



Iacovleff - Portrait Of Raja Khasroo Khan Of Chalt - 1931



20 000 EUR

Signature : Alexandre iacovleff

Period : 20th century

Condition : Restauré

Material : Paper

Description

Chalt, July 24, 1931. Red chalk, charcoal, and pastel on watermarked paper "J. Perrigot Arches France." 60.5 x 50.5 cm. Named, located, dated, and signed, lower right: "Raja Khasroo Khan/of Chalt/Chalt/July 24/1931/A.Iacovleff." Restored tear and some reddish traces in the upper right part of the drawing, without affecting the portrait. Superb portrait of one of the chiefs of Nagar (one of the princely states of the British Indian Empire, present-day Pakistan), made by Iacovleff during the Yellow Cruise. Of Russian origin, Alexandre Iacovleff (Saint Petersburg, 1887- Paris, 1938) is known for his extraordinary drawings and paintings brought back from the Black and Yellow Cruises. Under the aegis of André Citroën, these scientific and artistic expeditions in half-tracks, led by Georges-Marie Haardt across

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Africa in 1924 and Asia in 1931, were a huge success. The official painter for both expeditions, Alexandre Iacovleff was tasked by the Minister of Fine Arts with "recording with a brush the disappearing indigenous customs and traditions." From each mission, Alexandre Iacovleff returned with more than three hundred drawings, as well as a large number of sketches and drafts. An accomplished draftsman, he created his portraits in red chalk--the material that would make his fame--charcoal, and sepia. Sometimes, using pastel, he softened the lines. A subtle and creative colorist, the artist recomposed the nuances of his palette as he traveled. Georges Le Fèvre, the historiographer of the Yellow Cruise, wrote that he invented "a palm grove green, a spahi red, a minaret blue" (Georges Le Fèvre, *La Croisière Jaune*, Plon, 1933). In 1931, Alexandre Iacovleff belonged to the Pamir group of this famous Yellow Cruise linking Beirut to Beijing. The extreme conditions of the expedition made the painter's task difficult. However, in the heart of the Himalayas, he painted astonishing portraits such as, here, that of Raja Khasroo Khan of Chalt, one of the heads of the state of Nagar, or that of his formidable rival Mohammed Nazim Khan, the Mir of Hunza. At the end of the 19th century, the kingdom of Hunza, hidden by the mountain wall of Chalt, was considered the most inaccessible cutthroat in the Himalayas. Refusing all domination, the inhabitants of two small independent states, Nagar and Hunza, were known for terrorizing caravaners with their pillaging. A centuries-old hatred divided them, even to the point of transforming into a formidable union in the face of external danger. In 1931, their conflicts were over, and the passage of the Haardt group, which needed many porters and ponies, was a godsend for these petty kings. This drawing has belonged to several private collections since the 1930s and has never appeared on the market. Literature: IACOVLEFF, Alexandre. *Drawings and Paintings of Asia, Road Sketches and Travel Notes, Third Mission of*

G.-M. Haardt-L. Audouin-Dubreuil. Paris: Lucien Vogel, 1934. Plate 25: Raja Khasroo Khan of Nagar. Tchal. Exhibition: Alexandre Iacovleff. Painter attached to the Citroën Central-Asia expedition, third G.-M. Haardt-Audouin Dubreuil mission. Exhibition of Drawings and Paintings. From May 16 to June 4, 1933, Galerie Jean Charpentier. 76, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris, Catalogue No. 246, Raja Khosroo Khan de Tchal [sic]. A certificate of authenticity from Madame Caroline Haardt de La Baume, expert on the work of Alexandre Iacovleff, will be issued to the purchaser. This portrait will be included in the catalogue raisonné of Alexandre Iacovleff currently being prepared.