



The Distraction - Walter Charles Horsley (1855-1934)



42 000 EUR

Signature : Walter Charles Horsley (1855-1934)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 52cm

Height : 64cm

Description

This well observed and sensitively painted portrait depicts an elegant young Egyptian woman, leaning out of her window to gaze onto the street below. From what we can see of the interior space, it is richly furnished - an open cloth bag lies on the window sill next to an ornate ball incense burner. The incense burner has been filled with blooming roses and the removed lid bears the artist's signature. The woman herself wears extensive golden jewellery and a fringed cream gown with a red sash tied around her waist. This is a scene of beauty, wealth and fragrances. The design of domestic architecture in the Middle East was one of the most consistent motifs in British Orientalist painting. Indeed, for those artists who intended to paint any kind of Middle-Eastern domestic subject a study of

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domestic architecture was an essential preliminary. The modest façades, projecting balconies and above all the delicate mashrabiyyas (lattice-work screens) of private buildings attracted the attention of most of the artists including Horsley. The mashrabiyyas here has been given specific attention, taking up a large portion of the noticeable area on the canvas.

Walter Charles Horsley (British, 1855 - 1921) was born at his family's home in Kensington in 1855, the son of the historical and genre painter John Callcott Horsley R.A. (1817-1903). On his paternal grandmother's side, Walter was related to the artist Sir Augustus Wall Callcott (1779-1844). As one biographer noted Walter "inherited his father's power of observation" and having trained under him he then entered the prestigious Royal Academy Schools where he furthered his artistic studies and where he won a silver medal for a portrait likeness. In 1875 Horsley made his debut at the Royal Academy where he continued to regularly exhibit up until 1911. In addition to the Royal Academy, Horsley also showed his work at the Royal Society of British Artists and other annual exhibitions. In 1875, the year that he first showed at the Academy, Horsley was commissioned by The Graphic magazine as an illustrator to record the Prince of Wales's visit to India. This trip was followed by others to India as well as numerous painting expeditions to Egypt, especially Cairo and along the banks of the Nile, Tangiers, Morocco and Turkey, in particular Istanbul (then known as Constantinople). He continued to travel east well into old age for instance in 1931, he and his wife went to Tangiers and two years later returned from a trip to India. As a reflection of his standing Horsley's work is represented in a number of public collections including the Royal Academy and the National Army Museum. In addition to his artistic ventures, in 1881 Horsley became a Lieutenant of the Artist's Rifles Association and from 1822 up until his death was Colonel of the

Regiment. Horsley gained considerable repute for his multi-figural genre scenes which likewise contain dramatic narrative, fine detailing and strong brushwork. Unlike many contemporary Orientalists, Horsley viewed his subjects at first hand having travelled widely throughout India and Egypt as well as Turkey, Tangiers and Morocco. Horsley can be considered amongst the great late nineteenth and early twentieth century British painters.