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French Symbolist School (circa 1890-1910) - Landscape



1 000 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : A restaurer

Material : Paper

Width : 31

Height : 57

Description

French Symbolist School (circa 1890-1910)
Landscape with Meditative Figures
Charcoal on paper (watermark "France" and "Ingres d'Arches," circa 1890)
57 x 31 cm
Provenance:
Private collection
This work fittingly belongs to the Symbolist aesthetic that marked the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. In contrast to the dominant naturalism of the period, Symbolist artists favored inner evocation, poetic suggestion, and spiritual atmosphere. The present drawing, executed in charcoal on fine Arches paper, reflects this sensibility oriented toward mystery and introspection.
The vertical composition enhances the upward

Dealer

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movement of the forms and guides the viewer's eye toward the elongated silhouette emerging on the left, almost ghostlike. Beside it, a seated figure, folded into itself, appears absorbed in deep meditation. The characters are not described with anatomical precision; rather, they emerge from a dense network of hatching and soft shading, as though they belong to the landscape itself. This fusion between the human figure and nature is one of the defining features of Symbolist imagination.

The treatment of the trees, with their slender and nervous branches, creates a subtle graphic rhythm that contrasts with the dark masses of rock in the foreground. The artist skillfully manipulates tonal values: the deep blacks of the charcoal stand in opposition to the lighter areas of the sky, establishing a twilight atmosphere that feels almost dreamlike. The landscape does not depict a specific location; instead, it suggests a state of mind.

One is reminded of the contemporary explorations of Odilon Redon and Eugène Carrière, who likewise favored floating forms, indistinct contours, and enveloping, silent atmospheres. As with these artists, the subject here appears less narrative than symbolic: the scene may evoke solitude, contemplation, or the passage of time.

The quality of the paper, confirmed by the "Ingres d'Arches" watermark, enhances the depth of the blacks and allows for supple, nuanced modeling. The drawing reveals a confident hand, capable of varying pressure to achieve subtle effects of texture and light.

Through its solemn and meditative atmosphere, this work stands as an eloquent testimony to the French Symbolist sensibility. It captivates through its evocative power and through the technical mastery that supports a vision at once restrained and profoundly expressive.