Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Henri DELUERMOZ (1876 - 1943)

Studies of the Wings of a Sea Eagle and a Separate Study of a Vulture

Brush and black ink, with touches of white chalk, on reddish-brown prepared paper.

Signed with a monogram and dated Marseille / hD. Janv.1906- at the lower right.

Extensively inscribed with colour notes: brun très foncé et très chaud / plumes légères noir et brun jaunâtre. / tête duvetée (blanc) / collier de plumes très fines et / très blanches. / entre les plumes / le fond du duvet / est gris très fin et chaud / plumes très fortes / et brunes / fond foncé dans les / bruns chauds / -dessins noirs / culottes blanches. / serres très puissantes / plumes plus marquées que celles / du collier. / plumes plus longues et en perspective / (?)-ant en avant in black ink.

The present sheet, dated January 1906, was drawn in Marseille - almost certainly at the Jardin Zoologique in the gardens of the Palais Longchamp - shortly after Henri Deluermoz had settled in Provence. While the main part of the drawing studies the wings of a sea eagle, probably the White-tailed Eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla), a smaller, subsidiary study at the lower left centre depicts a vulture, likely a Griffon vulture (Gyps fulvus), seen from the back with its wings spread.

The artist has here made extensive notes about the colour and characteristics of the plumage of both the eagle and the vulture: ‘very dark and warm brown’, ‘light black and yellowish-brown feathers’, ‘fluffy head (white)’, ‘necklace of very fine and very white feathers’, ‘between the feathers the bottom of the down is very fine and warm grey’, ‘very strong and brown feathers’, ‘dark background in warm browns’. ‘black drawings’, ‘white culottes’, ‘very powerful claws’, ‘feathers more marked than those of the necklace’, ‘longer feathers and in perspective.’

A similar drawing of an eagle is illustrated in an article on the artist published in the magazine L’Artiste Contemporain in 1920, while an undated drawing of an eagle perched on a rock is one of five drawings by the artist in the Brooklyn Museum.

Artist description:

A painter, illustrator and engraver, Henri Deluermoz was a pupil of Alfred Roll and Gustave Moreau. He became one of the finest animal painters of his day, with a particular penchant for depictions of wild animals. He also painted Provençal landscapes, equestrian and bullfight scenes, and produced designs for tapestries, mural decorations, and book illustrations. (Among the books he illustrated were editions of Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book, Henri de Montherlant's Les Bestiaires, and Louis Pergaud's Histoires de bêtes.) Deluermoz did not send any paintings to the Salon until 1909, when he was already in his thirties, although thereafter he exhibited there regularly, and also showed at commercial galleries in Paris between 1913 and 1919. At the Salon of 1911, a large painting of a stampede of wild animals before a flood elicited much praise from critics, with Arsène Alexandre writing in Le Figaro, 'Mais quelle connaissance de l'animalité dans cette grande peinture! Quelle vérité dans l'observation des mouvements!', while another critic wrote of the painting 'Each creature is represented in its own character, and in motion true to life, and one takes pleasure in studying in turn the elephant and the buffalo in their heavy flight, the panther bounding along, the deer leaping lightly forward – all this evolved in the mind of a Kipling of the brush.'

An exhibition of Deluermoz's work at the Galerie Reitlinger in 1913 led to the purchase by the State of a large drawing of a bullfight. An exhibition of his animal drawings was held at the Galerie Le Goupy in Paris in 1926, while a larger and more comprehensive exhibition of paintings and drawings by the artist was mounted at the Galerie Charpentier in Paris in 1939.