

Antal Berkes, Paris. Rue du Louvre in the evening, c. 1910, oil on cardboard, signed lower right "ABerkes", 33 x 43.3 cm, framed, inscribed (verso) i.a. "Paris. Rue du Louvre"

The Hungarian painter Antal Berkes (1874 Budapest – 1937 Budapest) is known for his specialization in street scenes, especially from Budapest, Vienna, and Paris. He studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts under József Feichtinger (1840–1907) from 1889 to 1894 and then undertook various study trips (including Munich in 1907), which also took him to Paris. Berkes received numerous awards, including a state scholarship in 1904 and a bronze medal in London in 1908. In 1903, he was also a founding member of the National Salon (Nemzeti Szalon) in Budapest, a space for art exhibitions by the Society of Hungarian Artists, who opposed the conservative art promoted by the Budapest Art Gallery.

His stay in Paris seems to have been decisive for his work, as it was here that he came into close contact with the Impressionist style of painting and found the motifs in the streets of this vibrant city of modernity that he would return to throughout his life. Among Berke's many paintings, the Paris street scene offered here clearly stands out in terms of quality, color choice, and atmosphere. Against an olive-green sky, perhaps hinting at the hazy air of a rainy winter evening, a multitude of people and carriages appear as silhouettes. The reflections of the brightly lit shop windows in the Rue du Louvre are rendered with impasto brushstrokes. The street had been redesigned during the Second Empire as part of Georges-Eugène Haussmann's (1809–1891) radical transformation of the Parisian boulevards and was then considered the epitome of modernity.

The painting is certainly one of Antal Berkes' best works and is framed by a very beautiful, stylistically appropriate frame.