

August 21, 2006

**THE SWISS ALPS VISIT THE BERKSHIRE HILLS THIS FALL DURING
*ALPINE VIEWS: ALEXANDRE CALAME AND THE SWISS LANDSCAPE***

**The First Exhibition in the United States to Focus on Swiss Landscapes of the
19th Century**

For Immediate Release

Digital images available upon request

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA- Rugged and stunning landscapes of the Swiss Alps, never before the subject of an exhibition in the United States, will be on view at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute this fall. *Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape*, opening October 8, 2006, reflects a recent growing interest in the work of Alexandre Calame (1810-1864) and Swiss landscape painting among collectors and European and American museums. This exhibition brings together 26 sensuous paintings and sketches by Calame, and places them in the context of the 19th-century landscape



Lake Lucerne, c. 1857-1861, by Alexandre Calame.
Collection of Asbjorn R. Lunde.

tradition. His works are shown alongside 27 of those of his contemporaries, including Caspar Wolf, François Diday, and Johann Gottfried Steffan, offering a rare opportunity to explore the development of the often-overlooked yet significant Swiss school of landscape painting. *Alpine Views* is on view through December 31, 2006.

Throughout the 19th century, many great artists were attracted to the mountains and valleys of Switzerland. One of the most important was Calame, a native Swiss painter who grew up near Lake Geneva. Calame's paintings of the Swiss landscape are remarkably naturalistic depictions of lakes, high peaks, and rushing waterfalls, but at the same time, he considered them meditations on the theme of nature and the divine.

"We are delighted to be the first American museum to present the work of Alexandre Calame, who had such an important influence on landscape painting," said Michael Conforti, director of the Clark. "It is a perfect fit for the Clark. We are located in a beautiful rural setting, which plays against the Swiss landscapes so well. The exhibition also reinforces the Clark's commitment to a deeper understanding of 19th century painting."

Calame was the leading artist of the Swiss school of alpine painting, having briefly studied under Diday, becoming his rival, and eventually surpassing him in popularity and success. Despite a childhood disability that left him lame in one leg, Calame traveled throughout Europe, and even more impressively, climbed the Alps on summer painting excursions. He took his first trip to study the Alps in 1835 in the region of Bernese Oberland, famous for spectacular mountains and valleys, and



Mountain Torrent Before a Storm, 1850, by Alexandre Calame. Collection of Asbjorn R. Lunde.

returned almost every summer to study in the magnificent vistas of the famous mountains.

Landscape painting prior to Calame tended to be very idealized and romanticized as represented by the work of artists such as Poussin and Claude Lorraine. Calame's direct and fresh approach was somewhat shocking to the audience of his day, but his work was very well received and was in great demand. He had his first

international success at the salon of 1839. Calame's work can be seen as a precursor to the landscapes of the Impressionists, who also approached their subjects very directly. For the Impressionists, the small outdoor easel paintings were the finished piece, while Calame used them as studies for larger oil paintings finished in the studio.

The Clark's 140 acres surrounded by the Berkshire hills and views of the Green Mountains and Taconic range is the perfect setting for visitors to connect to the dramatic scenery of the Alps. The power of nature, its ferociousness, its splendor, and its unpredictability, is amplified in Calame's work, and experienced by visitors to the Berkshires.

All works in the exhibition are from the collection of Asbjorn R. Lunde. Alberto de Andrés, of Lausanne, Switzerland, is the guest curator. The accompanying catalogue, published by the Clark and distributed by Yale University Press, reproduces many of these works for the first time in color. The exhibition is sponsored by Toblerone.

The Clark

Set amidst 140 bucolic acres in the picturesque Berkshires, the Clark is one of the few major art museums in the United States that also serves as a leading international center for research and higher education. In addition to its extraordinary collections, the Clark organizes groundbreaking special exhibitions that advance new scholarship and presents an array of public and educational programs. The Clark's research and academic programs include an international fellowship program and regular conferences, symposia, and colloquia. The Clark, together with Williams College, jointly sponsors one of the nation's leading master's programs in art history and encompasses one of the most comprehensive art history libraries in the world.

Its Fellows and Conference Programs draw university and museum professionals from around the world.

The Berkshires, a region of rolling hills in western Massachusetts, have been a haven for cultural activity since the first half of the 19th century. The Berkshires are home to a wealth of cultural institutions that in addition to the Clark include: Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, MASS MoCA, the Norman Rockwell Museum, Williams College Museum of Art, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival, among many others. For more information, visit www.clarkart.edu or call 413-458-2303.

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October 8 to December 31: Rugged yet stunning landscapes of the Swiss Alps, never before the subject of an exhibition in the United States, will be on view during "Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape." *Alpine Views* will feature 26 sensuous works by Calame, along with 27 by his contemporaries, in a comprehensive overview of the Swiss landscape tradition. These works of art, all from a private collection, have never before been exhibited together. The Clark, 225 South Street, Williamstown, MA 01267. 413-458-2303, www.clarkart.edu.

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