



Auguste Borget

1808-1877

A-Ma Temple in Macao

Oil on canvas / signed lower right

Dimensions : 32 x 51 cm

Dimensions : 12.60 x 20.08 inch



## Biography

Auguste Borget was born in 1808 in Issoudun, Indre, in a wealthy family of merchants, and completed his studies at the Lycée de Bourges. His vocation as a painter started very early, but his parents sent him to work in a bank. After three years, in 1829, the young man finally moved to Paris. There, having been recommended by the Carraud, he entered to the Fine Arts School of Paris and was taught by Boichard and then by Theodore Gudin, official painter of the Navy. He met Honoré de Balzac through Zulma Carraud and maintained a continuous friendship with the two.

Eager to perfect his skills, the young man traveled to Northern Italy before he made his debut at the Salon of 1836. In October of the same year, he embarked on an extraordinary initiatory journey, which lasted four years, through North and South America, the East, the Far East and Oceania.

During these four years, he lived according to the customs of the countries he crossed, often confronted with colonial wars, storms, loneliness and diseases. He was charmed by these unknown civilizations and drew everything from observation. In 1838, Borget travelled to South China and to the Pearl River delta region, three years before the British annexation of Hong Kong. He stayed a year and a half in China, including 8 months in Macao, where he continued drawing landscapes, monuments, villages, homes and scenes of everyday life. He then visited the Philippines and India, where he developed a serious illness that forced him to put an end to his world tour.

The drawings of his travels became an inexhaustible source of inspiration when he returned to France in 1840. Auguste Borget was one of the first painters to depict the surroundings of Hong Kong. Beyond the pictorial qualities, his works had an important ethnographic interest.

In 1842, he illustrated the story of an imaginary journey written by Honoré de Balzac, "China and the Chinese", and published thirty sketches of the travels in a volume he dedicated to the king Louis-Philippe. The king purchased his painting "View of a Great Chinese Temple in Macao" at the Salon of 1841. Our painting has a similar composition and is part of a series of works which represented the temple A-Ma, which Borget considered the most beautiful piece of architecture in the world.

In 1845, he published "Fragments of a Journey Around the World" and then illustrated 215 pictures for "The open China" by Old Nick. The press at the time also published prints of his travel diaries.

He continued to exhibit regularly at the Salon until the mid-1850s, before he retired to Bourges where as a fervent Catholic he devoted himself to charity.

In 2016, a Borget retrospective was held at the Macau Museum of Art. Many of his works are preserved in the museums of Châteauroux, Issoudun and Bourges, as well as in the Museum of History in Hong Kong.

## Museums

Musée Lambinet, Versailles

Musée Condé, Chantilly

Musée de Bourges

Musée de Châteauroux

Musée de Hong Kong

Bibliography

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