

# CHARLES-AUGUSTE VAN DEN BERGHE Oil Sketches on Naples • 1828

## TEFAF Maastricht

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Photography Thierry Jacob, Paris

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Beauvais, 1798 - Paris, 1853

Son of Augustin van den Berghe (1756-1846), a former pupil of Suvée, professor of drawing at the *Manufacture de tapisserie* and at the *École centrale de dessin* of Beauvais, Charles-Auguste was first trained by his father in his native town. Sent to Paris, he improved his skills in the workshops of Antoine-Jean Gros and Anne-Louis Girodet. Admitted to the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1817, he tried to win the grand prize for history painting. After repeated failures from 1823 to 1826 (*Égisthe, believing to find the body of Oreste dead, discovers that of Clytemnestre*, 1823, private collection, fig. 1), he left for Italy at his own expense.



On his arrival in Rome in 1827, he became friend with Léopold Robert, who stimulated his interest in popular subjects inspired by Italian folklore. He also studied at the Villa Medici under Pierre-Narcisse Guérin and later under Horace Vernet, who was appointed director in 1829. After his return to France, van den Berghe followed the official career of a successful artist, executing numerous portraits. Taken from Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, his *Major Heyward and the Hurons*, exhibited in 1835, shows the eclectic nature of his inspiration. The following year, critics praised his *Burial of the Virgin* (Nantes, cathedral, fig. 2), a posthumous tribute to the *Funeral of Atala* by his master Girodet.



It was probably through the members of the Académie de France in Rome, during joint work sessions, that van den Berghe's interest in landscape and nature study developed. During this years, the practice of plein air painting became an integral part of the artistic training of the Villa's students. In the case of van den Berghe, this activity as a landscape painter was far from being occasional.

The numerous views of Rome, Naples and Venice that he exhibited at the Salons between 1831 and 1836 (A Roman Woman, Costume of Nettuno; View of the Island of Capri, taken from the Mergellina in Naples; or View from the Lodge of the French Academy in Rome) bear witness to this. All of these works are currently lost and the only landscape paintings known until now was a View of the Gardens of the Convent and the Church of the Trinità dei Monti, dated 1827 (London, private collection, fig. 3)<sup>1</sup> and a View of the Dogana di mare at Venice (Salon de 1833, private collection, fig. 4).

As our four dated landscapes indicate, van den Berghe visited Naples in 1828. He may have been encouraged to visit the kingdom of Naples by his friend Leopold Robert, whose brother Aurelius stayed in Capri in 1829. The search for local color, and incidentally for the beauties of nature, led van den Berghe to South. And here, as in Rome, the artist, who had come in search of "types", was seduced by the incomparable beauty of the Parthenopean city.

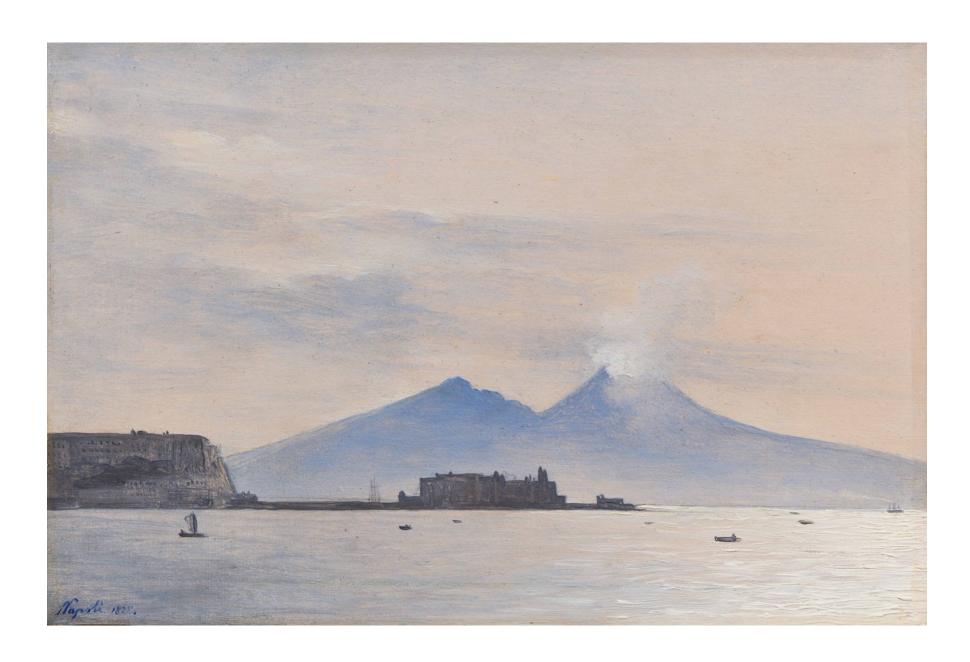






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1. A. Ottani Cavina (ed.), *Paysages d'Italie, les peintres du plein air (1780-1830)*, Paris, Grand-Palais et Mantoue, Palazzo Te, 2001, n°133, p. 185.



