

26 *Indian Rhinoceros* ca. 1850s

Watercolor and gouache, highlighted with gum arabic, some scraping (on the animal's back, shoulder, and head), on ivory laid paper affixed to artist board 8 1/4 x 7 1/2 inches (212 x 189 mm)
Signed at lower right in brown watercolor, BARYE

ANTOINE-LOUIS BARYE (see also cat. no. 25) was the nineteenth century's most prominent artist of animal subjects. Best known in his lifetime for his bronze sculptures, he also was a talented draftsman and watercolorist whose animal portraits in watercolor found an eager audience among collectors in the 1850s.

The Martin watercolor is one of only two created by Barye of the rhinoceros. The other depicts a pair of the animals (fig. 1). He made at least two drawings of the animal, which were included in an 1875 *École des Beaux-Arts* exhibition in Paris, but appears never to have represented them in the medium of sculpture.¹

Barye's model—a young, single-horned Indian rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros unicornis*—is thought to be the animal that went on display at the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris on March 22, 1850, the first of the species recorded in the city since 1818.² Rhinoceroses had been objects of curiosity in the West since antiquity and regularly were transported to Europe for display in private menageries and later public zoos.³ An Indian rhinoceros brought to a Lisbon zoo in 1515 was made famous by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), whose print was widely disseminated throughout Europe.

As was his practice, Barye probably began by making a pencil study of his subject from life at the zoo. Following the example of his animal portraits in watercolor, he portrayed his subject alone in a starkly simplified landscape. The high horizon line—an indeterminate terrain of

inky gray rock or dense, black-green forest—serves to dwarf the animal, whose true size—about ten feet in length, five feet in height, and weighing about a ton⁴—is disguised by the absence of any object with which to judge scale. The landscape's muted palette of browns, ochres, and grays extends to the animal itself, serving to further diminish it. The effect of Barye's design for the watercolor is to neutralize the usual menacing appearance of this wild animal, an effect seen to an even greater degree in the second of his two watercolors, where the pair appears to be lolling almost playfully on the ground.

PROVENANCE: Albert Sancholle Henraux (1891–1953), Paris and (later) Chantilly, by 1936; private collection; Charles-Otto Ziesenis (1915–2000), Paris, by 1985; from whom acquired by Wildenstein, New York, 1985; from which acquired by Esmond Bradley Martin, 2012; on long-term loan to the Denver Art Museum, inv. 4.2012.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Charles-Otto Ziesenis, *Les Aquarelles de Barye: Etude critique et catalogue raisonné*, Paris, 1954, pp. 22–23, 82, no. K1, pl. 35; *French Nineteenth Century Watercolors, Drawings, Pastels, Paintings and Sculpture*, exh. cat., Shepherd Gallery, New York, 1983, n.p., under no. 26; G. F. Berge, "Barye, Antoine-Louis," in *The Dictionary of Art*, London, 1996, III, p. 315; William R. Johnston and Simon Kelly, *Untamed: The Art of Antoine-Louis Barye*, exh. cat., Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 2007, p. 227, under no. 113.

EXHIBITIONS: Petit Palais, Paris, *Gros, ses amis et ses élèves*, exh. cat., 1936, no. 135; *Galerie Telesco frères*, Paris, *Aquarelles et dessins de Barye et Rodin*, exh. cat., 1949, no. 2; *Galerie Alfred Dabert*, Paris, *Aquarelles de Barye*, exh. cat., 1956, no. 28; Wildenstein, New York, *The Wild Kingdom of Antoine-Louis Barye (1795–1875): A Loan Exhibition for the Benefit of the Wildlife Conservation Society*, exh. cat. by Joseph Baillio, 1994, pp. 24, 90, 126, no. 95, repr. (color).



FIG. 1: Antoine-Louis Barye, *Pair of Rhinoceroses*, ca. 1850–54. The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA 1996.48.18809). The George A. Lucas Collection, purchased with funds from the State of Maryland, Laurence and Stella Bendann Fund, and contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations throughout the Baltimore community.

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1. Johnston and Kelly 2007, p. 227 and n.3. A red-chalk drawing of a rhinoceros in profile is in the collection of the Musée Bonnat, Bayonne, France. I thank Dr. L. C. Rookmaaker for this reference.

2. Ziesenis 1954, p. 22; L. C. Rookmaaker, *The Rhinoceros in Captivity*, The Hague, 1998, p. 97.

disputes Ziesenis's assertion that the Paris rhino was the animal that belonged to the Huguot menagerie.

3. Rookmaaker 1998, p. 33.

4. Dimensions and weight provided by Dr. L. C. Rookmaaker; correspondence with the author, October 14, 2012.

