



GALERIE  
ALEXIS BORDES

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16<sup>th</sup> TO 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY  
DRAWINGS

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Dimensions are given primarily in centimeters, height before width,  
*(with feet and inches indicated in parentheses, height before width.)*

Works are sold mounted and framed.

Price upon request.

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*“Who was it who said that drawing is the writing of form? The truth is that art should be the writing of life.”*

Edouard Manet (1835-1883)





# 16<sup>th</sup> TO 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY DRAWINGS

Catalogue by Mégane OLLIVIER



VERSION  
FRANÇAISE

[www.alexis-bordes.com/22dessins](http://www.alexis-bordes.com/22dessins)

English translation by Christine ROLLAND

## Exhibition

From Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Alexis Bordes Gallery  
4, rue de la Paix – 75002 Paris  
stairwell 2, 2nd floor on the right

Opening Hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. – 2 to 7 p.m.  
Open Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.



## | *Preface*

As in a ritual, the month of March rolls out our new selection of works on paper.

These past two years, we have adapted to current exceptional circumstances by developing digital means. From now on, each new exhibition at the gallery will be presented in a virtual visit with a focus on the works which have especially touched us.

Activity has remained steady for a year, and I would like to thank all of our loyal collectors, as well as the institutions which have sustained us through their judicious acquisitions.

Our new catalogue takes us back in time with a magnificent *Temptation of Saint Anthony* by Luca Cambiaso. Done in iron gall ink, this 16<sup>th</sup> century drawing is striking in its virtuosity and the rapidity of execution. Using a very modern layout, the artist schematizes figures with broad pen strokes while leaving spaces of blank paper. True to the French 18<sup>th</sup> century, the visit continues with a pastel of a young *Member of the National Convention* who wears a beautiful azure jacket with a red collar embellished with an elegant ascot.

The depiction of artist studio interiors at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century intrigues us in a large drawing in black chalk and an almost pointillist technique. Facing his easel, Robert Lefèvre prepares the portrait of a young very elegant painter depicted with great psychological acuity.

Continue our travels with Henri-Joseph Harpignies sketching this beautiful view of Rome taken from the banks of the Tiber during his Grand Tour in 1851.

The *Belle Epoque* is evoked by this work by Paul-César Helleu of his daughter wearing a hat and sketched from life in three chalks. Positively dizzying in virtuosity and spirit, here Helleu's work is comparable to Giovanni Boldini whom he met in the studio of his master, Jean-Leon Gerome.

Spring carries us into a wheat field sketched from life by Leon Lhermitte in which light reflects off of the grain like sheaves of gold.

How could one miss this superb young woman named "Jacqueline" by Elisabeth Sorel? A rare woman artist who emerged from Symbolist trends, she uses watercolors on a gold leaf ground in Pre-Raphaelite tradition to present this young beauty in a Neo-Renaissance costume.

Our stroll culminates in a rare Nabi landscape handled in shades of blue by Charles Guilloux. Very poetically, the artist approaches this lacustrian moonlit view as if it were an Aurora borealis with tentacular clouds flooding the sky.

I would be delighted to welcome you to the gallery starting this coming March 22<sup>nd</sup> and have you discover our beautiful harvest.

*Alexis Bordes*  
*Paris, March 2022*





## | *Acknowledgments*

Located on rue de la Paix, the gallery has a predilection for the French 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Encouraged by great French and foreign institutions, as well as by numerous collectors, we provide both advice and expertise for purchases and sales.

This catalogue has long been maturing with the invaluable assistance of art historians and museum curators whom we thank for their advice and enlightened opinions.

We render homage to all of the museums who have demonstrated their confidence in us by integrating works that came through our gallery into their collections :

Art Gallery of South Australia; Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin; Museum of Fine Arts, Nancy; National School of Fine Arts, Paris; Custodia Foundation, Paris; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Louis-Philippe Château, Eu; Comédie Française, Paris; Getty Research Center, Los Angeles; Cabinet des Dessins, Château de Fontainebleau; Cognacq-Jay Museum; National Galleries, Ottawa; Museum of Fine Arts, Nantes; Chateau National Museum, Compiègne; National Museum of Art and History of Luxemburg; Museum of Fine Arts, Quimper; Museum of Fine Arts, Troyes; Museum of Fine Arts, Dôle; Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Château Museum, Versailles; Houston Museum of Fine Arts; Tate Britain, London; Marly-le-Roi Promenade Museum; Luneville Château; Orsay Museum; Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe; Gorkums Museum...

I would like to warmly thank all of the individuals without whom this catalogue would never have seen the day:

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Gallery Owner

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Drawing Conservator

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**Michel BURY**

Photographer

**Mégane OLLIVIER**

Art Historian,

Author of the catalogue

**Julie AKOUN**

Gallery Assistant

**Christine ROLLAND**

Art Historian,

Translator of the catalogue into English

**Christophe BRISSON**

Graphic Designer

# Luca CAMBIASO

(Moneglia, 1527 – San Lorenzo de El Escorial, 1585)

## 1 | *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, iron gall ink on paper

40.5 x 29 cm. (15 1/16 x 11 1/16 in.)

Inscription in black pencil, lower left: *Luca Cambiaso*

### *Provenance:*

- Princetown, Professeur & Mrs. Jonathan Brown Collection.
- France, Private collection.

### *Bibliography:*

- *Le dessin à Gènes du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, exh. cat., Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1985.
- Lauro Magnani, *Luca Cambiaso: da Genova all'Escorial*, Genoa: Sagep, 1995.
- Bertina Suida Manning, *The Genoese Renaissance: Grace and Geometry: Paintings and Drawings by Luca Cambiaso from the Suida-Manning Collection*, Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1974.

Son of the famous painter Giovanni Cambiaso, Luca Cambiaso began his training in his father's studio. Active in his native town of Genoa, the young artist practiced copying recently executed works in the Andrea Doria Palace at Fassolo which were by Renaissance masters, such as Il Pordenone, Domenico Beccafumi, and Perino del Vaga whom he particularly admired. When the latter died, Cambiaso left Genoa and went to Rome, Florence, and then the Emilian Province where he carefully studied the art of Parmegianino and Correggio.

The 1570s marked a turning point in his œuvre which gradually developed great clarity. As a result of his varied education, Cambiaso developed his own style which eventually turned him into a transitional figure leading to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century masters of reality.

An excellent draughtsman, he had a quite prolific graphic production which was widely diffused and copied in his lifetime. The artist fully shared Counter-Reformation preoccupations in handling religious subjects, of which our painting is an excellent example. It depicts the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, an episode reported by the Christian Saint Athanase of Alexandria (c. 357 BC), and revived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Jacques de Voragine in *The Golden Legend*. In retiring from the world of men and assuming the life of an anchorite, Saint Anthony split his time between work and prayer before arriving in the desert. Clothed



Ill. 1

Luca CAMBIASO

*The Temptation of Saint Anthony*

Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash on paper  
39.8 x 28.1 cm. (15 1/16 x 11 1/16 in.)

Stockholm, National Museum (inv. NMH 1573/1863).





Ill. 2  
 Luca CAMBIASO  
*The Temptation of Saint Anthony*  
 Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash  
 over traces of black chalk on paper  
 laid down on beige paper  
 40.1 x 28.1 cm. (15 ¾ x 11 ¼ in.)  
 Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. 1929.540).

in a horsehair shirt, he decided to strengthen his faith for 13 years during which he resisted the devil's temptations to which he was subjected. Saint Anthony is considered the father of Christian monasticism.

Our composition is known by other recognized versions from the artist's hand which have similar dimensions. These include one in the National Museum of Stockholm (*ill. 1*), a second in the Cleveland Museum of Art (*ill. 2*), and another from a private collection in Paris.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Louvre conserves two copies of lesser quality which are catalogued as being after Cambiaso's work (inv. 9272 and 9273).

Other engravings based on the composition were

created after the artist's death: F. Mancini mentions two woodcuts, one conserved in the Witt Library Print Collection in London (inv. 1736) and another by Arthur Pond in 1736 at the Auckland Art Gallery (inv. 1945/7). Furthermore, the artist seems to have been fascinated by Saint Anthony iconography, as he also sketched variations, including a *Saint Anthony Pursued by Demons*, sold at Christie's in Paris in 2004 (*ill. 3*).

Cambiaso's drawings, fundamental to understanding his work, are characterized by tremendous creative energy and brilliant dynamism. His fluid style facilitates copies of the softened forms in works characteristic of his mature period, a few years before his late "cubist" drawings which inspired Georges de La Tour in particular.

Michelangelo's obvious influence can be seen in the special attention given to powerful musculature in the

<sup>1</sup> Mentionned in F. Mancini, *Dessins italiens du musée du Louvre, Dessins génois, XVI<sup>e</sup> - XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 2004, p. 140 (no supplementary detail is given concerning its technique or dimensions.)



Ill. 3

Luca Cambiaso (1527-1585)

*Saint Anthony Pursued by Demons*

with inscription 'L.C.' (*verso*)

Pen and brown ink, brown wash on paper

41 x 28.6 cm. (16 1/8 x 11 1/4 in.)

Christie's, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004, lot 29.

depiction of figures systematically shown in motion, as here in the diabolical creatures surrounding the saint. Cambiaso drew rapidly, while the energetic displays on his pages expressed the liveliness of his hand. Using a quill pen, he sketched forms and added depth with wash, while the iron gall ink widely used by Renaissance artists accentuated contours.

Cambiaso devoted many works, including our drawing, to the study of depth. By placing multiple figures on several planes, he was obliged to render space precisely which resulted in skillful complex compositions with balanced proportions. He took advantage of this exercise to demonstrate his virtuosity in the use of foreshortening which he had already mastered perfectly in his youth while producing frescoes, alongside his father, for Antonio Doria's palace decoration.

Not a fervent defender of Mannerism from which he

kept his distance, Cambiaso was a famous artist in his lifetime who was admired by peers and royalty. He arrived in Spain in 1583, where Philip II placed him at the head of a colossal project producing paintings on canvas and frescoes intended to complete the decoration of the Escorial. He died there in 1585. Right up until his death, the artist received many commissions for fresco decoration which he honored even while fulfilling those for easel paintings.

His works were collected through the centuries by amateurs and artists such as Jean-Baptiste Wicar, a grand collector who conserved in his collection a drawing of *The Arrest of Christ in the Garden of Olives* in Cambiaso's hand which was bequeathed, along with the rest of his collection, to Lille (Palace of Fine Arts), Wicar's native town.

M.O.





# Jacob JORDAENS

(Antwerp, 1593 – 1678)

## 2 | *Study for the Figure of Silenus*

Sanguine with black chalk highlights on paper  
42.9 x 28.4 cm. (16<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

### *Provenance:*

- Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt (L.2356).
- Wilhelm Koller (d.1871), Vienna (L.2632).
- Adalbert, Freiherr von Lanna (1836-1909), Prague (L.2773).
- France, Private Collection.

### *Bibliography:*

- Max Rooses, *Jordaens: sa vie et ses œuvres*, Société d'édition Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1906.

Representative of 17<sup>th</sup> century northern art, and especially Flemish art, Jacob, or Jacques Jordaens, as he himself signed his letters,<sup>1</sup> was born and died in Antwerp. Placed between the legendary figures of Peter Paul Rubens ((1577-1640) and Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641), Jordaens also enjoyed a great reputation in his lifetime. He is considered an excellent painter of inventive genres whose most famous subjects remain *The King Drinks !* and *As the Old Sing, so the Young Pipe*. These nonetheless represent an infinitesimal part of his oeuvre, as the artist equally stood out for his mythological paintings. The considerable number of his preparatory drawings allowed the artist to produce spectacular compositions, most of which are conserved in public collections around the world. Among the multitude of mythological subjects, which demonstrate that the artist regularly read texts by ancient authors, Jordaens was above all fond of depicting mankind very realistically. His central figures are systematically heroic.

Here, attention is focused on Silenus, apparently in preparation of the central part of the work attributed to Van Dyck now conserved in the National Gallery in London (*ill. 1*). Like the painted work, this figure is presented in three-quarter half-length view, although some variations can be seen in the depiction of the face.

<sup>1</sup> Autograph letter by the artist conserved at Morlanwelz, Mariemont Royal Museum.

Mythology, which was ranked at the same level as history painting, occupied a dominant role in Jordaens' oeuvre. The iconography of Silenus, to which the artist devoted several works (*ill. 2*), was both popular and fashionable in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: the character was considered even more licentious and exuberant than Bacchus, god of wine. In mythology, Silenus was Bacchus' adopted father and preceptor. An allegory of drunkenness and excessiveness, Silenus is depicted by Jordaens as a nude pot-bellied old man who probably lost his clothes during



Ill. 1  
Attributed to Antoine van Dyck (1599-1641)  
*Drunken Silenus supported by Satyrs*  
Oil on canvas  
133,5 x 197 cm. (4 ft. 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. x 6 ft. 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
London, National Gallery (inv. NG853).







Ill. 2  
*The Triumph of Silenus*, c. 1640  
 Oil on canvas  
 141.5 x 125.5 cm. (13 ft. 7 3/16 in. x 4 ft. 1 1/8 in.)  
 Private Collection.



Ill. 3  
*Nude Man with a Grey Beard*  
*(Study for the figure of Silenus)*  
 Black, red and white chalk on paper  
 30.4 x 19.7 cm. (11 13/16 x 7 3/4 in.).  
 Lower left: collector's mark of Ch.H. His de la Salle (L. 1333).  
 Lower right: mark of Benjamin West collection (L. 419).  
 Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Department (Inv. R.F.  
 00.674).

the festivities. His grimacing face sports a voluminous beard, his messy hair is topped by a crown of vine leaves known as a pampre. Hilarious and drunk, the unstable character is held up by two figures. The arm of one holding up the god by his waist can be seen on the right side of the composition, while on the left, the shoulder of the other can be perceived supporting his chest.

*“Courbet was impressed by the naturalism and sensuous rendering of 17<sup>th</sup> century Flemish masters such as Jordaens, especially in the nudes.”*<sup>2</sup>

Specialists of Jordaens have hypothesized that the main figures in his history paintings were no other than members of this family, his close circle, or the artist himself who was sometimes blowing loudly into a bagpipe (Rubens House, Antwerp, inv. VI-05).<sup>3</sup>

Despite the work's format, the figure of Silenus is monumental. In this study, through precise handling of the wrinkled flesh, the artist endeavors with remarkable acuity to reproduce the raw jovial realism of this bare body, in all its ugliness, drunkenness, and decrepitude. The torsion revealing tension in the pose, along with the terrific rendering of the swollen face and bulging reddening flesh, constitute characteristics which can be found in some of the artist's other works.

The handling of the figure, as well as the clothing, shows how Jordaens worked on light which falls precisely between the belly and waist. The painting is sufficiently detailed for Jordaens to leave the realization of the final figure to one of his assistants, today presented by the National Gallery as attributed to his contemporary Van Dyck. Indeed our drawing corresponds to a very prolific period when the artist received many commissions for which the precise subjects were defined by the master and produced by his studio.

*“Jordaens executed his drawings admirably well, and never lost his great color taste [...] Jordaens' drawings are usually colored and are real pictures in themselves [...]”*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dominique Marechal, 2013, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Alexis Merle du Bourg (dir.), *Jordaens 1593-1678*, Petit Palais, Museum of Fine Arts of the City of Paris, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Dezallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, 1762, pp. 333 and 335.



The brilliant handling of our work leaves no room for doubt as to its attribution. It attests to the artist's drawing talent as he took great care in the execution of details through minute careful use of sanguine from facial features to veins in the hands, and through a more vigorous handling in the rest of the body. Jordaens presents the dense flesh of his subject by sketching hatching and streaks in black chalk which instantly give movement and power to the figure's otherwise limp flabby musculature. In this respect, our work can be compared to the figure study in the Louvre of Silenus (*ill. 3*) and that of the old man conserved at the University of Leiden (*ill. 4*) which are very close to our study stylistically.

The terrific conservation of many studies makes it possible to better understand this prolific artist's creative process whose works are sometimes overshadowed by the very rich production of his contemporaries. Between Rubens and Van Dyck, Jordaens also found inspiration with

some other famous artists of his generation, including Hendrick van Balen (1575 – 1632) and Abraham Janssen (1567-1632) with whom he shared a love of mythological culture and beyond that, of ancient art.

Jacob Jordaens never participated in the patronage orchestrated by religious institutions through commissions of Biblical subjects. He found recognition by satisfying the demands of the nobility and bourgeoisie who wished to furnish their cabinets of wonders with evidence of their culture and refinement. In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the artist's profitable career placed him at the forefront of the artistic scene: in 1659, Jordaens figured among the 400 richest citizens in Antwerp.<sup>5</sup>

M.O.

