The Long Swing

Ernest Henry Griset

Sold



REF: 319543

Height: 86.36 cm (34")

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Width: 66.04 cm (26")

Description

Griset was born in Boulogne and studied briefly in Belgium under Louis Gallait. Griset’s family ”“ his father, Louis, being a professor of languages ”“ became political refugees of Napoleon III’s authoritarian reign and, as early as 1861, Ernest was living with his uncle, the painter Henry Griset, in St Pancras, London. Although intending to become a serious watercolours, by 1865 his idiosyncratic drawings were attracting the attention of the press: “Does the reader remember, any time during the past two years, walking down Bear-street, Leicester Square, and noticing in a small shop window ”“ on the right as you go to St. Martin’s Court ”“ some wild dashing sketches in colours with the signature of Ernest Griset at the foot? The drawings were too vigorous not to attract the attention of all passers-by, and a crowd generally occupied the pavement. The shop was an old book store, with seedy volumes in delightful confusion on every hand, and a gloomy attendant in the recess behind, waiting to pounce out on the first comer. The pictures, in the window, were 1s, 2s and sometimes 2s 6d.; and the legend in the neighbourhood was that a strange figure appeared at night ”“ a wild political Frenchman, dressed anyhow, one account stated ”“ deposited a fresh portfolio of drawings, and then vanished up the court opposite to be seen no more until the following evening. Be this as it may, numbers of persons have sought to find out the man, but no one is known to have succeeded until recently, when a gentleman ascertained his whereabouts, and commissioned him to prepare a series of humorous sketches. These pictures, illustrative of the wonderful career of three English sailors, are about to be published with the clever Muchausen story which has ever been written to accompany them by Mr. Greenwood.” (London Review). He went on to illustrate other books for Greenwood and later for the Dalziel Brothers, establishing himself and as a successful animal artist and creator of anthropomorphic and grotesques illustrations and caricatures. Works by him are in the collections of the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum. The present work is one of a series of humorous watercolours of gymnasts in action executed by Griset in the 1860s or 1870s.

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