

Jean-Michel CELS (The Hague 1819 - Brussels 1894)

A Clearing at the Edge of a Wood

Oil on paper, laid down on canvas.

Signed, dated and inscribed Chateau de Meisse près Bruxelles / JM Cels 7bre 1840 on the verso.

237 x 182 mm. (9 5/8 x 7 1/8 in.)

The present sheet is part of a group of oil sketches by Jean-Michel Cels that appeared on the art market in London in 1997. The artist's inscription on the verso notes that this sketch was painted in September 1840 at Meise, on the northern outskirts of Brussels; the town is now home to the National Botanic Garden of Belgium.

Provenance:

Private collection, Belgium, c.1950
Anonymous sale, London, Christie's, 16 April 1997, part of lot 311
Kate de Rothschild, London.

Literature:

Sarah Herring, National Gallery Catalogues: The Nineteenth Century French Paintings. Volume 1: The Barbizon School, London, 2019, p.68, fig.1, under NG 6578.

Artist description:

The 19th century Belgian artist Jean-Michel Cels remains little known today. He was the son and pupil of the Neoclassical painter Cornelis Cels, director of the Académie de Tournai, and also studied with the landscape painter Pierre Jean Hellemans. The younger Cels must have learned the practice of making plein-air oil sketches from his father, who is known to have made such studies during the seven years he spent living and working in Italy early in his career.