

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Edward William Cooke  
(London 1811 – 1880 Groombridge)

*Vesuvius, seen from within a  
fisherman's workshop in  
Castellammare di Stabia*

oil on canvas  
26 x 35.6 cm.;  
10 1/4 x 14 in.

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This picture was painted in Castellammare di Stabia, near Naples, looking out through a fisherman's workshop across the bay to Vesuvius. Cooke arrived in Naples in May 1846 whilst on a tour of the Mediterranean. The shore life of the Calabrian fishermen working, washing, drying and mending their nets with spread awnings and miscellaneous gear offered colour and variety that Cooke took full advantage of in this productive period of his life.

Cooke was born in Pentonville, London, the son of the well-known line engraver George Cooke (1781 – 1834); his uncle, William Bernard Cooke (1778–1855), was also a line engraver of note, so Edward was raised in the company of accomplished artists. He was a precocious draughtsman and a skilled engraver from an early age, displayed a preference for marine subjects (in particular in sailing ships), and published his *Shipping and Craft* – a series of accomplished engravings – when he was just 18, in 1829. He benefited from the advice of many of his father's associates, notably Clarkson Stanfield (1793 – 1867), whose principal marine follower he became, and David Roberts (1796 – 1864). Cooke began painting in oil in 1833, took formal lessons from James Stark (1794 – 1859) in 1834, and first exhibited at the Royal Academy and British Institution in 1835, by which time his style had essentially formed.

He went on to travel and paint with great eagerness both at home and abroad, indulging his love of the 17th-century Dutch marine artists with a visit to the Netherlands in 1837. He returned regularly over the next 23 years, studying the effects of the coastal landscape and light, as well as the works of the country's Old Masters, resulting in highly successful paintings. These included *Beaching a Pink at Scheveningen* (National Maritime Museum, London), which he exhibited in 1855 at the Royal Academy, where he was an Associate from 1851. He later travelled in Scandinavia, Spain, North Africa and, above all, to Venice. In 1858, he was elected into the National Academy of Design as an Honorary Academician.