



BERNARD BUFFET

(Paris 1928–1999 Tourtour)

Assiette et vase de fleurs bleues. 1957.

Oil on canvas.

Signed and dated upper right: Bernard/Bufet/ 57.

65 x 46 cm.

The authenticity of the work has been confirmed by Galerie Garnier, Paris, 4 June 2020. Provenance: Private collection USA. "'Bernard, why is all your work so tragic? Why so much unhappiness?' – He [Bernard Buffet] lit a new cigarette from his old one, inhaled deeply, let his lungs be free again, then, polite but definite: 'La grande peinture n'a jamais faire rire' – Great painting has never produced laughter." (Nicholas Foulkes 2015, p. 61). Transience and melancholy are silent companions

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of the present still life by Bernard Buffet. Pale tones – black, white and grey – dominate the arrangement that by no means lacks expressive power. On the contrary, Buffet references life's temporality in the broken flower. By singling out and separating the moment when the bloom falls, the artist infuses his depiction with meaning. Bright colours are not present in this still life, but rather a sober colour scheme prevails, underscored by a dark network of lines. The strong, almost raw brushwork is characteristic of Buffet's expressionist style. When the nearly thirty-year-old Bernard Buffet painted the present still life in 1957, he was already known for his talent in Paris and was celebrated by the international art world. Bernard Buffet's character is difficult to grasp, as it continually swung between the extremes of an introspective artist of the post-war years and a "mega artist" of the Parisian glamour world (Lankarani 2016). This non-conformist multifaceted nature is also reflected in his work, which thematically oscillates between religious motifs, depictions of war damage and everyday objects. Buffet treats every subject stylistically with the same stencil-like drama. The present still life from Buffet's prime years is thus exemplary of the artist's unmistakable style. Tranquility and elegance as well as sweeping melancholy coalesce within the painting, while Buffet's eccentric signature – placed in the upper right corner of our work – underscores the character of the artist.

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