

WILLOW GALLERY



Escalier d'une Maison à Labastide-du-Vert

Henri Martin (1860 - 1943)

Oil on canvas, signed.

Canvas size: 32 x 33in / 81 x 84cm

Frame size: 40 x 41in / 101 x 104cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, France – acquired directly from the artist
c.1920

Thence by decent

LITERATURE

This painting is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from Cyrille Martin and will be included in the forthcoming catalogue raisonné.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Henri Martin was born in 1860. After persuading his parents that his future lay in painting, he enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Toulouse, after which he completed his training in Paris. Martin received a solid academic training there, which heavily influenced the first part of his career. After five years of submitting traditional paintings to the Salon, during which he was awarded a first-class medal, Martin received a grant to study in Italy where he became a huge admirer of Pre-Renaissance and Renaissance painters such as Giotto and Raphael. Unusually, Martin was also becoming influenced by Seurat and the other Neo-Impressionist painters, which led him to briefly pursue a fusion of conservative Academic imagery with the short divisionist brushwork of Seurat and his followers. This period of stylistic soul searching led to several years of producing Symbolist works, which in turn led to the long series of mural commissions which made his name.

However, the big change of Martin's career can be traced to his purchase of a property in Labastide-du-Vert, north of Cahors, in 1900. Very quickly Martin abandoned the allegory and myth of Symbolist art and began to use nature as his inspiration. Alongside a continuous stream of mural commissions, he started to paint canvases in his now habitual Neo-Impressionist manner predominantly of the countryside and villages in the south of France. These paintings are now considered as among his most successful works and he continued to produce them until his death in 1943.

'Labastide-du-Vert à la fin de l'Été' is one of Henri Martin's finest paintings of the village. Painted from the gardens of his house on the hillside above, Martin has depicted the entire valley with Labastide-du-Vert in the centre. His love for the area is evident, and he presents it as a timeless rural idyll, untouched by modernity. This view of the village exists in several other paintings but this example stands apart due its size, panoramic format, and the quality of the palette and brushwork.

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