

LE CLAIRE
KUNST SEIT 1982



LAURITS TUXEN

1853 - Copenhagen – 1927

The Strait of Messina in Evening Light
(*Messina Straedet*)

Oil on wood; 1888.

Inscribed, monogrammed and dated lower right: *Messina Straedet, LT 88.*

15.5 x 24 cm

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Denmark

Laurits Tuxen's wish from childhood was to become a marine painter, but his teachers at the Academy of Fine Arts encouraged him to become a figure painter. He had his apprenticeship with Léon Bonnat in Paris. From the winter of 1878-1879 Tuxen gathered a number of graduate painters to study from models at the Søkvæsthuset in Copenhagen. This developed into the Kunstnernes Frie Studieskoler, where he taught together with P.S. Krøyer from 1882. They transferred the technique and figure study of the naturalistic French school to Danish painting, a radical transformation of the technical foundations of painting.¹

Tuxen's talent, his eye for colour and good teaching skills placed him at the forefront of his generation.

Tuxen understood the value of the artistic conditions of the 1880s and 1890s and had the idea to create a museum that exhibited the art of those decades. Skagens Museum was founded in 1908, but it would be 20 years before it could be inaugurated. Tuxen continued to paint pictures, but landscapes of the picturesque north of Jutland became his favourite subjects, knowing that he belonged to the epoch of naturalism from the decades before the turn of the century.²

Tuxen travelled to Egypt at the end of 1888, where he remained until January 1889.

During his stay he was inspired to paint a number of extremely colourful sketches and finished works, acknowledging the extent to which the powerful southern sunlight enhances colour.³

Our beautiful oil sketch was created during a stopover on his journey through Italy, probably in the town of Villa San Giovanni, on the Italian mainland where ferries leave for Sicily. The painter looked across the Strait of Messina⁴ to the mountain range that rises on the northern coast of Sicily.

¹ Claudine Stensgaard Nielsen, Danske Leksikon - https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Laurits_Tuxen (accessed July 2020)

² Lise Svanholm, Weilbach Kunstnerlexikon - <https://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/VisWeilbach.do?kunstnerId=1019&wsektion=alle>

³ Mette Bøgh Jensen and Tine Nielsen Fabienke, *Tuxen. Colour, Countryside and Crown*, exhib. cat., Skagens Museum, Skagen, 2014; Fulsgang Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, 2014

⁴ The Strait of Messina is a narrow strait between the eastern tip of Sicily and the western tip of Calabria in Southern Italy. It connects the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north with the Ionian Sea to the south, within the central Mediterranean.

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST

The sketch *The Island Elba* [Fig.1], which belongs to the Skagen Museums, is comparable stylistically and was executed on the same trip in 1888.

We are grateful to Mette Bøgh Jensen, Skagens Kunstmuseer, for her valuable advice.



The Island Elba, 1888,
oil on panel, 15.7 x 23.4 cm.
Art Museums of Skagen, Denmark
(Inv.no. SKM1602)