

Basic Detail Report



Rousseau's Tomb, Ermouville (Tombeau de Jean Jacques Rousseau)

Date

1866

Primary Maker

Charles François Daubigny

Medium

Pencil on paper

Dimensions

33.6 x 49.5 cm

Description

From a family of painters, Charles François Daubigny was one of the earliest exponents of plein air painting in France. He painted landscape for its own sake rather than imbuing it with mythological or historical significance or feeling the need to populate it with figures. Work made during his travels in his studio boat along the River Seine and River Oise was published in an album of etchings titled *Voyage en Bateau*. His 'voyage pittoresque', as his travels were known, was made in response to the increasing urbanisation of the French countryside and Daubigny's sense of urgency to record and celebrate the French rural landscape. As a Salon judge Daubigny was sympathetic to the younger generation of artists and he championed those who were subsequently to become the Impressionists. Born in Geneva, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a critic of 18th century principles of rational and scientific progress. He saw nature as something noble, rather than as a universe of predictable laws, cultivated and geometric. Nature was something everyone could see without the need for scientific equipment such as telescopes and microscopes, and was articulated through wild flowers, forests and mountains. In contrast to divine nature, Rousseau felt that culture and classical art were artificial and man-made. Rousseau's philosophy had an important influence on landscape gardening and the grounds of Ermenonville, the estate belonging to his patron Count Louis-René Girardin, where Rousseau spent his last months, were modelled on ideas he described in his novel *Julie; ou la nouvelle Héloïse*. Initially buried on the Ile des Peupliers at Ermenonville, Rousseau's remains were later moved to the Panthéon in Paris. However, his tomb at Ermenonville, conceived as a 'natural' environment and possibly designed by Hubert Robert continued to be a popular destination during the 19th century. (JO'D) A lake surrounded by trees; to the right a tall, thinly branched tree leans forward over the water; in the centre background tall poplars.