



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

French School, 1820-1830, Soldiers Playing Cards

150 EUR



Signature : ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE, 1820-1830

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 25 cm

Height : 19 cm

Description

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1820-1830
SOLDIERS
PLAYING CARDS
Paper, black chalk
25 × 19 cm
/ 10 × 7.5 in, unframed
The 1820s and 1830s marked the peak of fame for Horace Vernet (1789-1863), the distinguished French battle painter who enjoyed popularity not only among the aristocracy but also with the wider public. As one of the pioneers of lithography in France, Vernet actively reproduced his works in this new medium, which greatly enhanced his renown and made his art accessible to a broader circle of collectors. One example is the lithograph *Soldats jouant à la drogue*, created in March 1818. It is documented by Bruzard (no. 35), Beraldi (no. 69), La Combe-Clément (no. 926), and Blanchard de la Fontaine (no. 297). The catalogue describes it as follows: "Deux soldats assis à califourchon

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sur un tronc d'arbre jouent aux cartes ; celui qui est à gauche porte sur le nez la petite fourche de bois que l'on appelle Drogue de la Drogue. Un troisième soldat, debout, le regarde." (Bruzard, p. 11)The print was issued in a single state: at lower right the lithographic signature H. Vernet 1818, below that Lithog. de Last., and in the center the title Soldats jouant à la drogue. Today impressions are preserved in the collections of the Château de Chantilly (Musée Condé), the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Musée municipal de La Roche-sur-Yon, as well as in the Sanchez collection. Our sheet is a rare drawn repetition of this composition, executed in crayon noir, probably in the 1820s. Such drawings were often produced either as academic exercises or as independent reinterpretations of popular lithographs. Unlike the printed sheet, this example lacks titles and inscriptions, while the soft hatching and stumping lend the scene a more intimate and individual character. On the game itself La drogue (or la drogue de la drogue) was a French card game popular among soldiers in the 19th century. According to contemporary sources, one of the players was required to hold a small wooden fork on his nose -- a kind of "penalty" or humorous sign of misfortune. The game combined elements of chance and farce, which made it particularly favored in military circles. Vernet captured this comic aspect: in the lithograph (and in our drawing), the soldier on the left with the fork on his nose is depicted as the main object of his comrades' laughter. PROVENANCE Paris, private collection