

Basic Detail Report



Marseille: The Old Port

Date

1843

Primary Maker

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

Medium

Oil on canvas

Dimensions

Framed: 49 x 60 x 9.5 cm 24.1 x 34.9 cm

Description

According to Robaut (1905, vol. II, p.160, n°443, repr.), this is a view of the old harbour in Marseille. It is seen from the entrance of the harbour and the blue-green sea in the foreground takes nearly half of the composition. Old buildings and two rows of ships run along each side. In the background is the town and further back in the distance, is the Sainte Beaulieu Mountain, a Marseille landmark. It is not dated but thanks to annotated drawings we know that when he was on his way to Rome, Corot stayed in Marseille in May 1843. That year, Corot had decided to travel to Italy when his painting, Destruction of Sodom, was not admitted at the Salon; he left France with Brizard, a friend and also a painter. It was his third and last trip to Italy where he stayed until October. This little canvas, painted outdoors has the harsh light of his first period and his idiosyncratic unity of atmosphere and tone. Blue-green sea in the centre, small portion of harbour wall to the right; in the background a view of Marseilles with ships bordering the water on either side; on the horizon blue/grey hills. A small boat with a sail middle left.