

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Alexandre Calame (1810 - 1864)

The Vierwaldstättersee seen from Seelisberg, Switzerland

oil on canvas

32.7 x 33.1 cm.

signed, circa 1861

Provenance:

Fischer, Luzern, 17 June 2004, lot 1275

Asbjørn Lunde (1927-2017), New York.

Exhibited:

Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape, Williamstown, Clark Art Institute, 2006, no.13, repr. p. 61;

Den ville natur. Sveitisk og norsk romantikk. Malerier fra Asbjørn Lundes samling, New York, Tromsø, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum and Bergen Billedgalleri, 2007-8, no.15, repr. p. 85;

Forests, Rocks, Torrents: Norwegian and Swiss Landscapes from the Lunde Collection, London, National Gallery, 2011, no. 39, repr., fig.15, p. 59.

Literature :

V. Anker, *Calame Vie et oeuvre* (1987), p.437, no.670

This fine study in oils comes from the studio sale of the artist's works held a year after Calame's death in Paris's Hôtel Drouot. The sale was conducted over two days and included 650 lots, mostly oil studies with two hundred or so drawings. It bears repeating that Calame never sold his sketches in his lifetime but the sheer quantity put up for sale in the Drouot reveals to what extent he was devoted to working *en plein air*. This is one of many known compositions by Calame painted near the cliffs at Seelisberg. The three peaks dominating the skyline are, from the left, the Gitschen, then Brunnistock and the snow-capped Urirotstock which is visible from many vantage points on the pristine 'Lake of the Four Cantons', (Vierwaldstättersee). Calame regarded this region as the spiritual and historical centre of his native land and from preparatory views such as this, he made more formal commissions. A few large format *Urirotstock* paintings now hang in Swiss museums such as the Kunstmuseum in Basel and Winterthur.