

S P H I N X F I N E A R T



Franz Quaglio (Munich 1844 - Wasserburg am Inn 1920)

Circassians on Horseback

signed and dated 'Franz Quaglio/ 1892' (lower right)

oil on panel

18 x 14 cm (7 x 5 1/2 in)

Dominating this small work is a Circassian horseman, as the vibrant blue of his jacket instantly draws the viewer's eye to him. In addition to this coat he also wears a tall woollen hat, typical of the Circassian people, and he bears a rifle in addition to traditional sabre, known as a *Shashka*. As he and his companion make their way slowly along the side of the cliff face, he spins in his saddle to see if they are being followed. The rider's horse, wearily bowing its head, is brilliantly depicted, as the sunlight shimmers off its coat. Franz Quaglio has depicted the horsemen making their way through long thick grass. but this indication of fertile ground is contrasted with the bright glare of the fierce sun, and the forbidding rock walls, looming above them.

Quaglio depicted the Circassians repeatedly throughout his career, their affinity with their horses making a natural subject for such a talented equestrian painter. In *Circassian Horsemen in the Caucasus* (Private Collection), Quaglio again demonstrates his talent as a horse painter, alongside his ethnographic interest and his ability to convey the harshness of the landscape in which his subjects must survive. Both works are executed on a small scale, but despite this Quaglio finds a balance between closely observed detail, and a slightly loose, expressive style.

Quaglio was born into a renowned Italian-German family of artists and architects, active from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. His initial training was from his father Simon Quaglio (1795-1878), before he joined the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he came into contact with the renowned equestrian and battle painter Joseph von Brandt (1841-1928). Quaglio usually painted genre scenes but they generally featured horses, whether in the context of Circassians, military works or images of rural life. He was a prolific painter, a testament to the popularity and demand for his works, and *Circassians on Horseback* is an excellent example of the more exotic part of his output.

Artist description:

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