



Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny (1798-1871), The Muses Or The Fountain Of Helicon



12 500 EUR

Signature : Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny

(Chantenay-Saint-Imbert, 1798 - Lyon, 1871)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on paper

Width : 23,4 cm

Height : 31,7 cm

Description

31.7 × 23.4 cm. Oil on paper. Monogram TCA lower right. Bibliography: M.-M. Aubrun, *Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny et ses compagnons*, Nantes, 1979, no. 34, illustrated. M.-M. Aubrun, *Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny, Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre peint, dessiné, gravé*, Paris, 1988, p. 138, no. 144, illustrated p. 189. This painting by Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny, a major 19th-century neoclassical painter and landscape artist, depicts a mythological episode inspired by ancient traditions and Greek poetry. The composition is structured in two vertical registers, united by a stream of water. At the top, the Muses are gathered beneath the trees, full of grace and bathed in golden light. They stand beside a gushing spring, identified as the fountain of Hippocrene, which, according to legend, sprang

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from the hoof of Pegasus on Mount Helicon. Their semicircular arrangement recalls classical iconography that d'Aligny knew well, having stayed in Rome and studied the masters of the Renaissance. Below, in a more subdued light, a pensive young man is seated beside the basin formed by the waterfall. He is a poet, awaiting inspiration from the heights. This visual contrast between the divine realm (the Muses) and the earthly world (the poet) highlights the allegorical message: the source of artistic creation flows from the divine to the human, who can only grasp it through contemplation. The wooded landscape demonstrates d'Aligny's mastery of structured composition. The slender tree trunks create a rhythm that mirrors the descent of the water and guides the viewer's gaze. The soft golden light envelops the scene in a dreamlike atmosphere. The sky suggests a timeless moment in a sacred space devoted to beauty. With its mythological subject and neoclassical treatment, *The Muses or The Fountain of Helicon* fits perfectly within the aesthetic of Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny. A friend of Corot, he sought to merge real landscapes with antique ideals, pursuing an art that was both edifying and harmonious. Finally, the arched frame enhances the theatrical effect, as if inviting us to sit by the spring and listen to the voices of the Muses -- a silent invitation to return to the sources of poetic imagination.

Exhibitions: *Rétrospective des artistes lyonnais*, Lyon, 1904, no. 559. *Maîtres et petits maîtres du XIXe siècle*, Paris, Galerie René Drouin, October 1942, no. 1. *Le Paysage français, ses précurseurs*, Paris, Galerie Lefranc & Engrand, January 8-29, 1944, no. 4. *Paysages d'Italie*, Paris, Galerie Charpentier, 1947, no. ?. *Peinture lyonnaise du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Musée de l'Orangerie, 1948, no. 2. *Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny et ses compagnons*, Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts, February 28-April 20, 1979; Dunkerque, Musée des Beaux-Arts, April 25-June 20, 1979; Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, June 25-September 4, 1979, no. 34.