

William-Adolphe Bouguereau

1825–1905 | French

1888



Au bord du ruisseau

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

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Oil on canvas | 1888

Signed "W Bouguereau 1888" (upper left)

Canvas: 32" high x 40 3/4" wide | 81.28 x 103.51 cm

Frame: 47 3/8" high x 56" wide x 5" deep
120.33 x 142.24 x 12.7 cm



“

In painting, I am an idealist. I see only the beautiful in art and, for me, art is the beautiful.

- William-Adolphe Bouguereau

”



OVERVIEW



This enchanting work, painted by the majorly successful William-Adolphe Bouguereau, depicts his favored subject from the second half of his career: young women at ease in nature. This work, entitled *Au Bord du ruisseau*, masterfully captures the subtle curiosity in the child's expressive eyes. It is this charming subject that charted his rise to one of the most celebrated and important painters in French Academy history.

In the painting, a young girl rests on the sandy banks of a river. Just having removed her bright red stockings, which lay carelessly crumpled in a pile to her left, she meets the eyes of the viewer. Her slightly flushed cheeks contrast the softness of her pale skin, emphasizing the beauty that comes with youth. In addition to his skill at rendering the human figure, Bouguereau also demonstrates his expertise in depicting botanical figures. The rocky outcrop contrasts the sharpness of the bulrush (*typha latifolia*) sprouting out from the sand. Although the impossibly smooth brushwork erases Bouguereau's hand, his technical mastery of the scene is undeniable in the varying textures of her soft skin, the coarse linen of her dress and the crisp foliage behind her.

Internationally famous for his skill as a draftsman and painter of religious imagery, Bouguereau transitioned into painting genre subjects by the mid-1870s. Always keenly aware of what was trending with the art-buying public, Bouguereau became inspired by a broad cultural shift and the many summers spent in his childhood village, La Rochelle. In 1882, Bouguereau purchased a summer retreat in La Rochelle, allowing him to paint local models *en plein air* before finishing his canvases in Paris.

Unlike other artists in the 19th century who documented the arduous lives of peasants toiling in the French countryside, such as Jean-Francois Millet, Bouguereau romanticized them. The wonderment of a childhood spent in nature, running wild and free, is celebrated across Bouguereau's oeuvre, making him an exceptional commercial success in his day. Collectors on both sides of the Atlantic had to wait two to three years to purchase one of his prized paintings. In the 19th century, no American collection would have been complete without a portrait by the French Academic master. Today, his works reside in prestigious museum collections such as the Musée d'Orsay, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum. ●



PROVENANCE

Sold by the artist to Joseph Barrigan of Providence, RI, May 30, 1888

Private Collection of Dr. John Garry, Ipswich, MA

Sale, Sotheby's, New York, October 26, 1983, lot 98

Borghi & Co., New York

Private Collection, acquired from above 1985

Sale, Christie's, New York, October 31, 2018, lot 00021

Private Collection, Louisiana

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

LITERATURE

Bougeureau's accounts, as *Au bord du ruisseau, petite fille mettant ses bas*

Catalogue Braun & Clément, 1907, no. 3203, entitled *Au bord du ruisseau*

Marius Vachon, *W. Bouguereau*, Paris, A. Lahure, 1900, p. 156

M. S. Walker, "A Summary Catalogue of the Paintings" in *William Bouguereau: l'art pompier*, Borghi & Co., New York, 1991, p. 73

