

François-Louis FRANÇAIS (Plombières-les-Bains 1814 - Paris 1897)

Portrait of Henri-Joseph Harpignies

Pencil.

Signed with the artist's initials at the lower left.

Inscribed Portrait de Harpignies. / fait pendant une séance du / Jury de peinture par / Louis Français. on the verso.

Further inscribed 'FRANÇAIS était un peintre de/ l'école de Barbizon, Harpignies un / marchand de tableau (si mes souvenirs sont bons) / Ce tableau avait été acheté par Grand père <<à la/ Bigotte>> et était accroché au chalet à Auvers. / Francis le 20 juillet 2005' on a modern printed label formerly pasted onto the old backing board.

The same label also inscribed (in a modern hand) 'Portrait d'/ HARPIGNIES', 'Il y a un tableau de Francais au Musée / d'ORSAY' and harpignies 1819-1916!.

84 x 111 mm. (3 1/4 x 4 3/8 in.)

François-Louis Français not only exhibited regularly at the Salons, but was also often asked to participate on its jury. The inscription at the bottom of the present sheet notes that this portrait of his close friend Henri-Joseph Harpignies (1819-1916) was drawn while both artists were serving on the Salon jury. The drawing is a fine example of a quick sketch that captures the essence of the sitter.

Artist description:

François-Louis Français began his artistic career as an illustrator, utilizing the mediums of lithography and wood engraving. In 1834 he entered the the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where he studied under Jean Gigoux. He exhibited at the Salon for the first time in 1837, and in the same year met the artist Camille Corot, who would become one of the biggest influences on his work. Corot and Français would work together for the next ten years. The next phase in his career came during the middle of the 1840s. In 1846 he travelled south to Italy with his close friend François-Auguste Ravier. Initially intending to only last three months, the trip was extended and Francais ended up staying in Italy for a total of three years. Travel would remain a large influence on his life and art, and Français often went on sketching

expeditions with other artists, including Corot, Gustave Courbet and Henri-Joseph Harpignies. From 1873 onwards he spent the winter months residing in Nice, along with close friends Harpignies and Emile Dardoize. Although Français was mainly active as a landscape painter, he also painted a number of fine portraits and a few still life subjects. He was fond of depicting fellow artists, and produced portraits of Jean-Alexis Achard, Corot, Courbet, Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres and Celestin Nanteuil.