



Edouard Detaille 1848+1912 - Horse Hunter Of The Impérial Guard. Wat/temp 17 X 21.5



2 250 EUR

Signature : Edouard Detaille

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Gouache

Length : 17

Width : 21,5

<https://www.proantic.com/en/1416475-edouard-detaille-18481912-horse-hunter-of-the-imperial-guard-wattemp-17-x-215-cm.html>

Description

Christie's New York Sale on January 27, 2016
Born in 1848 into a close-knit bourgeois family, Edouard Detaille, the eldest of eight children, showed early talent for drawing. "He was a prodigy," notes François Robichon. At thirteen, he had a stunning surety of hand and a phenomenal sense of composition. His father, connected to Horace Vernet, encouraged him. At seventeen, having passed his baccalaureate, he entered Meissonier's studio. This encounter, which led to mutual affection, spared Detaille the academic detour through the École des Beaux-Arts. Rather than dictating a precisely "official" art, Meissonier, at the height of his fame, traveled with his students, introducing them in Brussels and Lille to the nuances of Titian, Rembrandt, and Rubens. In 1867, the Paris of

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"free trade" reigned over the world through the technical revolutions of the Exposition Universelle, and the amiable, handsome young man discovered the salon of Princess Mathilde and the theater of Dumas fils. He even approached the empress. "Not bad, the empress," he noted in his journals. This observation encapsulated Detaille: he was confident in his talent, cultivated flair, enjoyed the company of beautiful women, and sought to conquer circles of power without losing his freedom.

From childhood, he had listened to his calling:

"Before I could read, I imagined the subjects of battles, the names of illustrious generals, the weapons of officers and soldiers, from the images I had admired in the books of Norvins and Laurent de l'Ardèche." He mingled with collectors and would not have missed the military review on the Champs-Élysées for an empire! His first painting exhibited at the Salon in 1868, "The Drummers' Halt," was praised by critics who immediately discerned "remarkable observational truth and simplicity of effect." The purchase of this work by Princess Mathilde, cousin of Emperor Louis-Napoleon, made Detaille, at twenty, an envied celebrity, known to all: Sainte-Beuve, Théophile Gautier, the Goncourt brothers, and Flaubert. The young artist's humanistic vision contrasted with the compositions of his predecessors. His works depicted soldiers in maneuvers, contemplative and resigned in the face of the looming war.

The Vision of the Fighter

The siege of Paris, where he nearly lost his life in 1870, and the death of two of his brothers in that defeat darkened his outlook. From 1871 onward, Detaille no longer concealed the cruelties of war: German sharpshooters mowed down by machine guns, panicked cuirassiers and horses trapped in an ambush, fields plowed by shells and strewn with dead animals. The unvarnished tragedy: "It is an absolute fact that no painter until now has

rendered a battlefield covered in dead as it is," commented Jules Claretie. "The corpses lying there still bear, in their icy rigidity, the appearance of life." Detaille's testimony on the shocking defeat and the devastating effects of the first total war in history was not a celebration of heroism but a lament, a "lesson in darkness."

"From war, which used to be considered the supreme effort of human genius, we now see only melancholy and horrors," judged a writer in front of his canvases.

"Detaille experienced, at a young age, the reality of battle during this war that bore the seeds of the two world conflicts of the 20th century," explains François Robichon. "With great concern for realism, Detaille paints war from the fighter's perspective. He introduces humanity, a critical lucidity on the evolution of the phenomenon of war. In Detaille's work, with incredible intensity, we find the violence and power of new weapons like machine guns." Detaille became, before he was thirty, the chronicler of these years of pain. He exhibited what a critic described as a "faithful portrait of modern war" that both civilians and soldiers had experienced up close. He embodied a youth humiliated, eager for revenge. Yet this scrupulous artist also remembered, in his vast landscapes, in the chalky plateaus of Île-de-France or in the Russian plain, the lessons of Corot and Courbet. Manet was not far behind.

"I wouldn't want my art to be reduced to mere patriotic art," he asserted. "One method I often use and greatly appreciate is to first execute the landscape, very effective, very detailed, closely based on nature..." In him, the advice of Meissonier still resonated: "Do as I do; nature, always nature!" Detaille was so close to this surrogate father that after living on Rue Legendre from 1872 to 1875, he had a mansion built at the age of 26, beginning in 1874, next to his master's studio at 129 Boulevard Malesherbes, on a 425 m² plot purchased from the Pereire family. He had even chosen the same architect as

Meissonier: Paul Boesvilwald. A bachelor and incorrigible seducer, the painter entertained his conquests, including Valtesse de la Bigne, amid his collections. He had built his studio in the courtyard.

A Diplomatic Actor

As Detaille's fame grew, his hotel on Boulevard Malesherbes quickly became a gathering place for foreign princes, politicians, and heads of state, where Juliette Adam, Léon Gambetta's muse, offered him shrewd advice. Thus, the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, formed a true friendship with the painter. "This fervent patriot, a friend of Déroulède, was extraordinarily open to the world," recounts François Robichon. "In just a few years, he gained considerable social, cultural, and international standing. Received at Windsor, at the Court of England, he was an intimate of Tsar Alexander III and a close friend of Félix Faure."

In this capacity, Detaille was a key player in the Entente Cordiale, signed in 1904, between England and France, the Franco-Russian alliance in 1894, and thus in the Triple Entente among the three powers. An engaged witness of his time--associated with the birth of the "Ligue des Patriotes" with Alphonse de Neuville and Déroulède, founder of the "Sabretache" and initiator of the Army Museum--Detaille was not blinded by his convictions. He was not insensitive to the tributes that Wilhelm II and the Crown Prince discreetly paid him through diplomatic channels. Like Barrès, he had placed his hopes in the restoration of a symbol tarnished by Sedan: the French army. Beyond this choice, he was a man turned toward modernity. "Well-informed from the best sources, he was at the center of European life," notes François Robichon. Knowledgeable of photography's potential, he was one of the first, in the 17th arrondissement, to install electricity and telephones, to drive a car, and to attend the Lumière brothers'

cinematograph screenings in 1896. He even contemplated making a historical film. In this sense, he was a pioneer. His astonishing war panoramas--Champigny and Rezonville--long sequences filmed with Alphonse de Neuville on Rue de Saussure near the Porte d'Asnières, anticipated the historical cinema of Abel Gance, the naturalism of John Ford, the frescoes of Andrei Tarkovsky, and the emotional power of *Apocalypse Now*. Did not Abel Gance draw his Napoleonic epic vein from Detaille's paintings? Detaille envisioned a painting beyond the frame, capturing both the entirety and the details of the cathartic upheaval of war. He pushed the traditional limits of his profession to pave the way for the major art of the twentieth century: cinema. Dying on December 24, 1912, at his home on Boulevard Malesherbes, he received near-national funeral honors at Saint-Charles-de-Monceau Church on December 27. A company from the 28th Infantry Regiment, whose new uniform he had designed, presented arms. The Prime Minister, Raymond Poincaré, bare-headed, walked behind the family. Today, François Robichon, who has sensitively and passionately revived the painter's fate, fights to save his grave at Père Lachaise.