<sup>5</sup> F. Van Cauwenberghe-Janssens, "De sociale toestand van de Antwerpse schilders in de ryde eeuw," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten*, Antwerp, 1970, pp. 233-240.



Ill. 4  
Jacob Jordaens  
*Study of a Reclining Old Man*  
Sanguine and white chalk on paper  
20.5 x 29 cm. (8 1/16 x 11 7/16 in.)  
Leiden, University of Leiden Libraries (inv. AW 249).



## Michel CORNEILLE the Younger

(Paris, 1642 - 1708)

### 3 | *Hercules Carrying the Cretan Bull to the Altar*

Sanguine over black chalk lines on paper

24.6 x 13.1 cm. (9<sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)

Black chalk signature in lower right corner: *C. Le Brun*

*Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

*Bibliography:*

- Brejon De Lavergnée, Barbara, “Les Corneille entre le père (vers 1603-1664) et le fils (1642-1708);” *Nouvelles de l’estampe*, 2011, (235), pp. 6-13.

A student of his father Michel Corneille the Elder, Michel Corneille the Younger began his training as a painter at a very young age, as did his younger brother Jean Baptiste Corneille (1649-1695) a few years later.<sup>1</sup> Recognized very early for his artistic gifts, he was taught by the most famous painters in the kingdom, including Charles Le Brun (Paris, 1619-1690), the King’s Painter, and his main rival, Pierre Mignard (Troyes, 1612 – Paris, 1695).

Winner of a prize created by the Academy, Michel the Younger arrived in Italy in 1659 where he assiduously copied works by the Old Masters. His education continued in Bologna when he entered the *Accademia degli Incamminati* founded by the Carracci. Their refusal of Mannerist artifices and their return to Antique forms as the ultimate artistic references inspired the young artist who also tended to extoll the importance of drawing as a means to synthesize observed reality with ideals being sought.

Upon his return to Paris in 1663, Michel the Younger was only 21 years old. He was received with honors into the Academy where he was appointed Professor in 1690. Acclaimed by his contemporaries, he was appointed by the king to work at Meudon, Fontainebleau, and Versailles. All the while, he benefitted from Louvois’ protection and numerous commissions, including tapestry designs for the Gobelins Manufactory.

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: confusingly for the English reader, Michel Corneille the Elder is called “*l’ancien*” (literally, “the old one” but translated “the Elder”), and Michel Corneille the Younger is sometimes called “*L’Aîné*”, (literally “the Elder” or “the Eldest”) because he was the older brother of Jean Baptiste Corneille.



Ill. 1

*Vulcan*

Red chalk with white highlights on paper

On the verso: study of a draped man in black chalk.

39.7 x 27 cm. (15<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)

Private Collection.



His Italian experience led the artist to develop a more personal visual language. The technical quality of Michel Corneille's graphic production was very high, as he was a terrific draughtsman. Our drawing is a marvelous example of the many studies he drew from Greek mythology in which his taste for Antiquity is evident. Our work's iconography appears to refer to the seventh of Hercules' Twelve Labours imposed by Eurystheus. Hercules was ordered to tame an uncontrollable bull who had been released by the god Poseidon in anger against Minos, King of Crete. The myth recounts that after having captured the bull, Hercules lifted the animal by its horns and then onto his back in order to carry it to the altar on which it was to be sacrificed. This subject seems completely convincing in terms of the themes selected by the artist in which mythology, considered by the Academy to be at the same level as History Painting, held a prominent place.

An Antique iconographic repertory for settings, with a column in the background and an altar in the foreground, conveys the historic tone of the drawing required by the subject. Although the Antique canon for anatomy is not fully respected in all of his figures (*ill. 1*) and the bodies' contortions often seem difficult to maintain, these characteristics are the sign of a truly French authorship and of the artist's real success. Among his many studies,

the handling of hair and beards composed of thick curls seem drawn from observation of his father's work, as is the drapery enveloping the figure's waist which is formed of heavy, almost sculptural, pleats characteristic of his father's late work. In Michel the Younger's work, drawing is rigorous, enriched by extensive study of the rendering of flesh traced in red chalk (*ill. 1*). The hero's musculature is rendered powerful by the play of hatching used in most of the artist's studies of male nudes, including the *Antique Warrior Seated in Left Profile*, conserved in the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (*ill. 2*).

An indefatigable worker, Michel Corneille the Younger died in 1708 at his work place, the Gobelins manufactory, a fact which earned him the nickname of "Corneille of the Gobelins." Having remained for a long time within his master's circles, the artist suffered from Charles Le Brun's fame, and their works were often mistaken for each other's. Certain apocryphal signatures mentioning *C. Le Brun*, as affixed in the lower right of our drawing, led experts astray and considerably reduced the artist's corpus. We propose to return this drawing to this admirable artist long eclipsed by his father's production and his masters' influences.

M.O.



Ill. 2  
*Seated Warrior from Antiquity in Left Profile*  
Sanguine on paper  
44.2 x 52 cm. (17<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.)  
Signed lower right: *Corneille L'ainé*  
Paris, *École nationale des Beaux-Arts* (inv. EBA 2832).





# Philippe MERCIER

(Berlin, 1689 – London, 1760)

## 4 | *Studies of Hands and Arms*

### *Preparatory Study for "Sense of Smell"*

Pastel on prepared blue paper  
28.5 x 20 cm. (11 ¼ x 7 ⅞ in.)

#### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

#### *Bibliography:*

- Robert Rey, *Quelques satellites de Watteau: Antoine Pesne et Philippe Mercier, François Octavien, Bonaventure de Bar, François-Jérôme Chantreau*, Paris: Librairie de France, 1931.

Although this study has long been given to Nicolas Vleughels, we suggest returning it to the œuvre of Philippe Mercier, a painter from the same generation whose life and work remain little documented.

Originally from the Holy Roman Empire, Philippe Mercier was from a family of Huguenots who had left France at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. According to information furnished by Horace Walpole,<sup>1</sup> the young artist began his training at the Berlin Academy of the Arts under the direction of the famous Antoine Pesne (1683-1757), official painter at the German Courts and of the King of Prussia. He visited Italy and then France where in Paris, he encountered Antoine Watteau, a friend of Pesne who was famous as the inventor of the *fête galante* which profoundly influenced Mercier's production.

*"(...) Several of the Watteaus conserved in England and which are sometimes quite suspect could be by Mercier."*<sup>2</sup>

Back in Germany again, the painter received a commission for the portrait of Frederick of Wales, son of King George II whom he followed to London in 1716 as First Painter to the Crown Prince.

<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole (1717-1797) erudite collector and statesman, author of the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 1786, 5 vol., vol. IV, pp. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Mantz, *Antoine Watteau*, Paris, 1892, p. 122.



Ill. 1  
*Portrait of Miss Hamilton Gordon of Newball*  
Signed lower left: *Ph. Mercier*  
Oil on canvas  
124 x 99 cm. (48 13/16 x 39 in.)  
Sotheby's London, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005, lot 68.



In England, Philippe Mercier was very successful. He was chosen to paint several members of the king's family, and additionally, the British elite held him in high esteem for his conversation pieces. These were society portraits exempt of artifices which depicted a family or a group of individuals wishing to make themselves known.

In 1720, he encountered Watteau again in the neighborhood known as "Little France" where French painters lived. His production demonstrates profound admiration for the ingenuity of the one he considered his master. As a result, their works have sometimes been confused for each other's, and thus Mercier's corpus has been considerably reduced.

With his reputation well established, Mercier took a tour of Europe by visiting Ireland, Spain, and Portugal before returning to London to finish his career. Between his German education, his French apprenticeship, and his English career, his oeuvre is a perfect blend of diverse influences and encounters, a hybrid production at the heart of which the artist successfully expresses his own identity.

These slender fingers imbued with infinite lightness almost serve as a signature in Mercier's oeuvre. The depiction of the hand remains a perilous exercise which many artists have avoided attempting. As can be seen in our study, Mercier gave great importance to this part of the body which allowed him to thus express his virtuosity. They are not simply details; the artist systematically gave them an essential place in each of his works, especially in his female portraits which were regularly half-length, a more expensive format than bust portraits (*ill. 1*).

The fingers are sensual, delicate, and precious. Depending on finger position, the hands communicate each sitter's own gracefulness and charm. Our pastel presents two studies of forearms, including the sketch of a dress sleeve. The quality of execution of our work implies reflection for a more ambitious project: indeed, it served as preparation for a work entitled *The Sense of Smell* (*ill. 2*) from a series depicting the five senses.<sup>3</sup> In our drawing,

<sup>3</sup> Sotheby's Sale, New York, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, lot 329.



Ill. 2

*The Sense of Smell*

c. 1744-1747

Oil on canvas

132.1 x 153.7 cm. (4 ft. 4 in. x 5 ft. ½ in.)

New Haven, Yale Center for British Art (inv. B1974.3.16).



the study of the right arm holds a few flowers in its hand as a symbol of feminine charm and elegance which can be found in other portraits by him (*ill. 3*). The use of pastel conveys this elegance by capturing the pink flesh tones and stumping the contours, thus imbuing the whole with grace and voluptuousness. The finger position reflects the sitter's refinement, as she lifts her little finger and delicately pinches flower stems. The second hand seems to be resting on a fabric support. In the painted version, the painter adapts his drawing to the rest of the composition; the finger position thus slightly differs.

Close to the English crown, this artist of German origin who had traveled around Europe succeeded in establishing his reputation beside the most brilliant painters of his generation.

Painter and draughtsman, Mercier was also an engraver. According to Mr. Jules Strauss (1861-1943), a banker and passionate collector of the artist's works, most of his engravings, which were long considered after originals by Watteau, were in reality taken from Mercier's own original compositions. Today the British Museum conserves most of his engraved works.

*M.O.*



Ill. 3  
*Seated Young Woman*  
Black chalk on paper  
22 x 16 cm. (8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
London, British Museum (inv. 1933,0728.2)  
© The Trustees of the British Museum.



# Jean-Baptiste DESHAYS

(Rouen, 1729 – Paris, 1765)

## 5 | *Study for Triton with Raised Arms Holding onto a Rope*

Black chalk and sanguine on beige paper

27.4 x 34.8 cm. (10 3/4 x 13 1/4 in.)

### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection

### *Bibliography:*

- André Bancel, *Jean-Baptiste Deshays 1729-1765*, Paris, Arthena, 2008.
- Marc Sandoz, “Etudes et esquisses peintes ou dessinées de Jean-Baptiste Deshays (1721-1765),” *Gazette des Beaux-arts*, Paris, 1951, republished, Oct 1960.
- Marc Sandoz, *Jean-Baptiste Deshays, 1729-1765*, Paris 1977.

*“... His academies were skillful and firmly characterized. Despite slight inaccuracies, something extravagant in his manner of capturing forms, these light defects, if one could even call them that, are more than compensated for by the beautiful flame which produces them, and which shines everywhere, and by the effects, taste, and velvety touch which clearly distinguishes the great painter.”<sup>1</sup>*

A proud representative of French 18<sup>th</sup> century painting, famous as a history painter Jean-Baptiste Deshays was also an excellent draughtsman.

After winning the Prix de Rome in 1751, the artist left for the French Academy in Rome in 1754 to study the Old Masters. Thus, after returning to Paris, he entered the Academy in 1758 as a history painter. His classic education under his father-in-law François Boucher (1703-1770),<sup>2</sup> Carle Van Loo, and Charles-Joseph Natoire defined his career. Deshays practiced all the genres valued by the Academy, although religious painting formed the major part of his production. His talent was acclaimed by his contemporaries during the Salons of 1759, 1761, and 1763, a fact which led to prestigious commissions. The rigor with which he followed his masters’ teaching has led to many errors in



Ill. 1

*Study of a Male Nude*

Stump and charcoal on paper

Private Collection

Charpentier Gallery, *Figures nues d'Ecole Française*, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1953.

<sup>1</sup> Cochin, *Essays sur la vie de M. Deshays*, published by Sandoz, 1977, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Deshays married Jeanne-Elisabeth Victoire Boucher, François Boucher’s daughter, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1758.





attribution, especially with Boucher's oeuvre: "*Deshayes... is one of the best students M. Boucher ever formed...*"<sup>3</sup>

Considered one of the most eminent practitioners of drawing in 18<sup>th</sup> century France, Jean-Baptiste Deshayes left many academies which were produced after his Italian sojourn during which he admired antique statuary. Our drawing is a terrific example. This male nude depicted in mid-effort could well be a preparatory drawing for a more ambitious composition. The sketched fish tail bursting out in the middle ground suggests that our study could depict the figure of Neptune or a river god such as the artist often figured in the artist's compositions.

Evident strength emanates from this subject firmly holding onto a rope over his head with both arms. This is not a rare subject for the artist. Many studies, for the most part conserved in private collections, have come down to us (*ill. 1*).

In a skillful composition sketched with a masterful precise line, Deshayes presents a half-length figure. The sitter's head is hidden by his raised arms, the lower part of his legs is not shown: here the artist is interested in working on the musculature of the torso down to the thighs. Deshayes formulates a powerful but graceful study which evokes ancient canons of beauty.

A play of hatching in black chalk communicates the tension projected by this twisting torso whose powerful musculature, learned from ancient masters, is accentuated through the use of sanguine handled in skillful hatching bringing out the flesh.

This sketch is also evidence of the artist's consideration of light. The stumping technique causes the shadows projected on each side of the dynamic figure brings volume and depth to it, while the main contour forms a diagonal which can also be seen in his study of *A Semi-Reclining Male Nude Seen from Behind who seems to be Pulling an Object towards Himself* (*ill. 2*).

According to Mariette's writings, "*his drawings and sketches were sold very expensively at his inventory*"<sup>4</sup> [post-mortem sale]. Praised for the speed with which he progressed, Jean-Baptiste Deshayes was highly successful in his lifetime for the lyricism and poetry embodied in his works. Prematurely deceased at the age of 35 just as his production was in full swing, Deshayes received many commissions which place him as one of the great 18<sup>th</sup> century French draughtsmen.

M.O.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Abecedario*, written between 1765 and 1774, ed. A.A.F., Paris, 1851-1860, vol. II.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



III. 2  
*Semi-Reclining Male Nude*  
*Homme Seen from Behind,*  
*who seems to be Pulling an Object towards Himself*  
Stump, charcoal, and white highlights on paper  
60.7 x 42 cm. (23<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Paris, Louvre Museum (inv. 26207, Recto).



## Studio of François BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703 – 1770)

### 6 | *Portrait of a Young Woman with a Velvet and Fur Muff* *Allegory of Winter*

Pastel on paper laid down on canvas  
40.3 x 32.3 cm. (15 7/8 x 12 1/4 in.)

#### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

François Boucher first learned under his father Nicolas Boucher (1671-1743), a master painter and draughtsman at the Academy of Saint Luke. At 18 years old, he entered the studio of the famous François Lemoyne (1688-1737) which really launched his career. Having won the Prix de Rome in 1723, Boucher arrived at the French Academy there in 1726 where he studied the Old Masters. Upon returning to Paris, he entered the Royal Academy in 1734 as a history painter.

Highly appreciated in his lifetime, the artist received all the honors a painter of his generation could hope for. His brilliant career was rewarded by many titles, including those of Professor, Director of the Royal Academy, and First Painter to the King. Until the 1760s, the artist fulfilled hundreds of commissions from prestigious patrons, including the Marquise de Pompadour and the Duke of Chevreuse, as well as the Royal Manufactures of Beauvais and Gobelins. He also taught his style enthusiastically to members of his studio.

In the 1760s, he produced portraits of women whose faces were stamped with a new elegance, probably following the initiative of Caylus, a member of the Academy who proposed a competition of expressive heads (*têtes d'expression*) which was adopted in 1759.<sup>1</sup> This renewal is especially recognizable in the width of the sitters' foreheads and their large eyes stretching beneath their perfectly arched eyebrows. Privileging seduction of the eye over that of the mind, they inaugurated a canon of beauty presenting portraits of women with unprecedented sensuality which his students enjoyed following assiduously.

<sup>1</sup> Françoise Joulie in *Esquisses Pastels et dessins de François Boucher dans les collections privées*, exh. cat. Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004 to Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Versailles, Lambinet Museum, Paris: Somogy éd. d'art, 2004.

The depiction of this young woman in a three-quarter view with the head delicately turned to the left seems to have been drawn from life, as if she was interpellated by the artist. Attired in a red silk dress under which white muslin gauze peeks out from beneath her bodice and her sleeves, the sitter wears her hair and make-up according to fashions of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A few flowers in her hair under a black silk fichu and two beauty spots bring out her whitened complexion produced by generous powdering.

