

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



The Lake

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (French, 1796–1875)

Date 1861

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 52 3/8 x 62 in. (133 x 157.5 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1906.1.25

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 13, West Gallery

Commentary Corot exhibited this large, nearly monochromatic picture at the Salon of 1861. Critical reactions to it varied. The critic J.A. Castagnary evoked most clearly the artist's approach to painting at this time, saying: "The Lake is a ravishing landscape, simple in composition and full of grandeur. . . . When he sets himself before his canvas it is — like a musician seating himself at the piano — in order to give voice to the inspiration that torments him. What he wants is to express his personal feelings, not nature that inspired them in him." But another reviewer, Théophile Thoré, was less sympathetic to this approach, remarking of The Lake: "Mist covers the earth. One is not sure where one is and one has no idea where one is going. Corot's work is perhaps poetic, but it is not varied." Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History De Bériot, Paris. Gavet, Paris. Brun, Paris. Marquis de Fressinet de Bellanger, Paris. Alexander Young, London. Knoedler. Frick, 1906. Source: *Paintings in The Frick Collection: French, Italian and Spanish. Volume II*. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.