

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Alexandre Calame (1810 - 1864)

Mountain Torrent

c. 1850-60

oil on canvas

28 x 37.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Asbjorn R. Lunde Collection, New York.

EXHIBITED

Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA. October 8-December 31 2006. pl. 8

Den Ville Natur Sveitsisk og Norsk Romantikk, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Tromsø and Bergen Kunstmuseum, Bergen, Norway, September 29, 2007 – August 31, 2008, p.80, no. 10

Forest, Rocks, Torrents: Norwegian and Swiss Landscapes from the Lunde Collection, The National Gallery, London. June 22-September 18 2011, no. 35

This modestly sized canvas is prime Calame and demonstrates just what a master painter he was in capturing his country's beautiful scenery. Using a series of v-shaped compositional planes with sharp shadows, Calame succeeded in creating an amazing sense of depth and drama in this mountainscape. The stand of fir trees beside the rushing torrent separates the chasm from the far-off peak and, equally, points to Calame's long-lasting assimilation of Jacob Ruisdael's landscapes. It is noteworthy that

Calame made the giant boulders in the foreground a primary feature in the picture. Whereas many of his contemporaries and followers struggled to recreate rocks faithfully, including Gabriel Loppé, Calame excelled at painting them. His closest rival in this aspect was E.T.Compton, born a generation on.

Many of Calame's finest paintings derive from the environs of Handeck in the eastern Bernese Oberland. With its steep valleys, waterfalls and views of lofty mountain ridges and tops, the region offered nearly all the motifs that recurred in his compositions.