Boucher transmitted to the members of his studio his interest in rendering details, especially of accessories, which tended to make the sitter's identity disappear in favor of an idea or symbol, of which our work seems to be an example. The young woman is wearing a fichu



Ill. 1  
François Boucher (1703-1770)  
*Winter*, 1755  
Oil on canvas  
56.8 x 73 cm. (22 3/8 x 28 3/4 in.)  
New York, The Frick collection (inv. 1916.1.15).



to protect her head from the cold, an accessory which gradually became fashionable and can be seen regularly in 18<sup>th</sup> century female portraits. To this is added the presence of a fur-trimmed blue velvet muff in which the sitter hides her hands. This is another element that was very fashionable throughout the century: in 1763, Drouais presented an interior portrait of the Marquise de Pompadour wearing a white fur muff (Orleans, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 385).

Our work is related to an allegory of Winter, probably realized following a series of portraits by the master's hand and copied by his studio, of women representing the four seasons. Allegorical subjects are not rare in Boucher's oeuvre and were widely copied and engraved. For example, *Morning*<sup>2</sup> and *Winter* (ill. 1) are such works which are very close to ours in pose and accessories. Allegories interpreted through female portraits were in vogue throughout the century (ill. 2). Charles-Antoine Coypel's . Charles-Antoine Coypel's (1694-1752) pastel entitled *Winter* (ill.3) is an apt comparison here:

<sup>2</sup> Here we can cite *Morning: Lady at her Dressing Table* as a work belonging to a group of four allegories depicting the *Hours of the Day* and showing an elegant young woman seen half-length at different times of day.

iconographically very close to our work, it presents a three-quarter bust view of a young woman whose gaze turns towards the viewer, and who wears a black fichu, her hands slipped into a fur muff.

François Boucher rigorously transmitted to his students his gift for using pastels to render the effects of fabrics. Here, stump brings volume to the silk fabrics in the dress, muslin gauze, velvet and fur. An excellent draughtsman, he also taught his ingenuity and virtuosity in handling the light which bathed his sitters. Here the light renders the gracefulness and sweet gentleness in the modeling of the face, on the one hand, and on the other, illustrates the luxuriousness of the silk in the dress on which the light is reflected by a skillful play of vertical white hatching.

An incontestable representative of French 18<sup>th</sup> century portraiture, François Boucher was also an excellent pastellist. He gained the admiration of his colleagues and prestigious collector patrons avid for his female figures which he placed in the foreground of his works, and which his studio enjoyed reproducing with rigorous composition and high enough quality of execution to meet the master's satisfaction.

M.O.



Ill. 2  
Charles-Antoine Coypel (Paris, 1694-1752)  
*A Woman in a Blue Dress and Flowers in her Arms: Spring*  
Signed: C Coypel  
Pastel, on formerly blue paper  
15.4 x 12 cm. (6 1/16 x 4 3/4 in.)  
Christie's Sale, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.



Ill. 3  
Charles-Antoine Coypel (Paris, 1694-1752)  
*A Woman in a Black Coat with a Muff: Winter*  
Signed: C Coypel  
Pastel, on formerly blue paper  
15.4 x 12 cm. (6 1/16 x 4 3/4 in.)  
Christie's Sale, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.



## Joseph-Marie VIEN le Jeune

(Paris, 1761 – 1848)

### 7 | *Portrait of a Member of the Constitutional Assembly*

Leadpoint, black chalk and black ink wash on paper

19 x 8.8 cm. (7 ½ x 3 ⅞ in.)

Signed and dated: *Vien f. 1790*

#### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

#### *Bibliography:*

- *L'Étoffe des héros: costumes et textiles français de la Révolution à l'Empire*, exh. cat. Musée des arts de la mode, Paris: Union des arts décoratifs, 1989.

Student of his father Joseph-Marie Vien, who was painter and Director of the French Academy in Rome, and of the famous history painter François Vincent, young Vien started with a rigorous education which opened the way to a profitable career. Recognized by the Academy, he exhibited in the Salons from 1794 to 1835.

Implicated in society and the evolution of ideas, he participated in the illustration of key faces of the Revolution, of which our portrait is an example. With a calm serene gaze, our model's profile can be compared to that of Maximilien de Robespierre (*ill. 1 and 2*), a public figure who had defended the abolition of the death penalty, and who turned gradually to stricter politics which led to the Reign of Terror.

The artist dated his work to 1790, the dawn of the Revolution. Unlike others who associated their accoutrements with political ideas extolling simplicity and economy, our sitter's trim appearance is topped with a powdered wig. Clothed in a style fashionable during the Revolution, he nonetheless retains a certain elegance: probably attired in black, because that was the color worn by representatives of the Third Estate seated at the States General (*ill. 2*), the sitter has a lined buttoned jacket, categorized during the Revolution as "over clothing," under which a buttoned vest can be seen revealing a white collar. Long pants and stockings clothe his legs, while black buckled shoes are on his feet.



Ill. 1

School of François Dumont (1751-1831)

*Miniature Portrait of Robespierre*

Collection of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands

Frits Lugt, *Le portrait-miniature illustré par la collection de S.M. la Reine des Pays-Bas*, 1917, p. 76, fig. 40.

Depicted full length, the figure stands proudly with one hand on his hip. Rather than a Phrygian bonnet associated with the people, the other hand is holding a hat reserved for the current authorities: fairly voluminous and topped with the tricolor cockade and feathers. Incidentally, in 1792 the Marquis de La Fayette wore the same hat held in the same manner in the portrait by Joseph-Désiré Court (*ill. 3*).





After beginning as a portraitist, Joseph-Marie Vien the Younger found his path in making miniatures which allowed him to express his technical virtuosity in capturing his characters' psychology. He gave all his attention to depicting details and rendered his miniatures with the same rigor as his portraits, going from the transcription of his sitter's temperament to accessory details. In our work, the artist adhered to faithfully depicting symbols of the sitter's personality and role, including the plumed hat, cockade, and even the keys worn hanging from the waist (similar detail, *ill. 2*) which were in fashion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. With leadpoint, Vien the Younger brings out the contours of his figure which, in reduced format, benefits from additional preciosity. The ensemble realized with finesse and precision enables the artist to treat this portrait as an icon which could be easily reproduced.

Joseph-Marie Vien's life and career remain scarcely documented. Freed from the paternal aura from which he benefited in the beginning, Vien the Younger succeeded in building his reputation as a painter of small portraits. As he signed with the same name, the attribution of his works could be confused with those of his father and thus reduced his corpus considerably.

After having placed his talent in the service of the Revolution, the artist followed the evolution of French politics by immortalizing the profile of *Napoleon Bonaparte, 1<sup>st</sup> Consul*, conserved today in the National Museum of the Châteaux of Malmaison and of Bois-Préau at Rueil-Malmaison (inv. M.M.82.4.1, 54 x 46 cm. / 21 ¼ x 18 ½ in.).

M.O.



Ill. 2  
 Pierre Roch Vigneron (1789-1872)  
 after Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753-1809)  
*Portrait of Maximilien Robespierre  
 in the Costume of a Delegate to the Third Estate*  
 1790  
 Oil on canvas  
 Versailles, Museum of the Château of Versailles (inv. MV 6653).



Ill. 3  
 Joseph-Désiré Court  
*Portrait of Gilbert du Motier Marquis de Lafayette in 1792*  
 1834  
 Oil on canvas  
 Versailles, Museum of the Château of Versailles (inv. MV 2346).



# Joseph DUCREUX

(Nancy, 1735 – Paris, 1802)

## 8 | *Portrait of a Member of the National Convention*

Pastel on paper laid down on canvas

55.6 x 46.6 cm. (21 7/8 x 18 3/8 in.)

### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

### *Bibliography:*

- Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*, Unicorn press, 2006, pp. 163-173.
- Georgette Lyon, *Joseph Ducreux, Premier peintre de Marie-Antoinette (1735-1802): sa vie son œuvre*, La Nef de Paris Edition, 1958.

From a family of artists originally from Nancy, young Joseph Ducreux was trained under his father Charles Ducreux who had established his reputation as Painter to the King of Poland. In the course of his education, he developed a taste for drawing and enjoyed himself even more when he discovered working in pastel. Very fashionable in England and widespread since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, pastels could be produced rapidly by the portraitist and at very little cost. Arriving in Paris in 1760, Ducreux frequented the greatest painters and fashionable pastellists, including Jean-Baptiste Greuze who became one of his closest friends. Greuze advised him:

*“Finish your works as best you can, return to them thirty times if necessary, your backgrounds well coated, try to do it first off, and never fear to return to it later, providing you do it in glazes, never impaste your lace or gauze; be stimulating if you can’t be true, never make your head larger than life nor smaller if at all possible (...) Above all, do drawing studies before painting.”*<sup>1</sup>

Their works have often been confused for each other’s.<sup>2</sup> The artist followed Greuze’s advice even while studying under the best pastellist of his time: the famous Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704-1788), a fact which assured his fame.

<sup>1</sup> Goncourt, 1880, I, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> The *Portrait de Benjamin Franklin*, sold at Christie’s, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, was attributed to Jean-Baptiste Greuze for a long time.

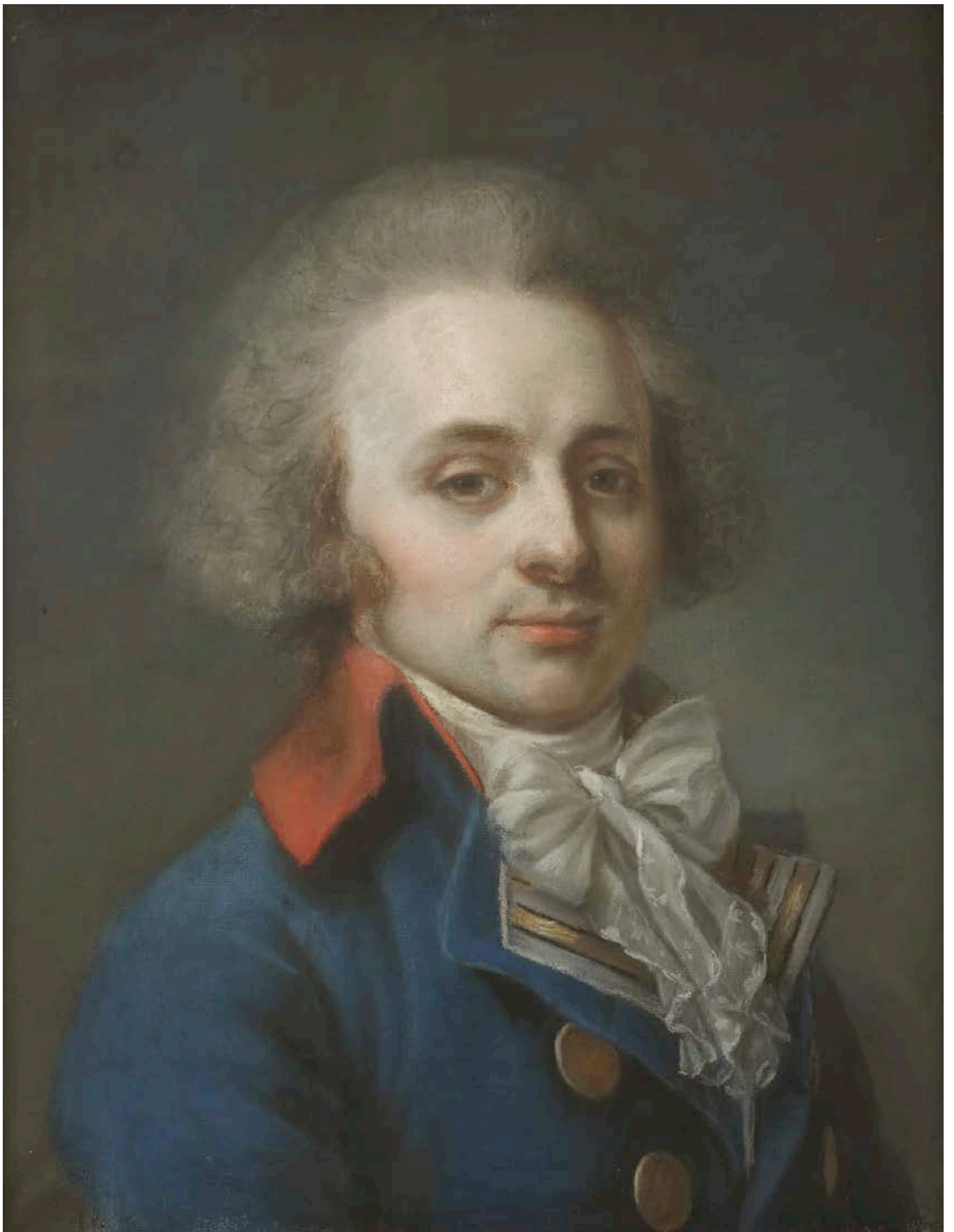


Ill. 1

### *Portrait of Citizen Brichard*

Pastel on several sheets of brown paper laid down on a bordered sheet of cream-colored paper on a stretcher  
73 x 57 cm. (28 3/4 x 22 7/16 in.)

Inscribed in pencil on back of mount: *Ducreux Cen Brichard*.  
Private Collection.





III. 2  
Charles-Jean HUET (1760-1791).  
*Portrait of a Revolutionist*  
Pastel on paper, signed and dated lower right  
58 x 47 cm. (22 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 18 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.)  
Private Collection.

After a short stay in England, Ducreux returned to Paris where he exhibited for the first time at the Academy's Salon which had been opened to everyone by a decree of the National Assembly a little earlier. After some success at official events, Ducreux was entrusted with many portrait commissions from noble families, including the Noailles, La Rochefoucauld, and La Live de Jully for whom he executed his first pastels under La Tour's benevolent gaze. A more important and sensitive responsibility was given to him when the Duke of Choiseul sent him to Austria in 1769 to draw the portraits of the Archduchesses Amelie and Marie-Antoinette, future Crown Princess of France whose marriage to the Crown Prince, the future Louis XV, was to be celebrated the following spring.

*"The King displayed great satisfaction on the subject of the portraits of Her Royal Serene Highnesses, the Archduchesses Marie-Antoinelle and Marie Theresa... At the morning reception the day before yesterday, all the assistants, foreign ministers, and courtiers saw the portrait in question."*<sup>3</sup>

From 1770 to 1789, the artist led a very profitable career: appointed First Painter to the queen, member of the Academy of Vienna, and King's Painter, he entered the Imperial Academy in Vienna before returning to Paris to the Academy of Saint Luke.

The French Revolution marked a turning point in the work of the artist who played an important political role as an enlisted volunteer. In 1793, Ducreux exhibited effigies of several revolutionists at the Academy including Couthon, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Mirabeau, Barnave, and Jean Charles Thibault de Laveaux, icons of the Revolution to whom he paid homage. Our portrait appeared among these revolutionists. Although keeping the sitter unidentified, the artist gratified him with a portrait of excellent quality as a celebration of a participant in the Revolution implicated in the evolution of new ideas.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from the Count of Mercy to Prince Kaunitz, Paris, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1769.

With a gaze as serene as it is wise, our sitter wears a late 18<sup>th</sup> century hairstyle: a greyish wig, whitened by the utilisation of powder which can be seen in the dusting visible on his shoulders. A characteristic garb of the Revolutionary era clothes the sitter in a thick white loosely tied bow around his neck embellished with an elegant lace jabot on his chest. Over that, a blue velvet frock-coat with a collar lined in red evokes the colors of the tricolor flag adopted some time earlier, on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1790, in which most of his revolutionary sitters are attired (*ill.* 1 or 2).

Ducreux' portraits are admired for the vivacious mentality communicated by his sitters. As an excellent draughtsman, his remarkable mastery of pastel let him render vibrations in flesh and fabrics through use of stump, while when necessary, masking his sitter's eventual uncomeliness. Nonetheless in a concern for truthfulness, Ducreux was mainly interested in his sitters' physiognomies and did not represent superfluous accessories. Here, the minutiae in facial details, as well as those of the wig in which strands of hair are drawn one by one, bring the sitter alive.

Beyond the ingeniousness he displays in depicting the face, the artist renders the suit with a lot of realism, including the thick velvet frock-coat which can be found on most of his sitters. The bright blue of our sitter's jacket is similar to that worn by the Baron of Montjean (*ill.* 3).

The talent of this artist, an Ancien Regime favorite and protégé, was highly appreciated until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His flight to England in 1791 did not last. Joseph Ducreux wanted to be a model citizen. In returning to France, he proved his patriotism by doing portraits of revolutionists, of which our work is a terrific example. The artist joined the Society of Friends of the Constitution, and then the National Guard of Paris, before being appointed a member of the Committee of Public Safety in 1793.

