

MAURICE UTRILLO
(1883 - 1955)

Place Jean-Baptiste-Clément

Oil on cradled panel
51.3 x 76.2 cm (20$^{1}/_{4}$ x 30 inches)
Signed towards lower right, *Maurice. Utrillo. V.*
Executed *circa* 1918

Provenance
Galerie Marcel Bernheim, Paris

Weill Collection, Zürich

Galerie Römer, Zürich, no. 53

Private Collection, Zürich, acquired from the above in 1963, until at least 1982

Private Collection, thence by descent

Literature
Paul Pétridès, *L'Œuvre Complet de Maurice Utrillo*, Paris, 1962, vol. II, no. 739, p.226 (illustrated n.p.)

Exhibitions
Bern, Kunstmuseum, *Maurice Utrillo*, 19th January - 17th March 1963, no. 67 (illustrated)

This work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Comité Utrillo.

Painted *circa* 1918, this Utrillo oil depicts Place Jean-Baptiste-Clément, a street located in the heart of Montmartre, Paris. During the twentieth century, Montmartre was known for being an artistic and intellectual hub, home to artists such as Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani and André Derain. Utrillo was born in the district and remained there for the majority of his life, using a muted colour palette to capture the streets of his neighbourhood. His mother, Suzanne Valadon, was an artist herself and had modelled for the likes of Degas, and Renoir – both of whom were rumoured to have been Utrillo's father. Consequently, Utrillo was surrounded by art for the entirety of his life, becoming an established figure amongst modernist circles.

He became revered for his metaphysical approach, which involved capturing the rigidity of the architecture and melancholy of the streets. As illuminated in *Place Jean-Baptiste-Clément*, Utrillo focused upon structure within his paintings and favoured a pronounced sense of space. He gives the architecture a strong presence, rendering elements such as the wrought-iron fence and shutters with precision. The prism-shaped building is likely to be the old reservoir, which while having a new roof, remains on the site in Paris today. His inclusion of people in the distance, not only emphasises Utrillo's interest in perspective but gives the work an emotional weight and provides a subtle sense of narrative. When including figures within his work, Utrillo would often depict them in transit or position them away from the foreground. He uses their anonymity in combination with the soft tonal quality to create a sombreness.

Realised *circa* 1918, this painting was executed during the last year of Utrillo's 'White Period', where he used zinc white abundantly and often mixed plaster into paint. This method allowed him to produce his very specific urban landscapes and contributed to his rendering of texture and architectural detailing. The rawness invoked by the method, emphasised the imperfections of the city street and allowed him to thoroughly engage with the mood in Paris during the First World War. It was during the late 1910's that he was painting fervently and solidifying his reputation as a respected artist.

Despite his life-long battle with alcoholism, Utrillo achieved a remarkable amount, exhibiting at the Salon d'Automne and Salon des Indépendants, and receiving the Légion d'Honneur in 1928. Considered one of the pioneers of The School of Paris, Utrillo is seen as a central figure to Parisian bohemianism and today, his work can be found in collections across the globe. As such, he is highly collectible internationally, with a strong following, particularly in Asia.

This original work of art by Maurice Utrillo is available for sale.