LOT 69

JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES

FRENCH
1780 - 1867

THE VIRGIN WITH THE SLEEPING INFANT JESUS

oil on canvas

47 by 34 in.
119.4 by 86.3 cm

ESTIMATE $100,000-200,000 USD
Lot Sold: 233,000 USD

PROVENANCE
Raymond-Joseph-Antoine Balze (a gift from the artist)
Baron Joseph Raphaël Vitta, Lyon and Paris (and sold: Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Catalogue des tableaux modernes,
aquarelles et dessins... provenant de la Collection Baron Joseph Raphaël Vitta, June 27-28, 1924, lot 56)
M. Gradt (acquired at the above sale)
Joseph Hotermans, Paris (until 1968)
Private Collection

EXHIBITED
Paris, Palais de l'École Impériale des Beaux-Arts, Catalogue des tableaux, études peints, dessins et croquis de J.-A.-D. Ingres, 1867, no. 1
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Ingres (1780-1867), February 24-May 15, 2006, no 138

LITERATURE
Henri Delaborde, Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux, sa doctrine, d'après les notes manuscrites et les lettres du maître, Paris, 1870, p. 181, no. 10
Charles Gounod, Mémoires d'un artiste, Paris, 1896, pp. 110-2
Henry Lapauze, Les Dessins de J.A.D. Ingres du musée de Montauban, Paris, 1901 text volume, p. 148 and note 1; no. 149 (as 1827)
Jules Momméja, Collection Ingres au musée de Montauban, Paris, 1905, p. 80
Louis Flandrin, "Deux disciples d'Ingres: Paul et Raymond Balze," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, VI, no. 650, August, 1911, p. 154
Georges Wildenstein, Ingres, New York, 1954, p. 211, no. 229, illustrated fig. 144
Georges Wildenstein, Ingres (2nd, revised edition), London, 1956, p. 190, no. 133, illustrated p. 190, fig. 79
Hans Naef, "Portrait Drawings by Ingres in the Art Institute of Chicago," Museum Studies (Art Institute of Chicago), no. 1, 1966, p. 71
Emilio Radius and Ettore Camesasca, L'Opera completa di Ingres, Milan, 1968, pp. 107-8, no. 129a. illustrated p. 106
Edgar Munhall, Ingres and the Comtesse d'Haussonville, exh. cat., The Frick Collection, New York, 1985-1986, p. 56
Annalisa Zanni, Ingres: catalogo completo dei dipinti, Florence, 1990, p. 149
Georges Vigne, Ingres, Paris, 1995, p. 228, 230, 335

CATALOGUE NOTE
On a visit to Rome in 1839, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich (the future Czar Alexander II) commissioned from Ingres the devotional painting known as The Virgin with the Host (fig. 1, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow). By August 1840, the artist could report that he was well on his way to completing the composition, as well as two other major works: a version of the Portrait of Cherubini and the Muse of Lyric Poetry (Musée du Louvre, Paris). The Virgin with the Host was completed in 1841, after which it was sent to St. Petersburg where it would appear to have incurred the displeasure of the Czarevich, who had it deposited in the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in that city.
When featured in the Ingres retrospective held in Paris soon after the artist's death, the present work was described as the première pensée for The Virgin with the Host. Mary's Raphaelesque pose and hieratic expression are virtually identical in both works, as are the forms of her ample drapery. They clearly derive from Ingres' seminal Vow of Louis XIII (Cathédrale de Notre-Dame, Montauban; Wildenstein no. 155), which, when shown at the Salon of 1824, earned the artist almost overnight fame. Yet, early on, Ingres appears to have abandoned the present work, presumably for iconographic reasons. Thus, in place of the Christ Child, in the final work he substituted the Eucharist, thereby imparting a more mystical aura to that composition and providing a more austere, geometric design. Nothing suggests, however, that he was in any way dissatisfied with the painting's formal qualities. Ingres' belief in the primacy of drawing is evident throughout the present work, notably in the revised placement of the Christ Child's right forearm. It is obvious that the painting under discussion, whose dimensions are very close to those of The Virgin with the Host, was originally meant to be carried to completion. It is therefore erroneous to treat it as a première pensée for Grand Duke Alexander's painting. Its accomplished technique alone refutes this classification. It was simply abandoned mid-stream.

Fig. 1

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, The Virgin with the Host (1841, oil on canvas, 45 by 33 in.; 113.3 by 84.3 cm, Pushkin Museum, Moscow)