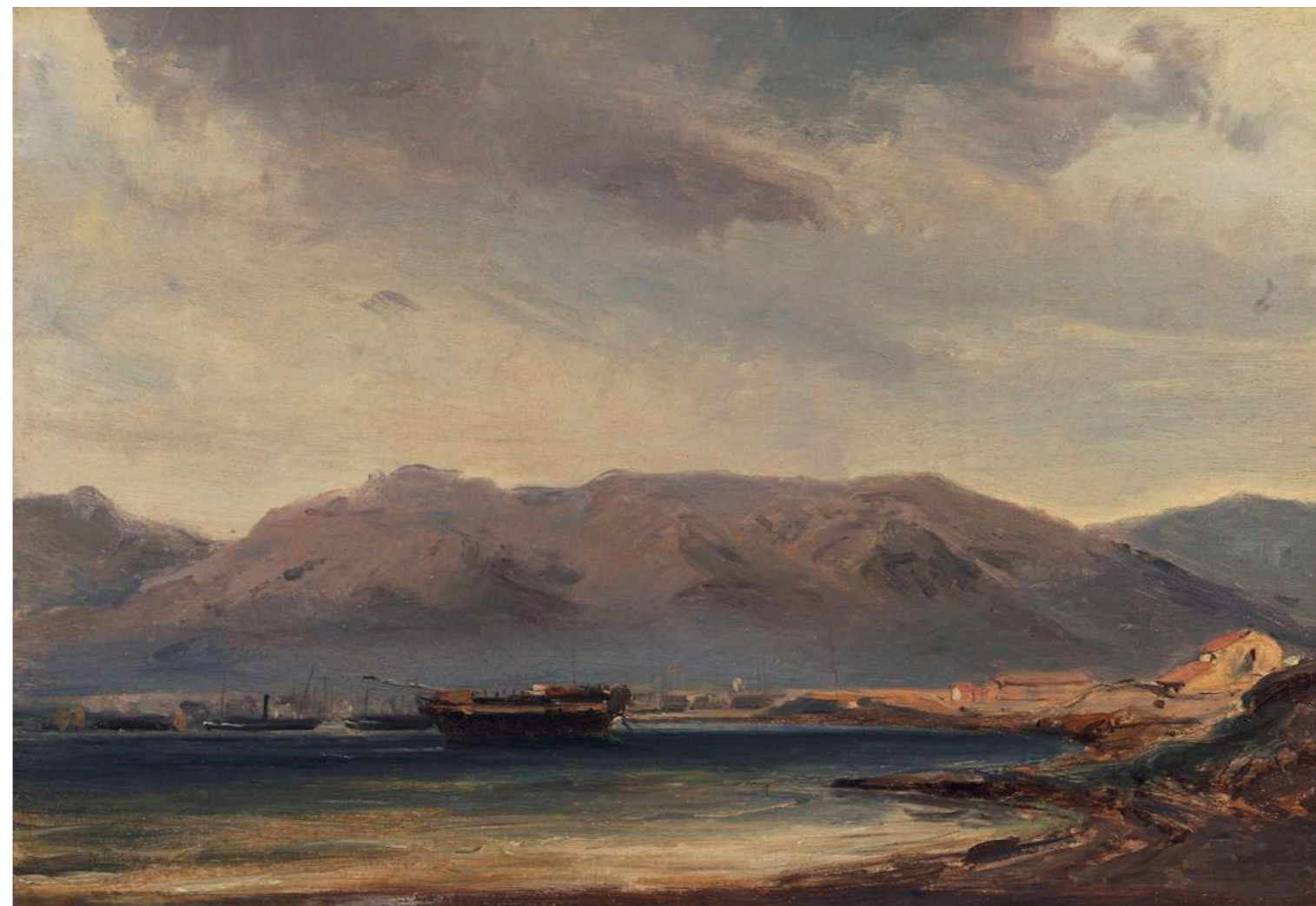
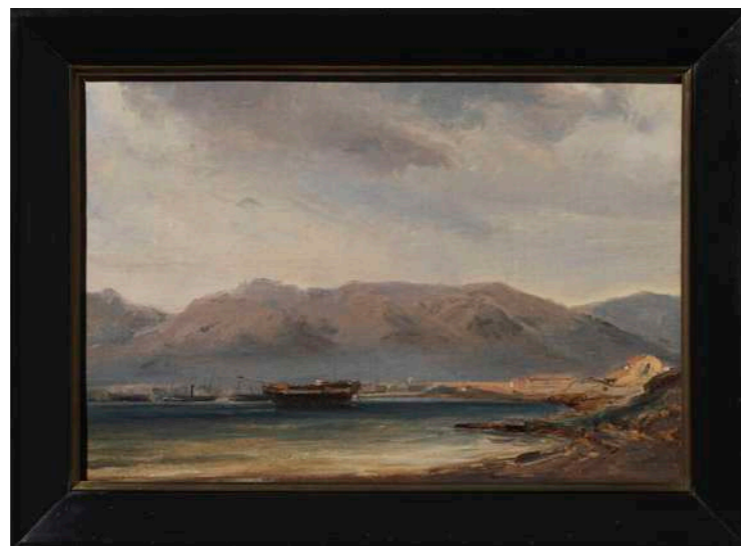
U.S.A., Joseph Stewart collection

sale Malborough (Massachusetts, USA),

Bonhams/Skinner Malborough, May 28,

2025, lot 55

Paris, private collection



10. VILLAGE DE PÊCHEURS EN BORD D'ESTUAIRE, C. 1832

Watercolor on paper

153 x 208 mm

6 x 8.18 inches

Framed :

30,5 x 38,5 cm

12H x 15.16 inches

Signed lower left : "E. Isabey"

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Piasa,

December 17, 1999, lot 124

France, private collection

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Libert et associés,

July 6, 2023, lot 120

Paris, private collection





11. PIEUX FICHÉS DANS LE SABLE, C. 1832

Watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper

210 x 305 mm
8.26 x 12 inches

Framed :
30 x 39,2 cm
11.81H x 15.43 x 1 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Paul Prouté

Paris, private collection

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Ader,
November 8, 2024, lot 50

Paris, private collection



Marine par gros temps, 1832
huile sur toile, 166 x 261 cm
Paris, collection particulière



12. LES NAUFRAGÉS

Oil on several sheets of paper
laid down on canvas
49,5 x 149 cm / 19,5 x 58,7 inches

Framed :
67 x 164 cm / 26,4H x 64,57 inches
Unsigned

Stamp of the studio sale lower right
(Lugt 1401b)

On the back, stamp from
the American Art Association

LITERATURE

The American Art Association,
*Catalogue de luxe of the Art Treasures
collected by Thomas Ennalls Waggaman*,
New York, 27 janvier – 3 février 1905,
lot n°65 (reproduit) ; Pierre Miquel,
Eugène Isabey, cat. rais. tome II, 1980,
n°928, p.181 (reproduit) ; Marty de
Cambiaire, *Une collection privée.
Euvres choisies*, 2025, n°9, p.24-27

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Atelier Eugène Isabey,
Galerie Georges Petit, Paris,
March 30-31, 1887, lot 148 (under the title
“*Marins attaqués par des pirates*”)

Washington D.C., Thomas Ennalls
Waggaman collection

sale New York, The American Art
association Auction, January 27, 1905,
lot 65 (illustrated)

USA, C. Schmidt collection

France, private collection

Paris, Marty de Cambiaire

Paris, private collection

This sketch in oil on paper mounted
on canvas bears witness both to
Eugène Isabey’s creative process and
his technical mastery, particularly
when, as seen here, he brings
together the two main themes of his
work: seascapes and genre or history
painting.

