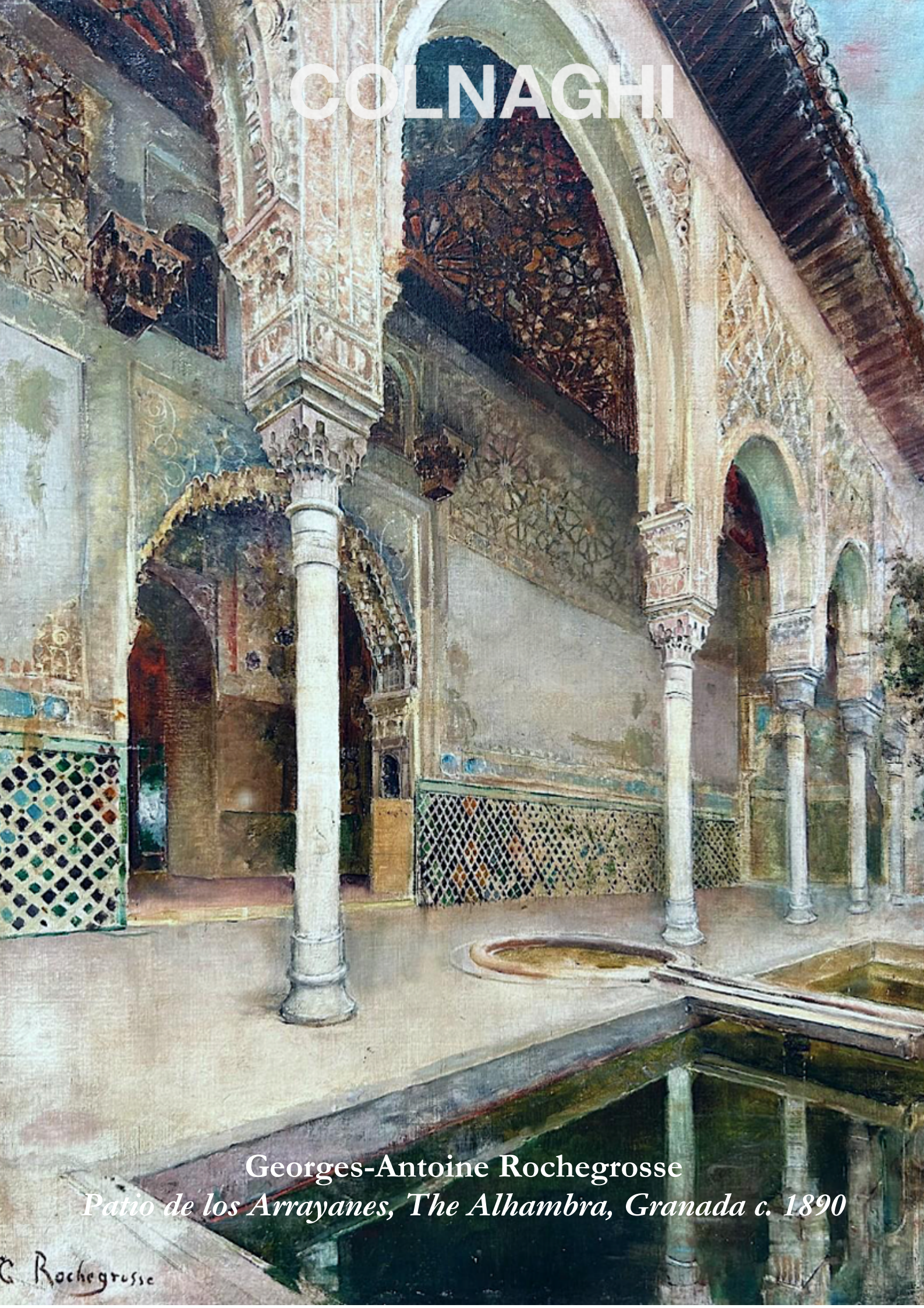


COLNAGHI



Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse
Patio de los Arrayanes, The Alhambra, Granada c. 1890

© Rochegrosse

COLNAGHI

GEORGES-ANTOINE ROCHEGROSSE

(Versailles 1859 – 1938 El Biar)

