



Bernard-édouard Swebach, Winter Scene In Russia

800 EUR



Signature : BERNARD-ÉDOUARD SWEBACH
Period : 19th century
Condition : Bon état
Material : Paper
Length : 21,5 cm
Height : 17,5 cm

Description

BERNARD-ÉDOUARD SWEBACH WINTER SCENE IN RUSSIA
BERNARD-ÉDOUARD SWEBACH
Paris 1800 - 1870 Versailles
Paper, pen and ink
17.5 x 21.5 cm / 6.9 x 8.5 inches; with frame
27.5 x 32.5 cm / 10.8 x 12.8 inches
PROVENANCE France, private collection
Russia's victory over Napoleon in 1814 was not only a significant political and military event but also a turning point in the country's cultural life. Among the many artists and cultural figures who returned to or arrived in Russia were notable Frenchmen who left a lasting mark on early 19th-century Russian art. Among these figures were the father and son Swebach -- Jacques François Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines and Bernard-Édouard Swebach. Jacques François Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines, born in Metz in

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1769, received a solid academic education and gained renown as a master of battle scenes, genre painting, and lithography. His works were distinguished by exceptional dynamism and precision, making him one of the prominent artists of his time. Officially invited to Russia to lead the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory in Saint Petersburg, Swebach soon expanded his presence and influence. This was largely thanks to the patronage of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yusupov -- one of Moscow's most powerful and culturally influential aristocrats. At the Yusupov court, the Swebachs worked on numerous artistic projects and frequently visited the prince's Moscow estate, Arkhangelskoye. This connection explains their constant movement between Saint Petersburg and Moscow and offers a glimpse into their daily lives and creative work. The younger Bernard-Édouard Swebach, the artist's son, received thorough training in Paris, beginning in 1814 when he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and worked under his father's guidance. His style gradually moved away from classical conventions, acquiring the traits of Romanticism -- a movement then just emerging in European artistic circles. It is precisely this romantic outlook, combined with attention to folk life and detailed observation, that makes his works unique. It is tempting to suggest that this period -- their stay in Russia and close ties with the Yusupovs -- corresponds to the intriguing drawing in our collection. The drawing depicts a lively scene from Russian life: a man skating, a peasant carrying a yoke, and a group of military and civilians sledding down a hill. The vividness and immediacy of the composition suggest the work was executed from life, in the very heart of Saint Petersburg or Moscow, where the artist stayed with his father. The landscape details, architecture, and even the dynamic poses of the figures give reason to believe that, with some perseverance, the exact location and estate depicted in the background might be identified. This scene is more than just a depiction

of everyday life; it is a testament to cultural exchange and a lively dialogue between Western European artists and Russian reality. At a time when Russia was beginning to open up more actively to the world, Bernard-Édouard's works became among the first artistic responses to this new reality, blending European technique with Russian color. Bernard-Édouard Swebach not only continued his father's traditions but also infused them with the fresh spirit of Romantic poetry characteristic of his era. His lithographs and drawings are not merely visual chronicles of the time but emotional portraits of folk life, full of dynamism and humanity. From an art historical perspective, this drawing is a valuable document reflecting not only the artist's skill but also the complex cultural processes unfolding in early 19th-century Russia. Thus, through the prism of the Swebachs' fate, one can trace a fascinating story of cultural exchange, the contribution of French artists to the development of the Russian art school, and how personal connections, aristocratic patronage, and a love of nature combined to create masterpieces that continue to live on today.