The composition which is studied
here by Isabey echoes one of his
masterpieces, *Bataille du Texel*,
29 Juin 1694 (Musée de la Marine,
Paris), presented at the Salon in
1839. The importance of this painting
for Eugène Isabey’s reputation was
such that he subsequently produced
numerous depictions of pirate
attacks in which the waves and the
storm heighten the violence and
turmoil of the scene.

The National Gallery of Canada
holds in its collections in Ottawa
a sketch executed in the same
technique as our work, which
represents another stage in the
research process for the same

composition. In this work, entitled
Combat naval, which the museum
dates to around 1855, Isabey
incorporates a large flotilla of ships
and appears to focus more on the
overall movement of his canvas and
the distribution of light than here,
in our sketch, where all attention
is concentrated on the foreground
and the decisive moment of the
shipwreck.

This shift in composition between
the two sketches reveals how Isabey
sought to explore the dramatic
impact of a scene, as here, to
capture the most intense moment
of a shipwreck in which sailors,
pirates and boats are all swept away
together. This effect is achieved
through the artist’s handling of
light intensity, but also through
a prodigious attention to detail,
evident here in the balance between
a very dark palette and subtle,
luminous touches and bursts of
colour.

The presence of the Isabey studio’s
sale stamp in the lower right-hand
corner of our sketch and that of
the Ottawa sketch suggests that
they were preparing a large-scale
composition that may never have
been realised. The provenance
history of this work reveals just how
significant it has been for collectors
and connoisseurs of the artist: a
sketch executed with a master’s hand,
to the point of achieving the status of
a work in its own right.



Autre esquisse du même sujet conservée
au Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada,
à Ottawa : *Combat naval*, vers 1855
huile sur papier maroufflé sur toile,
64 x 147,5 cm , inv. 23219





13. CLOCHER AU BORD DE L'EAU, C. 1846

Watercolor on paper

255 x 165 mm

10 x 6.5 inches

Framed :

48 x 38 cm

18.9H x 14.96 inches

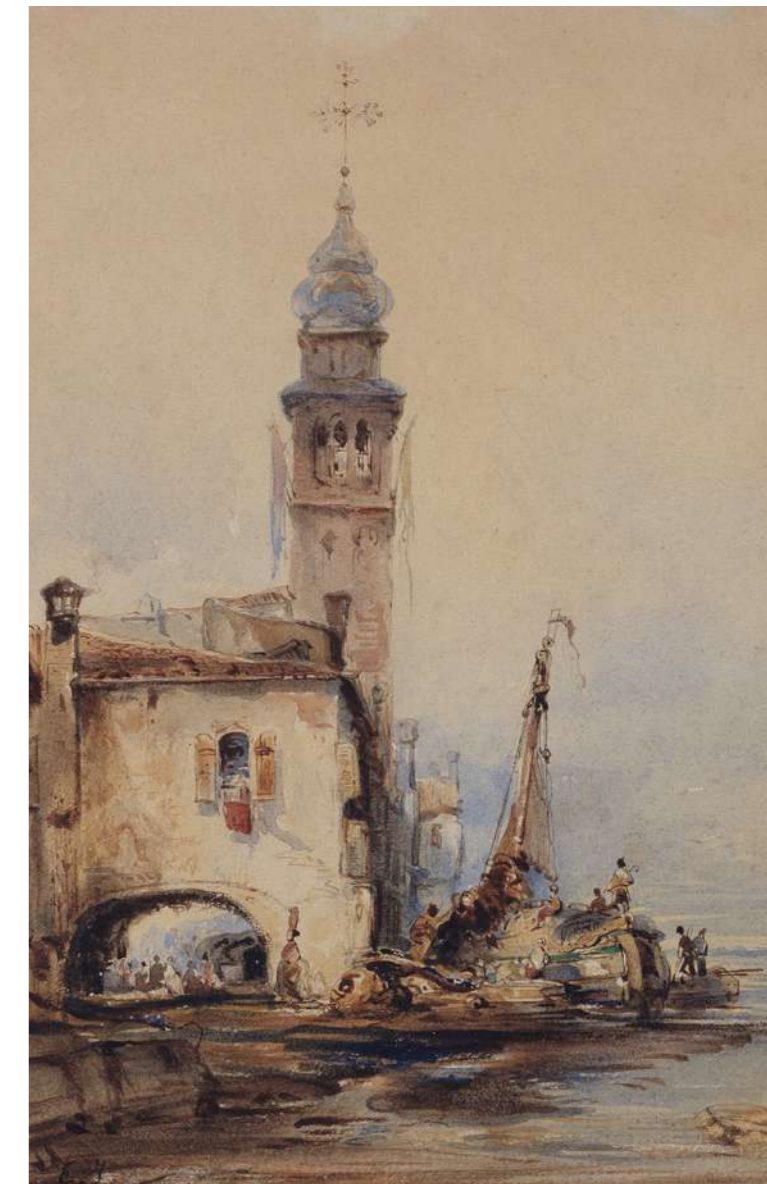
Signed with the monogram lower left :

"E.I."

