Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Paul SIGNAC (Paris 1863 - Paris 1945)

View of Calvi, Corsica

Pencil and watercolour. Laid down.
Inscribed by the artist a P Basset(?). amicalement at the lower left and signed P. Signac at the lower right.
210 x 263 mm. (8 1/4 x 10 3/8 in.)

This luminous watercolour would appear to depict the coastal town of Calvi in Corsica. Paul Signac made both of his only trips to Corsica in 1935, the last year of his life, having earlier written to his wife Berthe that 'I should like to go and see this island and work there before I die...It would renew my repertoire of pictures, and I could use it.'

In February 1935 Signac visited the towns of Calvi, Ajaccio, Propriano, Bonifacio and Bastia. He returned in May and June, travelling south along the east coast of the island from Saint-Florent and L'Ile-Rousse towards Calvi, Ajaccio and Propriano. As Marina Ferretti Bocquillon has written of this trip to Corsica, which was to be the final journey of Signac's career, 'Travelling from one harbor to the next with the energy of a young man, he made his last Mediterranean notes. Only two months before his death on August 15 he had been working without respite on a dazzling series of watercolors.'

Provenance:

Given by the artist to P. Basset(?), according to the dedication at the lower left
Galerie de l'Elysée, Paris
Private collection, Paris
Thence by descent to a private collection, Paris.

Artist description:

Active as a painter, draughtsman, writer and collector, Paul Signac was one of the leading artists of the Neo-Impressionist movement. He came from a wealthy bourgeois family, and as such was able to support the careers of several of his fellow artists as a patron and collector. He became a close friend of Georges Seurat, whose work he first encountered at the inaugural exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants in 1884, and between them the two painters formed the nucleus of the group of

artists known as the Neo-Impressionists. Signac would spend the winter working in his Parisian studio, while the summer months were spent painting at a coastal resort, eventually settling in Saint-Tropez from 1892 onwards. In 1904 Henri Matisse spent the summer with Signac at Saint-Tropez, a period that was to have a profound effect on the younger artist.

Signac painted around six hundred canvases as well as a significant body of works on paper, mainly watercolours. As Marina Ferretti Bocquillon has noted, 'Signac was the neo-impressionist who practiced watercolor most consistently…For him, watercolor was a seductive alternative to the demanding labor of studio painting, a zone of freedom that suited his restless temperament and love of the outdoors. It gradually took over from his work in oil...'