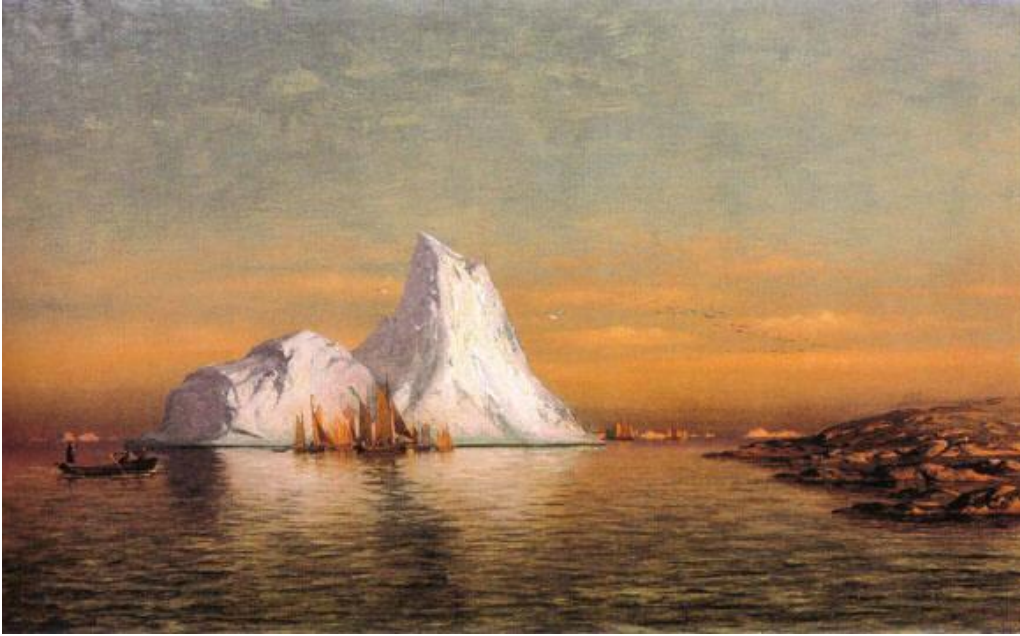


Basic Detail Report



Title: Fishing Fleet off Labrador

Date: 1884

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3ffc2

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: Bradford painted "Fishing Fleet off Labrador" in 1884, fifteen years after his last trip to the Arctic. Like Frederic Church, whose panoramic success "The Icebergs" (1861; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts) undoubtedly reinforced Bradford's desire to record the northern regions, Bradford painted his landscape in the warmth of a New York studio. But while Church abandoned the Arctic to concentrate on the tropics, Bradford continued to use these cold and watery regions as his primary subject. By 1884 his fame as the painter of the Arctic was ensured: Mr. Bradford's reputation as a Polar Sea painter has been long established by his lovely reproductions of the picturesque scenery along the Nova Scotian and Labrador coasts. He is what may be called a "truthful" painter, following nature conscientiously, adorning her, or changing her but little, except where her arrangements do not suit the limits of his canvas."⁽¹⁾ While other artists occasionally made forays into the Arctic for subject matter, they often included wrecked ships or savage polar bears that were meant to evoke the Sublime forces of nature. In "Fishing Fleet off Labrador", however, man and nature are closely aligned: the boats are fishing vessels and they are sheltered in the calm waters of a Labrador bay. Bradford rarely copied the sketches and photographs that he made during his voyages, but used elements of them--ships, rocks, icebergs, and occasionally even

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Eskimos--as interchangeable pieces he arranged in limitless combinations on the canvas. In 1884, the year he completed "Fishing Fleet off Labrador", he told a writer for the "Philadelphia Photographer": "Why, my photographs have saved me eight or ten voyages to the Arctic regions, and now I gather my inspirations from my photographic subjects, just as an author gains food from his library, and I could not paint without them."(2) In "Fishing Fleet off Labrador), Bradford combined his memories with a subtle sensitivity to color; ships, sea, iceberg, and shore are artfully composed and unified by the orange glow of an Arctic sunset. MEB Bibliography: John Wilmerding, William Bradford, 1823-1892, exhib. cat. (Lincoln, Mass.: De Cordova Museum, 1969); Frank Horch, "Photographs and Paintings by William Bradford," American Art Journal 5 (November 1973), pp. 61-70; Anne-Marie Amy Kilkenny, "'Life and Scenery in the Far North': William Bradford's 1885 Lecture to the American Geographical Society," American Art Journal 26, nos. 1,2 (1994), pp. 106-8. Notes: 1. "The Paintings of Mr. William Bradford, of New York," Philadelphia Photographer" 21 (January 1884): 7. 2. Ibid., p. 8. Dimensions: Frame: 24 x 35 3/4 in. (61 x 90.8 cm) Image: 18 x 29 5/8 in. (45.7 x 75.2 cm)