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Arsinopia

Paris, collection particulière





14. VOILIERS AU PORT AU CLAIR DE LUNE

Watercolor on paper

255 x 165 mm

10 x 6.5 inches

Framed :

48 x 38 cm

18.9H x 14.96 inches

Signed with the monogram

lower left : "EL"

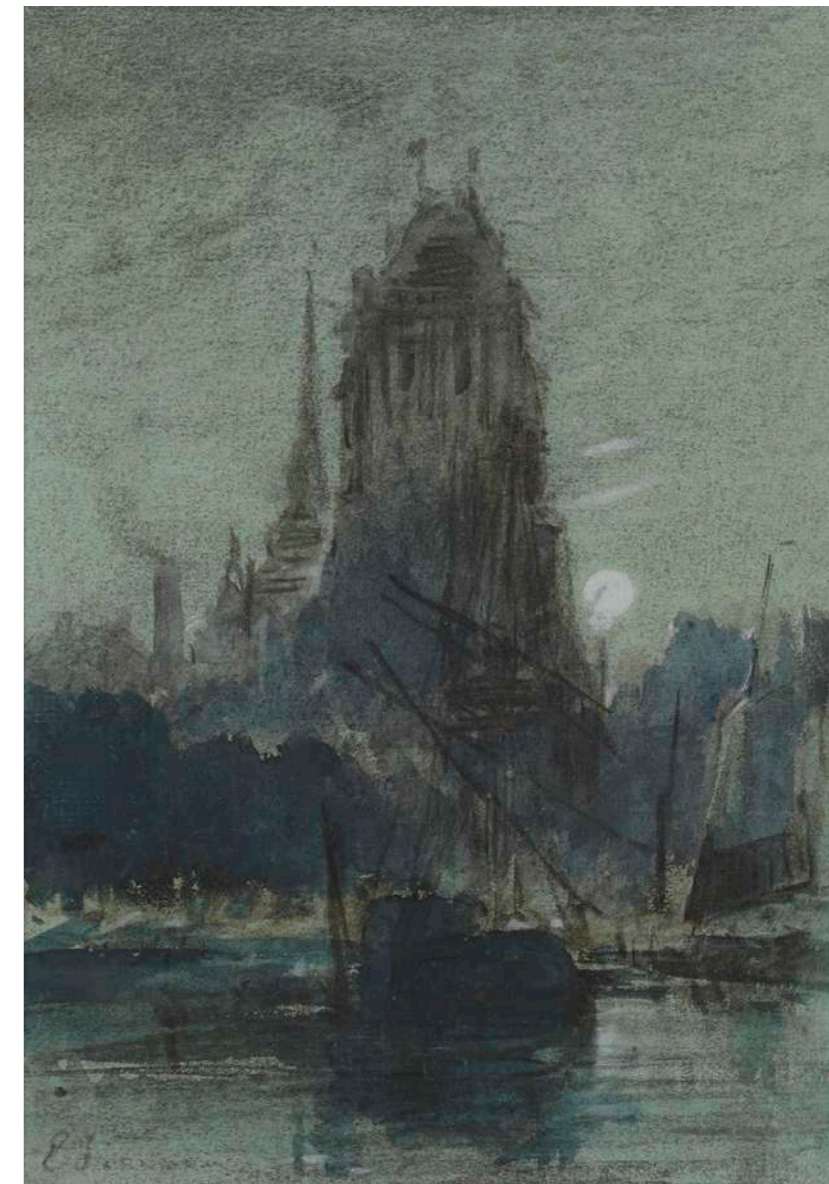
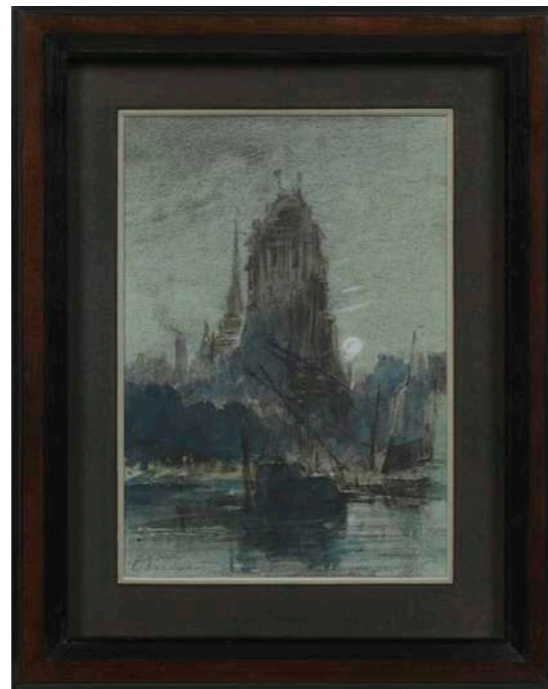
PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Giquello et associés,

November 20, 2025, lot 91

Paris, private collection



15. VUE D'UN PORT AVEC PHARE EN BOUT DE JETÉE, C. 1850

Charcoal and gouache on brown paper

330 x 210 mm

13 x 8.27 inches

Framed :

57 x 51 cm

22.44H x 20 inches

Signed with the monogram

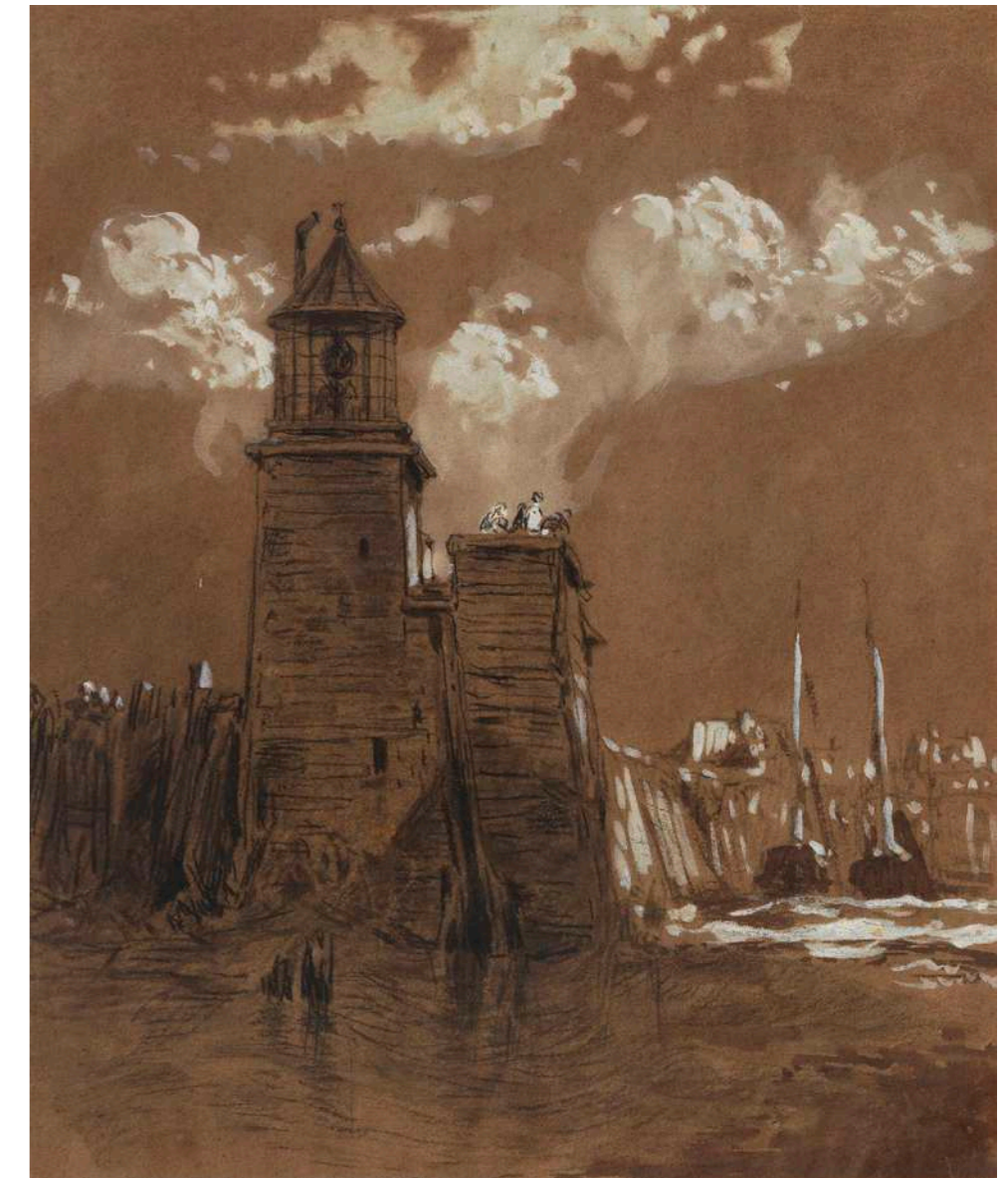
lower left : "EL."

