

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM  
FINE ARTS

**JEAN-LOUIS FORAIN**

Reims 1852 – Paris 1931  
French School

**AT THE RACES**

Oil on canvas  
H. 0,27 m; W. 0,38 m  
Dedicated upper left: *amicalement / j. l. forain*

DATE: c. 1885

PROVENANCE: Private collection

Forain entered the studio of Gérôme at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts and then became a draughtsman chronicling society for various Parisian newspapers. He frequented different circles at the time, the world of spectacles, theatre and literature. He noted and illustrated the quirks of each of these milieus with a critical outline, faithful in this to the spirit of the time, agitated by financial, stock market, society, and political scandals. The quality of his graphic manner should be compared to his contemporaries Daumier and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Forain made a dozen or so paintings on the theme of horse racing.<sup>1</sup> He paid less attention to rendering the landscape than the human figure. Like a chronicler, Forain created multiple studies of the ambitious or pretentious bourgeois standing on their seats or distant, on the edge of the racecourse chatting to ladies. He did not paint from life, but made several sketches and then reused them in the studio. A pastel (private collection) studies the couple in our painting, which can also be found in his composition, *Souvenir of Chantilly*, which Forain exhibited at the eighth Impressionist Exhibition in 1886.



Forain, *At the Races*, c. 1885, pastel on paper, private collection.



Forain, *Souvenir of Chantilly*, 1886, oil on canvas, Galerie Schmit, Paris.

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<sup>1</sup> *Jean-Louis Forain (1852-1931). 'La comédie parisienne'*, exh. cat. Petit Palais, Paris, 10 March – 5 June 2011, p. 82.