



MACCONNAL - MASON

ESTABLISHED 1893



Marcel Dyf (1899 - 1985)

“Catherine Pensive, Claudine la jeune baigneuse”

Signed, lower left: Dyf

Oil on canvas

21¾ x 18⅞ in – 55.2 x 46 cm

Frame size

30½ x 26½ in – 77.5 x 67.3 cm

Artist description:

Marcel Dyf was born in Paris, 7th October 1899. His father, in the automotive industry, had moved from Colmar in 1870, opting for France rather than Germany at the time of the Franco Prussian War. Born Marcel Dreyfus, Dyf subsequently changed his family name.

Marcel originally studied engineering and in 1918 at the completion of his studies went to Morocco to work on the construction of a harbour. It was here, captivated by the light and landscape that his thoughts turned towards painting. On his return to Paris, Dyf worked in an artist's studio, before in 1923, and against the wishes of his family, he set out on his career as an artist.

He settled in Arles and rapidly met patrons, benefactors and made friendships that were to last a lifetime. A painter of genre, portraits and still life, it was for his landscapes that Dyf made his reputation, his ability to capture the light and landscape of Provence, in his studio overlooking the Rhone.

Dyf's reputation grew and he received a number of public commissions. In 1932 he painted a series of the four seasons for the Hotel de Ville in Saint-Martin de Crau and the same year a series of historical

frescoes for the Hotel de Ville in Saintes Maries de la Mer. Subsequent commissions included a stained glass window for the church of St. Louis, Marseilles and the decoration of the Hotel de Fêtes at College Ampère, Arles.

In 1935 Dyf returned to Paris, occupying a studio in Avenue Mairie, once that of Maximilien Luce, and exhibiting at Galerie Drouart, rue de Seine. Come 1940, Dyf returned to his studio in Arles, exhibiting at the Galerie Jouvène in Marseilles. In 1942, Dyf lost a number of friends, including his brother René Dreyfus who died during deportation. Following the Liberation, Dyf returned to Paris and in the subsequent years was a regular visitor to Saint Paul de Vence and exhibited in Cannes, Marseilles, Nice, Strasbourg and in 1949, Paris. Dyf also exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français at the Salon d'Automne and in 1950 was invited to exhibit at the International Exposition des Beaux Arts at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, from which he received highly complementary reviews.

Dyf lived briefly in Cannes before, in 1954, meeting Claudine Godat, they married in 1956 and moved to the village of Bois d'Arcy near Versailles. Claudine was to be a source of inspiration to Dyf and the subject for some of his most appealing portraits. Summers were spent at Port Navalo, then at Arzon in Brittany, where in 1961 they built a home. Winter visits to Provence provided subjects for his paintings and maintained long-standing friendships.

In 1956 Dyf formed a relationship with the art dealer Sir Christopher Wade in London, which spread Dyf's fame beyond continental Europe to the United Kingdom and the United States. In America Dyf became highly successful and sought after amongst prominent patrons, one of whom, Charles Masson, donated a seascape to The White House, while Ruth and Bill Killgallon not only formed a large collection of Dyf's work, but were to remain lifelong friends.

In 1984 Dyf exhibited at the National Art Club in New York, in the year before his death, a testament to an artist admired and recognised as a disciple of the Impressionists.

On 28th September 1985, following the death of Marcel Dyf, Le Figaro published an obituary: "Those who knew him, admired and loved him."