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Adolphe Balfourier (1816-1898) View Of Chigi Park In Ariccia (45 × 51 Cm, Framed)



1 600 EUR

Signature : Balfourier

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on paper

Description

Oil on paper mounted on canvas, with an oval view
Dimensions of the artwork: 30 × 35 cm
Dimensions with frame: 45 × 51 cm
Presented in a large antique carved and gilded wooden frame.
Appraisal: Cabinet Turquin
A very beautiful Romantic landscape by Adolphe Balfourier depicting Chigi Park in Ariccia, in the Alban Hills, southeast of Rome--a site the artist painted several views of during his stay in Italy. Deep within an almost untamed grove, two young women appear at the edge of calm water. One, seated, seems to be emerging from a bath, while her companion stands beside her; at their feet, red and yellow fabrics add a few vibrant touches amid the deep greens and browns of the vegetation. But the true protagonist of the composition remains nature. Balfourier organizes

Dealer

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his landscape around a spectacular light-colored, sinuous tree trunk, which cuts across the composition in a grand arabesque. Brightly lit, almost white in places, it stands out vividly against the dark depths of the undergrowth and draws the eye toward the water and then into the distance. The foreground is rendered with a remarkable richness of texture. Ferns, grasses, climbing plants, and small red, yellow, and white flowers are suggested by a multitude of loose, colorful brushstrokes. The painter also pays particular attention to reflections: the luminous silhouette of the large trunk extends into the dark water, while the vegetation along the banks dissolves into vertical ripples. In the background, beyond the deep mass of trees, a fortified structure overlooking the landscape appears in a brighter light. This opening toward the distance lends the composition its full depth and contrasts the mysterious intimacy of the undergrowth with the light of the Italian landscape.

Chigi Park in Ariccia: A Subject Documented in Balfourier's Work

The identification of the site is supported by a particularly convincing comparison with a major work by Balfourier also titled *Souvenir of Chigi Park in Ariccia*, an oil on canvas measuring 89 × 116 cm, exhibited at the 1848 Paris Salon under no. 162. This large composition, from the Allier Collection, was sold by Rouillac on May 27, 2024, for EUR5,000 at the hammer. A comparison of the two works is particularly illuminating. They share the same conception of a dense and enveloping Italian landscape, the same deeply shaded undergrowth, the landscape opening up to a landscape featuring architecture in the distance, and, above all, the spectacular use of large, light-colored, gnarled tree trunks standing out against the dark masses of vegetation. In both compositions, Balfourier also includes tiny female figures accompanied by red drapery, almost absorbed by the surrounding nature. They serve more to convey the scale of the landscape than to constitute its true subject. The large painting exhibited at the 1848

Salon thus provides a valuable point of comparison for our work and allows us to situate it within Balfourier's particularly prolific Italian period. A date in the late 1840s, likely around 1847-1848, can therefore be proposed. Balfourier and the Mediterranean Landscapes of the 1848 Salon This comparison is all the more interesting given that, at the 1848 Salon, Balfourier simultaneously exhibited several landscapes inspired by his travels in the Mediterranean. Alongside *Souvenir du parc Chigi à Ariccia* (no. 162) was, notably, *Environs de Valldemusa (Majorque)* (no. 163), a large composition now housed at the Nantes Museum of Art. This work shares several characteristics visible in our painting: abundant vegetation occupying a large part of the composition, tall trees used as veritable natural architecture, the alternation of deeply shaded areas and luminous vistas, as well as a composition built in successive planes leading toward the distance. Our *Souvenir du parc Chigi à Ariccia* is fully in line with Balfourier's exploration of the romantic Mediterranean landscape, in which humans become almost incidental in the face of a monumental, picturesque, and mysterious natural world. Adolphe Balfourier in Public Collections A landscape painter recognized during his lifetime and a regular exhibitor at the Paris Salons, Adolphe Balfourier is today represented in several public collections in France and abroad. The Nantes Museum of Art notably houses his significant work *Environs de Valldemusa (Majorca)*, an oil on canvas measuring 131 × 195 cm, a major work for understanding his exploration of the Mediterranean landscape. The Fabre Museum in Montpellier also holds a large composition by the artist, *L'Abreuvoir, paysage*, which entered the collection in the 19th century. His engravings are also represented at the Geneva Museum of Art and History, which holds several of Balfourier's landscapes and travel sketches, including views of Mallorca, Murcia, Elche, La Crau, and

Hyères. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York also holds a landscape etching by the artist, while several of his prints are included in the collections of the British Museum in London. This presence in public collections attests to Balfourier's standing among mid-19th-century French traveling landscape painters, even though his paintings appear relatively rarely on the market today.

A Beautiful Antique Frame The work is presented in a beautiful and substantial antique frame of carved and gilded wood, which is particularly well-proportioned to the composition. Its broad molding, embellished with a relief decoration and foliage motifs at the corners and centers, surrounds an interior opening with rounded corners that harmoniously complements the painting's oval viewing area. The richness of the carving and the beautiful, slightly muted patina of the gilding create a particularly pleasing contrast with the deep tones of the undergrowth. More than just a frame, this piece plays a full part in the work's decorative presence and, together with the painting, forms a particularly charming ensemble.