

Fine Art / Wed, 15th February 2023 / Lot 20



LOT 20

Juan Manuel Blanes - A Gaucho on Horseback in a Uruguayan Prairie Landscape, 19th century oil on canvas, signed with initials recto, label verso, 112cm x 128cm, within a Watts style gilt composition frame. Provenance: Baldomero Hyacinth de Bertodano, 7th Marquis del Moral (1844-1921), Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature and resident of Cowbridge House, Wiltshire; The sale of the Contents of Cowbridge House, Messrs Matthews, Matthews & Goodman in conjunction with Messrs Dore, Fielder & Co, October 1922, lot no.137 described thus, 'A fine Oil Painting, The Gaucho on the Pampas in Argentine about 52 by 46 ins'; where purchased by Charles Edmund de Bertodano M.Inst.C.E. (1853-1926); thence by family descent. Note: Juan Manuel Blanes was one of the most important artists in the history of Uruguay, helping to shape the visual identity of the country, which was, at the time, locked in an independence battle with Spain. He was also instrumental in establishing wider Latin and South American aesthetic archetypes. The gaucho was a recurring theme in his work. Intrigued by the powerful proud landless cattle ranchers that roamed the plains of Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, Blanes stamped for posterity his vision of these characters who lived lives of seemingly utter freedom. Blanes himself said of the gaucho, 'A man among the thousands of hapless men who live in our ravaged countryside; a decent, vigorous, and intelligent man reduced by the contempt in which he is held; a man garbed in a chiripá, a rough shirt, a flimsy pair of short trousers, a vincha (headband), a bandanna handy at the neck, carrying the adornments of his trade, the bolas and belt...' Blanes' 'equestrian gauchos' were painted during 1875 to 1878. Light played a crucial element in these works; in this painting the luminous glow from the sky beyond shares the stage with the gaucho, whose pointing gesture amplifies the rising or setting sun. With thanks to Arch. Gabriel Peluffo Linari for his help with the cataloguing of this lot.

Estimate: £80,000 - £120,000

Condition Report

20. Cleaned and relined (or contracted out) by the dealership E. Stacy Marks in December 1971. The canvas is tight and the stretcher is good. Under UV only a few very small areas on the periphery of the painting, show minor areas of touching up from historic paint loss/damage. It's hard to tell whether areas of the sky have been overcleaned, or whether the artist intended wispy clouds. There are a few tiny, tiny specks of brown dirt that will probably come off easily without the need for solvent. Another cleaning/revarnishing may enhance the contrasts of the atmospheric effects and foreground. Overall good condition. Frame also in good condition.

