



Michael Wutky

The eruption of the Vesuvius

Michael Wutky (Krems 1739-1822 Vienna)

The eruption of the Vesuvius
signed 'M. Wutky?' (lower right)

oil on canvas
90.5 x 126.2 cm.

Famous for his moonlit landscapes and pictures depicting Mount Vesuvius, Michael Wutky's career began at the Vienna Academy, which he joined in 1755. Just over ten years later, he became a member of the newly-founded Imperial Drawings Academy. In 1771, he travelled to Italy, visiting Trieste, Padua, Venice and Rome. It was in Rome that he became acquainted with the artists, John Robert Cozens (1752-1798), Thomas Jones (1742-1803) and Louis-Rodolphe Ducros (1748-1810). In 1781-2, he was commissioned by Marcantonio Borghese to work alongside Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737-1807) and Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798) on the decoration of the Villa Princiana, Rome.

The expansion of scientific curiosity and knowledge in the Age of Enlightenment led to a considerable degree of fascination with volcanoes, particularly amongst natural philosophers in France and England. Mount Vesuvius became a popular destination for tourists and artists alike towards the end of the eighteenth century. Michael Wutky is documented on one expedition to Vesuvius, with Sir William Hamilton in 1779, after the great eruption of the volcano in that year. In the 1984 exhibition catalogue [op. cit.], Ronald de Leeuw suggests that the small figure of the artist startled by the eruption, might be Wutky himself. He compares the present lot to Wutky's painting in the Kunstmuseum in Basel of circa 1780.

oil on canvas

Height 35.6 in.; Width 49.7 in. / Height 90.5 cm.; Width 126.2 cm.

Signed

Christie's Amsterdam: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 [Lot 00117]
Old Masters & 19th Century Art - (including Dutch Impressionism)

12,000 - 18,000 EUR

?

(12,761 - 19,142 USD)

235,500 EUR Premium

Title

Description

Medium

Size

Misc.

Sale of

Estimate

Sold For