

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM

TABLEAUX - DESSINS - SCULPTURES

CHARLES FRANCOIS GRENIER DE LACROIX, called LACROIX DE MARSEILLE

Marseille c. 1700 - Berlin 1782

French school

VIEW OF A MEDITERRANEAN HARBOUR WITH THE FLAG OF THE ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM

Oil on canvas

H. 0,82 m ; W. 0,52 m

DATE : ca. 1770

PROVENANCE :

Private collection, Italy

From Marseilles, Charles François Grenier de Lacroix was in Rome in 1750. There, he met the Marquis de Vandières, Soufflot and Cochin but little biographical information about him has survived. He was the pupil of the renowned marine painter from Lyon, Adrien Lyon Manglard and probably assisted Vernet. He lived then in Naples for ten years before returning to Paris around 1776, where he exhibited at the *Salon du Colisée* and the *Salon de la Correspondance*. A large number of the works he produced are dated to the 1760s. He died in Berlin in 1782 according to Pahin de la Blancherie.

In his works, Lacroix de Marseille adopted fully the new way of painting seascapes that had been developed by Vernet. He placed his small scale figures in the foreground, most often inserting them into a fishing scene, to leave the majority of the canvas for the seascape, creating a play of perspective and light. This style oscillates between realism and ornament, both through scenes of the routines of inhabitants of cities by the sea, and by the effects rendered of landscapes and the play of light on the water. Indeed, dominant shades of pink and grey can be seen for the context, and livelier colours for the figures depicted with a certain care for detail.

From the care given to each detail and the refined sense of light, these paintings are among the mature works of Lacroix de Marseille. In the foreground are young fishermen playings cards, and elegantly dressed men, one of which oriental, have a conversation at the edge of the water. The motif of the watchtower and the flag can be found in numerous paintings by this artist. His distinct manner of rendering the masts and the ropes, the small figures in the distance, and above all the surface of the water, are all characteristic of the elegant art of Lacroix de Marseille.

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