Camille Pissarro
(Danish, 10.07.1830 - 12.11.1903)

La Vachère, Matin, Soleil
Signed lower left C. Pissarro 1887
Gouache and watercolour over pencil on paper
20.5 x 26.5 cm / 8.1 x 10.4 inch

PROVENANCE

LITERATURE

BIOGRAPHY
(Camille Pissarro)

Camille Pissarro had an early talent for drawing, which was encouraged by the director of his school, who suggested that he draw outdoors. He devoted almost all of his spare time to making sketches of nature and daily life surrounding him. Pissarro studied at various academic institutions in Paris, including the École des Beaux-Arts and Académie Suisse, and under a succession of masters, such as Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Gustave Courbet, and Charles-François Daubigny. He befriended Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet and other famous impressionists. At first Pissarro attempted to maintain the academic rules, but his instincts led him to experiment with new subjects and styles. As a result he is known to be one of the most innovative artists of his time. His finest early works are characterized by broadly painted naturalism derived from Courbet, but with an impressionist palette. He depicted rural and urban French life, particularly landscapes in and around Pontoise, as well as scenes from Montmartre. His mature work displays empathy for peasants and laborers, and sometimes evidences his radical political leanings. He was a mentor to Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin and his example inspired many young artists. Around 1870-1871 Pissarro and Monet visited London, where they were strongly influenced by William Turner and John Constable. In 1885 he was introduced to Paul Signac and Georges Seurat, who was developing the Neo-Impressionistic style known as Pointillism or Divisionism. Always open-minded, Pissarro became convinced that this technique would add greater luminosity to the painted surface. However, after some time he came to the conclusion that it was a sterile technique that lacked the spontaneity that he valued in art. After a successful final decade of his life, filled with one-man shows, regular exhibitions and a number of visits to England, Belgium and Holland, he developed an eye disease in 1895, which troubled his sight and forced him to work indoors. When Pissarro died in 1903, he left us with a rich legacy of paintings, etchings and lithographs.