



# MACCONNAL - MASON

ESTABLISHED 1893



**Jean Béraud (1849-1935)**

## **Le Pont de Bercy**

Signed, lower right: *Jean Béraud*.

Oil on canvas

18¼ x 22 in – 46.5 x 56 cm

Frame size

25⅝ x 29 in – 65.1 x 73.7 cm

### **Provenance:**

Private Collection, Scotland;  
Rutland Gallery, London by 1969;  
Private Collection, UK;  
MacConnal-Mason Gallery, London, 2005;  
Private collection, USA

### **Exhibitions**

London, Rutland Gallery, *French and Belgian Painting: Where They Meet and Diverge*, 1969, no.1  
(illustrated in the catalogue)

### **Literature:**

Patrick Offenstadt, *Jean Béraud 1849-1935, The Belle Époque, A Dream of Times Gone By, Catalogue raisonné*, Taschen, 1999, pp.156-157, no.160 illustrated

### **Artist description:**

Born in St. Petersburg, 12th January 1849.

Died in Paris, 4th October 1935.

French School.

If there is one painter who defines the Belle Époque, it is Jean Béraud. A highly successful painter who recorded Paris in the golden age, high society, salons, promenading on the Champs Élysées, the cosmopolitan Paris of the fashion house Worth, the Paris whose admiration for Scandinavian and Russian literature, Wagnerian opera, Savile Row tailors and American money, knew no bounds. Yet Béraud also recorded the popular billiard rooms, music halls of Montmartre and bars peopled with the lower reaches of society.

Jean Béraud was born in St Petersburg to French parents on 12th January 1849, his father, a sculptor, died when Béraud was four, whereupon the family returned to Paris. Here he studied at the Lycée Bonaparte and subsequently read law at the University of Paris. In 1870 he took part in the defence of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and at its end in 1872, enrolled in Léon Bonnat's (1833-1922) studio. Béraud first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1873 and continued to show his faithful renditions of High Society Paris at the Salon until 1889, in which year he became a founder of the Société National des Beaux-Arts. This came with demanding social duties; he was secretary until 1913, amongst other administrative roles. By the late 1880's Béraud had established himself as the painter of Parisian life, well connected, a friend of Marcel Proust (1871-1922), he was a part of the high society circle that he portrayed.

Béraud was highly regarded by his peers and in turn, admired and was influenced by both Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Claude Monet (1840-1926), his subject matter, in many cases the commonplace, his use of light and fluency of brushwork shows a debt to the Impressionists. He was a highly successful artist in commercial terms, the dealer Bernheim Jeune in 1907-1912, while showing Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), bought Béraud's work; he exhibited throughout Europe, in Amsterdam, Brussels, Munich, Berlin, Moscow, Vienna, London, Monaco, Florence and throughout France. He was created Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1887 and an Officer in 1892.

The end of the Belle Époque came in 1914 and, following the Great War, Béraud's output fell. In his long life, he died in 1935 at the age of 86, he produced about 500 paintings, considerably fewer than many of his contemporaries, a consequence of his commercial success and a tribute to his detailed observation and working methods.

His works can be found in museums in: London, National Gallery; Liège; Lille; Paris, Musée d'Orsay; Tours; Troyes and New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.