



Albert Bierstadt

Title

Coast of California

Medium

Oil on paper mounted to canvas

Date

1870s

Dimensions

14 × 19 in. (35.6 × 48.3 cm)

Catalogue Number

2016.11.2

Credit Line

Richard M. Scaife Bequest, 2015

Web Description

Bierstadt first traveled to California in 1863 at the height of his fame and made sketches and studies on which he based his large-scale canvases of Yosemite Valley. Later, in the early 1870s, Bierstadt returned to California, staying in San Francisco. The small format of this work and the artist's loosely handled brushwork indicate that it is one of his plein air studies, most likely made during this later trip, when the artist took sketching trips to the Farallon Islands, just off shore, and further afield to points along the Pacific Coast and the High Sierras. In contrast to the high finish and romantic drama of his more formal oil paintings, Bierstadt rendered this appealing study in a quiet mood, lavishing attention on the effects of light, in particular those figures or areas of landscape on which the soft, flat light falls, and those in shadow.