*M.O.*



III. 3  
*Portrait of Auguste-Louis François Henri de Mailly,  
Baron of Montjean*  
Pastel on paper laid down on canvas  
Oval. 63 x 52 cm. (24 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 20 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.)  
Private Collection.

**Robert LEFEVRE**, attributed to  
(Bayeux, 1755 – Paris, 1830)

9 | *Portrait of an Artist in his Studio*

c. 1800

Black chalk, stump, and white highlights on paper  
73 x 54 cm. (28 ¾ x 21 ¼ in.)

*Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

*Bibliography:*

- G. Lavalley, *Le Peintre Robert Lefèvre, sa vie et son œuvre*, Caen, 1914.
- Louis-Antoine Prat and L. Lhinares, *La collection Chennevières, Quatre siècles de dessins français*, Paris, 2007.

Inside an artist's studio, a painter proudly poses in front of his easel. Typical of late 18<sup>th</sup> century studio depictions, the room is very Spartan (*ill. 1*). Depicted full length, the painter stands between his two attributes: a box of paints on the left and an easel on the right, behind which are placed objects related to his profession, including several drawings against a wall and held in place by a Medici vase with sculpted decoration. In a corner of the room, in the upper right of the composition, is a shelf holding classic models used for study: a marble fragment representing Mercury's foot; a flayed man, which was an essential figure for achieving exact anatomical depictions; a sculpture with the profile of Antinous which was the canon of antique beauty *par excellence*; and two small sculptures of cupids conveying the artist's cultivation.

Several elements, such as the oval format of the portrait's canvas which only lasted until the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, make it possible to date our drawing to the end of the Directory, as do certain details in the depiction of the sitter. The artist's cleverly ruffled hair in the turn-of-the-century so-called "drowned" style is emphasized by his attire which consists of a tailcoat over a crossed vest, a large white collar around his neck, high-waist pants, and fine kid boots.

Our work's quality of execution which is as skillful as it is precise supposes the hand of a great painter. In that respect, it can be associated with Robert Lefèvre's portrait depicting Carle Vernet at work (*ill. 2*) which was



Ill. 1  
French School, c. 1780-1800  
*Portrait of an Artist in his Studio*  
Oil on canvas  
(49.53 × 35.88 cm.) 19 ½ × 14 ⅞ in.  
Dallas Museum of Art  
Photo: Dallas Museum of Art.

apparently done only a few years after our drawing. Furthermore, the canvas represented in the Vernet portrait is on the same type of fairly rare A-frame easel as that in our drawing.







Ill. 2  
 Robert Lefèvre  
*Portrait of Carle Vernet (1758 - 1836)*  
 Oil on canvas  
 129 x 97 cm. (4 ft. 2 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. x 38 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
 Paris, Louvre Museum(inv. RF 671).



Ill. 3  
 Robert Lefèvre  
*Portrait of the Painter Pierre Guérin (1774-1833)*  
 Oil on canvas  
 109 x 80 cm. (42 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 31 ½ in.)  
 Orléans, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 582).

Lefèvre, who enjoyed international fame, was a portraitist of elegant society under Louis XVI, the First Empire, and the Restoration. Admired by his contemporaries, he proudly exhibited in the Salon between 1791 and 1827. Drawings from his hand are extremely rare, the few known pieces were destroyed during World War II.

The sitter's features in our drawing can hypothetically be associated with those of the artist's contemporary and friend encountered in Regnault's studio, Pierre-Narcisse Guérin whose portrait by Lefèvre is conserved in the Museum of Fine Arts in Orléans (*ill. 3*). Guérin would seem to be painting one of the women with sweet delicate rounded faces wearing clothing and hair in antique styles that are characteristic of his works.

The artist's virtuosity is seen in the care given to each compositional detail, from the handling of hair drawn strand by strand, to the diamond-shaped lock on the painting box typical of the Directory style. The work's format, quality, and fine handling suggest that the drawing was done by a painter who excelled in the manipulation of black chalk. An attentive observer, Robert Lefèvre conveyed his sitters' psychology with great acuity. In a desire to render movements accurately, the artist worked the delicate handling of the light illuminating the pure and exact lines of the forms, capturing the setting's calm, and the serenity which dominated in most of his works.

The room is lit by natural light which seems to come from an opening to the left of the composition. It illuminates the sitter's face accentuated by his collar highlighted in white gouache, while bringing out the forms of the reliefs as a result of the shadows projected by the paint box and the painter – which is also found in his portrait of *Vernet (ill. 2)*, - as well as by the easel.

With an exceptional format and quality of execution, our work shows the importance of depicting oneself among artists at the turn of the century. We suggest attributing this work to the hand of Robert Lefèvre, a famous portraitist who was noticed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the diplomat and writer Vivant Denon, who became Director-General of Museums from 1802 to 1815 and introduced the artist to the Imperial Court.

M.O.



## Gustave MOREAU

(Paris, 1826 – 1898)

- 10 | *Two Studies for the Helmeted Soldier behind Darius;  
Study for a Leg and Shoulder on the left  
Preparatory Study for Darius Fleeing after the Battle of Arbelles,  
Paris, Gustave Moreau Museum (inv. 223)*

Leadpoint on paper

21.9 x 29.4 cm. (8 5/8 x 11 5/16 in.)

*Provenance:*

France, Private Collection.

*Bibliography:*

- Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau: Monographie et nouveau catalogue de l'œuvre achevé*, Courbevoie: ACR éd, 1998.

*Exhibition:*

- Emmanuelle Brugerolles (dir.), *Quand Moreau signait Chassériau*, Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>- Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005, ill. p. 43, cat. 9.

*"(...) from the age of 8 years old, he never stopped drawing everything he saw."*<sup>1</sup>

Fascinated with drawing which he practiced very early, young Gustave Moreau nonetheless finished his studies before devoting himself completely to his vocation. He was the son of Louis Moreau, an architect who had studied under Charles Percier (1764-1838) and Pierre Fontaine (1762-1853). After Gustave obtained his school diploma, Louis submitted his work to Pierre-Joseph Dedreux-Dorcy (1789-1874) who confirmed the young man's talent for drawing. Gustave was subsequently sent to François-Edouard Picot's studio (1786-1868). Due to his undeniable drawing talent, he won first prize at age 13 and then entered the Royal School of Fine Arts seven years later.

An assiduous copyist at the Louvre, Moreau displayed a particular taste for ancient and mythological subjects which he placed in the foreground of his work: the Royal School qualified him as a history painter.

*"How many elements shaped his talent! He started from Delacroix whom he had glimpsed through his dear Th. Chassériau, this other painter with high ambitions whom he loved like a brother (...)"*<sup>2</sup>

Fascinated by the work of a few of his most famous contemporaries, he immersed himself in the work of Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) whom he admired at the Salons on account of the intense romanticism of his violent dramatic scenes, before turning towards Theodore Chassériau's work:

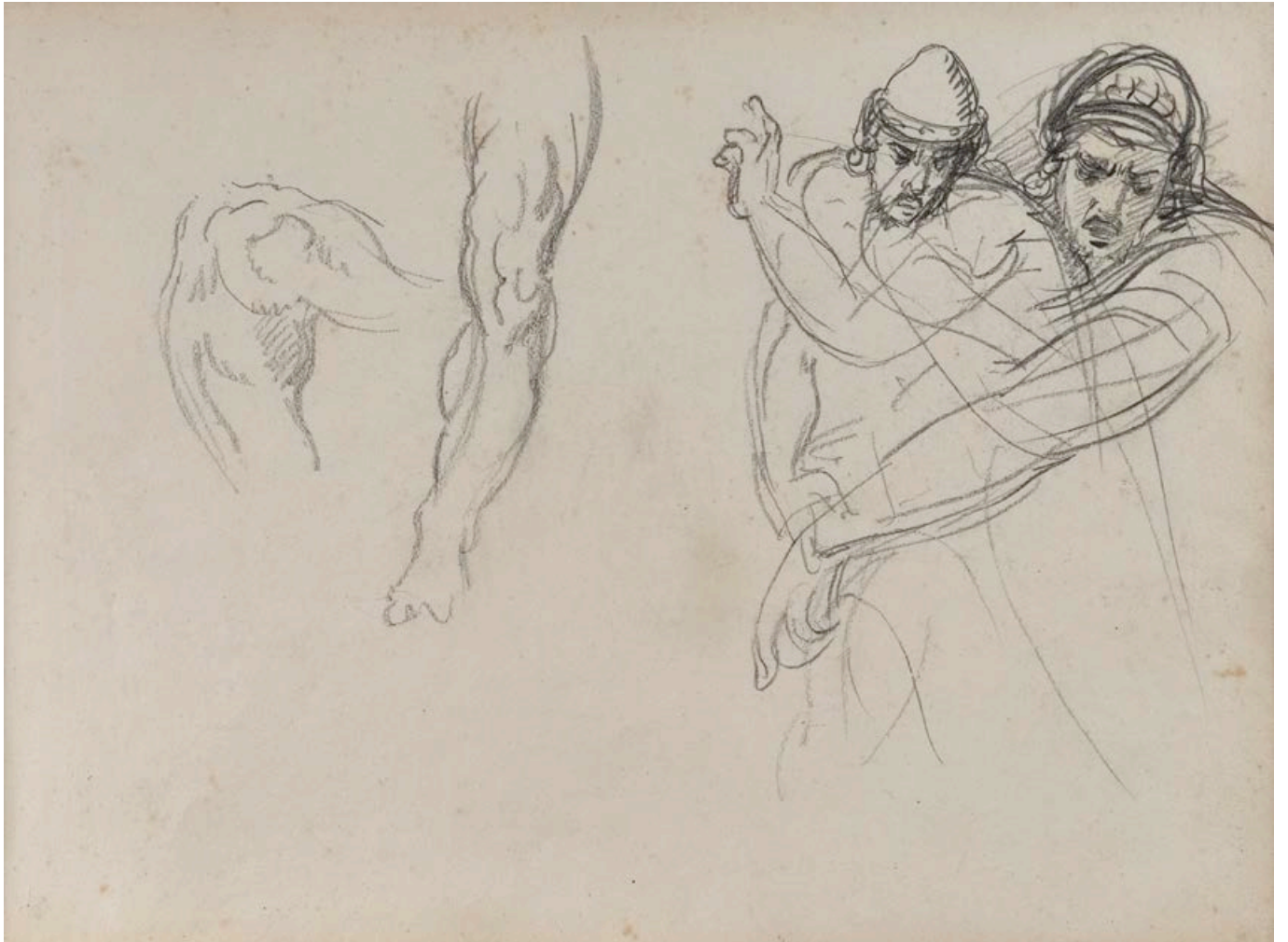
*"Among those who are a little interested in artistic things, my fidelity to Chassériau's memory, to the memory of this noble admirable artist whom I liked so much, is too well known."*<sup>3</sup>

Along with a *Pieta* and a *Portrait of a Man, Study of a Head* at the 1852 Salon, Moreau presented a history painting related to the last great battle of Darius III, the King of Persia beaten by Alexander the Great, entitled

<sup>2</sup> P. Cooke, 2002, II, pp. 239-240.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1898 to Ary Renan, cited in L. Bénédite, *Chassériau*, Paris, 1932, vol. 2, p. 345.

<sup>1</sup> MGM. Archives, Pauline Moreau manuscript, the artist's mother.





Ill. 1  
*Darius Fleeing after the Battle of Arbelles.*  
 1852  
 Salon of 1853, n°847  
 Oil on canvas, 245 x 165 cm. (8 ft. ½ in. x 6 ft. 5 in.)  
 Paris, Gustave Moreau Museum (inv. 223)

*Darius, while Pursued by the Greeks after the Battle of Arbelles, Stops, Exhausted, and Drinks Muddy Water.* The three works were refused by the jury. The model for *Darius*, close to Chasseriau's, was nonetheless hailed by a few contemporaries, including Théophile Gautier whose eloquent review vaunted the work's merits: "(...) *this piece with superb audacity, violent color, and energetic brush; it would have produced quite an effect in the middle of this Salon which is a little calm and a little too prudent; in art, it is good sometimes to break some window panes.*"<sup>4</sup> The following year, the Salon finally accepted the work under the title, *Darius Fleeing after the Battle of Arbelles* (ill. 1). Subsequently, the painting remained in the artist's studio, and he retouched it many times thanks to the many sketches, including ours, which he had done for the

painting. On the right, our drawing displays two studies for a half-length helmeted soldier caught in motion with the left arm shown first bent and then straightened. The study allowed the artist to work on how to render the face of a major figure in the composition who was placed center right in the middle ground, just behind Darius stretched on the ground.

*"I want to create an epic art that is not from school."*<sup>5</sup>

The some ten thousand drawings which the artist left at his death show the importance he gave to his sheets of studies, in a frantic need to multiply compositional possibilities.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in *Théophile Gautier, la critique en liberté*, exh. cat. Paris, Orsay Museum, 1997, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> J. Paladilhe, *Gustave Moreau*, Paris, 1971, p. 10. Jean Paladilhe was the Museum Secretary starting in 1914, and then curator until 1985.



car





Ill. 2

*Study for a Helmeted Soldier Lifting the Veil of the Shulamite*

Leadpoint on paper

24.8 x 13.8 cm. (9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 5 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Paris, École nationale des Beaux-Arts (inv. E.B.A. n° 6613)

The stylistic osmosis with Chasseriau's oeuvre was emphasized during the exhibition of 28 unpublished drawings at the Gustave Moreau Museum in 2005, during which our work was presented.<sup>6</sup> Together these works displayed the vitality of the artist's hand and his ability to catch the nervousness of his subject through line as rapid as it was audacious: his freedom in handling characterized as "chasseriesque" led specialists to attribute his graphic works to Chasseriau on more than one occasion. Our drawing seems to have been done between 1850 and 1852, a transitional period when Moreau was moving away from the use of watercolor in favor of leadpoint as a way of rendering details in his studies with great precision, while going over the same line several times in order to accentuate its energy (*ill. 2*).

The study of two helmeted soldiers on the right facing those of a leg and a shoulder on the left reveals an insatiable need to draw in search of a composition which would completely satisfy him. Our drawing evokes the artist's frenzy as he worked, passing from the study of a detail to a compositional sketch and thus rejecting the rigor and severity which had been imposed on him during his academic education.

Our work shows the artist's admiration for Theodore Chasseriau, whose exalted Romanticism had opened the way for him to leave the path of academism taught at the National School of Fine Arts. The rediscovery of this sheet of studies, which was in preparation for a painted work conserved in the Gustave Moreau Museum (*ill. 1*), opened new research on the final work which until then was hardly documented.

<sup>6</sup> *Quand Moreau signait Chasseriau*, Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>- December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005, ill. p. 43, cat. 9





# Henri-Joseph HARPIGNIES

(Valenciennes, 1819 – Saint-Privé, 1916)

## 11 | *View of Saint Peter's in Rome*

Watercolor on paper

Signed lower right: *Harpignies*

23 x 32 cm. (9 1/16 x 12 5/8 in.)

*Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

*Bibliography:*

- Jean-Pierre Cappoen, *Henri Harpignies, 1819-1916: peindre la nature*, exh. cat. Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire, Loire Museum, June 4<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire: Loire Museum, 2016.

Henri-Joseph Harpignies began his career as a traveling salesman before devoting himself at age 27 to his passion for art by taking lessons from the landscape painter Jean Achard (1807-1884).

Fascinated by Italy which he visited twice, Harpignies completely immersed himself in the peacefulness of the Roman countryside which occupied most of his works from these travels (*ill. 1*). Upon returning to Paris, his talent was acclaimed for his outdoor painting entitled *View of Capri* exhibited at the 1853 Salon. Subsequently he won many prizes and medals which allowed him to make a choice place for himself among the landscape painters of his generation. Harpignies deeply admired the painters of the school of 1830, mainly Corot, whom he considered his master and by whom he was largely inspired at the beginning. He gradually developed his own style with which to express his personality through delicate works which delighted the eye of viewers seeking to be transported elsewhere.

In this peaceful vision of nature, the Basilica of Saint Peter's in Rome appears in the distance in the middle of the Roman countryside. Attention is focused on nature which occupies most of the composition. The eye wanders through the whole work before perceiving a seated figure in the middle ground, apparently sketched from the view which lay before the artist. The immensity of the natural surroundings illustrates Nature's power over Man which was probably the artist's personal conviction. In fact, he himself could be the one depicted in our composition.