Beauvais, 1798 - Paris, 1853

#### 1. Vesuvius in the early morning, 1828

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

15.5 x 22.5 cm

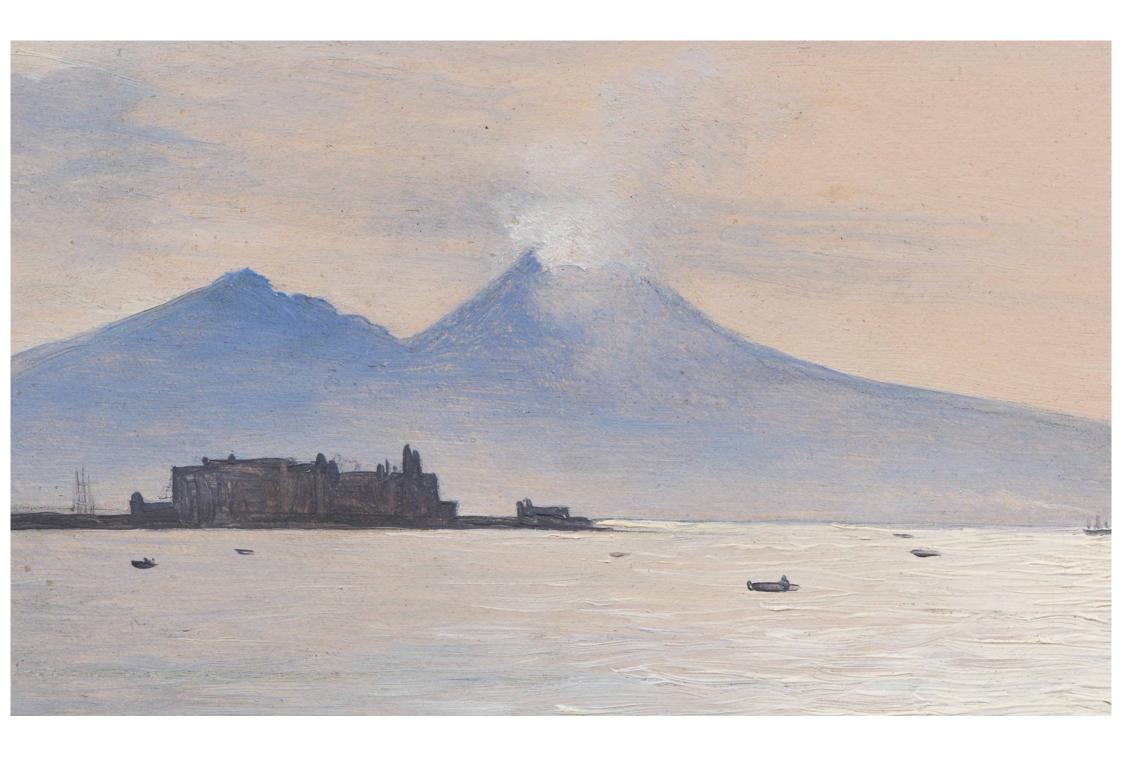
Dated lower right: Napoli 1828

Signed, titled and dated on the stretcher:

Vésuve / Aug. van Ben Berghe / 1828

artist was probably standing on the artistes pressing desire to the shore in Mergellina, an capture the fleeting glow of elegant resort near Naples at dawn before it disappears into the time. The luminous the new day. A simple artiste evocation of Vesuvius painted delight, this pochade only aims by van den Berghe shows us a to evoke the memory of a stay peaceful mountain, at the top that one imagines to be happy. of which only a light plume of white smoke suggests the low activity of the crater. In the foreground, the silhouette of the Castel dell'Ovo stands out between the sea and the mountain.

In this view of Vesuvius, the The fluidity of execution reveals





Beauvais, 1798 - Paris, 1853

#### 2. View of Palazzo Donn'Anna, Naples, may 1828

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

 $24.5 \times 30 \text{ cm}$ 

Located and dated lower left: Naples 1828 / mai

Signed, titled and dated on the stretcher: Palais de la reine Jeanne à

Naples / Aug. vanBenBerghe

stands by the sea, in front of the palace was the anchor of famous the Donn'Anna, located at the turing Donn'Anna - sometimes beginning of via Posilippo, confused with Queen Joan of halfway between Mergellina Aragon -, beautiful fishermen, and the small town of unhappy lovers murdered and Pausilippe. Its name is inspired returned to haunt the palace ... by that of the wife of its first owner, Anna Carafa della During the eighteenth and Stadera, Princess of Stigliano nineteenth centuries, the two (1607-1644), wife of Ramiro facades of Palazzo Donn'Anna Nunez de Guzman (1600- were the subject of numerous 1668), Viceroy of between 1625 and 1644.