*ENTRANCE TO THE HALL OF THE AMBASSADORS, THE ALHAMBRA, GRANADA,
C. 1890*

Oil on canvas

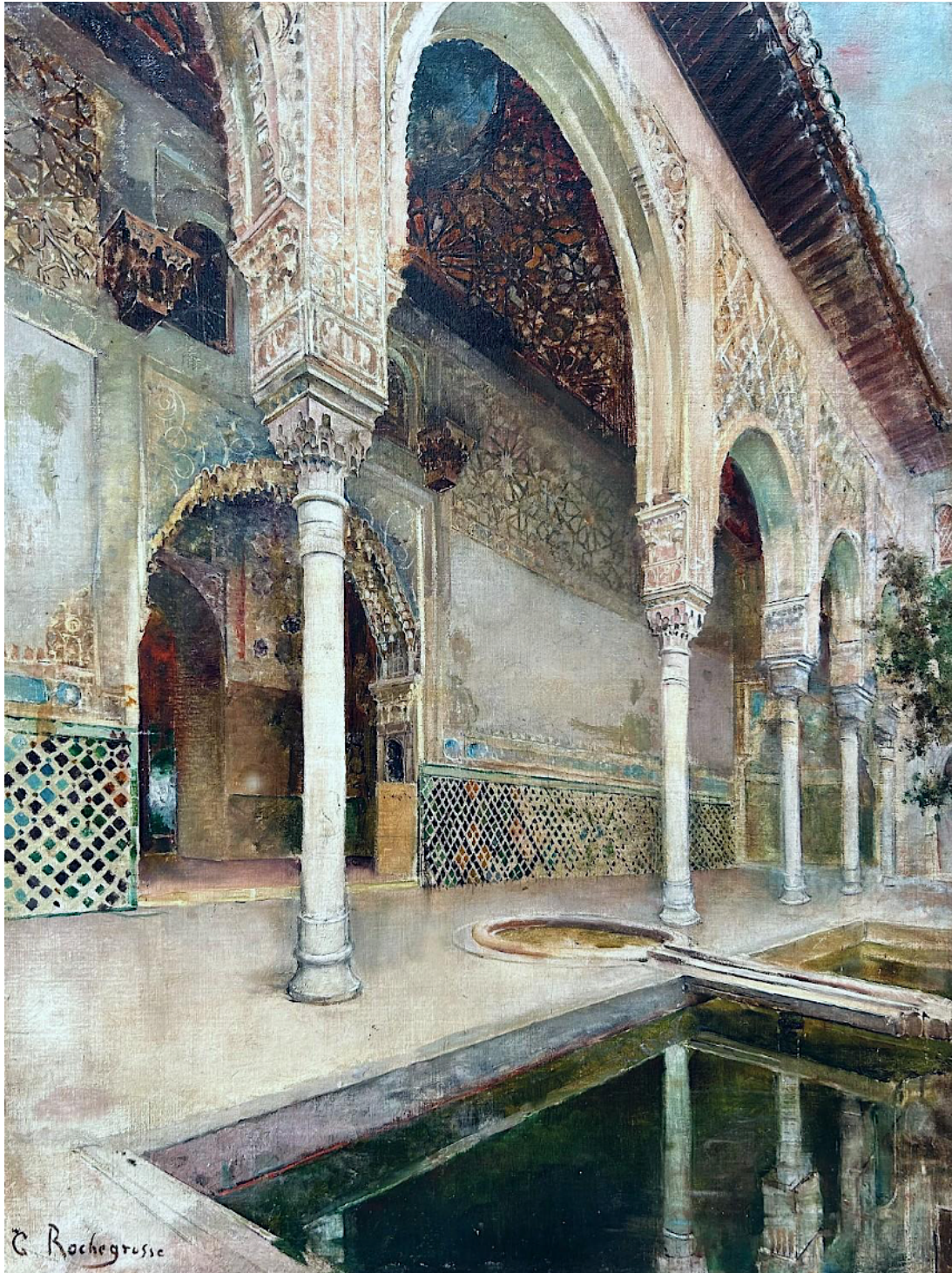
68 x 50 cm; (26 3/4 x 19 3/4 in.)

Signed lower left: "G. Rochegrosse"

Provenance

Private collection.

