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Isidore Pils (Paris, 1813 - Douarnenez, 1875) - Study Of A Woman Holding A Bowl



2 500 EUR

Signature : Isidore Pils (Paris, 1813 - Douarnenez, 1875)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 26.5

Height : 36.3

Description

Isidore Pils (Paris, 1813 - Douarnenez, 1875) Study of a Woman Holding a Bowl Red chalk, heightened with white chalk, on buff paper 36.3 × 26.5 cm (14 ¼ × 10 3/8 in.) Provenance Sale of the artist's studio, Paris, Hôtel Drouot [Durand-Ruel & Mannheim], 20 March - 1 April 1876, probably part of lot 844 (Figures diverses pour la "Distribution du pain aux indigents": Dix feuilles, sanguine et crayon noir). Born into a family of artists, Isidore-Alexandre-Augustin Pils studied under François-Édouard Picot at the École des Beaux-Arts. He won the Prix de Rome in 1838 and spent five years in Italy before returning to Paris in 1844. Initially devoted to religious subjects, he turned to military themes after the Crimean War, in which he served as an observer.

Dealer

Objets Choisis

Old master paintings and drawings

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Paris 75001

His success as a military painter led to commissions from Napoleon III and the State, while he also engaged with modern historical themes, such as his celebrated *Rouget de Lisle Singing the Marseillaise*, exhibited to great acclaim at the Salon of 1849. Another major commission followed with *Soldiers Distributing Bread and Soup to the Poor*, painted in 1852 for the State (4,000 francs) and exhibited at the Salon that year. Long thought lost, the painting--today preserved at the Château de Fontainebleau (inv. RF 557)--was known only through a lithograph published in *L'Illustration* in 1852. The subject, showing a military soup kitchen in 1849, may have been inspired by the artist's own observations of similar scenes in Paris. Contemporary critics viewed the work as particularly relevant to its time, reflecting the continued role of the army (and by implication, the government) in addressing social distress. The canvas was later exhibited at the Exposition Universelle of 1900. Pils prepared extensively for this ambitious work, producing numerous compositional sketches, figure studies, and oil sketches. The posthumous studio sale of 1876 included several sheets related to the painting--compositions, nine studies of soldiers, and thirteen drawings of figures in the crowd. As Gabriel Weisberg has noted, Pils relied on carefully staged models to achieve the realism of expression and gesture that his subjects required, thus bringing his practice close to the academic tradition. The present sheet is a study for the mother and child at the centre of *Soldiers Distributing Bread and Soup to the Poor*. A smaller preliminary red chalk sketch of the same figure, though without the bowl, is preserved in a private American collection. Pils often drew his models from the poorest quarters of Paris, convinced that "it was in the streets...among the people that one could find types and models; and in this way history painting could become true and human." References Château de Fontainebleau, inv. RF 557; Gabriel P. Weisberg,

"Studies for Works in Another Medium," in Lisa Dickinson Michaux & Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Expanding the Boundaries: Selected Drawings from the Yvonne and Gabriel P. Weisberg Collection*, exh. cat., Minneapolis, 2008-2009, p.26, fig.8. Gabriel P. Weisberg, "Early Realist Drawings of Isidore Pils," *Master Drawings*, Winter 1990, p.394, fig.7; p.392; pp.392-395; p.398, fig.11. Lisa Dickinson Michaux & Gabriel P. Weisberg, *op. cit.*, p.24, fig.7, detail illustrated p.2 (dimensions 242 × 140 mm; perhaps once part of a small sketchbook). L. Becq de Fouquières, *Isidore Alexandre Auguste Pils: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, Paris, 1876, p.26; translated in Gabriel P. Weisberg, *The Realist Tradition: French Painting and Drawing 1830-1900*, exh. cat., Cleveland and elsewhere, 1980-1982, p.111.