
REDISCOVERY
OF AN EXCLUSIVE PAINTING
BY INDONESIAN ARTIST
RADEN SALEH

REDISCOVERY OF AN EXCLUSIVE PAINTING BY INDONESIAN ARTIST RADEN SALEH



WINTER SALE
SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2025, 2:00 P.M.

32, place des Lices
35000 Rennes

Contact : Maître Carole Jézéquel
+33 (0)2 99 31 58 00
art@rennesencheres.com

Expert : Alexis Bordes
4, rue de la Paix
75002, Paris

+ 33(0)1 47 70 43 30
+ 33(0)6 10 80 64 34
expert@alexis-bordes.com

ALEXIS BORDES

TABLEAUX & DESSINS



Raden Saleh (Indonésie, Semarang, 1807 - Bogor City, 1880)

Portrait of Joseph Le Bron de Vexela (1793–1853)

Oil on canvas

61.5 x 50 cm

Signed and dated in red 'R. Saleh 1836' lower left

The son of a disgraced Javanese aristocratic family, Raden Saleh was born in Indonesia in 1807. Trained by Dutch painter Antoine Payen (1792–1853), his precocious talent was noticed early on. This enabled him to travel to the Netherlands in July 1829, where he obtained a pension as a ward of the state.

Exposed to the masterpieces of the old masters, Raden Saleh perfected his brushwork. His artistic ability was quickly recognised by critics.

Accomplished portraitist, he received numerous commissions from important military figures, such as the *Portrait of Johannes Graaf van den Bosch, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies*, now in the Rijksmuseum (inv. SK-A-3798), signed and dated the same year as our portrait, 1836 (ill.1).



Johann Karl Bähr (1801 - 1869)
Portrait of Raden Saleh, 1842
 Oil on canvas, 85 x 70 cm
 Latvian Museum of Art

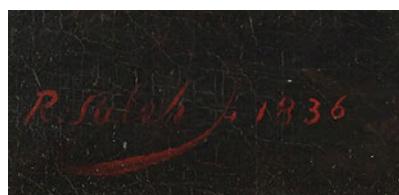


Ill.1 Raden Sarief Bastaman Saleh (1807 - 1880)
Portrait de Johannes Graaf van den Bosch, gouverneur-général des Indes hollandaises orientales
 Huile sur toile, 115 x 97 cm
 Rijksmuseum (inv. SK-A-3798)

In our composition, a man is depicted standing in a landscape representing the central Java region, on the banks of the Progo River. On the right, the Merapi volcano, recognisable by its two peaks, exhales dense clouds of smoke.

This painting certainly evokes the siege of Pleret in 1826, in the province of Bantul. This battle, won by Dutch forces, saw the emergence of several military figures such as Joseph Le Bron de Vexela (1793–1853), who played a decisive role in the victory by leading the offensives of the third division.

Born in Nijmegen to a colonel father, Baron Le Bron de Vexela followed in the family tradition when he enrolled in the military school at Honselersdijk at the age of 14. His training took place against a backdrop of political instability.



Raden Saleh (1807–1880)

Portrait of Joseph Le Bron de Vexela (1793–1853)

Oil on canvas, 61.5 x 50 cm



JOSEPH LE BRON DE VEXELA,

GENERAL-MAJOOR.

Noor een schilderij van den Javaanschen Schilder RADEN SALEH.

From 1809 onwards, the Kingdom of Holland gradually lost its territories to the French Empire. Le Bron therefore entered the Napoleonic army in 1811, joining the 123rd Infantry Regiment.

He is proudly depicted in our portrait, an illustration of which (ill. 2) is reproduced in J. P. Shoemaker's *Verhalen uit de oorlogen in Ned. Oost-Indië* (Stories of the Wars in the Dutch East Indies) by J. P. Shoemaker, published in 1899 (p. 144).

His courage was celebrated at the end of the Russian campaign, from which he returned from captivity in August 1814. With the Netherlands liberated from French rule, he asked to rejoin his country's forces, which was reluctantly granted by his superiors, who recognised his potential.

Ill. 2 Based on Raden Sarief Bastaman Saleh (1807–1880)

Schoemaker J. P., *Verhalen uit de oorlogen in Ned. Oost-Indië*, 1899, Van Vrijberghe de Coningh, page 144. Original work held at Cornell University (NY), United States.

Sent to India in 1823, Le Bron witnessed the beginnings of the Indonesian uprising that would lead to the Java War from 1825 to 1830. His capture of the island priest Kiai Modjo, the man behind the rebellion, elevated him to the rank of military hero. He thus put an end to the last vestiges of a war claimed to be 'holy' against the Dutch colonisers.

Le Bron returned to the Netherlands in 1830 and was honoured with the title of colonel in August 1834. He did not return to the Indies until 1837. This portrait was painted during this interval, while Raden Saleh was working in The Hague. The colonel was then 43 years old. We believe that the two were already acquainted at this time, given that Le Bron was one of Saleh's benefactors and patrons during his trip to Paris a few years later.

Another portrait of Le Bron de Vexela by Saleh, now in a private collection, is known to exist (ill. 3).



Ill.3 Raden Sarief Bastaman Saleh (1807–1880)

Portrait of General Joseph Le Bron de Vexela

(1793–1853)

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Raden Saleh's works, rare on the art market, are true historical pieces, bearing witness both to his artistic genius and to the unique encounter between East and West in the 19th century.

This portrait can be viewed by appointment at Alexis Bordes's appraisal office at 4 Rue de la Paix prior to the public auction on 23 November 2025.

ALEXIS BORDES

TABLEAUX & DESSINS

RE RENNES
ENCHÈRES
BRETAGNE