

Simon Denis

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Simon-Joseph-Alexandre-Clément Denis (1755-1812) was a Belgian painter active primarily in Italy.

A native of Antwerp, Denis first studied in that city with landscape and animal painter H.-J. Antonissen. The work of Balthasar Ommeganck also influenced his style. He moved to Paris in the 1780s, and soon gained the patronage of genre painter and art dealer Jean-Baptiste Lebrun. Lebrun's support allowed Denis to move to Rome in 1786. His paintings there attracted favorable attention, and in 1787 he married a local woman. He remained close to the Flemish community in Rome, and in 1789 was elected to head the Foundation St.-Julien-des-Flamands. He also developed ties within the French artistic community; Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun stayed with him for some days in 1789 and that same year he and she traveled with François-Guillaume Ménageot to visit Tivoli. François Marius Granet sought his advice when he arrived in Rome in 1802. In 1803, he was elected to the Accademia di San Luca; in 1806 he settled for good in Naples, becoming court painter to Joseph Bonaparte. Denis died in 1812.



Study of Clouds with a Sunset near Rome, oil on paper, now at the J. Paul Getty Museum

Reference

- Philip Conisbee, Sarah Faunce, and Jeremy Strick. *In the Light of Italy: Corot and Early Open-Air Painting*. New Haven; Yale University Press, 1996.

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