Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Johan Barthold JONGKIND (Latrop 1819 - La Côte-Saint-André 1891)

A Farm near Pupetières

Watercolour over a pencil underdrawing on paper; a page from a sketchbook.

A sketch of a man and a dog on a path, drawn in watercolour and pencil, on the verso.

Stamped with the atelier stamp (Lugt 1401) at the lower right and dated 27 Oct 77 at the lower right.

Numbered 6 9 at the lower right.

Numbered 5878 on the verso.

118 x 289 mm. (4 5/8 x 11 3/8 in.)

Jongkind was a brilliant and gifted watercolourist, and his work in this medium - as well as his interest in working en plein-air and in the study of various weather and atmospheric conditions - were highly influential on the Impressionist painters. As his friend Eugène Boudin noted of Jongkind in 1887, 'The more one looks at his watercolours, the more one wonders how they are done! It is with almost nothing, and yet the fluidity and density of the sky and clouds are rendered with unbelievable precision.' Jongkind's training in the art of watercolour was based on his experiences in the studios of his masters Andreas Schelfhout and Eugène Isabey, both of whom were known for their skill as watercolourists, and was further stimulated by his friendship with Boudin, whom he first met in Normandy in 1862. As a recent scholar has written of Jongkind, 'The "sketch" under his pencil and brush becomes a major vehicle of expression and, in his oeuvre, often surpasses his oils in quality.' The present sheet – a page and a half from a small sketchbook – is a fine and typical example of Jongkind's watercolour technique. During the 1870s the artist tended to prefer an extended horizontal format for his watercolours, often using a double-page spread of a rectangular sketchbook, as here. The scene depicted is a farm near the Château of Pupetières, in the valley of the river Bourbre in the Dauphiné region of France. Jongkind first came to the area in 1873 with his companion Joséphine Fesser, when they came to visit Joséphine's son Jules, who was working as a chef at the château. Jongkind soon fell in love with the landscape of the Dauphiné, and they returned to the area every summer thereafter.

Jongkind's landscape watercolours have been highly admired by collectors to this day. The present sheet belonged to the well-known pharmacist and collector Henri Canonne (1867-1961), who was the inventor of the throat lozenge. Canonne owned several watercolours by Jongkind, alongside works by Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Bonnard, Vuillard, Matisse and others. In his monograph on Jongkind, published in 1927, the artist Paul Signac, who admired and collected his work, opined that 'Jongkind's drawings and watercolors represent the most characteristic aspect of his oeuvre, the one that enables us best to understand and appreciate it. It is also the one that he favored, guarding it jealously in portfolios, reserving it for friends rather than dealers. It was the joy of his life.'

Provenance:

Possibly the ventes Jongkind, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 7-8 December 1891 or Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 16 March 1893
Henri-Edmond Canonne, Paris
His sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 28 May 1930, lot 61
Mrs. Stephen Millet
Anonymous sale, New York, Doyle's, 12 June 1963, lot 50.

Literature:

Victorine Hefting, Jongkind: Sa vie, son oeuvre, son époque, Paris, 1975, p.272, fig.691 (as Ferme près de Pupetières); To be reproduced in the Jongkind Catalogue Critique being prepared by the Comité Jongkind, Paris and The Hague, under no.G00006A-H691.

Artist description:

Johan Barthold Jongkind was a pupil of Andreas Schelfhout in The Hague, and through his recommendation gained a scholarship to study with the French landscape painter and watercolourist Eugène Isabey in Paris. Jongkind arrived in Paris in 1846, soon meeting and befriending artists such as Théodore Rousseau, Camille Corot and Constant Troyon. In 1847 he made the first of several trips to Normandy, returning in 1850 and 1851 in the company of Isabey. He made his Salon debut in 1848, and a few years later gained the support of the art dealer Pierre Firmin Martin, who was to play a crucial role in promoting the group of landscape artists who are today known as the pre-Impressionists. Following the Exposition Universelle of 1855, where his work met with little success, Jongkind fell into an alcoholic depression and returned to Holland. He lived and worked in Rotterdam but achieved little commercial or financial success. The proceeds of a benefit auction organized by Martin on Jongkind's behalf - which included works by such artists and friends as Corot, Isabey, Troyon and Rousseau, as well as François Bonvin, Charles-François Daubigny, Gabriel-Alexandre Decamps and Félix Ziem - allowed him to return to Paris in 1860. Three years later he took part in the Salon des Refusés, and thereafter enjoyed a number of productive and successful years. He spent much time in Normandy, where he met Eugène Boudin and Claude Monet, and also returned frequently to his native Holland until 1869. He stopped exhibiting at the Salon in 1873, however, and the following year turned down an invitation to take part in the first Impressionist exhibition.