Félix ZIEM (1821-1911) - View of Venice from the islands of Murano



Oil on panel signed lower right

Dimensions : W. 35 cm x H. 21 cm / with frame : W. 59 cm x H. 45 cm

A pioneer of Impressionism, Felix Ziem is undoubtedly the most important painter of Venice in the 19th century. Admired by Van Gogh, this visionary artist drew inspiration from but broke free from the great Italian masters of the "settecento" who specialized in lake scenes. Felix Ziem imposed a new vision of Venice, which lies in the systematic study of its light, changing with the hours and seasons, and the reflections and transparencies of the water. His characters and gondolas, treated with a lively touch, show his admiration for Francesco Guardi.

Felix Ziem was a gifted artist: he produced more than 5,000 works, including seascapes, landscapes, still lifes, flowers, and historical subjects. He mastered not only oil painting but also watercolor, even though his works on paper are far from reaching the prices of his oil paintings. The most sought-after and highly valued subjects are Venice and Constantinople.

In 1821, Félix Ziem was born in Beaune to a Croatian father who had settled in Côte-d'Or in 1814 and a Burgundian mother. He studied at the School of Architecture and Fine Arts in Dijon. By the age of 20, he had won countless prizes and awards. In 1841, he moved to Nice, where he received commissions from the city. From 1842 onwards, he traveled to Italy, visiting Rome before discovering Venice, which would become his second home. He would spend several months there each year from 1845 to 1892. He worked from his boat, which served as both his studio and his home.

Greece, Turkey, and the Mediterranean basin, Russia, Belgium, Holland, England, Egypt, Austria, Turkey, Algeria... Felix Ziem never stopped traveling, instantly capturing the light of each place and the atmosphere of each country.

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A friend of all the most famous landscape painters of his time, Ziem lived in Barbizon to paint there too, from life. He then stayed in his four homes in Venice, Martigues, Nice, and Paris, where he received awards and honors, including becoming an Officer of the Legion of Honor in 1878. His success and fortune enabled him to help young artists and establish numerous charitable works. The city of Martigues has dedicated a museum to Felix Ziem, and the Petit Palais preserves Ziem's studio, which he bequeathed to the city of Paris upon his death in 1911.

This work is an oil on panel, preserved in perfect condition and presented in its original frame. It brings together all the characteristic elements of Félix Ziem's style: a seascape near Venice, the presence of the sea and boats, and discreet architecture in the background. The Alps can also be seen in the distance. The artist reveals his talent for playing with light, with subtle reflections on the water and an atmosphere that is both luminous and poetic, emblematic of his work.

Museums:

Paris, Musée d'Orsay, Petit Palais...

Marseille, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Musée Grobet Labadié

Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Roubaix, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie

Martigues, Musée Ziem

Beaune, Museum of Fine Arts

Bibliography:

Catalogue Raisonné de Félix Ziem by Anne Burdin-Hellebranth, Belgium, 1998.

E. Bénézit, Gründ edition, Volume XIV, pages 899-900.