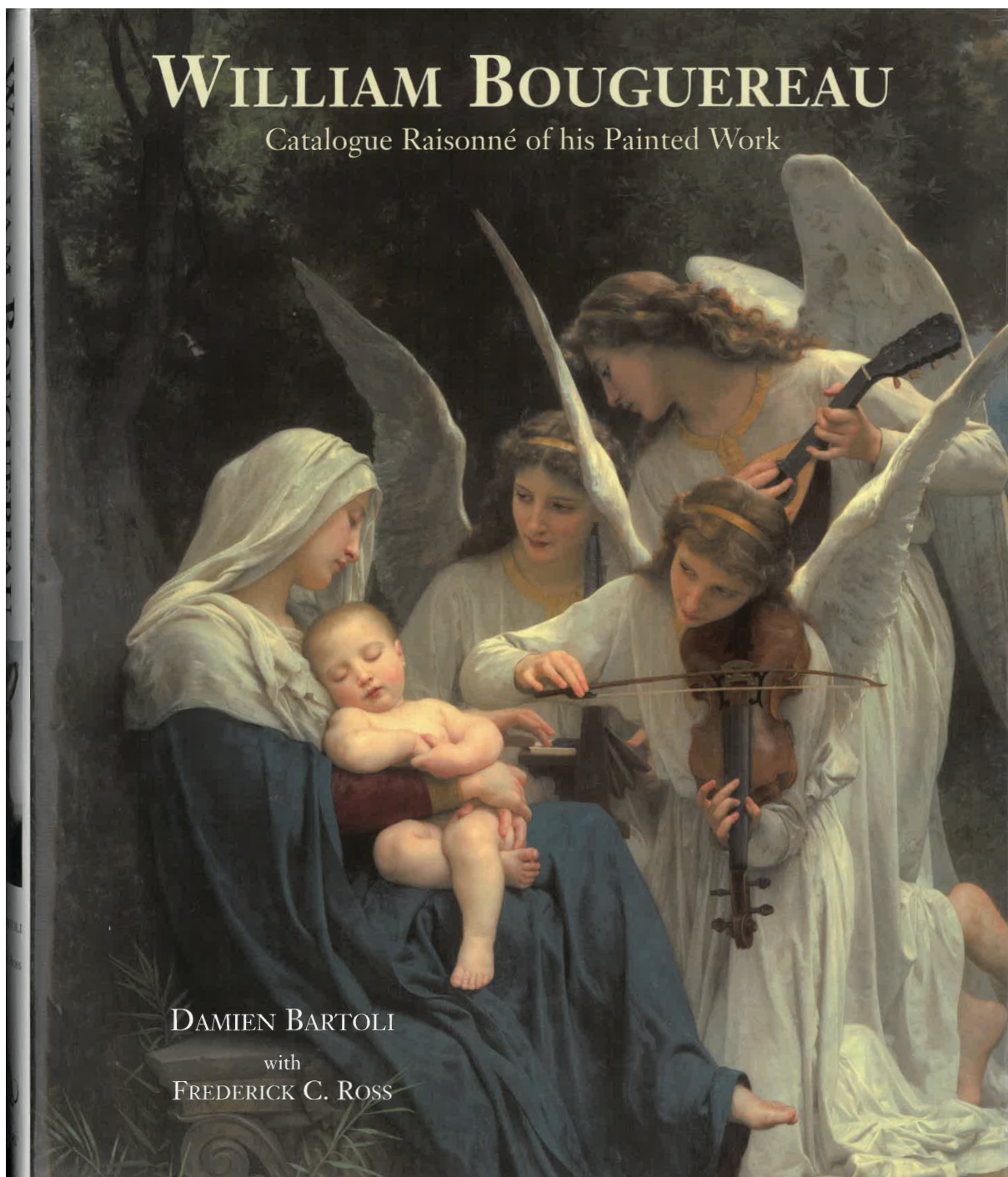
Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: Catalogue Raisonné of his Painted Work*, New York, 2010, p. 246-247, no. 1888/05 (illustrated)

Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: His Life and Works*, New York, 2010, p. 450, pl. 296 (illustrated)

EXHIBITED

Paris, 1888, *Exhibition of the Cercle Artistique et Littéraire*, no. 25





Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: Catalogue Raisonné of his Painted Work*,
New York, 2010, p. 246-247, no. 1888/05 (illustrated)



WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU

Catalogue Raisonné of his Painted Work



DAMIEN BARTOLI

with

FREDERICK ROSS

ANTIQUE COLLECTORS' CLUB

in cooperation with

The Art Renewal Center

Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: Catalogue Raisonné of his Painted Work*,
New York, 2010, p. 246-247, no. 1888/05 (illustrated)





1888/05 *Au bord du ruisseau* [The Edge of the River]

collection of Tempel Smith. Private collection, USA.