PROVENANCE

sale Chailly-en-Bière (France), Osenat,

November 21, 2022, lot 240

Paris, private collection





16. RUE DE VILLAGE

Pen, ink and gouache on paper

228 x 167 mm

9 x 6,58 inches

Framed :

48 x 36 cm

18,9H x 14,17 inches

Signed lower right : "E. Isabey"

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Millon,

September 14, 2023, lot 349

Paris, private collection



17. VILLAGE EN BORD DE MER, 1860s

Watercolor and gouache on paper

180 x 270 mm

7 x 10.63 inches

Framed :

33.5 x 43 cm

13.2H x 16.92 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

Biarritz/Pau, galerie Diane et Eric Lhoste

Paris, private collection





18. PÊCHEURS SUR LA GRÈVE, 1840s

Watercolor and gum arabic,
pencil on paper
165 x 224 mm
6,5 x 8.82 inches
Framed :
38 x 44 cm
15H x 17.32 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

sale London, Sotheby's,
November 23, 1978, lot 79

U.K., private collection

sale London, Chiswick Auction,

January 17, 2024, lot 112

Paris, private collection





19. BATEAU ÉCHOUÉ PRÈS D'UNE FALAISE, C. 1840

Watercolor on paper

125 x 234 mm

4.92 x 9.21 inches

Framed :

38 x 47,5 cm

14.96H x 18.7 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie La Nouvelle Athènes

Paris, private collection





20. MAISONS ET BATEAUX À MARÉE BASSE

Watercolor and white gouache on paper

80 x 135 mm

5.3 x 3.15 inches

Framed :

22,5 x 28 cm

8.85H x 11 inches

Signed with the monogram

lower right : "EI."

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*,
cat. rais. tome II, 1980, n°1385, p. 239
(illustrated)

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Paul Prouté

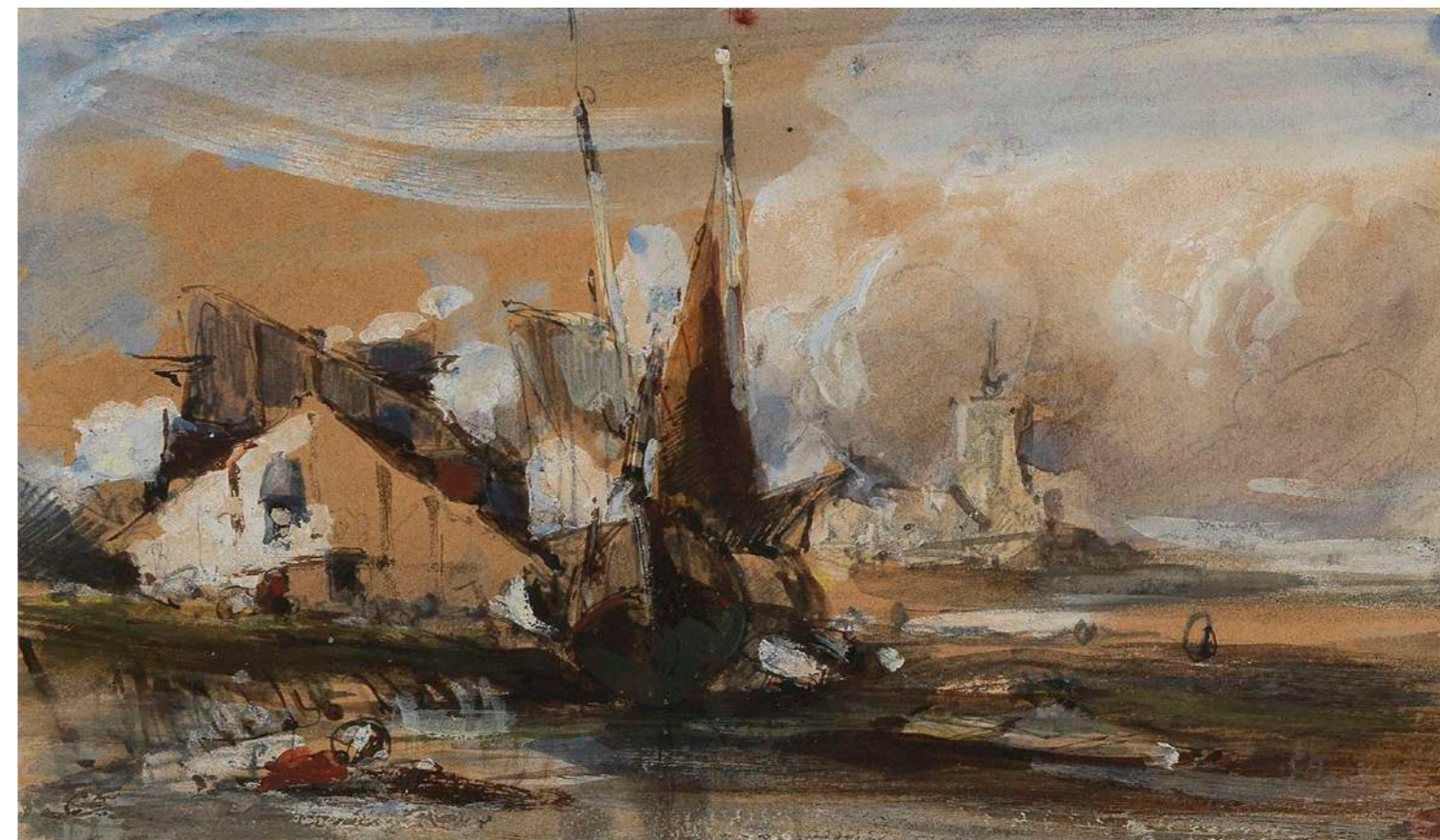
Paris, private collection

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Delon-Hoebanx et associés,

May 26, 2023, lot 47

Paris, private collection





21. BATEAU SUR LA CÔTE AU PIED DES FALAISES

Watercolor on pencil drawing on paper

85 x 155 mm

3.35 x 6.1 inches

Framed :

23 x 29,5 cm

9H x 11.6 inches

Signed with the monogram

lower right: "EJ."

