

Jacques Sturm (Luxembourg – Rome)



The Torre delle Milizie and the Convent of Santa Caterina, seen
from the Orti Fernesiani, Rome

Reference: 11040

Dimensions:

Height: 24.50 cm / 9⁵/₈ in
Width: 31.50 cm / 12³/₈ in

Signed l.l.: J Sturm, oil on paper laid down on canvas
24.5 x 31.5 cm; 9 5/8 x 12 1/4 inches

Exhibited

Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London, The Lure of Rome: Some Northern Artists in Italy in the Nineteenth Century, 31 October – 27 November 1979, cat. no. 66, pl. 36

Provenance

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London;
Sir Jack & Lady Baer, Kensington, until 2022

This partially unfinished view of the rooftops of Rome on a hot sunny day is the only known oil sketch by Jacques Sturm. It is a pleasing study of light and atmosphere in the city.

The artist was the son of a wigmaker and initially trained to follow in his father's footsteps. However, he simultaneously attended drawing lessons given by Pierre Maisonnet (1783-1823), the drawing teacher at the Luxembourg Academy. When Jean-Baptiste Fresez (1800-1867) replaced Maisonnet in 1824 he recognised Sturm's talent, and recommended him to Eugène Jobard (1792-1861), the Belgian court lithographer and photographer.

The Belgian Revolution of 1830 brought an end to Jobard's business; however, undeterred, Sturm began to engrave portraits himself for a living. In 1836 he painted his first works in oil, exhibiting for the first time two years later in Liège, and in 1839 he exhibited at the Brussels Triennale. Sturm moved briefly to Paris to study painting in oils but soon returned to Brussels.

It was around this time that his health began to deteriorate and so, seeking a milder climate, he moved to Rome in 1842. He lived there until his death in January 1844. This painting is one of apparently few examples from this period, possibly the only one to have

been published, and is a superb example of an artist experimenting with oils plein air at a time when such works were largely meant only for the artists' personal use and collections.

The present work's subject, the Torre delle Milizie may have had special associations for this Luxembourgish artist, as it was used by Emperor Henry VII, also known as Henry of Luxembourg, as his main bastion against the 1312 Guelph invasion.