Exhibitions: Salon of 1888, no. 329. Universal Exhibition of 1889, no. 159. 'Artists of the Paris Salon,' Cummer Gallery, Jacksonville, Florida, 1964, no. 3. Isaacson and Amaya, no. 21.

Literature: Bouguereau's accounts for 1887, as *Baigneuse (l'épave)*. Catalogue of the Paris Salon of 1888, Paris: Dupont, 1888, p. 27, no. 329, as *Baigneuse*. Eugène Montrosier, *Salon de 1888*, Paris, 1888, p. 24. Braun & Clément catalogue (s.l., n.d.), photograph no. 3089, entitled *Baigneuse*, in several sizes. Vachon, p. 156, as *Baigneuse*. Isaacson and Amaya, p. 27, no. 21. Walker, p. 73.



1888/02 *Premier deuil* [First Bereavement]

246

1888/02

Plate 191

Premier deuil [First Bereavement]

Oil on canvas 203 x 252cm (79 1/2 x 99 1/2 in.)
Signed and dated 1888, bottom left

Provenance: Sold directly Dec. 1889 to M. Francisco Uriburu of Buenos Aires, 20,000F. Delivered to M. Ary-Desprez (Bouguereau's accounts). Private collection of Francisco Uriburu of Buenos Aires. Donated by his heirs in 1939 to Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Exhibitions: Salon of 1888, no. 328. Universal Exhibition, Paris, 1889. Paris-Montreal-Hartford exhibition, 1984-1985, no. 117.

Literature: Bouguereau's accounts and family letters, as *Premier deuil*. Catalogue of the Paris Salon of 1888, Paris: Dupont, 1888, p. 27, no. 329. Illustrated catalogue of the Salon of 1888, Paris: Baschet, 1888, p. 289. Gyp. *Bob au Salon*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1888, pp. 29-30. F. Bourmano. *Paris-Salon de 1888*. Eugène Montrosier, 'Salon de 1888,' Paris: 1888. Georges Lafenestre, *Le livre d'or du Salon de Peinture et de Sculpture 1888*, p. 34, no. 328. Franqueville 1895, p.

370. Vachon, p. 156, under the year 1887. Braun & Clément catalogue (s.l., n.d.), photograph no. 3183, in several sizes. Eduardo Schiaffino, *La Pintura y la Escultura en Argentina*. Buenos Aires: 1933, pp. 344-346. d'Argencourt & Walker, no. 117. Walker, p. 73. **Notes:** The painting shows Adam and Eve grieving over their dead son Abel who was murdered by his brother, Cain.