PROVENANCE

London, Albany Gallery

sale Paris, Artcurial,

February 22, 2022, lot 379

Paris, private collection





22. ÉTRETAT

Watercolor on paper

100 x 175 mm

3.94 x 6.89 inches

Framed :

22 x 30 cm

8.66H x 11.8 inches

Signed with the monogram

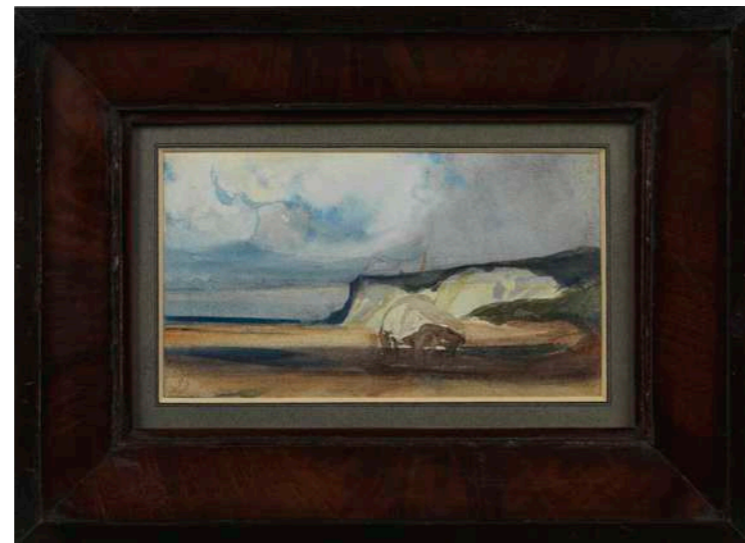
lower left : "EL"

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Ader,

October 16, 2025, lot 155

Paris, private collection



23. CÔTES ROCHEUSES EN BRETAGNE, C. 1855 – 1860

Watercolor, gouache and charcoal
on paper
201 x 316 mm
7.9 x 12.44 inches
Framed :
49,5 x 61 cm
19,5H x 24 inches
Signed lower left : “E. Isabey”

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Fraysse et associés,
July 8, 2021, lot 42
Paris, galerie Talabardon et Gautier
sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Ader,
March 23, 2023, lot 234
Paris, private collection

“Required by the need for quick sketches from life, a striking quality and a keen eye for the essential lines come to the fore.*”

The 64 watercolours and gouaches purchased by the State from Napoleon III’s civil list budget in December 1864 still constitute to this day the most coherent and significant collection of the artist’s graphic works in France’s national collections.

According to the main historian of Isabey’s work, Pierre Miquel, the painter developed this technique of watercolour laden with gouache at the very moment he was renewing his graphic practice, most certainly through his contact with the young Jongkind and specifically during an important journey they undertook together in Brittany in the summer of 1851.

This style, which deliberately eschews transparency, would subsequently become the most common in his works on paper, in his landscapes as well as in his genre scenes.

Each sheet is further proof of Isabey’s complete mastery in this significant evolution of his approach to landscape painting *en plein air*. The anecdotal element, so common in his work, is deliberately absent to make way for the landscape alone, rendered as timeless and often majestic, in views that give ample space to the sky and the movements of nature across the world.

In 2012, the exhibition at the Louvre Museum that Christophe Leribault devoted to this collection of works on paper brought Isabey’s drawings to the attention of the public.

The catalogue he produced on these ‘quasi-paintings’ remains a valuable source of information for gaining a deeper understanding of Eugène Isabey’s art.

Our composition, *Côtes rocheuses en Bretagne*, guided by a vision that is both bold and precise, closely resembles the style developed by Isabey around 1850–1855. The technique of watercolour mixed with gouache allows him to vary the intensity of his colours as well as the opacity or lightness of the washes. An underlying pencil sketch is visible, and the use of reserved areas is also noticeable, but it seems that the essence lies in the framing, the colour and, truly, in the overall impression.

* Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey – La Marine au XIX^e siècle*, tome I, Maurs-la-Jolie, éditions de la Martinelle, 1980, p.127





24. RUE À SAINT-SERVAN, BRETAGNE, 1855

Watercolor, ink and gouache on paper

190 x 250 mm

7.48 x 9.84 inches

Framed :

42 x 48,5 cm

12.2H x 14.96 x 0.39 inches

Signed and dated lower left : "Isabey 55"

situated lower right : "St Servan"

PROVENANCE

U.K., private collection

Scarborough (England),

David Duggleby auctions,

March 14, 2025, lot 141

Paris, private collection





25. RUELLÉ À HONFLEUR

Pencil on paper

195 x 120 mm

7.67 x 4.72 inches

Framed :

45,5 x 35,6 cm

17.9H x 14 inches

Signed with the monogram lower right

“EL”, situated upper right “Honfleur”

