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Breton Peasant Smoking A Pipe, Alexandre-marie Guillemain, Oil On Board, Circa 1850



2 500 EUR

Signature : Alexandre-Marie Guillemain (Paris, 1817 - Bois-le-Duc, 1880)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on cardboard

Length : 24

Width : 19

Description

Alexandre-Marie Guillemain (Paris, 1817 - Bois-le-Duc, 1880) Breton Peasant Smoking a Pipe Oil on board 24 × 19 cm Signed in red, lower left Original frame in gilt wood and stucco Circa 1850 "Mr. Guillemain's paintings have enjoyed the rare privilege of attracting the attention of Grand Duke Constantine; this alone attests to the Grand Duke's discernment, for the five small canvases by Mr. Guillemain are exceedingly remarkable. Nothing more closely recalls the manner of Greuze; the colour may be more vigorous, yet one finds the same charm in the composition, the same interest in the varied types, the same feeling in the situations. We would mention first The Peddler, a small painting handled with such ease of brush and breadth of touch that Meissonnier himself might perhaps envy it--if he were capable

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of envy at all. The simplicity of subject is ever sought in Mr. Guillemin's works, and yet one becomes genuinely engaged with these unassuming scenes: *The First Step*, *Do Not Move*, *The Holy Image*, *At the Edge of the Cage*--so many canvases imbued with enduring charm, for they rest upon feeling and simplicity."-- Jules Verne, Salon of 1857

A pupil of Baron Gros, Alexandre-Marie Guillemin exhibited regularly at the Salon between 1840 and 1879. Ranked among the painters of genre scenes, he also belongs to an early generation of Realist artists, active during the July Monarchy and the beginnings of the Second Empire. He was a contemporary of Alexandre Antigna, François Bonvin, Adolphe Leleux, and Edmond Hédouin--artists who turned their attention to rural life and explored the French provinces, foremost among them Brittany. Guillemin travelled to Brittany, as evidenced by the present work and by several paintings that have appeared at public auction (including *The Funeral Procession*, a large canvas dated 1845). He also exhibited a historical composition at the Salon of 1859: *The Blues Passing through Brittany in 1793*. However, it was chiefly to the Pyrenees that he devoted a significant part of his oeuvre. From 1857 to 1879, he exhibited works depicting Béarn, the Ossau Valley, Upper Aragon, and Navarre. These were popular subjects: *A Béarnais Tailor*, *Return from the Hunt in the Pyrenees*, *Descent of Béarnais Harvesters into the Ossau Valley*, among others. Guillemin's compositions are skilful, his brushwork deft, and his themes engaging and picturesque--qualities that earned him the admiration of Jules Verne, who went so far as to compare him to Greuze. Above all, his paintings stem from direct observation in the field and contribute to the early development of a rural ethnography of France, making them precious testimonies to peasant life.