

Carl Blechen (Umkreis)

Lot 26

Heidelberg Castle. The shattered tower



Low estimate :

€ 40,000

High estimate :

€ 60,000

Buyers premium incl. VAT :

32 %

Artist

Carl Blechen (Umkreis)

Additional description

Öl auf Leinwand (doubliert). (Um 1830). 75,8 x 89 cm. Gerahmt.

Period

(1798 Cottbus – Berlin 1840)

Technique

Gemälde

Provenance

Seit den 1950er Jahren in Privatbesitz, Bayern;im Erbgang an den heutigen Besitzer.

From Karlsruhe "we travelled to Heidelberg, where we arrived in the evening and spent the night. In the morning we drank our coffee, went out to the ruins of the castle, drew something there, had lunch, walked a little more and left for Mannheim in the afternoon, [...]". Carl Blechen concludes his report on his trip to Italy in 1828/29 with these succinct sentences - on his return journey to Berlin, he stopped off in Heidelberg for a day at the end of October 1829. There he visited Heidelberg Castle, which in the first decades of the 19th century had become a symbol of an awakening patriotism directed against France against the backdrop of Napoleonic foreign rule. The castle had already been destroyed by the troops of Louis XIV during the War of the Palatinate Succession (1688-1697) and its ruins became the epitome of romanticism in the 19th century, in which nature, art and history formed an inimitable unity. It is an understatement to say that Blechen only drew something at the castle - Paul Ortwin Rave, author of Blechen's Catalogue Raisonné, which is still authoritative today, knows of five drawings of the castle (Rave 1444-1448) and Blechen continued to pursue the motif in the aftermath. At the beginning there is a small-format oil study made around 1830, which formed the basis for an unfinished painting that is now lost. In both paintings, the herb or powder tower, which served as an ammunition store and exploded during the shelling in 1693, is at the centre of the depiction. In Blechen's work, the powerful explosion that shattered the tower's mighty walls still resonates - the tower's mighty walls gape apart like an open "wound", embedded in a churning landscape, the drama of which is heightened by Blechen's special lighting. While history still echoes in Blechen's work, it has passed in our painting - in this picture of destruction, calm prevails, the ruins shine in the bright light of the sun, a shepherd leaning on his staff has settled down with his goats below the tower. It is the idyllic image of a picturesque landscape in which the ruin stands between north and south - on the left, a Dutch-inspired scene, while on the right, memories of southern ruined landscapes are evoked. Our painter conveys all this with

great attention to detail and a high painterly quality - particularly evident in the precise observation of the masonry. Other versions of the motif are known, including in Cottbus and Bremen, which were not painted by Blechen himself but were created in his immediate neighbourhood. Athanasius Graf Raczynski lists various pupils such as Georg Höhn and Friedrich Eduard Pape in his 1841 *Geschichte der neueren deutschen Kunst* immediately after Blechen's death, but it has not yet been possible to attribute the versions mentioned to any of these pupils. This also applies to our newly discovered painting, which is nevertheless evidence of the extremely high level of painterly culture in Blechen's circle - not simply a copy, but an independent interpretation of the subject, in which the painter transferred Blechen's drama into an idyllic, picturesque overall mood. Dr Peter Prange With an expertise (copy) by Dr Ludwig Grote, dated 3.2.1955 (as Carl Blechen).