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Fraysse et Associés,

May 10, 2023, lot 129

Paris, private collection



26. PORT NORMAND À MARÉE BASSE, 1857

Watercolor and gum arabic,
gouache on paper
225 x 300 mm
8.85 x 11.8 inches

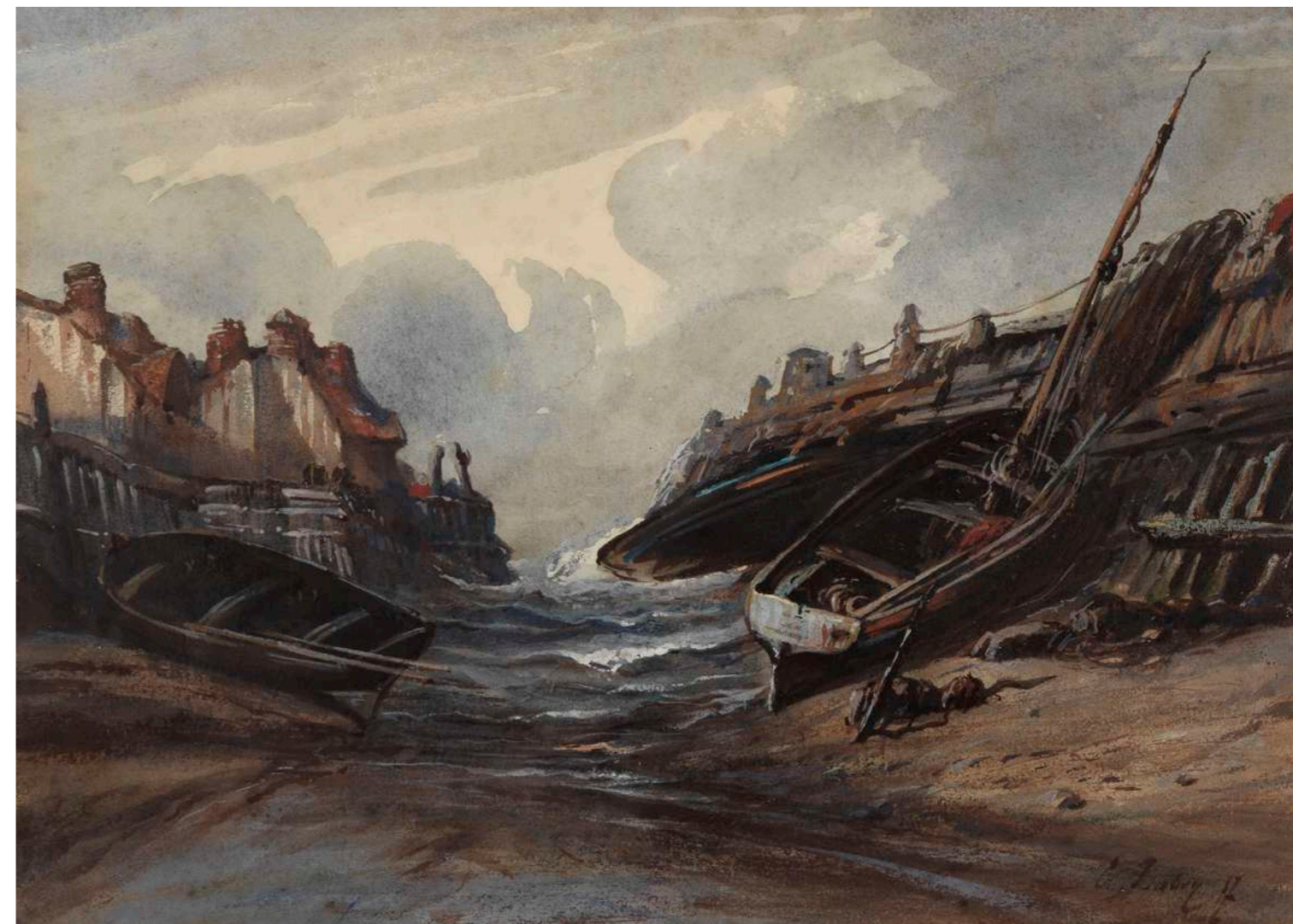
Framed :
42,5 x 52 cm
16.73H x 20.48 inches

Signed and dated lower right:
"E. Isabey 1857"

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Pierre Bergé et associés,
October 17, 2022, lot 23

Paris, private collection



27. BATEAU SUR LA GRÈVE

Oil on paper laid down on canvas

41,5 x 29 cm

16,34 x 11,42 inches

Framed :

61 x 48,5 cm

24H x 19 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Artcurial,

February 22, 2022, lot 346

Paris, private collection



28. LE DÉPART POUR LA PÊCHE, C. 1860

Gouache on paper

63 x 91 cm

24.8 x 35.83 inches

Framed :

66,5 x 94 cm

26.2H x 37 inches

Unsigned

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Adolphe Legoupy

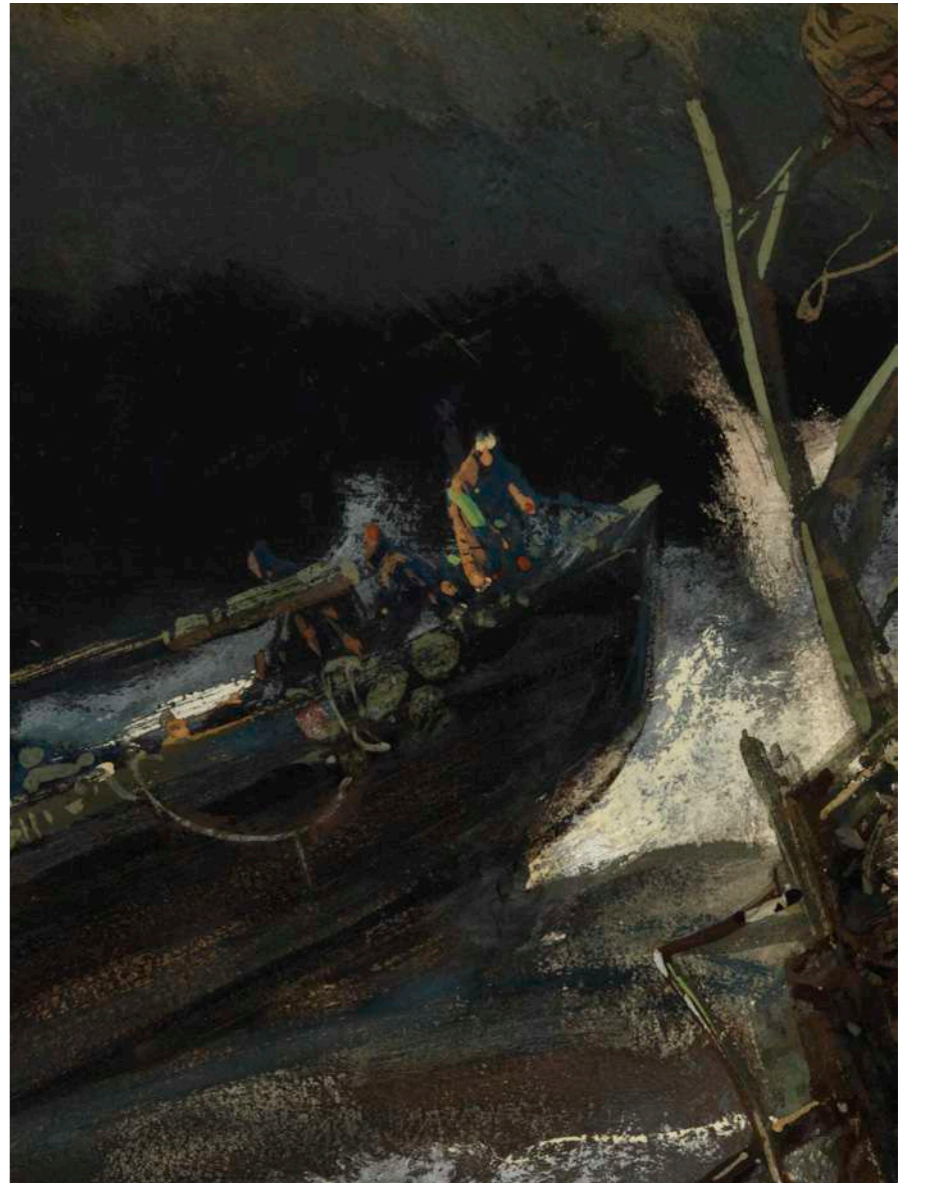
France, private collection

Paris, galerie Jean-Luc Baroni

& Marty de Cambiaire

Paris, private collection





29. L'ESTUAIRE À SAINT-BRIEUC, C. 1867

Watercolor, gouache
and pencil on paper

195 x 330 mm
7,68 x 13 inches

Framed :
38 x 49,5 cm
15H x 19,5 inches

Signed and dated lower right:
"E. Isabey 67",
situated lower left:
"St Briec"

