

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Harbor of Dieppe: Changement de Domicile

Joseph Mallord William Turner (British, 1775–1851)

Date exhibited 1825, but subsequently dated 1826

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 68 3/8 x 88 3/4 in. (173.7 x 225.4 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1914.1.122

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 13, West Gallery

Commentary Turner visited the French fishing port of Dieppe, in Normandy, twice before painting this canvas in his London studio. The work draws from sketches made on site, as well as from memory and imagination. In this romantic view, signs of modernization, such as the steamboats then in use, are excluded. Turner focuses on the vibrant energy of the town filled with glowing sunlight and hundreds of figures engaged in lively activities. The French subtitle Turner assigned the painting—“Changement de Domicile” (change of home address) — may refer to the couple at right, who appear to be loading or unloading objects from boats. Turner elevates his genre scene through the monumental scale of the canvas and the compositional format borrowed from the grand seaports of Claude Lorrain. Here, as in Claude’s paintings, a central core of sun reflected on water draws the eye back in space, while two arms of the city, with its buildings and boats, reach around it. Journalists of the time criticized Turner’s golden tones, considering them more appropriate to a southern climate.

Collection History James Wadmore. His sale, May 5–6, 1854, Christie’s, Lot 185, sold for 1,850 guineas to Grundy, probably for John Naylor, Leighton Hall, Welshpool, Montgomeryshire. Mrs. Naylor. Bought from her, together with Cologne, by Agnew and Sulley, through Dyer and Sons, for a total of £42,000. Knoedler. Frick, 1914. Source: Paintings in The Frick Collection: American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German. Volume I. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.