

Henri Biva (1848-1928) - Flower arrangement with Chinese vase



Watercolor on paper mounted on canvas

Signed lower middle right

Dimensions : H. 103 cm x W. 70 cm (with frame: H. 127 x W. 94 cm)

Henri Biva was born in Paris in 1848. He began his career as a painter at the age of 25, as a student at the Académie française. His masters were the greatest representatives of academic painting in France in the 2nd half of the 19th century: William Bouguereau, Benjamin Constant and Jules Lefebvre.

Biva is a painter of landscapes, still lifes and flowers. Although he most often uses oils, he also excels in the difficult techniques of watercolor and pastel. At the 1886 Blanc et Noir exhibition, he presented "Une rue de Ville-d'Avray, la nuit" and "Roses de Nice et giroflées", and took part in the Salon des Artistes Français on numerous occasions. By the turn of the century, Biva had achieved considerable notoriety, and became a respected teacher in his own right.

This rare watercolor is very large, which makes its perfect condition all the more exceptional. There are no tears or moisture marks. The colors have remained fresh, protected from direct sunlight. The work has also retained its beautiful original gilded wooden frame. Here, Henri Biva displays all his talent as an academic and naturalist painter, with a remarkable quality of drawing. The subject is very interesting, thanks to a blue china vase off-center on the entablature, and a throw of flowers to the left of the vase that balances the composition. Bouquets are often conventional, but here, in the manner of Georges Jeannin, Biva has produced a floral representation that is both modern and delicate. This is a highly accomplished work, with an infinitely nuanced background and a variety of pastel tones. The textile skilfully arranged on the entablature, against which the vase and the flower throw stand out, brings life and movement to this work, aptly named "Still Life".

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