



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

CHARLES AUGUSTE ÉMILE CAROLUS-DURAN (French, 1838-1917)

Bouquet de Fleurs, 1877

Oil on canvas

21½ x 51½ inches

Signed, dated and inscribed, lower center: “Carolus-Duran Montgeron 13 Août / 1877”

Best known as a portrait painter of members of French high society, Carolus-Duran, born Charles Auguste Émile Durand, received academic artistic training at the Académie de Lille in the city of his birth and at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Soon after, he traveled to Italy and Spain and was inspired by the paintings of the Old Master painter Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), who influenced his painting and teaching. Back in Paris, Carolus-Duran began his own atelier, and became known for his progressive, anti-academic teaching methods. Instead of focusing on drawing as the foundation of art education and the importance of line, the master taught his students to apply paint directly to the canvas without prior sketching or planning. Incorporating this spontaneous technique created lush compositions with a focus on color and form.

This two-paneled painting depicts an arrangement of blooming flowers located in Montgeron, France, outside of Paris. Carolus-Duran and other Impressionist artists such as Edouard Manet (1832-1883) and Claude Monet (1840-1926) frequently visited this countryside location. This image may have been painted while staying at the country estate of a patron. The rich colors and textures of this painting exemplify Carolus-Duran's spontaneous painting technique and depict the typical romantic landscape gardens of nineteenth-century France. Landscape gardens, which were influenced by English picturesque gardens, rejected the strict symmetry of seventeenth century French formal gardens. The new gardens instead sought an idealized naturalness that featured planned spaces to evoke emotions in reaction to the sublime and beautiful views, while still appearing wild or untamed. This improvisation and spontaneity found in both the painting technique and the landscape garden Carolus-Duran is depicting reflects the popular romantic ideals of wilderness and the course of nature.