In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of drawing and sketching outdoors was common in Europe. French artists turned towards Italy which was considered at the heart of the artistic tradition, in order to absorb its landscapes, grandiose monuments, and ancient vestiges which they incorporated into their works. Outdoor painting confronted the artist with practicing from reality: perpetually shifting weather conditions and natural lighting demanded an excellent mastery of drawing and color. From this production of sketches and preliminary drawings more ambitious compositions emerged resulting from a skillful blend of French techniques and Italian inspiration. These precious works were realized directly *in situ*, symbols of the pure state of nature, sometimes connected with famous sites, such as Saint Peter's in Rome, as can be seen in our study.

Halfway between painting and drawing, our watercolor shows the productivity of the artist's Italian sojourns. An incontestable example of outdoor painting, the artist sketched this spectacular panoramic view which was obviously spontaneously filtered through the artist's great sensitivity.

Forests, towns, seas, rivers, and streams, Harpignies did not restrict himself to one specific place or type of landscape as did most of his contemporaries. Our work shows this taste for nature, here translated into transparency through the use of watercolors. In choosing to depict the Tiber flowing around the city, he juxtaposes two elements which were so dear to him in the



same work: water and land. Even though he replicates grandiose views, the artist's compositions are often imbued with intimate poetic effects.

An excellent draughtsman, Harpignies was very successful as a watercolorist when he exhibited in London at the New Watercolour Society. Recognized in his lifetime as a "Michelangelo of the trees,"<sup>1</sup> the artist fascinated his public with the emanating peacefulness which he managed to breathe into each work, whether it was sketched, in watercolor, or painted.

Probably conserved in the artist's personal collection, this study, like most of them, was not destined to be exhibited or sold. An essential resource for his creations, the sketches made it possible to rework works in the studio and instantly find the freshness and spontaneity of a precise instant.

*M.O.*

<sup>1</sup> The artist's nickname given by Anatole France (1844-1924), writer and literary critic during the III<sup>rd</sup> Republic.



Ill. 1  
*Landscape with a Bridge over the Tiber*  
Watercolor on paper  
39.5 x 71.5 cm. (15 5/16 x 28 1/8 in.)  
Signed lower left: "HJ Harpignies"  
Belgium, Private Collection



# Charles-Louis Lucien MÜLLER

(Paris, 1815 – 1892)

## 12 | *Reclining Odalisque*

Oval pastel on vellum

61 x 69 cm. (24 x 27<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Signed lower center: *C.L. MÜLLER*.

### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

Known as a history painter because he participated in so many Salons, Charles-Louis Lucien Müller was also an excellent draughtsman. The young artist entered the School of Fine Arts when 16 years old, first under Antoine-Jean Gros, called Baron Gros (1771-1835), and then under Léon Cogniet (1794-1880), both of whom were Neoclassical and Pre-Romantic painters who rapidly detected his remarkable gift for drawing.

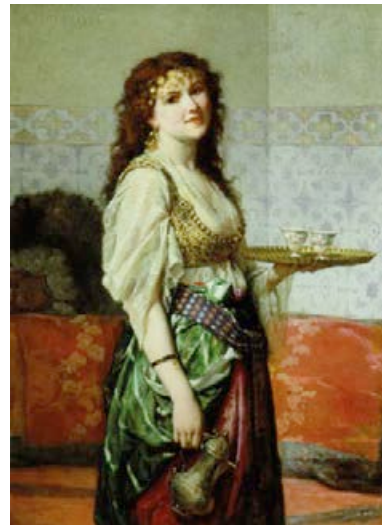
His success in the Salons was lauded with various rewards and medals. Müller's work won everyone over: his rank as a history painter allowed him to reach every audience. In the private sphere, the artist was given to a more intimate genre, including a few delicate portraits of women, prized for their exoticism and sensuality.

Recognized by his peers and by public opinion, Müller exercised several positions with high responsibilities: between 1850 and 1853, he headed the Gobelins tapestry manufactory, and then succeeded Hippolyte Flandrin (1809-1864) in directing the Academy of Fine Arts in 1864, and had a seat on the admission committee for the 1878 World's Fair.

Sensually reclining with arms raised on a blue silk cushion with yellow stripes, this young woman with a pearl necklace is akin to odalisques, a term from Turkish culture indicating women in the service of the sultan's harem. The picture's Orientalism is shown through this semi-nude's lascivious pose, traditional in depictions of Oriental women. In fact, Müller's work participated in the artistic and literary trends of Orientalism developed and appreciated in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The artist liked to portray young women he frequented in Paris and depict them in dreamy environments of which several examples are known to have been rendered in

paint (*ill. 1 & 2*). There are no known indications that the artist went to the Maghreb. Müller's works narrate an imaginary Orient which were the result of commissions from a clientele seeking to be taken out of their normal surroundings. Like his contemporaries, Müller was influenced by Turkey, and probably later by Egypt after the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Our picture's oval format contributes to its intimate quality: it immediately places the viewer in the position of a voyeur, as if, through a window, he were discovering



Ill. 1

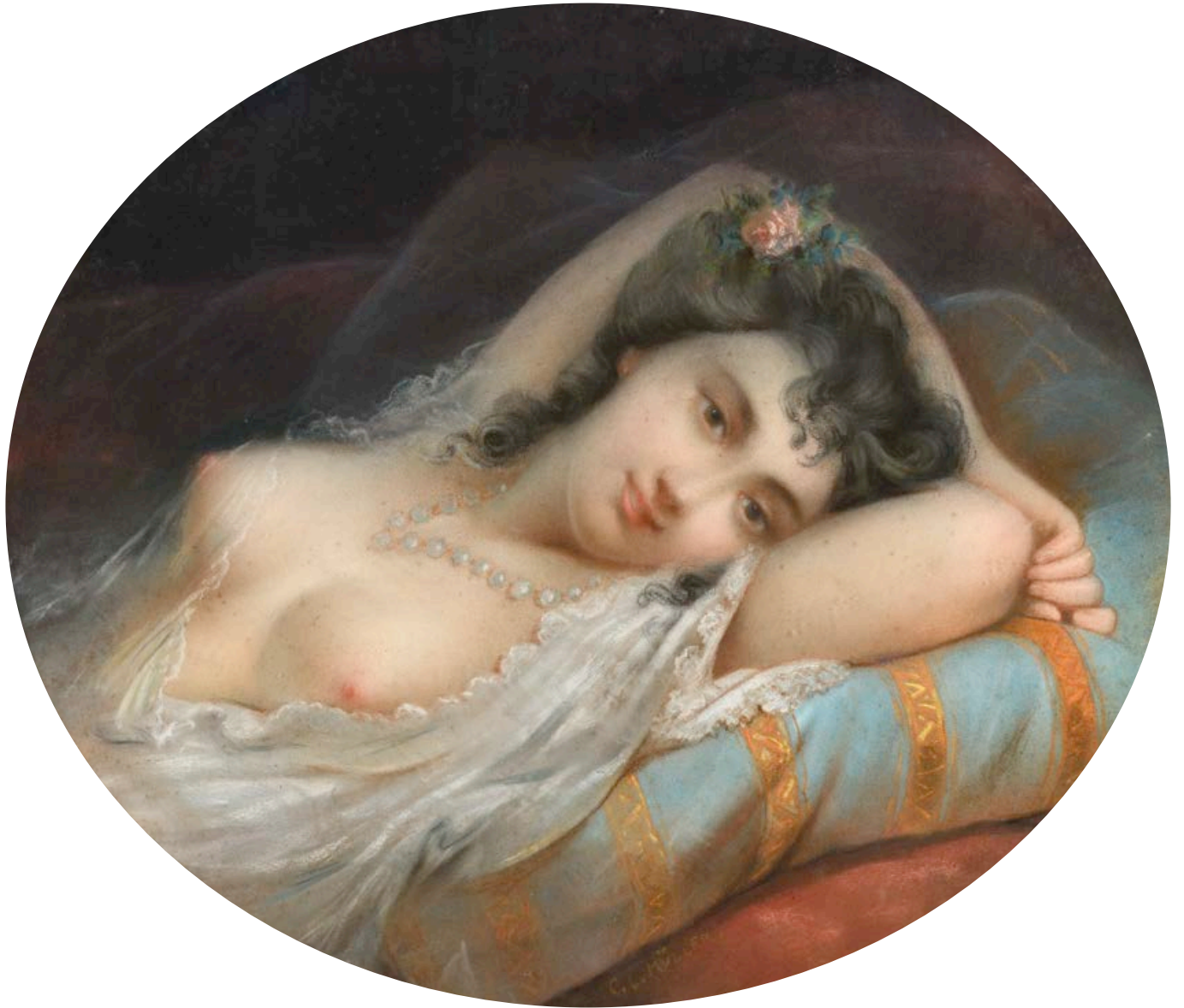
*A Servant in a Harem*

Oil on canvas

Signed upper left: *C.L. Müller*

120.5 x 87.5 cm. (3 ft. 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. x 2 ft. 10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Private Collection.



this young woman fixing her gaze on him. By using pastel, it is possible to infer a steamy atmosphere, create an evanescent drapery effects, and precisely render the young woman's flesh tones. The Occidental features of her porcelain face coalesce with an Oriental environment: Müller uses a decorative and vestimentary iconography in the depiction of odalisques propitious for the viewer. Working in pastel accentuates the picture's sensuality by bringing volume to the different fabrics. The proximity of the cushion and transparent blouse create an effect of blended colors heightened by the red velvet which seems to be a divan, whose color is palely echoed in the coral tones of the sitter's lips and flower in her hair.

Charles-Louis Lucien Müller had two distinct types of production, so that only his signature makes it possible to apprehend the entire scope of his work. On the one hand is that of the history painter present at official events, and on the other, the artist appreciated by the grand public who satisfied the demands of more intimate commissions which seem to have come out of his private circles, of which our pastel is delicate evidence.

*M.O.*



Ill. 2  
*The Odalisque*  
Oil on canvas  
Signed upper left: *Müller*  
121.5 x 87 cm. (3 ft. 11 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. x 10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)  
Private Collection.





## Paul César HELLEU

(Vannes, 1859 – Paris, 1927)

### 13 | *Portrait assumed to be of the Artist's Daughter*

Illustration for “Close the Curtains,” Lucie Félix-Faure-Goyau, *Chansons Simplettes pour les petits enfants*, 1906 (Simplistic Songs for Young Children)

Charcoal, red and white chalk on Japan paper

Signed lower right: *Helleu*

74 x 54 cm. (29 1/8 x 21 1/4 in.)

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Lucie Félix-Faure-Goyau, *Chansons Simplettes pour les petits enfants*. Illustrations by Helleu, Paris Edition d'Art de la Phosphatine Falières, 1906.
- Frédérique de Warrigant (Dir.), *Paul-César Helleu*, Somogy, Paris, 2014, ill. p. 77: *Fermez les rideaux. Chansons simplettes pour les petits enfants*, 1906.
- Robert de Montesquiou, *Paul Helleu peintre et graveur*, Flourey Editions, Paris, 1913.

Despite his mother's reluctance, Paul-César Helleu as a youth turned towards a career in the arts. Upon arriving in Paris in 1873, the young artist took extracurricular drawing classes and went to the Louvre frequently on Sundays where he met Jean-Leon Gerome (1824-1904). In 1876, Helleu entered Gerome's studio at the School of Fine Arts.

In the master's studio, Paul-César Helleu displayed promising singularity. There he encountered John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), as well as Giovanni Boldini (1842-1931), with whom he would remain very close. After a few years of training under the most brilliant artists in fashion, Helleu had his first successes as a result of exhibiting in Parisian salons, as well as entering artistic and high society circles. By 1882, he exhibited in the Society of French Artists, the Salon of Pastellists, the Salon of French Painters and Engravers, and the Brussels Salon of XX. Celebrated by his friends and contemporaries during his lifetime, praised by the critics, his works quickly found choice clients in the fashionable Parisian society in which he moved.

Draughtsman, pastellist, painter, engraver, Helleu also worked as an illustrator, a gift which he put to use in Lucie Félix-Faure-Goyau's work which appeared in 1906, *Chansons simplettes pour les petits enfants* (*Simplistic Songs for Small Children*). Our portrait was used for



Ill. 1

*Portrait of a Young Girl in a Hat*

Drypoint on paper

73 x 49 cm. (28 3/4 x 19 5/16 in.)

Private Collection.



the song *Fermez les rideaux* (*Close the Curtains*), upon which Count Robert of Montesquiou, Man of Letters and a great admirer of the artist, commented:

*“This close the curtains is a little masterpiece. The child, at her window in the evening, turns her eyes invincibly towards the obscurity which attracts and terrifies her because... Above her, the curtains form a heart. This naughty black heart, in the pink curtains, seems terrifying to her...Between the curtains, see, the night looks out like a prisoner at the bottom of a dungeon cell.”*<sup>1</sup>

Helleu's work as an illustrator was so successful that a few years later, he participated in an important monograph which Montesquiou (1855-1921) devoted to him, *Paul Helleu, peintre et graveur*, 1913, for which the artist furnished 182 drawings and engravings. Forever unsatisfied, Helleu was unhappy with the work for a while, as he thought Montesquiou had not given his paintings enough space. His pain was appeased when he was highly praised for his drawings and engravings, as well as for the entire work. In fact, among others, Marcel Proust wrote to Montesquiou, *“I wanted to tell you how much I admired these really superior pages.”*

In every respect, this large thin girl with pink cheeks and fashionable early 20<sup>th</sup> century hairdo seen half-length in profile resembles the girls the artist liked to portray (*ill. 1*). They were often based on the profile of Ellen his own daughter whom he depicted on many occasions. The features of our sitter are very close to those of the portrait of Ellen playing the piano next to her grandmother which is conserved in the Bonnat-Helleu Museum in Bayonne (*ill. 2*)

*“With Helleu, the lighting is not too warm or vulgar (...) but rather there is a seeking of delicate colors, like a Whistlerian Berthe Morisot, subtle nuances which pastel had never yet known how to render.”*  
(Jacques-Émile Blanche)

Considered an Impressionist by his peers, the portraitist was interested in the instantaneous effect of seizing his sitters' expressions from life. *“He was the most skilled, the most gifted, Manet, Monet, Renoir believed it the way we did.”*<sup>2</sup> To catch the instant, Helleu drew with a rapid hasty



Ill. 2  
*With Four Hands* (Ellen Helleu Beside her Grandmother)  
Drypoint on parchment paper  
39.8 cm. x 29.8 cm. (15 1/16 x 11 3/4 in.)  
Bayonne, Museum of Bonnat-Helleu Fine Arts  
(inv. CMNI 2996).

line and perfectly mastered the so-called three-crayon technique: charcoal, red and white chalk allowed him to easily render surfaces, materials, and depth, here the pinks are almost reddish in the sitter's hair. In our work, the sitter's delicacy is communicated through broad generous strokes which envelope her in supple graceful lines. His drawings are proof of the joy and freedom of line to which he gave the most importance, as opposed to the evanescent background which is often simply suggested. Always preferring the sketch to a finish, movement to the frozen, Helleu drew all his life without retouching, with the same enthusiasm as in the beginning. Boldini, Sargent, Monet, Tissot, Blanche, Gervex: this *“...tall thin boy, all in black, with a bowler hat on an Assyrian head, in black serge full uniform”*<sup>3</sup> frequented the most brilliant artists of his time between Paris, London, and New York where he went in 1902. A free artist and independent personality, he nonetheless refused to work with dealers, even if they were as prestigious as Durand-Ruel.

M.O.

<sup>1</sup> Robert de Montesquiou, *Paul Helleu peintre et graveur*, Floury Editions, Paris, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Robert de Montesquiou, *op. cit.*, p.123.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques-Émile Blanche, *Propos de peintre*, 1928, p.121.



# Léon LHERMITTE

(Mont-Saint-Père, 1844 – Paris, 1925)

14 | *Wheat*

c. 1887

Pastel on paper laid down on paper

Signed lower right: “L. Lhermitte”

Inscription recto: “n° 122 (4893)”

26.7 x 34.3 cm. (10 ½ x 13 ½ in.)

### *Bibliography:*

- Monique Le Pelley Fonteny, *Léon Augustin Lhermitte 1844-1925: catalogue raisonné*, Cercle d'art, Paris, 1991, under no. 15, p. 165: “*Les Blés*” (*Wheat*).

### *Provenance:*

- The artist's studio.
- Private collection until 1982.
- France, Private collection.

