

Louis Aimé Japy (1840-1916) - The shepherdesses



Oil on canvas, signed lower right

Dimensions : H. 41 x W. 31.5 cm (with frame: H. 67 x W. 57.5 cm)

Born in Bern in 1839, Louis Aimé Japy was an excellent 19th-century naturalist. He was one of the best representatives of the Barbizon School. He was a pupil of Louis François (1814-1897) and of the greatest master of the period in France, Camille Corot (1796-1875), who considered Louis Aimé Japy to be his best pupil. From this training, Japy retained this lightness of touch, almost ethereal, in his depictions of trees. For the dense vegetation of the undergrowth, Japy adopted a more substantial, worked and tight brushstroke, in the manner of Jules Dupré (1811-1889) who, along with Rousseau, was one of the pioneers of the Barbizon school. Louis Aimé Japy made his debut at the Salon in 1864 and exhibited there until the outbreak of the First World War. He won a medal at the 1873 Salon and became a member of the Salon des artistes français in 1883. His work was also rewarded with a silver medal at the Exposition Universelle in 1889 and again in 1900.

Louis Aimé Japy knew how to translate nature with great sensitivity. His poetic pastoral scenes are often bathed in melancholy light. We owe him a series of landscapes of Franche-Comté, but also of the regions of Brittany, Picardy and Oise.

Our painting is a luminous naturalist work. Japy's works depicting the sea are few and far between, and rarely so striking. The central breakthrough of the trees towards the sea is a brilliant and original composition. The vegetation and figures are treated with great care. Prefiguring Impressionism, Japy vigorously applied a pictorial material that blends a wide variety of colours. Thanks to the contrasts of light and dark tones, this painting is more powerful than most of the artist's works. It has the quality of Harpignies' best works. The painting is on a beautiful wooden panel and is in absolutely perfect condition. We have simply removed the original varnish to restore the astonishingly fresh colours. The original gilded wood and stucco frame, which is of very high quality, has just been restored.

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Louis Aimé Japy (1840-1916)
"On the banks of the Ville d'Avray pond"
Musée d'Orsay