



Jean-Marie Valentin (1823-1896) - The Descent From The Cross



9 500 EUR

Signature : Jean-Marie Valentin

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Terracotta

Width : 39 cm

Height : 63 cm

Depth : 29 cm

Description

Jean-Marie VALENTIN (Bourg-des-Comptes,
1823 - Paris, 1896)

The Descent from the Cross

Terracotta

H. 63 cm; L. 39 cm; P. 29 cm

Signed on the left of the terrace

Circa 1850-1860

"He was a Christian sculptor who, like his
ancestors in the Middle Ages, knew how to print
the works with which he filled, I cannot say how
many churches, with the seal of art and faith.

»Journal de Rennes, August 13, 1896

If he exhibited some of his creations at the Paris
Salon in the 1880s - including the monument to
Saint Yves at Tréguier, which earned him an

Dealer

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honorable mention -, it was mainly in Brittany, which Jean-Marie Valentin made himself known as one of the main contributors to the decoration of churches. To realize the importance of his work, it suffices to list the cities where this sculptor and architect left altars, statues, funerary monuments: Rennes, Saint-Brieuc, Tréguier, Saint-Thual, Saint- Malo, Dinard, Saint-Jouan-des-Guérets, Sainte-Anne d'Auray, Saint-Méen-le-Grand, Guingand, Lannion, Sillé-le-Guillaume, Redon, Plélan-le-Grand, Bain-de-Bretagne , Saint-Ganton, Dol-de-Bretagne... The list is not exhaustive!

The son of a master cabinetmaker, Jean-Marie Valentin made a name for himself in his father's studio because of his artistic disposition. Placed at the School of Fine Arts in Rennes, he follows the lessons of Jean-Baptiste Barré for sculpture, of Jourgeon and Briand for drawing. Then he went to Paris where François Lanno, a Rennes sculptor living in the capital, welcomed him. After having attended various workshops at the Beaux-Arts, he chooses to enter that of François Rude, who will have praising remarks about him. At the same time, he reads extensively, studies anatomy, learns history, Greek and Latin. Around 1850, he returned to settle in Rennes, while keeping one foot in Paris (he will have a workshop on Boulevard du Montparnasse). Specializing in statuary and religious furniture, he won a first major commission, a pulpit erected in the Sainte-Croix church in Saint-Malo, offered in 1858 by the Emperor Napoleon III. From then on, the sites will be linked together, including altars, Stations of the Cross, statues and recumbent figures of Rennes ecclesiastical notables, such as that dedicated to Cardinal Brossay Saint-Marc in the cathedral (we also find the whole Way of the Cross there) as well as that of Mgr Gonindard, the one erected in honor of Abbé Meslé at Notre-Dame-en-Sainte-Melaine where we also find a statue of the Virgin and the two angels of the high altar. To use the writing of Paul Valentin, who devoted a memoir to the artist in

the 1920s, the list of works produced for places in Rennes is complete. "If we had to invoke all the works that were executed by the artist Valentin, the list would be long. In the city of Rennes alone, we would meet them at every step, so let's quote at random: In the Saint Germain church, the altar of the Virgin adorned with twelve statues, in the church of Saint Helier four statues and a group, in the chapel of the Collège Saint Martin a pontoon above the main door, decorative sculpture. four large statues At the Little Sisters of the Poor, at the Carmelite chapel, at the Missionaries chapel, We will also find the artist's works at the Saint Melaine hospice, a large statue in the garden of the Seminary. Laurent, Three large statues, two bas reliefs and two statuettes ... "Although it draws references from religious statuary from the end of the Middle Ages or from the sacred painting of the Great Century, our beautiful Descent from the Cross is also shown in phase with artists who renovated sacred painting in the romantic era, such as Hippolyte Flandrin, Henri Lehmann (The Virgin at the Foot of the Cross) or Théodore Chassériau (Descent from the Cross). A real emotion - perhaps due to the author's classical culture as much as to his faith - passes through this sculpture and prevents him from all Saint-Sulpician banality. Does the object correspond to a modello or to an autonomous work? Jean-Marie Valentin could give body to such ambitious groups, as shown by the altar made for the Notre Dame d'Emeraude church in Dinard. It is in any case in front of a small terracotta of the same spirit, a Holy Family, that he chooses to pose still young for a portrait attributed to Léon Brune and probably dating from the 1850s. His black coat seems more the dress of a priest than an artist's apron!