1642, was entrusted to the most 1), Joseph Rebell, Jules Coignet important architect of the city or Giuseppe De Nittis. at that time, Cosimo Fanzago. Left unfinished after the death Donn'Anna and the departure of her husband, the building has the charm of an ancient ruin and the grandeur of Neapolitan baroque.

In this painting, the artist Since the eighteenth century, Palazzo several Neapolitan legends fea-

Naples representations by Neapolitan and foreign artists visiting Naples, such as Joseph Vernet The construction, initiated in (c. 1740, private collection, fig.





napoletane: Leggende the stone, leaving the green and light pavilion was located. shining plantation of the algae."

"At night the palace becomes several contemporary works, black, intensely black; the sky is such as Carl Wilhelm Götzloff's serene overhead, the great and painting Neapolitan Dances, beautiful stars shine, the sea of dated Posillipo phosphorus, melan- Kunsthalle, fig. 2) or in a cholic love songs monotonous notes of the made around 1820 (private mandolin come out of the villas collection). The quality of the lost in the groves: the palace light, warm and golden, allows remains gloomy and under its the artist's eye to register every vaults the sea wave roars".

In 1881, the poet Matilde Serao Van den Berghe gives a less described the palace in her gloomy image of the famous "The palace. It stands in the morning gloomy palace stands in the sea. light, which can be guessed by It is not worn out, but it was the shadow cast by the poles of never finished [...]. The high and the arbor. In the background, wide unglazed windows look on the right, we can see the line like eyes without thought; in of the coast between Mergellina the doors where the steps of the and the Riviera di Chiaia. The threshold have disappeared, artist has placed himself on a enters jokingly and laughing the small overhang of the shore blue flood, deposits its shells on where a ginguette protected by a

> This aedicula can be found in 1836 (Hamburger and drawing by Antonio Senape detail with analytical precision.





Beauvais, 1798 - Paris, 1853

## 3. View of Capri from the Beach near Palazzo Donn'Anna, may 1828

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

28 x 23.5 cm

Located and dated lower right: Napoli 1828 / maggio

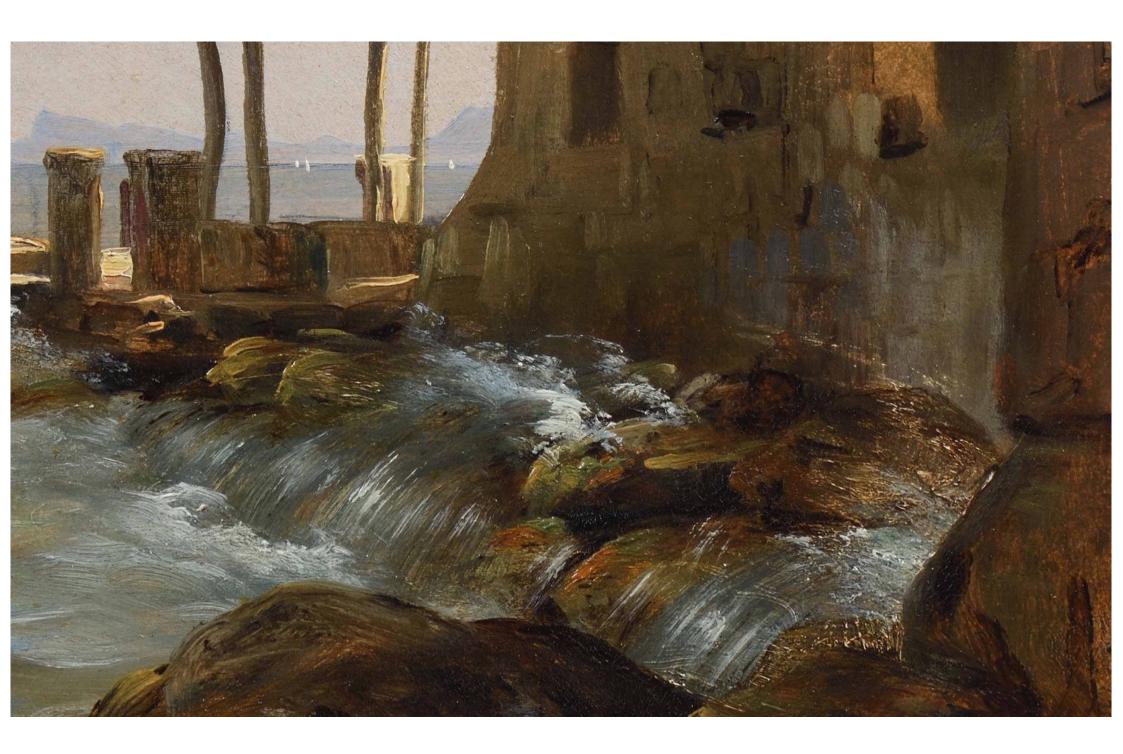
Signed and located on the strechter: ... à Naples / Aug. vanBenBerghe

