Edouard Léon Cortes (1882 - 1969)

A Paris view

Signed, lower left: *EDOUARD CORTES*

Oil on canvas

8⅞ x 12½ in – 22.5 x 31.5 cm

Frame size

14¼ x 17½ in – 36.2 x 44.4 cm

Artist description:

Edouard Léon Cortes was born in the town of Lagny (Seine-et-Marne) east of Paris. His father, Antonio Cortes (fl.1887-1894), a landscape painter of Spanish descent had settled in Lagny in 1855 and it was with his father that Cortes trained as an artist.

He first exhibited at the Societe des Artistes Francais in 1899; a landscape which was well received by critics, in part owing to the age of the artist, Cortes was seventeen. His early landscapes show the influence, not only of his father but the Barbizon and 'plein air' schools. It was in 1901 that Cortes showed his first Paris view, the precursor to many painted over a career of seventy years.

During the Great War, Cortes served in the Army, was wounded and awarded the Croix de Guerre. Subsequently, he returned to painting, continuing predominantly with his Paris views. He maintained a studio in Normandy for a number of years and worked there during the Second World War, painting landscapes, harbour scenes, and interiors with Breton families, in addition to his Paris works. Throughout his career, the Cortes view of Paris remained that of the pre and immediate post Great War years, Paris seen in a spirit of nostalgia with horse drawn omnibus, trams and the ever-present glow of lights shining in shop windows. Cortes exhibited with the Salon de la Societe Nationale and also showed with the Salon des Independents. His work was, and has remained extraordinarily popular throughout Europe and the United States. As early as 1903, works by Cortes were being sold on the secondary market in Paris and five years later in New York, a tribute to his popularity as a contemporary painter, a popularity that has become increasingly widespread.