

# JAMES MACKINNON

*Fine Paintings and Drawings Business by appointment only*

## **Josephus Augustus KNIP**

Tilburg 1777-1847 Berlicum

### ***Trees on the banks of Lake Nemi***

Watercolour over pencil

40 x 56.5 cm 15 3/4 x 22 1/4 inches

Inscribed '*Lac de Nemi*'

This view of trees lining the banks of Lake Nemi dates from Knip's stay in Italy between 1809-1812, awarded a pension as winner of the Dutch Prix de Rome in 1808. Knip's Italian drawings have been highly prized for their acute rendering of the architectural subjects and the brilliant *mise en page* by the artist, for many were left with significant unpainted reserves which give a clarity of vision to the site represented.

The present sheet is among those which have no architectural subject but instead depict pure landscape. The closest parallel example is a sheet, *Trees in the environs of Subiaco* (Rp-T-1940-638) in the Rijksmuseum. As in the majority of other sheets painted in Italy Knip employs a very subtle and limited palette. The image is within the framing pencil line Knip frequently used and is inscribed with the site on the drawing itself, the artist's usual practice on these sheets.

Son of the painter Nicolaus Frederik Knip, Josephus Augustus initially attended the drawing academy at s-Hertogenbosch between the ages of 10 and 13. Subsequently he left for France in 1801, encouraged by Gerard van Spaendonck (1746-1822), the still life painter, who was professor of iconography at the *Musée Nationale d' Histoire Naturelle*.

The Low Countries fell under the control of Napoleon who installed his third brother Louis as King of Holland in 1806. Among the changes made by the new ruler was the establishment of a Dutch equivalent of the Prix de Rome in 1807.

During these three years, Knip worked not only in Rome but travelled more widely in Italy, including to Naples. He returned to Paris with an extensive portfolio of 570 works, the majority being studies in pencil and wash or watercolour.

Knip is perhaps now best known for these highly desirable studies of Italian subjects which are well represented in museum collections, the most important group of 46 Italian sheets having been acquired by the Rijksmuseum from the estate of Prof. I.Q. van Regteren Altena (1899-1980) pre-empting sale at public auction. A smaller group was in the Ploos van Amstel Knoef collection, from which some were sold at auction in 2004 but which also gave a group to the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen.

Knip's Italian drawings provided him with a fund of subjects following his return from Italy. However in 1826 the artist's eyesight began to fail and he became totally blind in 1832, as his father had before him.