



Turcas, Jules (1854 - 1917)

View to the River, 1902

signed "J. Turcas" and dated "1902" lower right

oil on canvas

25 1/2" x 39 1/2"

A Barbizon Moment

Jules Turcas belonged to the first wave of artists at the Old Lyme Art Colony, a group that produced paintings in a style that has been referred to as the American Barbizon. He was born in Cuba and is first listed as a resident of New York City in 1893. In 1894, William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) produced a portrait of Turcas in Chase's well-known 10th Street Studio. The finished painting depicts the young artist as a handsome and enigmatic figure, whose dark and nearly indistinct features are echoed by the brown and black tonalities of the composition. This representation from over a century ago seems appropriate in present day, as both details of his life and examples of his artwork are surprisingly scarce.

Turcas was rediscovered to some extent in 1982 when the Lyme Historical Society and the Florence Griswold Museum published the exhibition catalogue, *Old Lyme, The American Barbizon*. It is known that he arrived in Old Lyme in 1902, and spent summers with his wife in Florence Griswold's home until the couple purchased their own on top of Grassy Hill in 1907. He exhibited with the colony for twelve consecutive seasons, and consistently received praise from reviewers of the annual Lyme exhibition.¹ He exhibited at the National Academy of Design, the Century Association, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Design, while retaining memberships in a number of notable clubs.

The deep influence of the Barbizon tradition and Turcas' colleagues, such as Henry Ward Ranger (1858-1916) and Allen Butler Talcott (1867-1908), is distinct. With a personal sensitivity to the nuances of evening light, sun dappled woodlands, and the atmosphere of the landscapes of Lyme, Turcas distinguished himself through his art. *View to the River* is a melancholy and poetic work, subdued by a palette of earth tones and amber typical of American Barbizon painters. The loose brushwork and spontaneity of application creates an extraordinary sense of movement, and the pastoral scene is bathed in a golden luminosity, details which encourage an emotional response in the viewer.

-CRM

Provenance: From a private New York collection to the gallery.

Presentation Notes: In a 4½" reproduction American Barbizon gilt cove frame. Expertly cleaned and lined.

