



PROANTIC
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André Devambez (1867-1944) Portrait Of A Woman At The Absinthe Bistro



24 000 EUR

Signature : André Devambez

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Length : 22 cm hors cadre

Width : 16 cm hors cadre

Description

André DEVAMBEZ

(Paris, 1867 - Paris, 1944)

Portrait of a woman in a bistro

Oil on mahogany panel

H. 22 cm; L. 16 cm

Signed lower right

Around 1905/1910

Provenance : Galerie de la Scala (68, rue La Boétie, Paris 8th), then by descent

Exhibition : the painting will appear (loan) in the exhibition dedicated to André Devambez by the Rennes Fine Arts Museum (February-May 2022 period) and the Petit-Palais Museum in Paris (September-December 2022 period)

Dealer

Galerie de Frise

Specialist in ancient paintings

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Son of the famous engraver and publisher Édouard Devambez, the young André very early on showed a taste and drawing skills. A pupil of Benjamin Constant and Jules Lefebvre at the Académie Julian, he continued his apprenticeship at the Beaux-Arts in Paris and won the Grand Prix de Rome in 1890, but he had already participated in his first Salon des Artistes Français in 1889. Back in Paris in 1896 after his Roman training, he first collaborated in magazines (L'Illustration or Le Rire for example) with humorous and satirical drawings, and he also illustrated menus, programs, or created posters. But quickly he will make himself known through his paintings. Alongside his large Salon paintings or his compositions for decorations, he developed an intensive production of genre paintings, often filled with tenderness and humour: beach scenes (in Yport) or urban life teeming with small characters (subway platforms, air shows, public gardens, omnibus queues, fairgrounds...), small portraits of drinkers, philosophers, skits with craftsmen, duelists, swordsmen or other brigands. At the time of his first private exhibition in 1913 at the Georges Petit gallery, he had already acquired popular fame and public recognition (legion of honor in 1911, regular participation in the Salon). It is particularly appreciated for its bird's eye viewpoints and its crowd effects. The war, where he was seriously injured, inspired him to paint on this theme, but did not interrupt his success as an unclassifiable artist, with multiple registers of expression. An article in the illustrated monthly Larousse devoted to him in 1930 speaks of the "realism of his figures, the antithesis of conventional academicism...irreproachable and precious execution...heir to the fine traditions of the Dutch and Flemish masters..." Our painting with its strong presence belongs to the series of what Devambez called his Misunderstood (in reference to his painting at the Salon of 1904, Les Misunderstood, now kept at the Quimper museum) and which he was particularly fond of:

types of drinkers, poets or artists drowning their distress or seeking inspiration in alcohol, lost philosophers... alone or in groups, inspired by the people of the bistros, in which the consumption of alcohol, in particular absinthe, was so very strong. The art historian Gustave Soulier writes about this: "It's like a kind of new Daumier that we find in Mr. Devambez". Between humor and tragedy, these guys are often decked out in grotesque hats, too big, too small, dented, or of incredible shape like that of our drinker. This one presents a marked face, with premature aging possibly due to the abuse of alcohol and tobacco. Whether she is a simple emancipated woman (there is a painting by Devambez titled *La féministe*, could it be ours?) smoking her cigarette and drinking her glass alone, or an old prostitute hoping to still be able to attract a hypothetical client, the café seems for her a place of asylum more than a place of exchanges and debates. Our work, by its subject and its construction, can be compared to the painting (27 x 21 cm) kept at the Musée du Petit-Palais in Paris, titled *Au Café*, and representing an absinthe drinker with a cigarette, supposed to be the chansonnier Marcel Legay.