

Case 3

Antoine-Louis Barye

French, 1796–1875

Turkish Horse (Left Leg Raised), modeled ca. 1844

Bronze, presumed sand cast

This work is one of the finest examples of Barye's talent for rendering animal subjects in sculpture with an unrivaled degree of naturalistic realism. The horse's arched posture and open mouth are carefully designed to emphasize the perceived intake of breath and infuse the sculpture with life. The tension implied by the animal's stretched form creates a physical resonance in the viewer, adding a dimension of immediate identification that seems intended to heighten the emotional experience before the work. The independence and freedom conveyed by the gesture also impart an aspect of dignity to the horse that raises the figure to the level of symbolic expression. This seamless combination of dramatic realism and expressivity in the work makes it an exemplary sculpture of the Romantic movement.

Copper: 86.8%, Zinc: 5.0%, Tin: 4.6%, Lead: 0.4%, additional trace elements

Gift of Mrs. Nelson L. St. Clair Jr., in celebration of VMFA's 75th anniversary, 2010.91

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