1888/03

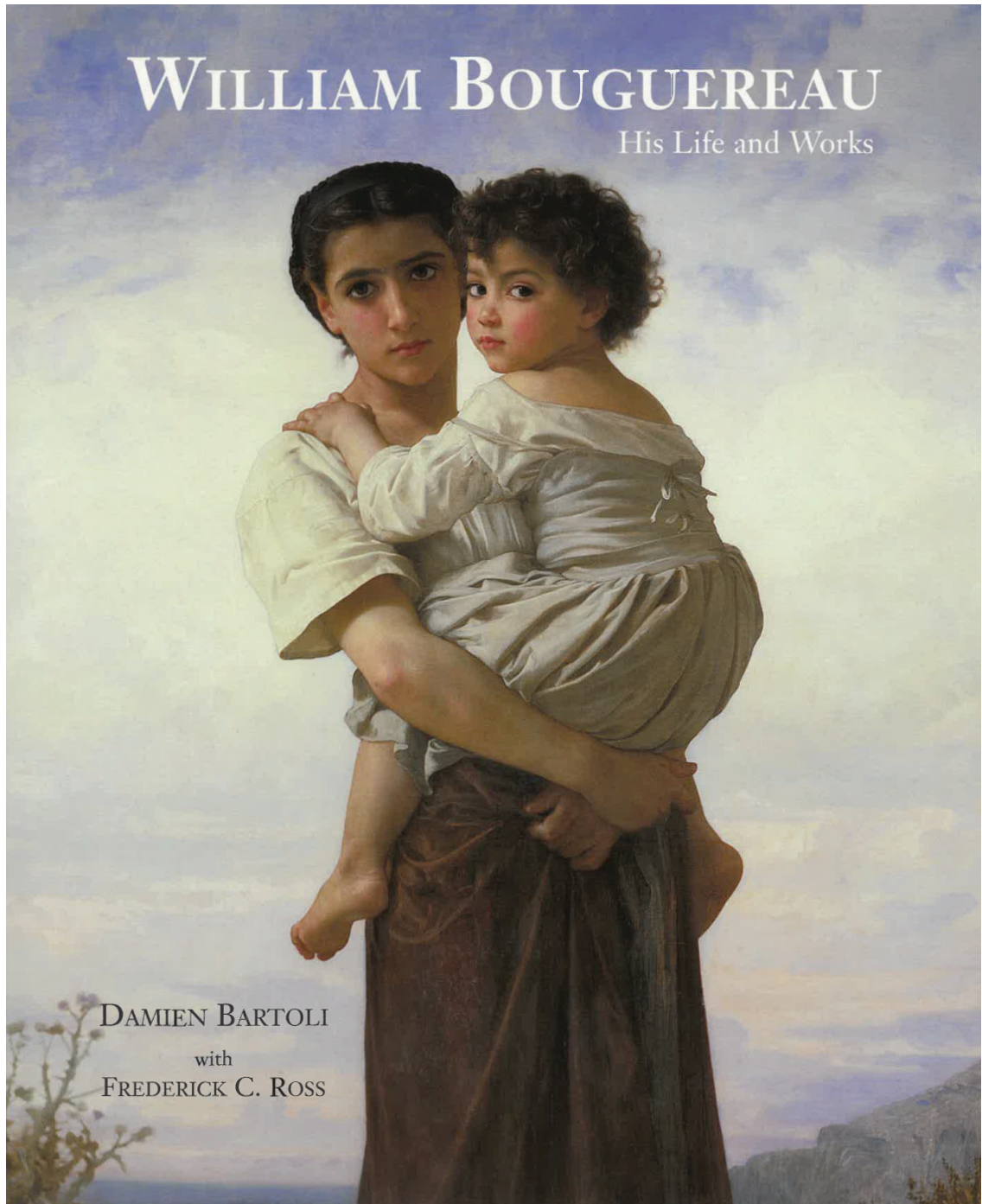
Madone assise [Seated Madonna]

Oil on canvas 176.5 x 103cm (69 1/2 x 40 1/2 in.)

Signed and dated 1888, top left

Provenance: Sold directly, May 26, 1888 by Bouguereau to M. Paumure Gordon, Hatton Court, London, through his Paris correspondent Bronson Willett, 56 rue de Provence; 30,000F + 570F for framing and conveyance to the rail station. Mr. Gordon sold it to Tooth & Sons on Dec. 12, 1898. Purchased by British Government, May 11, 1899, on the advice of a committee of experts headed by Harry P. Gill and Sir Edward Poynter, Director of the National Gallery. Transferred to Government of South Australia, Sir John Cockburn, Agent-General of South Australia, in 1899. Assigned to Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia.

