

HENRI-THÉODORE FANTIN-LATOUR

(Grenoble 1836–1904 Buré)

Nature morte aux abricots. 1869.

Oil on canvas.

Signed and dated upper left: Fantin 69.

26 × 30 cm.

We would like to thank Brame & Lorenceau for confirming the authenticity of the painting, Paris, 9 October 2019. Provenance: - Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Edwards, London. - Thomas Wallis & Son, London. - F. & J. Tempelaere, Paris. - Groesbeek, Amsterdam. - Private collection Hamburg, move 1926 to Switzerland and by descent to the present owners. Literature: Madame Fantin-Latour: Catalogue de l'Œuvre complet de Fantin-Latour, Floury, Paris, 1911, p. 47, no. 334. Henri Fantin-Latour holds a very

interesting and distinct position in French painting of the second half of the 19th century. From him comes the group portrait often reproduced in art history books, "Un atelier aux Batignolles". In that work he portrayed the most important artists of the avant-garde at the time, among them the Impressionists Renoir, Monet and Bazille, who gather around Édouard Manet, sitting at an easel. Although Fantin-Latour was close friends with those painters and participated in the Salon des Refusés in 1863, he was not involved in any of the seven Impressionist exhibitions and was critical of the arbitrary approach of his fellow painters. He grappled, however, with their innovations and found his own answer. Instead of painting outdoors, Fantin-Latour remained loyal to the studio. He combined the study of the Old Masters with the Realism of Courbet and the new colour theories tracing back to Eugène Delacroix. He also included elements of both Romanticism and Symbolism in his works, through which his unique imagery emerged. He softened the precision and hardness of naturalistic rendering through a strong emphasis on the effects of light, stylistically bringing him closer to the Impressionists. It was most notably his still lifes that first brought him fame in England, and subsequently around the world. The still life offered here was produced in 1869. In May of that same year, Fantin-Latour became engaged to Victoria Dubourg, whom he had met at the Salon in 1866. On the occasion of their engagement, he gave her a still life, which is currently located in the Musée Grenoble (Nature morte dite de fiançaille - à Mme. Fantin-Latour, cat. rais. no. 325). Today considered one of his most important still lifes, it is similar in format to ours and shows an arrangement of flowers, a glass of wine and a plate of strawberries, the latter being rather rare. The first owners of the present painting were the London-based collectors Edwin and Elizabeth Ruth Edwards. Fantin-Latour’s connections to England were very important to him. In 1858 he met James McNeill Whistler and, together with Alphonse Legros, founded the “Société des trois”. The following years included multiple visits to London. There, he also met the wealthy lawyer and art collector, Edwin Edwards and his wife. The artist encouraged Edwards to become a landscape painter and etcher. A friendship developed and the collector couple acquired several still lifes by

Fantin-Latour. They also recommend friends in London to acquire works, which contributed significantly to the ongoing international success today of Fantin-Latour's still lifes.

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