



At The Well - George Edward Robertson (1864-1920)



14 400 EUR

Signature : George Edward Robertson (1864-1920)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 99cm

Height : 71cm

Description

It is not clear whether Robertson ever travelled to the Middle East or North Africa, but it is certain that he would have been well acquainted with British Orientalist painters. As a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy in the mid and late 19th century, Robertson would have been familiar with the highly documentary paintings of men such as John Frederick Lewis, Edward Lear, and William Holman Hunt. The visual motifs in their works - as well as descriptions from the wide array of travel guides and diaries, and the artefacts travellers brought back from the 'Orient' - would have aided Robertson in producing accurate scenes of the Middle East, without ever having travelled there. This painting depicts a group of women in Middle-Eastern style dress as they fetch water from a well. The costumes and the

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manner in which they are draped is strongly reminiscent of classical costume, which Robertson would have been more than familiar with depicting in his history paintings. The archways, with their distinct point at the top, are more akin to Gothic architecture than Ottoman, but the use of ablaq - a Byzantine and Syrian architectural aesthetic of alternating light and dark stone - in the arch over the well demonstrates Robertson's clear understanding of Middle Eastern cultural motifs. Robertson's work is immensely detailed, with keen attention paid towards depicting the diverse range of headscarves and the folds in the fabric of the garments worn by the women. The interaction between areas of light and shadow is remarkable and demonstrates that Robertson was a master at light play. The archways naturally frame the central action of the water-gathering at the well, creating a composition that focuses the gaze of the viewer in an organic manner. George Edward Robertson Little is known of George Edward Robertson. He was born in 1864 and initially studied art under his father William Robertson, before embarking upon a more formal education at St Martin's School of Art. He spent his life and career in London, where he passed away in 1920. He was a recurrent exhibitor at the Royal Academy between 1885 and 1904, exhibiting some twenty works. These works were from a range of subject matters and genres, but Robertson is best known for his history and literature paintings. These works depicted scenes from Shakespeare's plays with a distinct focus on the dramatic tragedies of Julius Caesar, Othello and King Lear. As well as the Royal Academy, Robertson is recorded to have exhibited with the Society of British Artists, the Royal Institute of Oil Painters, the Walker Art Gallery, Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts, and the Manchester City Art Gallery.