Dated May 1828, this oil on Antonio Senape made around paper shows us the silhouette 1820 (private collection, fig. 1). of the island of Capri in the morning light. The same arbor The artist's analytical eye excels can be recognized in another in rendering the bubbling of work by the artist, View of the waves on the rocks in the Palazzo Donn'Anna, also dated foreground, while a fisherman's "May 1828": we can therefore silhouette accompanied by a imagine that the artist took child seems to contemplate the both views on the same ships in the open sea and the morning, moving slightly to misty silhouette of the island of change his point of view.

Leaving the Donn'Anna palace on his left, van den Berghe captures the small building with an arbor, slightly overhanging the sea, extended by a guinguette protected by a light pavilion at the water's edge. These buildings can be found in several contemporary works, such as Carl Wilhelm Götzloff's painting Neapolitan Dances, dated 1836 (Hamburger Kunsthalle) or in a drawing by

Capri.







Beauvais, 1798 - Paris, 1853

## 4. Capri, Sunshine, 1828

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

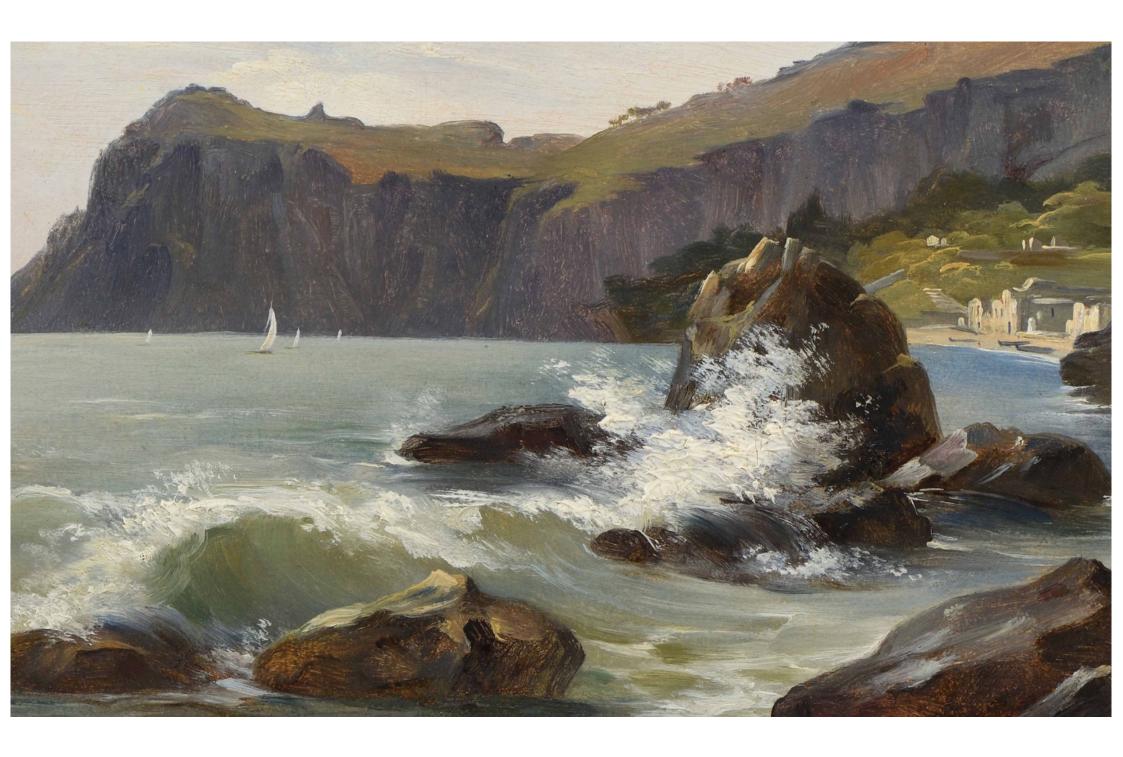
23.1 x 29.8 cm

Signed, located and dated on the stretcher: isola di Capri / Augte.

Vandenberghe 1828

In this view of Capri, the island On the left, the point of the whose beach serves as the port Salerno. of the village of Capri, dominated by the formidable mass of Monte Tiberio.

is offered to the spectator as his Campanella appears in the blue boat approaches the island. We distance, marking the junction can make out Marina Grande, between the gulfs of Naples and





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