

Horse Traffic in Paris

Antoine Blanchard (1910 - 1988)



REF:

Description

Oil on Canvas Signed lower right and verso 32 x 44 cm (12.5 x 17.5 ins) Two Exhibition labels Verso

Antoine Blanchard was born on 15th November 1910 in France, in a small village near the banks of the Loire. He was the eldest of three children whose father was a carver and managed a family-run carpentry and furniture shop in a small village on the banks of the Loire. His parents sent Antoine to Blois for drawing lessons to encourage his talent which had been discovered at an early age. He then attended the school of Beaux-Arts in Rennes, Brittany for three years, where he studied drawing and sculpture. At the end of his time there, he was presented with the highest award of Le Prix du Ministre. He moved to Paris in 1932 where he joined the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for four years. In 1939 he married a young woman he met in Paris but was then called up for active service. It was only in 1942 that he was able to resume his art career. In 1944, Nicole, a daughter, was born, who later in life also became an artist under the name of A Champeau. Sadly, at this time, his father passed away, so Antoine returned home to run the family business. In 1947 a second daughter, Evelyn, was born. In 1948 he gave control of the family business to his youngest brother so that he could resume his life as an artist. Antoine Blanchard was the pseudonym used by Marcel Masson for his well known, popular Parisian Street scenes, painted in an impressionist style. He painted the many boulevards, iconic monuments and Parisians of Paris but from a bygone era. He often took his subject matter from vintage postcards which he collected and would paint the same famous landmarks time and time again, but in different seasons and weather conditions. The same scene could be depicted on a wet windswept day or with snow under foot. The scenes were colourful with much light and reflection showing wet pavements and people hurrying home past shops emanating a warm glow from light within. One can feel the movement by the speeding horse drawn carriages, coats being drawn around the figures walking briskly through the wind or rain, a social statement of a bygone era with an almost photographic quality recording the famous Parisian streets which we know so well today. This work is no exception, showing a large carriage pulled by three trusty white dappled steeds, a form of omnibus of that era, and a smaller carriage alongside, probably privately owned. Willowy figures stopping to look into shop windows, whilst others hurrying home out of the blustery elements. This is almost certainly a view of the Boulevard de la Madeleine with a view of iconic buildings in the distance. All subjects were painted many times, however always depicting Paris in 1900. His work is often mistaken for the work of Cortes (and vice versa) being his friend and fellow artist, who painted the same subject matter as Blanchard. A.P. Larde wrote a book to commemorate his work "Antoine Blanchard. His life, His work" Antoine Blanchard died at the age of 77 on 10th August 1988 in his beloved Paris.