Painting, Military Horse On The Battlefield



18 000 EUR

Signature : attribué à Horace Vernet (1789-1863)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Width : 86

Height : 102

Description

Attributed to HORACE VERNET (1789-1863) "Military Horse on the Battlefield" Oil on canvas - 19th centuryPeriod / Style: Louis-PhilippeDimensions including original frame: 102 × 86 cmProvenance: Private collectionCondition: Very good conditionPrice: EUR18,000 Horace Vernet and 19th-Century Military Painting Horace Vernet, born on 30 June 1789 at the Louvre in Paris and deceased on 17 January 1863, occupies a prominent position in 19th-century French military painting.The son of Carle Vernet and grandson of Joseph Vernet, he grew up in a family of painters and received his earliest artistic training from his father, who was himself particularly renowned for his equestrian subjects.Elected to the Institut de France in 1826, Horace Vernet became Director of the French

Dealer

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Academy in Rome in 1829. During the July Monarchy, King Louis-Philippe commissioned him to produce major compositions for the historical galleries of the Palace of Versailles.His work combines a strong sense of narrative with meticulous attention to posture, uniforms and horse tack. The horse occupies a central place in his paintings: its movements, stance and gaze contribute to the dramatic intensity of the scenes.Vernet thus developed a style of painting in which the richness of detail complements the scale of the composition. These characteristics provide valuable points of reference for the stylistic study of the present painting.Stylistic Analysis and Composition This oil on canvas is structured around a brown horse occupying the foreground, while military figures gradually fade into the smoke of the battlefield.The contrast between the carefully modelled animal and the more atmospheric treatment of the background creates depth and gives the horse an almost tangible presence.The sense of movement is conveyed through the positioning of the limbs: the legs resting on the ground and their shadows lend weight to the body, while the raised foreleg extends the horse's movement towards the viewer.The palette combines the warm browns of the horse's coat, the earthy tones and ochres of the ground, and the greys of the smoke. Cream-coloured highlights on the blaze, white markings of the legs and sheepskin saddle covering punctuate the composition and guide the viewer's eye.On closer examination, individual brushstrokes remain visible, particularly in the white hair around the lower legs, where they suggest the texture of the coat and capture the light.The small reflection in the eye, the outline of the eyelid and the light highlights on the bit bring the horse's head to life with expressive economy.This combination of modelling, visible brushwork and precise rendering of equipment provides a significant basis for comparison with the equestrian paintings of Horace Vernet.The Number "5": A Military Detail from the First

French Empire A particularly interesting detail appears on the horse's equipment.Behind the saddle is a rectangular, dark-blue military valise, with a black end panel outlined in white and clearly bearing the number "5".This number provides a clue to regimental identification and places the study of the equipment within the context of French cavalry during the First Empire.The shape of the valise, its colours and the presence of a sheepskin saddle covering display characteristics that invite comparison with the equipment used by cuirassiers in Napoleon's army.The attention devoted to these military details adds to the historical interest of the composition and highlights the precision with which the artist depicted the horse's equipment.The Horse on the Threshold of Freedom Beyond its physical presence, the horse becomes the central figure in a silent narrative: that of a living creature moving away from violence.With its rider absent, it still bears the equipment of battle, yet the reins, now without a guiding hand, give its departure a new significance. What once bound the animal to man remains; what directed its course has disappeared. In this separation emerges the image of a freedom that is not yet assured.The broken branch standing in its path prevents us from interpreting this escape as a complete deliverance. Danger remains immediately ahead, as though the battle extends beyond the place where it is being fought.Yet the animal continues forward. Its nobility lies in this living presence crossing a landscape of desolation, seemingly searching for a way out beyond the boundaries of the painting.Freedom, wisdom and hope thus form an allegorical interpretation of the scene: freedom in the departure, wisdom in the retreat from the carnage, and hope in the continuation of life.Without presuming the artist's intentions, this interpretation lends the military subject a more intimate resonance. The horse becomes a symbol of survival, its forward movement opening the possibility of another horizon at the very

threshold of the painting.Physical Evidence and Possible Exhibition History The painting's history may also be explored through the markings preserved on the reverse and on its frame.Several inscriptions in a deep red colour, including the number 238, constitute potentially valuable clues to its provenance and history.These markings offer a possible avenue of research through historical exhibition catalogues, lists of works and archival registers.At the bottom of the frame, two small nails are positioned 12 centimetres apart. Their arrangement suggests the former attachment of a presentation card, label or exhibition plaque.Together with the inscriptions on the reverse, these features add further interest to the material history of the painting and its original frame.Stylistic Comparisons and Attribution The study of this composition involves comparison with Horace Vernet's documented military and equestrian paintings, particularly those devoted to the Napoleonic campaigns.The prominence given to the horse, the attention paid to its anatomy and equipment, the construction of movement and the atmospheric treatment of the military figures constitute the principal points of comparison with the artist's work.The accuracy of the military accessories, the modelling of the horse and the contrast between the animal in the foreground and the figures dissolving into the smoke all contribute to this stylistic interpretation.Conclusion This 19th-century equestrian and military composition is distinguished by the expressive presence of the horse, the quality of its modelling and the contrast between the precision of the foreground and the atmospheric depth of the battlefield.The number "5", carefully depicted on the military valise, provides a particularly interesting historical detail associated with cavalry equipment from the First French Empire.Beyond its military context, the painting offers a more intimate interpretation: that of a riderless horse seemingly moving away from battle, still bearing the traces of conflict.The

accomplished rendering of movement, the attention devoted to the details of the horse's equipment and the atmospheric depth of the composition constitute the principal points of comparison with the military and equestrian paintings of Horace Vernet.Price: EUR18,000www.lesantiquairesdeugenie.com