COLNAGHI



LONDON

NEW YORK

MADRID

BRUSSELS

COLNAGHI

This tranquil depiction of the Patio of the Arrayanes: the courtyard situated at the entrance of the Hall of the Ambassadors at the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain constitutes an important place within the corpus of Georges Antoine Rochegrosse (1859 – 1938). Remarkably devoid of human figures, unlike many Orientalist scenes teeming with life - directs attention to the architecture's geometric harmony. Sunlight filters through the arcade, illuminating the *cour d'honneur* with a warm glow. The scalloped arcades and intricate stucco "arabesque" carvings are characteristic of Islamic architecture. In the center, a narrow reflecting pool runs along the courtyard's length, its still water mirroring the arcades and casting soft light onto surrounding walls. Decorative *zellij* tilework lines the lower walls. Such attention to authentic detail reflects the influence of Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse's academic training under Gustave Boulanger - himself an Orientalist painter who had famously depicted the *Courtyard of Dar Khdaouedj el Amia* in Algiers.

The composition showcases the Islamic architectural décor as the true protagonist, undisturbed by narrative action. It also reflects a broader shift noted by art historians: by the 1890s, Orientalist art had begun to emphasize mood over story, often approaching the Symbolist in its evocative, dream-like presentations of the East. Within this tradition of architectural Orientalism, spanning from David Roberts' travel illustrations to Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant's grand Moroccan palace scenes teeming with courtiers and wild animals, Rochegrosse offers here a more intimate and perhaps introspective caprice.

The Alhambra, located in Granada, Spain, stands as one of the most remarkable surviving examples of Islamic architecture in Europe. Its origins trace to the mid-13th century, when the Nasrid emir Mohammed I ibn al-Ahmar established it as a royal citadel atop the Sabika Hill. Over the following century, successive Nasrid rulers, notably Yusuf I and Mohammed V, transformed the Alhambra into a sophisticated palatial complex characterised by intricate stucco work, arabesque ornamentation and harmonious integration of architecture, water and landscape. Following the Christian Reconquista in 1492, the Alhambra became the site of the Catholic Monarchs' court, symbolising the cultural convergence in post-Islamic Al-Andalus. And would later be under the reign of Emperor Charles V. Though, periods of neglect and damage occurred, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars, 19th-century Orientalist and Romantic travelers and scholars revived global fascination with the site. Today, the Alhambra endures as a UNESCO World Heritage monument, embodying the artistic, political and spiritual ideals of medieval Al-Andalus and its paramount legacy in global architectural history.

COLNAGHI

Constructed during the reign of Yusuf I (1333–1354) and completed by his successor Mohammed V (1354–1391), the Hall of the Ambassadors, situated by the Comares Tower of the Alhambra's Nasrid Palace complex served as the principal audience chamber of the Nasrid emirs - a space where diplomatic receptions and negotiations with Christian emissaries would have taken place. Its architectural design, punctuated by a soaring 17-metre-high wooden dome, embodies the celestial order and divine legitimacy of the ruler.

The present painting would have been painted before Rochemgrosse's travels to North Africa which commenced in 1894, starting in Algeria, when he was likely travelling through Granada. The artist's first trip to Algeria was undertaken to gather material for an envisioned illustration of Gustave Flaubert's novel *Salammbô*, set in ancient Carthage and marked a turning point in his career. He married a French Algerian woman, Marie Leblond, in 1896 and from 1900 the couple settled seasonally in El-Biar, on the hills overlooking Algiers. There Rochemgrosse had a villa, *Djenan Meryem*, lavishly decorated with oriental ceramics, textiles, Mashrabiya woodwork and even Greco-Roman columns, all of which the artist reproduced in many of his paintings. Immersed in the environment that had once been exotic to him, Rochemgrosse became a leading figure in the local art scene: he taught at the École des Beaux-Arts of Algiers and was feted as a master of Algerian painting, serving as honorary president of several Algerian art salons. In recognition of his artistic merit, after winning the Prix du Salon in 1883 for a history painting, he was appointed "Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur" in 1892 and was elevated to "Officier" in 1910.

COLNAGHI

COLNAGHI *London*

26 BURY STREET, LONDON SW1Y 6AL
UNITED KINGDOM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM-6PM

+44 (0)20 7491 7408

contact@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *Madrid*

CALLE GENERAL CASTAÑOS 9
PLANTA BAJA, DCHA.
28004 MADRID

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
BY APPOINTMENT

spain@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *New York*

23 EAST 67TH STREET, FOURTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10065
USA

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM-6PM

+1 (917) 388-3825

newyork@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *Brussels*

RUE JACQUES JORDAENS 30
1000 BRUXELLES
BELGIUM

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

brussels@colnaghi.com