

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Alexandre Desgoffe (Paris 1805 - Paris 1882)**

## **Coastal Landscape at Marseilles**

Watercolour, over an underdrawing in pencil.

The Desgoffe atelier stamp (Lugt 3161) stamped at the lower right.

Inscribed and dated M. le 26. 7 bre 1838 at the lower right.

Numbered 735 and 79 at the lower right.

155 x 235 mm. (6 1/8 x 9 1/4 in.)

This charming watercolour was, as the artist's inscription notes, drawn on a visit to the Mediterranean coast near Marseilles in September 1838. Desgoffe was in Marseilles between the 22nd and the 29th of September 1838, on a trip to the Midi that also included visits to Avignon, Nîmes, Arles, Toulon, Hyères, Sainte-Baume and elsewhere.

## **Provenance:**

Among the contents of the artist's studio in Paris at the time of his death, with the posthumous atelier stamp Alex. Desgoffe (Lugt 3161), applied by the artist's daughter, Aline

Art market, Paris, c.1974

Marie-Madeleine Aubrun, Paris (Lugt 3508), her collector's mark stamped at the lower left

Her posthumous sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 8-9 February 1999, lot 178

Jane Roberts, Paris.

## **Literature:**

Marie-Madeleine Aubrun, 'Un grand méconnu, pionnier du naturalisme: Alexandre Desgoffe (1805-1882)', Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français, 1983 (published 1985), pp.154-155, no.D2, fig.56.

## **Artist description:**

Alexandre Desgoffe was already a talented amateur landscape draughtsman when he began his artistic training in the studios of the painters Louis-Etienne Watelet and Jean-Charles-Joseph Remond. In 1827 he entered the studio of Ingres as one of the master's first pupils, joined the following year by the Flandrin brothers. Nicknamed 'Le Père la Nature' by the artist Jules Laurens, in view of the fact that he painted numerous plein-air studies from nature, Desgoffe exhibited his work at the Salons between

1834 and 1868. He was best known, however, as a painter of historical landscapes, and together with Paul Flandrin, who became his son-in-law, may be regarded as a master of the *paysage ingresque*. (A fellow landscape painter, Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny, noted somewhat unfairly that 'M. Desgoffe does historical landscape painting, one could say historical rock painting, since his pictures are devoid of any greenery or foliage.')

Desgoffe made two extensive trips to Italy, from 1834 to 1837 and again from 1839 to 1842. Between 1844 and 1846 he assisted Ingres on the painting of *L'Age d'Or* for the Chateau de Dampierre, and also contributed landscape backgrounds to one or two easel pictures by the master. An inveterate traveller, Desgoffe was particularly fond of the landscapes of the Auvergne, and also worked at Barbizon (one of the first artists to do so) and Fontainebleau, the Midi and, in the final years of his career, at Pornic on the Atlantic coast. He produced mural decorations for several Parisian churches as well as for the Hôtel de Ville and the reading room of the Bibliothèque Nationale. In 1878 he received one of his last important commissions, for a large landscape cartoon to be reproduced as a tapestry intended to hang over the grand staircase of the Palais de Luxembourg in Paris. Some 340 paintings and 1,600 drawings by Desgoffe are known today.