[...]There's surprising masterfulness in everything he [Lhermitte] does; excelling especially in modeling, he perfectly satisfies everything which honesty demands.<sup>1</sup>  
Vincent Van Gogh

In 1882, the French State acquired the monumental work, *The Reapers' Pay*, for the Luxembourg Museum. Praised by the critics, the artist Leon Lhermitte thus became a key figure in contemporary painting. On this occasion, his friend Auguste Rodin sent his congratulations in a letter to which the artist responded that the sculptor was one of “the very few whose appreciation is precious to him.”<sup>2</sup> Subsequently identified as one of the major representatives of peasant painting during the Third Republic, Lhermitte was especially committed to illustrating the surroundings of his native village, Mont-Saint-Père. Inspired by Corot, the Barbizon School, and Jules Breton, among others, the artist regularly moved around and drew outdoors a lot in order to sketch landscapes of the Picardy countryside from life in pastels and charcoals.

The Revolution of 1848 rejected the mythological subjects preferred by the Academy. In the 1850s, the peasant population represented 75% of the French population and so naturally occupied a major place in the heart of the arts, especially the main ones of painting and literature.



Ill. 1  
“*End of the Day*,” August 1887  
Dry pastel sec on fine beige laid paper  
22 x 29 cm. (8 1/16 x 11 7/16 in.)  
Signed lower right  
Reims, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 907-19-325).

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, II, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Greenwich, Conn., The New York Graphic Society, 1959, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Léon Lhermitte to Rodin on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1882, Paris, Rodin Museum.



The summer of 1887 seems to have been particularly propitious for the artist to study wheat fields. In fact, along with the work, *The End of the Day* (ill. 1), conserved in the Reims Fine Arts Museum, Lhermitte for a second time is singly interested here in a precise study of the fields which he attentively transposes onto paper. Simple in subject matter, but audacious as a symbol, our work illustrates the simple beauty of nature and embodies at the same time the hard labor of millions of French people. The field thus becomes an allegory of Work and Order in opposition to worker life in factories which was considered corrupted by socialism. The Second Empire promoted peasant painting as a genre which illustrated moral order, an image of security and stability far from the upheavals of revolts in the cities.

At the time, Lhermitte became close to Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884), an outdoor painter made famous by Zola in his *Complete Works* (Vol. 12, pp. 1022-1023, Paris, Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1969), and benefited from his aura. With him, he developed his taste as a *plein air* painter, by following and studying peasants busy with their daily occupations. The public appreciated the sincerity in his work which did not seek to embellish figures or rework landscapes.

Leon Lhermitte was a painter of reality. Both in his figures and in the nature surrounding them, the artist sought to capture the present instant above all. To do so, he preferred pastel and charcoal, which were fashionable in England, did not require preparation, and made it

possible to produce instantly. His direct observation of nature reveals a sensation of immediate reality in our work which is captured through rapid touches. In this small scale work which probably served as a study for larger compositions, the light but imposing masses are balanced and interact in a way as to create a single homogenous unity in which a few thick strokes of pastel define the horizon. Under the crushing heat of the sun at its zenith, the sparkling wheat is reflected like golden sheaves. Thanks to the use of pastel, the artist plays with the grain of the paper and creates an effect of blending which thus gives volume to this messy field trampled in places by wild animals. With Lhermitte, nothing is left to chance: in his works, the sky is usually absent or very reduced and never weighs down the composition.

The artist conserved this work in his studio until his death in 1925. Evidence of the hours spent doing outdoor studies, this small scale work probably served as a study for other compositions in larger formats which had in common a simplicity which celebrated the greatness of manual labor.

Exhibited by Durand-Ruel in London in 1875, celebrated by public opinion and by the State which acquired some of his most beautiful works, as well as commissioning the decoration for the City Hall and the Sorbonne, Leon Lhermitte was an artist who was highly appreciated in his lifetime and became an emblematic figure of 19<sup>th</sup> century peasant painting.

M.O.





## Elisabeth SONREL

(Tours, 1874 – Sceaux, 1953)

### 15 | *Portrait of Jacqueline*

Watercolor, gouache and gold leaf on paper

41.8 x 30.8 cm. (16<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)

Label lower left, on the glass of frame: 285

Original pediment frame dated 1909, measuring 57.9 x 46 cm. (22<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)

#### *Provenance:*

- Belgium, Private Collection.

#### *Bibliography:*

- *Charlotte Foucher*, “Elisabeth Sonrel (1874-1953): une artiste symboliste oubliée,” *Bulletin des amis de Sceaux*, Sceaux, n°25, 2009.

Trained in painting from an early age by her father Nicolas Stephane Sonrel, Elisabeth grew up in a family atmosphere favorable to an artistic career. Nonetheless, access to the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris was refused to women until 1897, so she entered the Julian Academy at age 17 to finish her education under Jules Lefebvre’s instruction.

Caught between two centuries, Sonrel followed early 20<sup>th</sup> century artistic decorative tendencies which centered attention on the female figure and Nature. Between Symbolism and Art Nouveau, her works also emanate a certain mysticism which she communicated through her sitters’ discreet wisdom and solemnity. Her subjects, which were mainly feminine, are characterized by two aesthetic qualities dear to the artist: tenderness and elegance.

The delicacy of her work was partially inspired by a trip to Florence at the beginning of the century which profoundly affected her style. Hence these female figures with sweet idealized faces and Botticellian gracefulness are depicted in arborescent settings which are also the consequence of many visits to the Breton Forest of Broceliande, the landscapes of Concarneau, and Plougastel.

In France, the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a revival of the Middle Ages in reaction to the impact of Industrial Revolution economic upheavals. The idealization of this Medieval past inspired many artists who naturally placed the sacred at the heart of their work. This mystic vein intensely affected Sonrel’s oeuvre and brings it very close to contemporaries Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (Lyon, 1824 – Paris, 1898) and Edgar Maxence (Nantes, 1871 – La Bernerie-en-Retz, 1954) in terms of predominance of the sacred and a pantheistic vision of Nature.

In utilizing gold leaf around our figure, Sonrel brings an additional mystique which once more suggests the divine and is reminiscent of 14<sup>th</sup> century religious icons in their invitation to devotion. In our picture, the use of ochre hues for the cartouche under the figure announcing “*JACQUELINE*” also echoes the gold. In fact, unlike her contemporaries, Sonrel conferred names on these idealized women which made it possible to identify them as saints or pious figures by concentrating attention on facial details.



Thanks to a pastel palette which creates an evanescent effect, Sonrel expresses her sitters' delicacy and melancholy to which the gold leaf adds a spiritual dimension. The artist's broad use of watercolor technique allows her to create material effects, such as the light *sfumato* around her figures, inspired by her Italian sojourn.

Represented in the Salon of French Artists as well as that of the Society of French Watercolorists between 1893 and 1939, Elisabeth Sonrel met with unqualified success. A Symbolist artist, *par excellence*, her work was nonetheless unjustly forgotten for almost a century before being rehabilitated by critics in the 1990s. A specialist in depicting female portraits, she occupies a preponderant place today in early 20<sup>th</sup> century pictorial art.

*M.O.*





# Aristide MAILLOL

(Banyuls-sur-Mer, 1861 - Perpignan, 1944)

## 16 | *Reclining Nude and Fruit*

c. 1930

Sanguine on plate of illustrations detached from the *Album Cham. Vendu au profit des orphelins d'Auteuil*, text by Ignotus [Félix Platel] of *Figaro* and the editors of *France Illustrée*, Paris, 1880, in-fol. [Cham Album. Sold for the benefit of the orphans of Auteuil]

Monogram lower left in pencil

On verso, three lithographed caricatures by Amédée de Noé, called Cham (Paris, 1818-1879): *One of his Nieces, Cham and his Niece, the Count of Noé, Father*

27.6 x 37.1 cm. (10 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.)

### *Provenance*

- France, Private Collection

### *General Bibliography (Unpublished Work)*

- Bertrand Lorquin, *Aristide Maillol*, Milan, Skira, Paris, Seuil, 2002.
- *Maillol peintre*, exh. cat., Paris, Fondation Dina Vierny-Musée Maillol, 2001.
- Pierre Camo, *Maillol, mon ami*, Lausanne, éditions du Grand-Chêne, 1950.
- George Waldemar, *Aristide Maillol et l'âme de la sculpture*, Neuchâtel, Idées et Calendes, 1964.

*"The degree to which Maillol had a feeling for form, the beauty of a line, the geometric perfection of a volume is well expressed in his least and quickest sketches. A simple line is sufficient to define the three-dimensional interest of a work over which he will linger for long months."*

Maurice Denis, 1925 (cit. Waldemar, 1964)

With Matisse, Picasso, and Léger, Aristide Maillol figures among the sculptor painters who pushed for modernizing sculpture. Born in the shadow of vineyards and olive trees in the village of Banyuls, Maillol was shaped by the land of his childhood to which he remained faithfully attached. Famous today for his sculpted works, Maillol started his artistic career as a painter. He arrived in Paris at the age of twenty to enter Gerôme's studio, and then studied for a while at the School of Decorative Arts before joining Cabanel's studio at the *École des Beaux-Arts*.

Feeling isolated in the capital, the young artist barely appreciated this academic training. Through the intermediary of Daniel de Monfreid, he joined the exhibition of the "Impressionist and Synthesist group"



Ill. 1.  
Aristide Maillol.  
*Victory*.  
1921. Bronze relief. 25,4 x 26,7 x 4 cm. (10 x 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 1  $\frac{5}{16}$  in.)  
Casting: C. Valsuani. Paris,  
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 1972.21.



in 1889 which took place outside of the World's Fair at the Volpini Café under Gauguin's tutelage. The aesthetic principles of this master from Pont-Aven opened Maillol to new perspectives: "The School of Fine Arts, instead of enlightening me, veiled my eyes. In front of Gauguin's pictures, I felt as if I could work in this spirit."

Gauguin was the one who encouraged Maillol to join the Nabis group to whom he was introduced by Rippl-Ronai. The young painter drew inspiration from eclectic sources: he absorbed Greek, Egyptian, and Indian art; was a precursor in his enthusiasm for African art; and all the while manifested his taste for Baroque and Venetian masters. Contact with the Nabis led him to explore mural decoration and inspired him for tapestries. At a time when the latter art was disappearing, he established a tapestry studio in Banyuls, selected his own wool, and gathered his pigments for the dying. The presentation of the *Mediterranean* at the Autumn Salon of 1905 consecrated Maillol as a sculptor. Motivated by his success in three-dimensional works, the artist from then on pursued this path without ever abandoning painting.

Throughout his career, drawing remained the primordial principle of Aristide Maillol's work, the daily foundation of his art. In charcoal, sanguine, or Conté pencils, he drew from life every day, and filled his sketchbooks with architecturally structured female silhouettes. The sculptor-draughtsman sought to render volumes, simplify the ever more powerful line, and convey the character of the body with more liveliness than exactitude. Thus he created a new aesthetic canon. His drawings accumulated and sometimes were brought out again years later to serve as the model for a new sculpture.

Here, Maillol depicts a reclining female nude. The artist likes sensing the body's flexibility and places his models in complex elliptical poses. In our drawing, the young woman bends a leg, the other slips over it. The torso is curved, one arm folded back over the shoulder, the head inclined forward in counterpoint. This synthetic drawing is entirely composed of curves and counter-curves. The artist details the volume of the bosom and stomach muscles, emphasizes contours with heavy outlines. As was his custom, the legs take up a preponderant part of the space, whereas he only dashes in facial features and barely takes time for the hand.

The model is situated in a landscape which is evoked in the foreground by fruit placed on the ground and beyond that, grass which has been hatched in. The drawing is encircled by an elliptical frame which gives it the appearance of a low-relief. It echoes, in particular, the rectangular low relief sculpture of *Victory* (ill. 1) exhibited at the Fine Arts Museum of Montreal which depicts a young woman in the same introspective pose. This position would be repeated later in that of *The Mountain* (ill. 2) which is known from a preparatory drawing (*The Mountain*, 1937, charcoal on handmade paper, 74.5 x 101.7 cm. / 29 5/16 x 40 in., Maillol Museum). Our work may also be compared with a group of chalk drawings reproduced in the work Pierre Camo, Maillol's close friend, published in 1950 in collaboration with the artist's son, Lucien Maillol. On the cover is a fairly closely related drawing depicting a woman in a similar pose.<sup>1</sup>

The evocative power of the female body in its expression and sensuality which Maillol achieves in our drawing make him not only the visual bard of ideal feminine beauty, but also, through the audacity of his line and independence of his style, a herald of modernity.

M.B.

<sup>1</sup> Camo, *Maillol, mon ami*, Lausanne, 1950, p. 55 (no caption).



Ill. 2.  
Aristide Maillol.  
*Mountain*.  
1937. Stone.  
176 x 185 x 78 cm. (5 ft. 9 9/16 in x 6 ft 13/16 in. x 2 ft. 6 1/16 in.)  
Lyon, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. RF 3244.





M.

# Henri Joseph HARPIGNIES

(Valenciennes 1819-Saint Prive 1916)

## 17 | *View of Paris from the rue Gracieuse looking towards the rue Monge and the Saltpeter Hospital*

1893

Watercolor over black chalk lines

Signed and dated lower left: «*Harpignies 93.8bre*»

Situated: «*Vue prise de la Gracieuse, en bas de la rue Monge et la nouvelle école de la ville, dans le fond la Salpêtrière*»

35 x 25.2 cm. (13<sup>13/16</sup> x 9<sup>15/16</sup> in.)

Provenance:

Sale of a Parisian Amateur (Durville), Nice, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 1942, lot n° 10.

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean-Pierre Cappoen, *Henri Harpignies, 1819-1916: peindre la nature*: exh. cat. Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire, Musée de la Loire, June 4<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire: Museum of the Loire, 2016
- Lucien Molin, *Harpignies, 25 paintings, 40 watercolors*, exh. cat. Roubaix Grand Hotel, April 28<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1928.
- *Dessins de maîtres français: de Lebrun à Rodin*, exh. cat ; Patrick Perrin Gallery, Paris, 1991.

By 1850, Harpignies was doing watercolors which became his real means of expression and let him express Nature's variations over the course of the seasons.

Essentially a landscape painter, the artist did not fit in the successive trends which agitated the evolution of painting, and although influenced by Corot, he rapidly affirmed his own personality. The freshness and luminosity of his landscapes gave him a reputation as a watercolorist who won many medals and was invited by Whistler to exhibit at the Royal Institute in London.

Mainly known for his naturalist landscapes, Harpignies nonetheless produced some Parisian views and studied the city's appearance at different times of day. The delicacy and subtlety of this work is an excellent example.

The technique of watercolors let him handle the urban landscape atmospherically via grey wash and very diluted colors. The view, situated slightly below the viewer, is dominated by a washed light and a shifting sky animated by greys and blues. It thus differs from previous city views which have greater contrasts and are more structured, such as *Saint-Germain Boulevard* of 1887 (Paris, Petit Palais Museum) or the *View from a Window at No. 6, rue Furstenberg* of 1882 (Private Collection). In addition, Nature, which is always present in views by Harpignies, is illustrated here with finesse through the interplay of different chromatic nuances of green, on the one hand, and on the other, by the depiction of trees and branches handled in India ink wash which are animated by a life of their own. The presence of a few figures sketched from life reinforce the vitality of the whole composition.



# Pierre-Auguste Renoir

(Limoges 1841 - 1919 Cagnes-sur-Mer)

## 18 | *Marguerite Charpentier's Salon*

Black chalk, pen, brown ink on laid paper

20.7 x 29.7 cm. (8 1/8 x 11 1/16 in.)

Signed lower right: *RENOIR*

### *Bibliography / Exhibition:*

- Original drawing for illustration in Alphonse Daudet, "Les Salons Bourgeois," M. E. Bergerat, *Les Chefs d'Oeuvre d'Art à l'Exposition Universelle 1878*, Paris: Ludovic Baschet Ed., 1878, vol. I, illus. p. 31.
- *Provenance:*
- Jean-Louis Debauve (1926-2016) Collection.
- Paris, art dealer.
- Paris, Private Collection.

Although Renoir vigorously proclaimed the autonomy of painting and literature which, according to him, should limit themselves to their own expressive means, he paradoxically left us personal opinions which attest to his interest for literary creation of his time.

Indeed the painter maintained close ties with many authors, such as Astruc, Zola, Banville, Duranty, Daudet, Mallarmé, Gide, Valéry, as well as his brother Edmond and his friend Paul Lhoste, to only cite a few. Renoir's oeuvre and the naturalist novels of Zola, Maupassant, Daudet, Duranty, the Goncourt brothers, and Huymans shared themes of modern life: these writers were committed to depicting country outings, balls, street and café scenes, as well as outdoor strolls.

Between 1878 and 1883, Renoir turned again to the official Salon, after having ceased his participation in Impressionist exhibitions which were of little financial interest. Occupied with making many portraits, he also devoted himself to the art of illustration. He especially collaborated on the illustrated edition of Zola's *L'Assommoir*, published in 1878 by Marpon and Flammarion.

