

19th century English Yacht at Sea

Nicholas Matthew Condy

\$ POA



REF: 2322

Height: 35.55 cm (14")

Width: 43.16 cm (17")

Description

This maritime scene by Nicholas Matthew Condy, the celebrated English marine painter continues to reveal his deep fascination with ships and the shifting moods of the sea. The composition captures a schooner in mid-journey, its sails billowing as it rides a slightly roughened surface under a dim, moody sky. Though the sea here does not reach the ferocity of a storm, it carries a sense of unease-whitecaps break against the hull, and the water, tinged with steel-grey, seems to churn with latent energy. Above, the sky is a bruised blend of purples, browns, and ochres, with patches of light pressing faintly through a heavy overcast.

The vessel is depicted with Condy's usual finesse, its rigging taut and sails trimmed perfectly, echoing his characteristic attention to nautical accuracy. A pair of flags whip at the masts-one featuring the red cross of St. George, signaling British identity, and another, possibly maritime code, further emphasizing the authenticity and functionality of the ship. The schooner is gracefully elongated, low on the water, giving it a sense of speed and agility, perhaps a nod to its use as a packet or coastal trader.

In the distance, two key elements anchor the painting in narrative and place: to the left, a ghostlike sail emerges from the haze, suggesting another ship either approaching or vanishing with the fog; to the right, a prominent lighthouse stands firm atop a craggy shoreline, a familiar motif in Condy's work. Its presence is both symbolic and practical-a beacon for safety, but also a vertical element that offsets the horizontal thrust of the ship and sea, balancing the composition.

A few gulls wheel in the foreground, their presence bringing a touch of life and motion to the quiet surface, while a small boat appears almost swallowed by the waves, a reminder of the scale and power of nature even in moments of relative calm.

What makes this painting particularly compelling is its atmosphere: it inhabits a liminal space between light and dark, safety and risk, movement, and stillness. Condy conveys this not with drama, but with subtle shifts in tone and detail. The heavy gilded frame, once again richly adorned in rococo ornament, underscores the value placed on such works as windows into the maritime soul of a seafaring nation.

Together with the other paintings, this piece forms part of a visual conversation-a poetic chronicle of ships, shores, and skies by an artist who understood the sea not just as a subject, but as a muse.

The frame is the original 19th-century handmade frame.