Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Charles Edme Saint-Marcel Cabin, called Edme Saint-Marcel (Paris 1819 - Fontainebleau 1890)

A Sleeping Cat and Two Kittens

Charcoal, stumped black chalk, pastel and white chalk.
Signed with the artist's monogram and dated 1877 at the top left.
354 x 520 mm. (13 7/8 x 20 1/2 in.)

This unusually large and highly finished drawing, signed with the artist's distinctive monogram and dated 1877, must have been intended as an autonomous work of art; produced as an exhibition piece or for sale to a collector. Among a handful of stylistically comparable works by Saint-Marcel is a watercolour drawing of a lion devouring its prey, in the collection of the Louvre, and a study of a crouching tiger that appeared on the art market in Paris in 2008.

Provenance:

Private collection, France.

Artist description:

Charles Edmé Saint-Marcel-Cabin, known as Edmé Saint-Marcel, was a pupil of Léon Cogniet, Théodore Aligny and, most significantly, Eugène Delacroix. Saint-Marcel worked with Delacroix as an assistant and collaborator on several of the master's large decorative mural projects. He made his debut at the Salon of 1848, and continued to exhibit both paintings and etchings there regularly. Perhaps best known as an animalier, Saint-Marcel was particularly admired for his studies of lions. He was also highly regarded as a painter of landscapes, particularly of the area around the forest of Fontainebleau, where he lived for most of his life.

The majority of extant drawings by Edme Saint-Marcel are characterized by a bold and vigorous use of the pen with rich tones of dark brown ink, in a manner strongly influenced by that of Delacroix. (Indeed, Saint-Marcel's drawings have at times been confused with those of the more famous artist, while Delacroix is apocryphally said to have occasionally copied figures from the younger man's drawings.) Saint-Marcel had a particular penchant for drawings of wild animals, an interest no doubt stimulated by Delacroix's own fascination with the theme. A large and varied group of drawings by Saint-Marcel, numbering twenty-two sheets, is today in the Musée Bonnat in Bayonne, while other significant examples are in the collections of the Louvre and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Pontoise.