This work, to which 22 artists, such as Clairin, Gervex, and Régamey contributed, was the first to combine traditional modes of reproduction with new techniques such as *guillotage*, a procedure which made the mechanical transposition possible of the draughtsman's line to a specific type of paper, called "*Gillot paper*." Renoir did four illustrations



Ill. 1  
After Augustte Renoir  
*Father Bru Stomping in the Snow to Get Warm*  
Illustration from an ink drawing by Renoir  
Published in Emile Zola, *L'Assommoir*,  
Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1878, p. 193.  
Bib. Nat. Cabinet des Estampes.





Ill. 2  
 After Auguste Renoir, *Initial "D"*  
 Illustration from a pen and ink drawing by Renoir  
 Published in Alphonse Daudet  
 "Les Salons Bourgeois," M. E. Bergerat,  
*Les Chefs d'Oeuvre d'Art à l'Exposition Universelle 1878*,  
 Paris: Ludovic Baschet Ed., 1878, vol. I, ill. p. 29.  
 Bib. Nat. Dept. des Estampes.

depicting the *La Loge des boches* [the Krauts' Lodging], *Lantier and Gervaise Having a Pleasant Evening at the Concert Café*, *Nana and her Friends Strolling on the Outer Boulevard*, and *Father Bru Stomping in the Snow to Get Warm* (ill. 1). Although these images with themes recalling subjects from his paintings were widely distributed for the artist at the moment of publication, they subsequently were forgotten for a long time by bibliophiles and specialists of Renoir's drawn and engraved works.

In 1998, John Collins contributed to the rediscovery of Renoir as an illustrator by exhuming a satirical text by Alphonse Daudet, "The Bourgeois Salons," published by Emile Bergerat in 1878 in *Les Chefs-d'oeuvre d'art* [Art Masterpieces], a compilation of essays dedicated to painting and decorative arts. This work, illustrated by a great number of artists (Gerome, Bastien-Lepage, Gustave Moreau, Meissonier, Rochegrosse, Stevens, Bonnat, etc.) was broadly distributed, the way Zola's *L'Assommoir* was that same year. The publisher's intention was to promote a new decorative style inspired by modern life and customs.



Ill. 3  
 After Auguste Renoir  
*A Salon*  
 Illustration from our pen and ink drawing  
 Published in Alphonse Daudet, "Les Salons Bourgeois," M.E.  
 Bergerat, *Les Chefs d'Oeuvre d'Art à l'Exposition Universelle 1878*,  
 Paris: Ludovic Baschet Ed., 1878, vol. I, ill. p. 31.  
 Bib. Nat. Dept. des Estampes.

Daudet's article is decorated with two illustrations by Renoir: an ornamental letter D (ill. 2) and a scene depicting a society Salon at the end of the text (ill. 3). Our ink drawing is the original work used for this illustration and was reproduced for the work through use of a photomechanical process. Daudet's essay alludes to the Salon hosted by Madame Charpentier, née Marguerite-Louis Lemonnier (1848-1904), wife of Georges Charpentier (1846-1905), who published the work of the naturalists. Inspired by the figure of Juliette Deberle in *A Page of Love* by Zola, this woman played a role of the first order in the cultural life of the time. At her home on 15 rue Grenelle, she received writers, sculptors, poets, statesmen, and especially painters. Emile Bergerat and Alphonse Daudet frequented the Charpentier Salon which took place on Friday afternoons from January to March. Here is where they met Renoir. Daudet and Renoir, who shared the same aesthetic vision, bonded in friendship between 1875 and 1880.

In September 1876, Renoir spent a month at Daudet's estate in Champrosay where he painted landscapes and a *Portrait of Madame Daudet, née Julia Allard*. Daudet and his wife themselves were the guests of a famous Salon frequented by the Parisian elite, and where "the Five"



Ill. 4  
 Auguste Renoir  
*Madame Charpentier et ses enfants*, 1877,  
 Oil on canvas, 154 x 190 cm.  
 NY, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

could be found. Also known as “the Group of authors who get booed,” they were Alphonse Daudet, Gustave Flaubert, Emile Zola, Ivan Turgenev, and Edmond de Goncourt. The evenings at the Charpentiers’, according to Daudet, did not have the characteristics of a real literary Salon. Indeed topics of conversation could as easily be on politics as on literature and the arts. In his text, he equally deplored the presence of “doctors who are getting established and want to know the neighborhood;” “fortuneless parents seeking to marry off their daughters;” “haranguing professors;” and “old ladies and young girls in ambitious faded costumes.” He gives an acerbic biting description of these high society gatherings:

*“The rooms are too small, and entirely lengthwise, where seated chatting guests have the uncomfortable air of people on an omnibus; the chaotic apartments with hallways, door keepers, surprise folding screens, and the flustered lady of the house who shouts at you, “[Do] not [go] that way...”*

Renoir’s illustrations for “The Bourgeois Salons” are in keeping with the text’s scoffing tone. The animated initial (*ill. 2*) which begins the first sentence of the essay, “*Of all the follies of the time, there is nothing gayer, stranger, or more fertile in comical surprises than this rage for soirées...*,” is formed by a tired tall seedy pianist hunched over his keyboard wearing a too small suit. The man with long disheveled hair is a caricature of Daudet who was known for his musical talent. This scene shows the humor of the author weary of attending evenings which didn’t seem to be worth his interest.

Still in the same sarcastic mode, our drawing, which was intended to illustrate the last page of the text (*ill. 3*), evokes the society Salon’s pretentious ritual: two men wearing exaggeratingly high collars bow respectfully to their buxom hostess who is none other than Marguerite Charpentier receiving her courtesans’ homage. Renoir also did several painted images of the young woman in

about 1876-1878. She sports the same type of dress and her hair is styled the same way as in our drawing (*ill. 4*).

A few years earlier, Edmond de Goncourt gave a description in his *Journal* which had equivalent biting humor, of Madame Charpentier surrounded by flattering writers:

*“A small woman with a pretty head, engaged in terrifying coquettishness, but so tiny, so short and so enveloped by the above, that in her fairy dress, she seems to be playing in a theater of the Queen of Low Bottoms. All around her, a court of little authors scraping and bowing.”*

Between 1878 and 1883, Renoir was the only Impressionist artist to be actively doing illustrations. The unconventional graphic style in our drawing can be found in a few of his illustrations dated the same year (1878); almost all of the originals which were used for their execution have disappeared. Aside from our unpublished work, a drawing of Lise published as a frontispiece for Duret’s pamphlet, “The Impressionist Painters,” and a few preparatory drawings for Zola’s *L’Assommoir* published by Marpon and Flammarion, have come down to us. In the drawing conserved at the Chicago Art Institute which depicts *Factory Workers’ Daughters Strolling on the Outer Boulevard* (*ill. 5*), Renoir employed the same technique as in our work: he very lightly sketched his composition in black chalk before executing the drawing in pen and ink. Indeed, underneath the thickness of heavy ink lines, a few underlying traces of pencil can be perceived.

His graphic style is characterized by overlapping short irregular hatching which forms masses of variable density while evoking a network of interlaced wires. He created a busy surface dissolving details and contours (*ill. 6 & 7*). Luminous areas are left in reserve. In favoring shading of tones and loose strokes, Renoir thus remained true to Impressionist innovations.

Following the success of *Les Chefs d’Oeuvre*, Renoir was frequently solicited to illustrate *La Vie Moderne*, a newspaper founded by Charpentier and directed by Bergerat between 1879 and 1880, and then by Edmond Rendoir between 1884 and 1886. Realized by an artist in full control of his means who had already painted major canvases, such as *The Theater Box*, *Dance at the Moulin de la Galette*, and *The Swing*, Renoir’s illustrations should be considered as works of art in themselves. Our drawing also shows a less known side of Renoir who could introduce a new level of satire into his work.

Our drawing belonged to Jean-Louis Debauve (1926-2016), an inveterate collector of literary and historic documents, engravings illustrating Brittany, Sade’s autographs and unpublished letters, as well as Jules Laforgue’s. Doctor in Law, he was introduced to literature by his mother who read a lot (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Symbolist poets) and his uncle Charles Martine, Librarian at the School of Fine Arts and collector who frequented the *Deux Magots* [a literary café near Saint-Germain-des-Prés] and friends with André Malraux, Robert Desnos, and Dunoyer de Ségonzac. Nicknamed “the Judge,” on account of his professional activities and meticulous spirit, Jean-Louis Debauve participated in establishing the complete works of Jules Laforgue, the product of thirty years of work.

*Amélie du Closel*





III. 5

Auguste Renoir

*Factory Workers' Daughters Strolling on the Outer Boulevard.*

*Arm in arm, they went along, taking up most of the width of the road.*

Black chalk, pen and brown ink on cream laid paper

27.5 x 39.9 cm. (10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Chicago, The Art Institute, Regenstein Collection.

Drawing for illustration published in Emile Zola, *L'Assommoir*,

Paris: Marpon and Flammarion, Paris, 1878, p. 368.



III. 6

Detail of our drawing.



III. 7

Detail of III. 5.





RENOIR.

## Luigi LOIR

Gorritz, 1845 – Paris, 1916

### 19 | *Paris, Rue de la Santé and the Val de Grâce Church Dome*

43.2 x 22.9 cm. (17 x 9 in.)

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated, lower right: *Loir Luigi*

#### *Provenance:*

- Formerly acquired by the Richard Green Gallery in London.

Originally from what was until 1867 the Austrian Empire, Luigi Loir was born into a family in the service of the Charles X's daughters-in-law (Marie-Caroline de Bourbon and the Duchess of Angouleme,) exiled in the city of Gorritz, nicknamed the "Austrian Nice," which was known as a royalist refuge. Young Luigi's parents, who had followed the Bourbons in the Duchy of Parma, entered France in 1860. Luigi was only 15 years old when he decided to remain in Parma to study at the Academy of Fine Arts where his teachers rapidly noticed his gift for drawing and naturally rated him among the best students of his class. Three years later, he joined his father in Paris and became known for the realization of painted ceilings beside the illustrator Jean Pastelot (1820-1870), and then made a choice place for himself in Parisian society by working as an illustrator for the greatest authors of his time, including Jules Verne for his work, *Voyages Extraordinaires*, which appeared in 1882.

When Loir exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1865, he was only 20 years old. However five years later, during the 18<sup>th</sup> mobile Battalion of the Seine, an experience which deeply affected him. Upon returning to civil life, Loir tried to forget this painful period and hoped for the simple joy of the lively Parisian streets. In addition to the many official commissions which he honored, Loir also liked to paint subjects from daily life, lively boulevards and alleys. Café terraces seething with excitement captivated him. The streets of Paris constitute marvelous examples of the largest part of his production in which he could mix the most beautiful examples of Parisian historic architecture with the tranquility of life as it passed by.

*"If Jean Berand painted the Parisians of Paris, Luigi Loir painted the Parisians' Paris."* Théodore de Banville



Ill. 1

*Rue de la Santé and Le Val de Grâce*

Oil on canvas

42.2 x 21.6 cm. (16 5/8 x 8 1/2 in.)

Signed lower right: *Loir Luigi*

Philadelphia, La Salle University Art Museum

(inv. 90-P-367).





Ill. 2  
*Lively Snowy Street*  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 21.5 cm. (15  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 8  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.)  
Private Collection.

Our work is an example from his more productive years. Luigi Loir focused on life in the vicinity of great monuments from the history of Paris. A subject which was dear to painters can be seen in the background of our composition. The Val de Grace, a 17<sup>th</sup> century church situated in the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, had been known before the Revolution as the Royal Abbey of Val de Grace Church and had subsequently become a military hospital.

That we know several versions of our work on different supports illustrates the importance of the subject for the artist. A painted version of similar size is conserved in the La Salle University Art Museum in Philadelphia (*ill. 1*). Slight differences reside in the handling of the brush which is more precise than the

looser touch in the American version. Other details are then apparent, including the dab of color in the little girl's hat in the foreground and a few blue openings in the sky of our version.

The painter seems to have positioned his easel in the same spot at two different times of day: our canvas could be an afternoon version as opposed to one made at the beginning of the day in the Philadelphia version and in winter. A version in a private collection today presents the same street under snow (*ill. 2*). We also know a drawing by the artist (*ill. 3*), probably preparatory to our painting, which is conserved in a private collection and which has several compositional differences, notably in the organization of the figures which he might have seen when he did the drawing,



Ill. 3  
*Rue de la Santé and the Val de Grâce  
 Church Dome*  
 Black chalk with white highlights  
 44 x 24 cm. (17 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 9 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
 Signed lower left: *Loir Luigi*  
 Private Collection.



Ill. 4  
*Val-de-Grâce Dome*  
 engraved by Gaston RODRIGUEZ  
 after Luigi Loir  
 Etching  
 46.5 x 24.5 cm. (18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 9 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
 Paris, Carnavalet Museum.

but the placement has been changed in our painted version. Praised by the critics, Luigi Loir was soon very comfortable in his art. This view of the rue de la Santé was so appreciated that it was also engraved (*ill. 4*).

In a few brushstrokes, Loir sketched the silhouettes of passersby in the street. Our picture is a version painted from life in several distinct stages: the contours were carefully traced, and then the artist added color according to changes in the weather. Thus he could give life to this street from which a tranquil luminous post-war atmosphere emanates. Our work reflects the real interest, inherited from Impressionist techniques, in capturing the moment to fix on canvas.

Evidence of economic and social upheavals during the *Belle Epoque* during the era of industrialization, the new look of post-war Paris re-inspired artists such as Luigi Loir, along with Toulouse Lautrec, Valadon, and Maurice Denis. Appointed a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1898, Luigi Loir would be represented by some great dealers, including the Bernheim-Jeune family who followed his work assiduously until his death in 1916.

*M.O.*







# Charles GUILLOUX

(Paris 1866 – Lormes 1946)

## 20 | *Nocturnal Landscape*

Oil on paper laid down on pasteboard.

Signed and dated lower left: *C. Guilloux 94.*

12.5 x 19.5 cm. (4 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 7 <sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

### *Bibliography:*

- J.D. JUMEAU-LAFOND, «Les peintres de l'âme, le symbolisme idéaliste en France,» exh. cat. Brussels: Ixelles Museum, Oct.-Dec. 1999, DZ Pandora, 1999. See Charles Guilloux, pp 73 - 75.
- Fred LEEMAN, *Paysages de l'Âme, paysages symbolistes français 1880 – 1910*, exh. cat. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, pp.43 - 55.

A self-taught artist, Charles Guilloux entered the Society of Independents in 1891. Quickly noticed by Roger Marx, he participated in all the Symbolist and Impressionist exhibitions at the Le Barc de Boutteville Gallery. Furthermore, he exhibited in the Idealist Salon for Art (Antwerp 1893), at the Durant-Ruel Gallery in Paris (1901), and in 1896, André Mellerio included him in painting in his Idealist Movement.

Critics were enthusiastic about his works with their sinuous synthetic forms and rhythms of suggestive dazzling colors. Very rapidly, his painting titles became more and more elliptical, thus confirming their Symbolist dimension: *Andante*, *Adagio*, *Lactic Calm*, *Lunar Scherzo*, etc.

In keeping with the painting, *Twilight* (ill. 1) conserved in the Orsay Museum, our small oil on paper is a beautiful example of the artist's Nabi period: between sky and water, a band of land barely emerges on which a few dark silhouettes of trees stand out against the horizon. The critic Jules Christophe's description of these oniric landscapes seems perfectly adapted to our work: «*dreamt landscapes, nothing but water, skies, trees, without any «fabrication,» without any other being.*»

All the symbolic force seems to reside in this monochromatic blue cameo suggesting a night lit by the full moon. The clouds' shadows become fantastical tentacles scattering the sky with mysterious zebra stripes, like an aurora borealis.

Charles Saunier concluded an article in the *Revue encyclopédique* (1896) by affirming that, «*a vision by Charles Guilloux is unforgettable.*»

M.B.



Ill. 1

*Twilight*

1892

Oil on canvas

32 x 46 cm. (12 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 18 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)

© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski.







## Félicien ROPS, attributed to

(Namur, 1833 – Corbeil-Essonnes, 1898)

### 21 | *Dance of Death*

c. 1900

Black chalk, stump, pen, and pink pencil highlights

58 x 39 cm. (22 ½ x 15 ⅜ in.)

#### *Provenance:*

- France, Private Collection.

#### *Bibliography:*

- Goethe Institut, *L'Homme et la mort: danses macabres de Dürer à Dali*, collection of the University of Düsseldorf, Paris: Goethe-Institut, 1985.
- Philippe Kaenel, Franck Knoery, Frank Muller, Florian Siffer, *Dernière danse, l'imaginaire macabre dans les arts graphiques*, Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2016.

