



## Belle-île-en-mer - Mario Prassinos (1916-1985)



3 200 EUR

Signature : Mario Prassinos (1916-1985)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 46 cm

Width : 38 cm

### Description

An oil on canvas measuring 46 x 38 cm depicting Belle-Île-en-Mer in 1939, signed in the lower left by Mario Prassinos (1916-1985). Mario Prassinos was born on July 30, 1916, in Constantinople, into a Greek family that had been established in the Ottoman Empire for several generations. In 1922, when persecution threatened the Greeks of Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, his family had to flee and went into exile in France. The young Mario, then six years old, settled with his father, Lysandre Prassinos, a lawyer and professor of French literature, and his sister Gisèle, the future great surrealist poet, in Nanterre and then in Paris. Prassinos continued his studies at the Lycée Condorcet and the School of Oriental Languages. At sixteen, he frequented the backstage of Charles Dullin's Théâtre de l'Atelier,

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thus discovering his passion for the theater. In 1934, his sister Gisèle published her first texts in the magazine *Minotaure*, opening the doors of the Parisian art world to the young Mario. He then met the surrealist poets André Breton, Paul Éluard, René Char, and Benjamin Péret, as well as the painters Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Hans Arp, and Marcel Duchamp at Man Ray's studio. His first works consisted of illustrations for his sister's poems for the publisher Guy Lévis-Mano. In 1938, he exhibited for the first time at the Billiet-Vorms gallery, with a preface by René Char. This surrealist period soon gave way to an expressionist aesthetic, then a constructivist one after the Second World War. A volunteer soldier in 1939, Prassinos was quickly wounded in combat and received the *Croix de Guerre* (War Cross). He then became friends with Raymond Queneau and in 1942 began a long collaboration with *Éditions de la N.R.F.*, illustrating the works of Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Sartre, Edgar Allan Poe, and Camus. He became a naturalized French citizen in 1949. In 1947, Prassinos created his first costumes and sets for Jean Vilar at the first Avignon Festival, for Paul Claudel's *The Story of Tobias and Sarah*. This theatrical collaboration continued until 1964, notably with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in 1954 and Strindberg's *Erik XIV* in 1960. From 1951, Prassinos settled in Eygalières in Provence and began designing tapestry cartoons. He created more than 150 cartoons woven in the Gobelins, Beauvais, and Aubusson workshops, becoming one of the major figures in the revival of French tapestry. The Provençal landscapes, particularly the Alpilles hills opposite his house, became his favorite themes. His graphic work became more refined, reflecting the atmospheric effects, the light, and the wind of the South of France. Recognized as one of the great painters of his generation and a leading figure of the new School of Paris, Prassinos received numerous distinctions: Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters in 1961, Knight of the Legion of Honor in

1966, and Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters in 1981. He also published two literary works, *Les Prétexats* (1973) and *La Colline tatouée* (1983). In 1985, Mario Prassinós donated a comprehensive collection of his work to the French State, comprising 108 paintings, drawings, engravings, tapestries, and prints. He died on October 23, 1985, in Avignon, at his home in Eygalières. The Mario Prassinós Foundation was inaugurated in 1986 to preserve and promote this important artistic legacy.