PROVENANCE

England, James Mackinnon collection
Paris, private collection



30. PAYSAGE VALLONNÉ EN BRETAGNE, 1844

Watercolor and gouache on paper

195 x 273 mm

7.67 x 10.75 inches

Framed :

36 x 43 cm

14H x 16.92 inches

Signed with the monogram lower right:
"EI"

Inscription on the back, in pen:

"Eugène Isabey / Voyage en Bretagne /
1844"

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*,
cat. rais. tome II, 1980, n°1615, p.264
(not illustrated)

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Delon-Hoebanx et associés,
May 26, 2023, lot 71

Paris, private collection





31. FERMES À VARENDEVILLE, C. 1860

Watercolor and gouache on paper

180 x 320 mm

7 x 12,59 inches

Framed:

38 x 52,5 x 1,5 cm

1,5H x 20.66 x 0.6 inches

Signed lower left: "E. Isabey"

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Massol,

July 9, 2010, lot 35

sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,

Delon-Hoebanx et associés,

November 29, 2023, lot 176

Paris, private collection





32. UNE FERME EN NORMANDIE, 1860s

Watercolor and gouache on a pencil
drawing on tinted paper

255 x 175 mm
10 x 6.9 inches

Framed:
56 x 48 cm
22H x 18.9 inches

Unsigned

Stamp of the studio sale lower right
(Lugt 1401b)

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Atelier d'Eugène Isabey,
Galerie Georges Petit, Paris,
March 30-31, 1887

Family of the artist

sale Monaco, Sotheby's,
June 15, 1990, lot 120

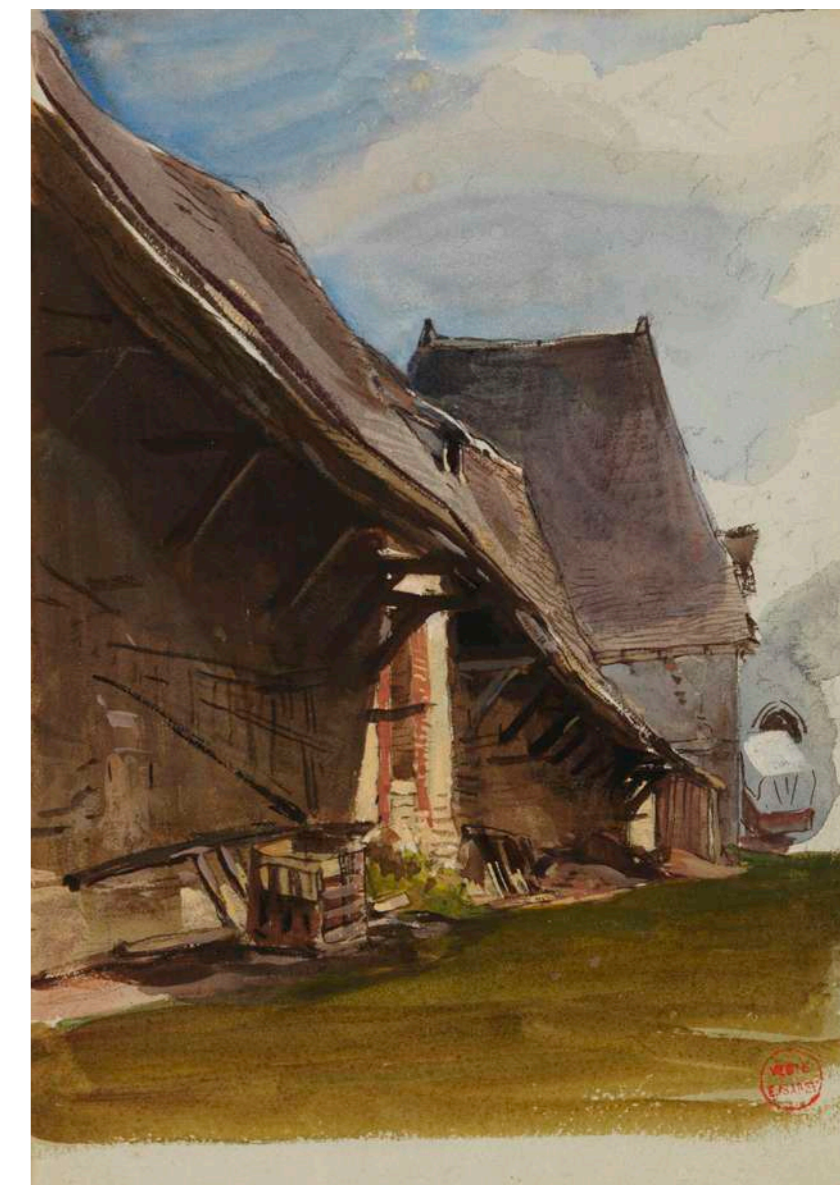
London, galerie Colnaghi

London, Colin Clark collection

sale Farnham (England),
Parker Fine Art Auctions,
March 19, 2021, lot 519

London, Stephen Ongpin Fine Art

Paris, private collection





33. NATURE MORTE À L'AIGUIÈRE, AUX LIVRES ET AUX RAISINS, 1870s

Watercolor on paper

220 x 300 mm

8.66 x 11.81 inches

Framed :

48 x 59 cm

18.9H x 23.23 inches

Unsigned

On the back, in pen :

“aquarelle esquissée par Isabey,
à Mme Becq de Fouquières”

EXHIBITION

Paris, galerie Charpentier,
“Les fleurs et les fruits depuis le
Romantisme”, 1942-1943, n°73
(not illustrated in the catalogue)

PROVENANCE

Paris, Louise-Marie Becq
de Fouquières collection

Paris, André Becq
de Fouquières collection

Paris, galerie Charpentier

France, private collection

sale Royan (France),

Saintonge enchères,

December 2, 2022, lot 32

Paris, private collection





34. CHEVALIER EN VISITE, 1867

Watercolor and gouache on paper

250 x 190 mm

9.84 x 7.48 inches

Framed :