Literature: Bouguereau's accounts for 1888, as *Madone assise*. Walker, p. 73. **Notes:** There is an engraving of this painting by Alfred Joseph Annedouche. It was paid for by Bouguereau himself. (See Bouguereau's accounts for Aug. 1888; the balance owing was paid in June 1889.) The model for the baby also appears in the painting *Frère et sœur* (1887). The girl who posed for this picture would be used again by Bouguereau in *La Vierge aux lys* of 1899, but her upper body only.



Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: His Life and Works*,
New York, 2010, p. 450, pl. 296 (illustrated)



WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU

His Life and Works



DAMIEN BARTOLI

with

FREDERICK ROSS

ANTIQUE COLLECTORS' CLUB

in cooperation with
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Damien Bartoli and Frederick C. Ross, *William Bouguereau: His Life and Works*,
New York, 2010, p. 450, pl. 296 (illustrated)





Plate 296. (1888/05). *Au bord du ruisseau* [*The Edge of the River*]. 81 x 103cm (31½ x 40½in.) PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

This 1888 *Au bord du ruisseau* is an especially captivating work which like so many reminds the viewer about the vulnerability of childhood and the unparalleled responsibility of the adults in their world to nurture and protect them. She is probably taking her socks off to wade in the nearby stream, as there is no sign of anything yet wet or rumpled from play. Always the artist would search for the most poetic way to depict his subject and certainly her left foot, stretching out, creates a challenge of distinct difficulty in modeling, which as always our master

accomplishes with near perfection. Again and again we see uniquely challenging yet familiar anatomical positions which are dispatched with a reliability that is breath-taking in its seamless dependability. Her right foot and two hands are all forced compositionally into a very small area which gives us no hint of the trouble such an ensemble would have caused a lesser hand. Secure and lovingly she returns the viewer's gaze, perhaps to ask us how well she is doing as a 'timeless little girl' speaking to to all the 'timeless parents' who will gaze on her over the ages.

In addition to the books he loved, Bouguereau (much like Rembrandt) purchased quantities of drawings,⁵⁵ pastels, water-colors,⁵⁶ engravings,⁵⁷ etchings,⁵⁸ and lithographs. Furthermore, as photography made more and more progress, he obtained hundreds of photographs of paintings, statues and famous buildings, as well as of simple street scenes and rural life in both European and exotic lands.⁵⁹ He also appreciated photographs that gave an impression of relief thanks to the stereoscope.⁶⁰

On the other hand our artist professed to love music but rarely found time for it.⁶¹ The musical events that he attended, therefore, were often the music of composers or performers whose reputation was legendary, but it was only on rare occasions that he attended a concert or an opera. If he did so it was generally in some official capacity, or in response to a cordial

invitation from a colleague from the Institute.⁶² However, like the excellent father he was, the artist claimed to have a strong liking for the piano, although this seems to have been particularly so in speaking of moments when his daughter Henriette was playing!⁶³

In short, he was interested in many subjects and sometimes could derive inspiration for his work from unexpected places. Bouguereau was eager to inform himself about the advances being made in science and technology as well as their new applications. In this respect he was very far from being conservative, and even seems to have burned with impatience to learn of new advances. A number of specialized works from his library provide evidence of this.⁶⁴

Bouguereau was a great lover of nature. Generally speaking he loved every 'work of the divine creator.' In particular, he was



MARIUS VACHON

W. BOUGUEREAU

PARIS

A. LAHURE, IMPRIMEUR-ÉDITEUR

9, RUE DE FLEURUS, 9

MDCCC

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Marius Vachon, *W. Bouguereau*, Paris, A. Lahure, 1900, p. 156



LA BOURRIQUE.
PARURE DES CHAMPS.

1885

MÉDITATION.
JEUNE FILLE ALLANT A LA FONTAINE.
FEMME ET AMOUR CAPTIF.
JEUNE FILLE A LA CRUCHE.
JEUNE BERGÈRE.
JEUNE FILLE PORTANT UNE CRUCHE.
FEMME AU COQUILLAGE.

