Philippe-auguste Cattelain (1838-1893) "to The Wretched Alexandre...," Signed Drawing



420 EUR

Signature : Philippe-Auguste Cattelain (1838-1893)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Width : 24

Height : 31.5

Description

Philippe-Auguste Cattelain (1838-1893) Au Miserable Alexandre, Portrait of a young mansigned and titled on the lower right "Au misérable Alexandre (pas le grand)" -To the wretched Alexander (not the Great) -graphite pencil on paperSheet: 12.4 × 9.45 in (31.5 × 24 cm)Framed: 14 × 10.8 in (35.5 × 27.5 cm).Condition : Stains and foxings; a stain running the entire length along the left edgeThe dedication reads "To the wretched Alexander (not the Great)". It is a teasing, affectionate inscription, typical of the exchanges between artists and friends in the Parisian bohemian circles Cattelain frequented. "Misérable" is used as a mock insult between friends. The parenthetical "pas le grand" plays on the famous namesake: the sitter is an ordinary Alexandre, not

Dealer

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Alexander the Great. Such dedicated sketches were gifts to friends, which gives the drawing the character of a personal souvenir.A bust-length portrait of a young man in profile facing right, his gaze directed out of the picture. The face is carefully modeled in fine, controlled graphite: the ear, the eye and the short beard and moustache are rendered with precision and delicate shading. The thick, wavy dark hair is built up in dense, velvety layers of pencil, in strong contrast with the pale skin. He wears a high white collar, a dark jacket or waistcoat worked in heavy black strokes, and a loosely knotted cravat whose ends fall in long vertical hatchings. The finish decreases from the head to the shoulders, and the background is suggested only by loose diagonal hatching on either side of the figure, leaving the sheet largely blank. A lively, confident portrait from life, between a finished likeness and a sketch, which captures the sitter's character with great economy of means.Philippe-Auguste Cattelain was a portraitist, caricaturist and etcher. Born in Paris on 6 February 1838, he contributed to satirical papers, including Le Hanneton, where he appeared alongside Vermersch and Verlaine in a caricature of the editorial team of 30 January 1868. He volunteered in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and contracted smallpox. During the Paris Commune he was appointed head of the Sûreté by Raoul Rigault. After the Commune's fall he gave himself up so that his wife would not be arrested. He was sentenced to three years in prison on 22 September 1871. He later lived in England, returning to France around 1882. He serialized his memoirs in Le Chat Noir in 1884, and they were published posthumously by Félix Juven. In 1887 he etched plates for Charles Cousin's Racontars illustrés d'un vieux collectionneur, and in 1888 he exhibited at the Salon. He died in Paris on 10 September 1893. His portrait by his friend André Gill appears in Gill's Vingt années de Paris (1883).