



Hippolyte-dominique Holfeld (1804-1872) Mutual Instruction

16 000 EUR



Signature : Hippolyte-Dominique HOLFELD

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 65 cm hors cadre

Width : 81 cm hors cadre

Description

Hippolyte-Dominique HOLFELD (Paris, 1804 - Paris, 1872) Mutual Instruction Oil on canvas H. 65 cm; L. 81 cm Signed and dated lower left 1852
Exhibition: Paris Salon of 1852, no. 642 Related works: - Engraving by Auguste Jouanin (1806-1887) published by Goupil, one copy of which was presented at the Rouen exhibition in 1856 (no. 406 of the booklet) - Photograph on albumen paper, published by Goupil et Cie in 1863 (Album of photographs, no. 77) - Preparatory drawings for the painting, part of lot no. 41 of the catalogue of the sale after the artist's death, Drouot, April 25 and 26, 1872 Entering the Beaux-Arts de Paris in 1822, Holfeld trained there in the workshops of Hersent and Abel de Pujol. He attempted the Grand Prix de Rome for painting several times, without success, finishing

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third in 1827, 1828, 1830, and 1831, second in 1832, and again third in 1833 and 1834. Exhibiting at the Salon from 1831 to 1872, he initially showed portraits before specializing in the theme of childhood (portraits and subjects related to education), as well as religious paintings, several of which are now found in churches. From 1866, Holfeld served as archivist for the Artists' Association founded by Baron Taylor. Like ours, Holfeld's paintings were frequently reproduced as prints, enjoying considerable public popularity. Thus, Jouanin's aquatint engraving (39 x 48 cm) depicting Mutual Instruction was still listed in the Goupil & Co. General Catalog of January 1874, priced at 30 francs. Based on co-instruction among children, mutual instruction originated in England at the end of the 18th century and spread across continental Europe from 1814 onward. The method consisted of forming small groups of students of comparable ability, supervised by a "monitor" (a slightly more advanced student), who had them complete short exercises simultaneously, then provided feedback. By the time our painting was created, this system was already disappearing, with the increasingly rapid structuring of the school system (buildings, equipment, trained teachers, etc.). Holfeld provides us with an illustration of this in an intimate, possibly family setting, likely showing the eldest child sharing a geography lesson with his brother and sister. The physiognomy of the young "monitor" on the left resembles that of the child depicted in another painting by Holfeld, *The Picture Book*, dated 1848, and could correspond to that of one of the artist's two sons, Louis-Frédéric, born in 1842, or rather Charles-Ferdinand, born in 1844.