1886

LE PRINTEMPS.
PETITE FILLE ACCROUPIE.
AU PIED DE LA FALAISE.
LE PELOTON DE LAINE.
LA SŒUR AINÉE.
BERGÈRE.
LA SOIF.
PETITE TRICOTEUSE ASSISE.
TÊTE DE PETITE FILLE.

1887

L'AMOUR VAINQUEUR.

1888





L'AMOUR AU PAPILLON.
BAIGNEUSE.
PREMIER DEUIL.
JEANNE.
BERGÈRE.
AU BORD DU RUISSEAU.
PETITE BOUDEUSE.
DÉCORATION DE LA CHAPELLE DE LA VIERGE, DANS L'ÉGLISE DE SAINT-
VINCENT-DE-PAUL, A PARIS.

1889

CHANSONS DU PRINTEMPS.
PORTRAIT DE M^{lle} AVON.



AUCTION COMPARABLES

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  | <p>1</p> <p>Title Description Medium Year of Work Size Misc. Sale of Estimate Sold For</p> | <p>William-Adolphe Bouguereau</p> <p>Chansons de printemps William Adolphe Bouguereau (French, 1825-1905) Chansons de printemps signed and dated 'W oil on canvas 1889 Height 58.3 in.; Width 39 in. / Height 148 cm.; Width 99 cm. Signed Christie's New York: Monday, October 28, 2019 [Lot 00214] European Art Part I 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD 3,615,000 USD Premium</p> |
|  | <p>6</p> <p>Title Description Medium Year of Work Size Misc. Sale of Estimate Sold For</p> | <p>William-Adolphe Bouguereau</p> <p>L'Orientale à la grenade (Girl with a pomegranate) signed W-BOUGUEREAU and dated 1875 (lower left)oil on canvas oil on canvas 1875 Height 23.5 in.; Width 18 in. / Height 59.6 cm.; Width 45.7 cm. Signed Sotheby's New York: Friday, May 4, 2012 [Lot 00027] 19th Century European Art 500,000 - 700,000 USD 2,322,500 USD Premium</p> |
|  | <p>8</p> <p>Title Medium Year of Work Size Misc. Sale of Estimate Sold For</p> | <p>William-Adolphe Bouguereau</p> <p>Le déjeuner du matin oil on canvas 1887 Height 35.7 in.; Width 22 in. / Height 90.8 cm.; Width 55.9 cm. Signed Sotheby's New York: Friday, April 18, 2008 [Lot 00033] 19th Century European Art including The Orientalist Sale 1,200,000 - 1,500,000 USD 2,057,000 USD Premium</p> |
|  | <p>10</p> <p>Title Medium Year of Work Size Misc. Sale of Estimate Sold For</p> | <p>William-Adolphe Bouguereau</p> <p>Glaneuse oil on canvas 1894 Height 42 in.; Width 25.6 in. / Height 106.7 cm.; Width 65 cm. Signed Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, October 23, 2007 [Lot 00041] 19th Century European Art 700,000 - 1,000,000 USD 1,833,000 USD Premium</p> |



William-Adolphe Bouguereau | *Childhood Idyll*

1900

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 40^{1/4} x 51^{1/2} inches | 102.23 x 130.81 cm



William-Adolphe Bouguereau | *The Young Shepherdess*

1885

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 28^{1/2} x 62 inches | 72.4 x 157.5 cm



BALBOA PARK
THE SAN DIEGO
MUSEUM OF ART

San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego, CA, United States



William-Adolphe Bouguereau | *Young Girl*

1886

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 63^{1/4} x 30^{1/4} inches | 160.65 x 76.83 cm



William-Adolphe Bouguereau | *Breton Brother and Sister*

1871

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 50^{7/8} x 35^{1/8} inches | 129.2 x 89.2 cm



**THE
MET**

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, United States



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