SARAH COLEGRAVE
FINE ART

Laburnums at Battersea by Theodore Roussel

Theodore Roussel

£1,400



REF: 1792

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Description

THEODORE ROUSSEL, RBA
(1847-1926)

Laburnums at Battersea

Etching, signed in the plate, trimmed to the plate mark and signed and inscribed on the tab: Theodore Roussel Inv. Between Second and Third state. Given to Miss Hetty Pettigrew. Th R.

34 by 22 cm., 13 ½ by 8 ¾ in.
(frame size 55.5 by 41 cm., 21 ¾ by 16 ¼ in.)

Provenance:
Given by the artist to Hetty Pettigrew, the artist's model.

Literature:
Margaret Dunwoody Hausberg, The Prints of Theodore Roussel: A Catalogue Raisonne, New York 1991, no.34.

Born in Lorient, Brittany and having fought in the Franco-Prussian War, Roussel moved to England in 1870. He settled in London and shared a studio with Percy Jacomb-Hood and Thomas Henry in Chelsea. Although he first began exhibiting in London in 1872 it was not until 1885 that Whistler became aware of his work and arranged to meet him. The two artists found they not only shared similar subject matter but their artistic sympathies and thoughts about the art establishment were also the same. Unusually for Whistler and his friends, they remained on good terms for life. Along with Whistler he became a member of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1887 only to resign with Whistler and his followers in 1888. Whistler is supposed to have said of Roussel, "At last I have found a follower worthy of the master". Although never actually a pupil, Whistler's influence on Roussel's work was immense, particular during his time living in Chelsea between 1880 and 1891.

In 1891 Roussel moved to Parsons Green, Fulham and his continued to paint aesthetic landscapes and portraits as well as producing many excellent etchings. Roussel died in St Leonards on Sea in 1926 and a Memorial Exhibition of his work was held in the following year at Goupil Gallery, London. More than 30 of his pictures were included in the "London Impressionists" exhibition at the Michael Parkin Gallery, London in 1975. Examples of his work are in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate Gallery and other public collections.

Executed 1889-90, this etching is also known as Laburnums and Battersea, Corner of the New Bridge White in Construction. The pile of sand in the foreground is presumably for the work on the construction of new Battersea Bridge, the old bridge having been demolished in 1879. Versions are in the collection of the British Museum, London and Museum of Modern Art, New York. This print was a gift from the artist to his favourite model, Hetty Pettigrew. She most notably sat for his 1886-7 oil The Reading Girl (Tate Gallery) but she also sat for Whistler, Holman Hunt, Millais and others.