



Firmin Baes (1874-1943)

Vieux paysan du Condroz (Old farmer from the Condroz), circa 1915

Pastel on paper

30 5/8 x 23 1/8 inches (78 x 59 cm.)

Signed 'Firmin Baes'

Provenance

Private collection, Belgium

Sale, Bernaerts Auctioneers, Brussels, 19 June 2017, lot 345

Private collection, United States

Note

Firmin Baes was born in an artistic family of framers, decorators, and architects in Brussels. His father Henri Baes (1850-1920) was a decorative painter and teacher at the Brussels Academy. Firmin studied at the Academy in Brussels from 1888 to 1894, after which he enrolled in a private academy, *La Patte de Dindon* pub on the Grand Place. There he studied under Eugène Laermans, Emile Fabry, and Victor Rousseau. While working with his father's team on large decoration assignments for restaurants and hotels, Firmin met Léon Frédéric (1856-1940), an occasional collaborator, who influenced his early work greatly. In 1900, his painting *The Archers* won a bronze medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, granting Baes international recognition. In the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, United States, he received again the bronze medal. A member of the Belgian artist's association *Pour l'Art* from 1898 onwards, Baes exhibited in their salons almost every year throughout his career. He became a member of the Société Royale des Beaux-Arts in 1919, and between 1920 and 1921 painted a memorial the Belgian army for Hôtel des Invalides in Paris.

In 1910, Baes built a large house and studio in Brussels, filled with his art collection, where he would receive visitors and patrons. He worked on a firm schedule: mornings spent on portrait sittings and posed nude models, while afternoons were devoted to still life subjects, interiors and landscapes. At first, he produced oil paintings and large charcoal drawings, eventually specializing in highly finished pastels, on canvas and paper supports, often on a large scale, notable for the high degree of reality and alluring coloration.