42 x 37 cm

16.54H x 14.57 inches

Signed lower left : "Eug. Isabey";
dated on the back : "22.Jlv. [July] 1867"

LITERATURE

Related work : Pierre Miquel,
Eugène Isabey, cat. rais. tome II,
1980, n°204D (oil on panel, p.100,
illustrated)

PROVENANCE

sale Rouen, Sequana,
June 11, 2022, lot 61
Paris, private collection





35. LA COUR DE L'AUBERGE DU SOLEIL D'OR, C. 1876

Pencil, watercolor and gouache on three sheets of paper

172 x 432 mm

6.77 x 17 inches

Framed :

35 x 62,5 cm

24.6H x 13.77 inches

Unsigned

LITERATURE

Related work :

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*,
cat. rais. tome II, 1980, n°1182 D, p.211
(oil on canvas, 1876, illustrated)

EXHIBITION

Paris, galerie Cailleux,
“Les Étapes de la création”,
June 12 – July 13, 1989, n°70 (illustrated)

PROVENANCE

Paris, galerie Cailleux
(certificate from Mme Marianne Roland
Michel, October 2, 1989)

France, Jacques Cagnat collection
sale Biarritz, Côte Basque Enchères,
March 25, 2023, lot 420
Paris, private collection







36. LE COURONNEMENT DE LA REINE

Watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper

290 x 405 mm
11.41 x 15.95 inches

Framed :
56 x 70,5 cm
22H x 27.75 inches

Signed lower right : "E. Isabey"

PROVENANCE

sale Dijon, Sadde, October 16, 2021, lot 37
Paris, private collection





37. INVOCATION À LA VIERGE, 1878

Watercolor and gouache on paper

265 x 325 mm
10.4 x 12.8 inches

Framed :
41 x 55 cm
16H x 21.65 inches

Signed and dated lower left :
"E. Isabey 78"

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, Eugène Isabey, cat. rais.
tome II, 1980, n°XII, p. 284 (illustrated)

PROVENANCE

Family of the artist
sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
Blanchet & Associés,
March 23, 2022, lot 76
Paris, private collection

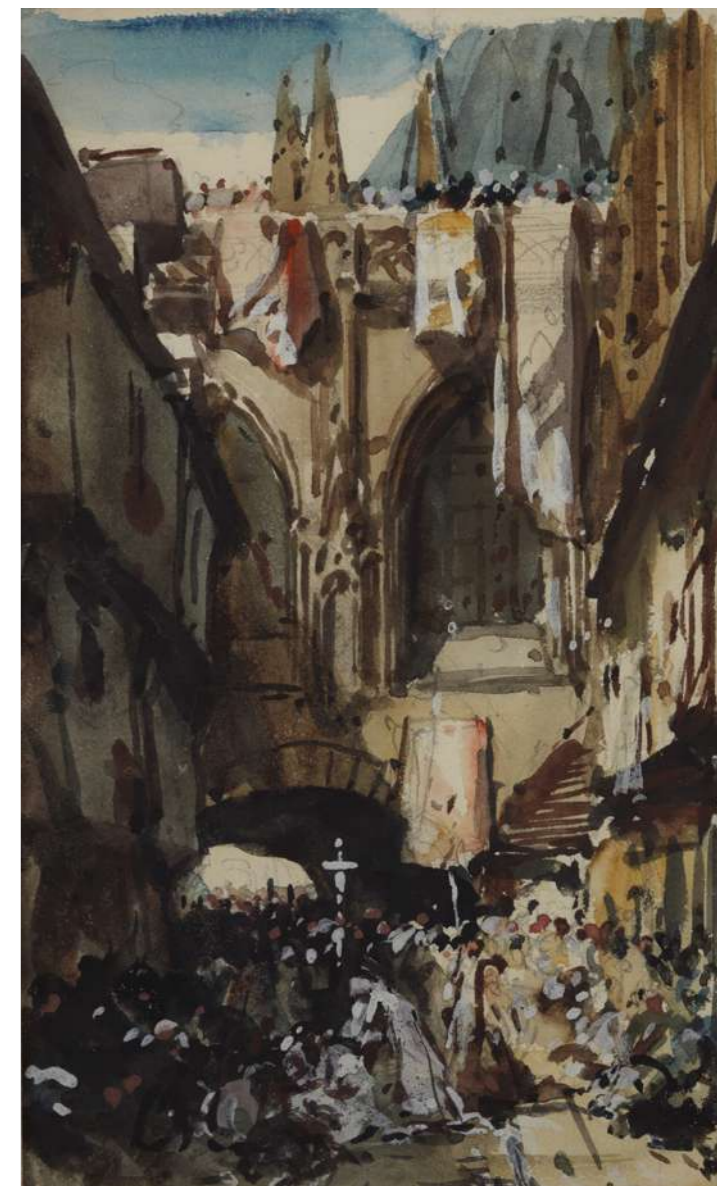


38. PROCESSION, C. 1870

Watercolor, gouache,
pencil drawing on paper
165 x 102 mm
6,5 x 3,94 inches
Framed :
25,5 x 19 cm
10H x 7,48 inches

PROVENANCE

Descendants of the artist
Paris, private collection
Paris, galerie Ambroise Duchemin
Paris, private collection



39. CHEZ L'ARMURIER, C. 1870

Watercolor and gouache on paper

220 x 325 mm

8.66 x 12.8 inches

Framed :

37 x 47 cm

14.57H x 18.5 inches

Signed lower right : "E. Isabey"

Stamp of the studio sale lower left
(Lugt 1401b)

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*, cat. rais.
tome II, 1980, p.73

PROVENANCE

sale Paris, Atelier d'Eugène Isabey,
March 30-31, 1887, lot 168 or 173
Paris, private collection



40. PRISONNIERS ESCORTÉS PAR DES SOLDATS, 1878

Watercolor and gouache on paper

200 x 250 mm
7.88 x 9.84 inches

Framed :
35 x 42 cm
13.78H x 16.54 inches

Signed and dated lower right :
"E. Isabey 78"

LITERATURE

Pierre Miquel, *Eugène Isabey*,
cat. rais. tome II, 1980, n°1496, p.251
(not illustrated)

PROVENANCE

Paris, Alfred Hartmann collection
sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot,
April 12-15, 1899, lot 237
Vallauris, private collection
Mandelieu-la-Napoule, galerie Lauretta
Paris, private collection



« Mr. Isabey is a true colorist, always brilliant, frequently subtle.
He has been one of the most justly fortunate of the men of the new movement. »

Charles Baudelaire, Salon de 1845



Eugène Giraud
Caricature d'Eugène Isabey, 1868
*Les Soirées du Louvre, Caricatures
et dessins humoristiques, 1800-1869*
source : BNF - Gallica

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demischdanant.com

