

Comte Henri Geoffroy DE RUILLE (1842-1922)

LA CROUPADE or «Air relevé»

Horse Museum (complete harnessing, Saumur)

Bronze, richly shaded dark brown patina

H : 53 cm, L : 57.4 cm, D : 17 cm

Artist example signed «Cte. G. de Ruillé» (complete harnessing),
in deposit at «Boudet, 43 Bd Capucines, Paris»
(engraved inscription on the base profile).

Circa 1910

*Beautiful edition as usual for this sculptor and depositary
(one of both examples identified with this harnessing).*



There is little information on the artistic training of Count Henri Geffroy de Ruillé, whose great-grandfather, a member of the nobility from Anjou like himself, was executed in January 1794. He exhibited regularly at the Salon from 1884 to 1921, focusing on equestrian subjects. At the time, he lived at 34 rue François I^{er} in Paris. Initially, the works exhibited were mainly in plaster. He began with portraits of horses and riders before moving on to the world of racing, as evidenced by the titles *Le départ* (1886), *Le dernier effort, chevaux de steeple-chase* (1887), *La rentrée du vainqueur* (1888), and the two plasters from 1894, *Étude de cheval de course* and *Une arrivée*. From 1895 onwards, the horse remained at the heart of the study, but the field went beyond the world of racing to linger on more historical and military subjects, such as *Sa majesté Nicholas II* (1898), an equestrian portrait of a cuirassiers officer (1902), a *Dragon du Premier Empire* (1905) or his *Murat à Eylau* (1907). At the beginning of the 20th century, success was undoubtedly on the cards, as the sculptures exhibited at the Salon were now mainly in bronze, with a particular mention of the technique used for the bronzes, as it is said that his *Relais de poste* in 1903 and his *Amazone* in 1904 are in lost wax.



Ruillé, *la Croupade*, bronze, Saumur, Musée du Cheval, inv. 957.5.3139.

chosen to show us the practice that leads to perfect mastery of the exercise required of the horse. One of the constants in the work of the Comte de Ruillé is the representation of the animal in movement.

A rider himself, he rarely turned his back on the world of horses, even though he was reputed to enjoy hunting, particularly hounding.

Our *Croupade* is certainly the most complete version and the most faithful to the traditional harnessing of the horse equipped for this figure. It was the property of a former Cadre Noir Ecuyer from Saumur. We know a simplified version of this subject with more anecdotal equipment and a fence. The name Boudet, 43 Bd Capucines, Paris, engraved on the profile of the terrace is a guarantee of the quality of the cast and the workmanship. Only one other comparable example is now in the Château-musée du cheval de Saumur (inv. 957.5.3139).

