

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Ary Scheffer (Dordrecht 1795 - Argenteuil 1858)

The Vision: Dante and Beatrice (Paradiso, Canto I)

36 x 19.5 cm

Signed Ary Scheffer lower right

The present watercolour was commissioned for the wedding album given by Louis-Philippe I, King of the French 1830-1848, and Queen Maria Amelia (1782-1866) to their tenth and youngest child Antoine d'Orléans and his bride Marie-Louise, youngest daughter of King Ferdinand VII of Spain, on the occasion of the young couple's marriage on 10th October 1846. Scheffer had been appointed drawings master to the children of Louis Philippe I and Maria Amelia in 1821. He subsequently became a close friend of the family, Louis-Philippe purchasing several of his paintings for Versailles. Hugely successful in his day, at the Salon of 1831, the year Louis-Philippe was crowned King, Scheffer showed 18 canvases.

Scheffer's subject matter was frequently inspired by literature, including Goethe, Byron and Dante. Dante's transcendent love for Beatrice, as recorded both in his autobiographical story *La Vita Nuova* and in *Paradiso*, the third and final part of his epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, offered the perfect theme for inclusion in the album.

The watercolour ranks among Scheffer's finest works on paper. Executed with exquisite detail and painterly finesse, possibly reflecting the influence of his mother who was an established miniaturist, the work remains in pristine condition after over more than 170 years. A grisaille study of the present composition of the same dimensions is in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. An oil of 1846 measuring 200 x 109.5cm is in the collection of the Wolverhampton Art Gallery. A second oil painted in 1851 measuring 180 x 99cm is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. An engraving after the composition by Narcisse Lecomte (1794-1892) was published by Goupil in Paris and London and Knoedler in New York in August 1855.

Provenance

Antoine d'Orléans (1824-1890), Duke of Montpensier and Infanta Maria-Louisa

Fernanda de Bourbon (1832-1897); a wedding gift from the Orléans family on the occasion of their marriage in 1846

Princess Maria Isabelle d'Orléans (1848-1919), daughter of the above and wife of the Comte de Paris (1838-1894)

Amélie d'Orléans (1865-1952), daughter of the above and wife of King Carlos I of Portugal (1863-1908)

Comte and Comtesse de Paris (by descent from the above)

Private European Collection

Sale: Sotheby's, London, June 11, 1997, lot 10

Private Collection, purchased above, until 2022