



PROANTIC
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Alfred De Courville (1816-1875) - View Of Lyon, The Banks Of The Saône At Saint-georges (1850)

1 500 EUR



Signature : Alfred Bernard de COURVILLE (1816, Vitré -1875, ?)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Water color

Width : 40 cm

Height : 22 cm

Description

Watercolors on paper. 22 x 40 cm. Signed lower right. With frame. This watercolor offers a delicate and poetic depiction of the city of Lyon between 1848 and 1850. Alfred de Courville finely captures the lively quays of the Saône River, dominated by the Church of Saint-Georges and its elegant pointed steeple, which stands out at the center of the composition. To the left, the hill of Fourvière overlooks the scene, while a bridge peacefully spans the river, linking the two banks. The soft palette, composed of pastel tones and subtle washes, creates a serene atmosphere. In the foreground, a few figures and crates suggest the typical commercial activity of the quay. The architectural precision of the buildings, the smoke rising from a chimney, and the details of the suspension bridge reflect the artist's keen

Dealer

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attention to urban life of the time. This work gracefully conveys the charm and vitality of old Lyon. Alfred Bernard de Courville, born in 1816 in Vitré and deceased in 1875, was both a career military officer and a talented watercolor artist of the 19th century. His dual life as a brigadier general and draftsman led him to produce remarkable works, particularly during his postings in France and his campaigns in North Africa. His meticulous watercolors finely capture the urban landscapes of Lyon as well as Algerian ports, demonstrating a precise eye and undeniable artistic sensitivity despite his primary career in the French army. Alfred de Courville was born into a family of Breton origin. His career began with a solid education at the École Polytechnique, where he was admitted in 1834. This prestigious training set him on the path to a military career. His achievements were recognized by the French state, which awarded him the prestigious rank of Commander of the Legion of Honour. Alfred de Courville's artistic work in France focused mainly on the Lyon region, where he was stationed between 1848 and 1850. His watercolors of Lyon display a great finesse of observation and remarkable technical mastery. Views of the Rhône and Saône rivers were among his favorite subjects. His compositions reflect his taste for urban landscapes structured around waterways, highlighting the distinctive architecture and topography of Lyon. The precision of his lines reveals his scientific background from Polytechnique, while his use of color and light shows a true artistic sensibility. North Africa, and particularly Algeria, held an important place in Alfred de Courville's body of work. During his military campaigns in this French-occupied region, he produced "delicate watercolors" that today serve as valuable visual records of these territories in the mid-19th century. His depictions of Algerian ports fit within the tradition of military artists who, throughout the colonial period, documented the landscapes and architecture of North African territories. The port

of Oran, in particular, received special attention from Courville. His pictorial treatment of these coastal views demonstrates the same technical precision as his Lyon watercolors, with particular attention given to boats, port structures, and the distinctive Mediterranean light. Alfred de Courville favored the use of pencil drawing and watercolor on paper, mediums particularly suited to an artist on the move, as a military officer often was. His practice follows a long tradition of officer-artists who, throughout the 19th century, produced artworks documenting their postings and travels. His technique is characterized by a great precision of line, perhaps inherited from his engineering training at Polytechnique, and by a delicate sense of color and light in his watercolors. The dimensions of his works are fairly consistent (22 cm in height by 40 cm in width), a horizontal format particularly suited to panoramic views. This relatively modest size also made it easier to transport the artworks during military campaigns.