The expression “danse macabre” or in English, “dance of Death,” apparently goes back to Jean Le Fèvre<sup>1</sup> (1322 - vers 1387), a parliament prosecutor who had a brush with death during the 1374 Black Plague and who two years later, wrote the *Respite from Death* in which the verse appeared, “*Je fistz de macabree la dance*” – roughly translated, “I did a gruesome dance.”

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century and through the following centuries until the 20<sup>th</sup>, in Western civilizations where at heart, men believed in the hereafter, dances of Death constituted a favorite subject in the graphic arts mainly in the Germanic regions. These last dances served as *memento mori*, reminders to the viewer of the ineluctability of death which strikes indiscriminately.

Since the Enlightenment, the evolution in thinking has given birth to a new iconography of Death which appears less terrifying. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, artist abandoned fresco, which has previously been highly appreciated, to concentrate on drawing and painting in order to decorate cemetery chapels. The theme of the Dance of Death then tended towards an ironic depiction of the genre. The animated skeleton motif was no longer strictly religious but connected with fantastic and dreamlike themes utilized by the Surrealists. Artists let their imaginations run free and the Dance of Death inspired many artists such as Max Klinger, James Ensor, and Salvador Dali.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Totentänze des Mittelalters.*



Ill. 1

Félicien ROPS (1833-1898)

*The Ultimate Vice*

Frontispice for the novel, *The Ultimate Vice* by Joséphine Peladan, volume from the cycle *Latin Decadence* (1883)

Etching

Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (inv. M.79.233.42).



Probably conceived as a frontispiece or ex-libris (which underwent a revival starting in the 1890s), our work is part of this creative wave diverting morbid images through new imaginings tending towards caricature. Utilized by the press, especially in the form of drawings, the works which emerged from this genre were mainly engraved.

In Belgium, the artist Felicien Rops was interested in this iconography as an illustration of the equality of everyone in the face of death. Son of rich textile merchants, Rops was born in 1833 when Europe was undergoing a major economic crisis. After studies under the Jesuits in his native city of Namur, he entered the University of Brussels. Starting in 1858, he also became attached to engraving as a rapid economical means of expression which he favored until his death.

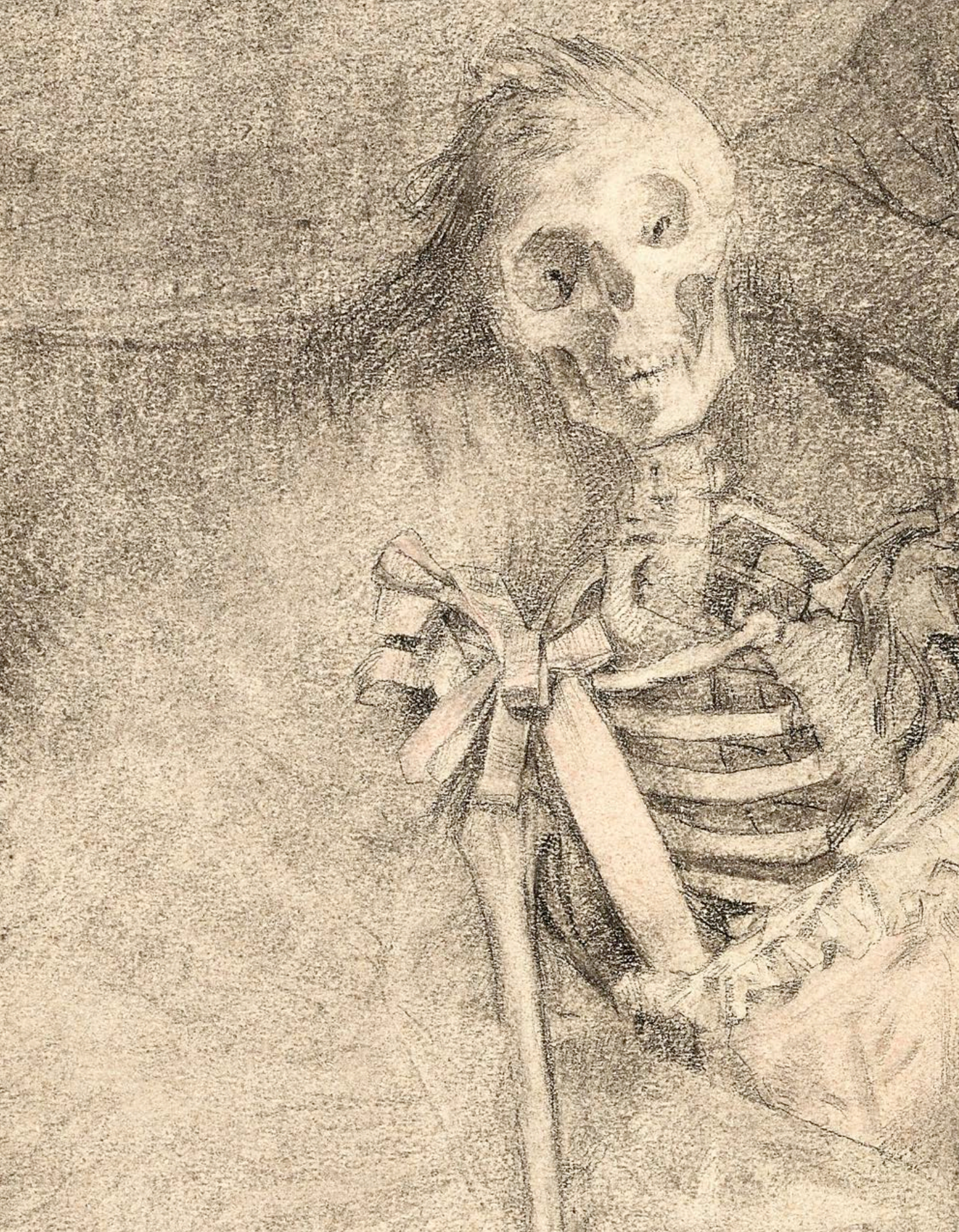
Rops' works are broadly inspired by literature. He executed many illustrations and frontispieces for the most famous authors of his time, including Barbey d'Aurevilly for whom he realized illustrations for the *Diaboliques* (1874), and was close to Joseph Peladan, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, and Huysmans, among others.

In his work, Death systematically is depicted with the features of an allegorized woman appearing in daily situations. Differently costumed, she is often depicted beside men whom she surprises, as in his famous engraving, *The Ultimate Vice* (ill. 1), where she seduces and thus seems to entrap while fixing the viewer with her mocking smile as shown in our work.



Ill. 2  
 Marcel Roux (1878-1922)  
*Métamorphose* (*Ceux qui la reconnaissent trop tard*), 1905  
 [*Métamorphosis* (*Those who remember too late*)  
 From the series of *Danse macabre* (suite of 15 estampes)  
 Etching on paper  
 45 x 58 cm. (17 ¾ x 13 / 16 in.)  
 Lyon Municipal Library (F20ROU008950).







Ill. 3  
*The Crimson Curtain*  
 Illustration for the *Diaboliques* (1874)  
 Pencil and gouache on paper  
 24.9 x 17.9 cm. (9<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
 Private Collection.



Ill. 4  
*A Dinner of Atheists*  
 Illustration for the *Diaboliques* (1874)  
 1879  
 Pencil and gouache on paper  
 24.3 x 16.7cm. (9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
 Private Collection.

Initially appearing insouciant, the couple seems to illustrate the idea that Death strikes without warning. Here Death is personified with the features of a dancer seated in her box after a performance and whom the man has come to court. As in the work *Metamorphosis* by his contemporary, the Frenchman Marcel Roux (*ill. 2*), the two characters are accoutered in the latest fashions: she wears an undone costume falling off her thoracic cage and slippers that have come unlaced around her calves. The man standing behind her wears a suit and top hat.

The scene apparently takes place in the dancer's box although no specific element supports this assumption. Through a play of hatching, the artist has taken care not to depict the background distinctly. Félicien Rops used this same technique, making it seem like a rubbing, to cover the background in many of his works (*ill. 3 & 4*) and accentuated in his engravings. On account of this technique, the viewer is invited to concentrate solely on the main figure as if lost in a fantastical obscurity. The black lines of the background hatching cut into the figures whose spontaneity is revealed by the multitude of sketched lines implying that the work was heavily studied and reworked. Altogether the pink pencil highlighting creates a velvety effect bringing unity to the composition as well as a gentleness or sweetness to this morbid vision.

Traditionally depicted by a skeleton, the figure of Death intervenes in the universe between phantasm and reality for late 19<sup>th</sup> century through mid 20<sup>th</sup> century artists. Furthermore, the animated skeleton was used in World War I iconography.

Félicien Rops was a proud representative of this production and left behind many examples of his creative spirit via the illustration of menus, illuminated letters, invitations, and marks, as well as works which lightly recalled death's omnipresence.

M.O.



# Alphonse OSBERT

(Paris, 1857 – 1939)

## 22 | *Meditation*

1907

Oil on canvas

24.6 x 41.2 cm. (10 x 16 ¼ in.)

Verso: Signed and dated with title and number: *n°294 / A. Osbert / Méditation / 1907*

### *Provenance:*

- Belgium, Private Collection.

### *Bibliography (Unpublished Work):*

- Véronique Dumas, *Le peintre symboliste Alphonse Osbert (1857-1939)*, Doctoral Thesis in Art History, Blaise-Pascal University, Clermont-Ferrand II, 1999.
- *Le symbolisme en Europe*, Paris, Grand Palais, May-July, 1976.

*“Working, producing, and creating is beneficent.  
It’s somewhat like seeing one’s soul in a mirror  
And the dream in which one would like  
to believe float past...”<sup>1</sup>*

Trained by Henri Lehmann in the Fine Arts, Alphonse Osbert did not, for all that, heed his master’s advice when it came to following in Leon Bonnat’s tracks. Upon arriving in Spain, the young painter found inspiration in the Old Masters such as Velazquez and Ribera whom he copied assiduously, especially for their rendering of anatomical power. In addition to such observation, the trip was even more enriching: it revealed light to him. By working on the relationship between light and spirituality, Osbert really found his path and assumed an undeniable role as one of the pioneers in Symbolist painting.

The year 1892 marked the beginning of his triumph. Recognized and encouraged by critics, the artist progressively developed his own poetic conception of landscape as a means to express the gentleness of Nature and the repose of souls. Sensitive to silence, he immerses his work in mysterious effects whose calm peaceful skies evoke a certain nostalgia through the image of suspended time. With a stroke as skillful as it is precise, the artist gradually refines his lines, makes figures paler, and delicately traces their contours.

Painted in 1907, our work falls within the artist’s first actually Symbolist attempts with his increasing interest in light effects as a means to communicate an emotion or sentiment. By going every year to Normandy, whence his parents came, Osbert was interested in abandoned landscapes and admired their silent beauty at each time of day. Thus, the titles of his works are often precise: among the many entries that he sent to the Salon of French Artists, can be found *Evening Calm* in 1919, and *Solitude, Sunset*, in 1922. As if covered in a fine silk veil, the pastel hues in his works attenuate their powerful coloring in keeping with a sensation of gentle well-being reinforced by the hazy blurred line of the horizon.

His work also expresses a pantheistic sense of Nature. Softly flowing water occupies a prominent place in his œuvre as a calm reminder of passing time along with the sweetness of a shared moment. His contemplative vision of the elements allows him to transform his works into sacred sanctuaries in which trees rise and figures are as fixed as statues. The figures, almost systematically female, are not specifically identifiable: they are the artist’s priestesses. Agents of solitude and poetry in the service of reflection, they are also allegories of the senses: sometimes alone (*ill. 1*), sometimes multiple, they can thus illustrate touch through their delicate movements, or, as in our work, hearing, thanks to their enchanting lyre which evokes the gentleness of songs soothing the spectator who is invited to participate in the artist’s reverie. As if emanating from a dream, the

<sup>1</sup> Alphonse Osbert, 1938.



artist clothes his muses in white robes (*ill. 2*), the color of purity, incarnating Meditation and magnifying the effects of sun and water on the elements.

Widely recognized during his lifetime, Osbert frequented the most eminent end-of-the-century painters, including Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Maurice Denis, and Emile Bernard. Loyal to many artists' gatherings which aimed to bring a new spiritual and decorative dimension to

art, such as in *The Feather*, *The Test*, or the *Rose+Cross*, Osbert participated in the most important events and thus created a choice place for himself in the artistic scene. His talent made him famous throughout France and beyond its borders: Boston, Saint Petersburg, Tokyo, Madrid, Liverpool, Brussels, Milan, as well as Riga in Latvia where he was honored with a gold medal.

M.O.



Ill. 1  
*On the Heights (Woman with a Lyre)*  
1927  
Oil on wood  
H. 36.5 x 56 cm. (14 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 22 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Paris, Orsay Museum  
©photo musée d'Orsay / rmn.



Ill. 2  
*Evening Meditation*  
1912  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 75.5 cm. (18 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)  
Paris, Orsay Museum  
©photo Orsay Museum / rmn.









A. Osborn

## Marcel DELMOTTE

(Charleroi, 1901 - Mont-sur-Marchienne, 1984)

### 23 | *On the Threshold of the New Era*

1966

Oil on prepared panel

Signed and dated, lower left: *M. Delmotte 1966*

Countersigned and entitled on the verso

70 x 90 cm. (27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

#### *Provenance*

- France, Private Collection.

#### *General Bibliography (Unpublished Work):*

- Waldemar George, *Le monde imaginaire de Marcel Delmotte*, Paris, ed. Max Fourny, 1969.

*Art is a wide awake dream. It is also magic realism.*

Marcel Delmotte, 1969.

Son of a master glassmaker, Marcel Delmotte was a building painter in his youth particularly specialized in emulating veined marble. He never frequented any school of art theory, but remained profoundly committed to the technical perfection of his craft his entire life. An unclassifiable artist, he constructed an eminently significant poetic world, which was both imaginary and visionary, and revealed itself in devastated lunar landscapes, filled with ruins and dried out trees, and peopled by allegorical figures with oversized sculptural anatomies. Delmotte's paintings questioned the harmony and mechanism of things, human destiny, progress, civilisation, and reason, even as they submitted the ensemble to a personal original aesthetic resolve, nourished by the heritage from Old Masters rather than from either emulations of contemporary surrealists or from metaphysics. In the artist's hallucinatory landscapes, cranes, factories, and industrial constructions of his native mining country can be discerned or divined, as can volcanic caverns, Dantesque abysses, collapsed baroque palaces, antique columns, chasms emitting noxious vapors, inextricable labyrinths, tiled floors from the Golden Century, vegetal or human forms which overlap, interlock, and metamorphosize.



Ill. 1.  
Marcel Delmotte.  
*Abstract Composition*.  
1953. Oil on panel.  
41.1 x 30.1 cm. (16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Private Collection.



Delmotte's original titles give no key to understanding the works, but contribute to creating a scenography, or to be more precise, a microcosm regulated by its own laws which render the viewer completely responsible for finding his own interpretation. Furthermore, the artist sometimes reused certain titles for radically different compositions. The picture which we present thus bears the same title as one painted three years later which was shown at the monographic exhibition, *L'Humanité en marche* (Humanity on the Move) at The Brachot Gallery (private Collection). Against a blood red background, a nude man sits at the edge of a precipice with his hand over his face, like a modern day Prometheus: "*man asks where he is going, because science is a double-edged weapon*" (Delmotte).

Much more complex and polysemic, our panel stands out from the marvellous colorism of Delmotte's work by its assumed monochromatics which contrast even with his pictures where a single shade dominates, in line with the *Abstract Composition* of 1953 (ill. 1). Our work is like an immense India ink drawing, reminiscent of seascapes "in the manner of an engraving" after Willem Van de Velde, or else of a black and white photograph of a transfigured newspaper. The convex elastic space filled with figures and ductile forms with undefined contours which wrap around a chimerical creature with the angelic face of a young girl – the only face in the picture – whose back is tattooed with tangled bodies. Out of this rhythmical turmoil emerges a combat – if not a ballet – between light and shadows or obscurity, between beauty and

ugliness of monsters worthy of Hieronymus Bosch, between curves and straight lines, between surface dullness and brilliance. Mountain peaks become waves, castles melt into the fog, intersecting lines form electric poles here and sailboat masts there.

Memories of Picasso's *Guernica* echo in the slow disappearance of the mining industry at Charleroi, in the progress of machines, the lack of equilibrium between unchecked material physical power and spiritual qualities, the turpitudes of the Cold War, while the rest is subject to an implacable formal order and invested with hope and humanism (even humanity) which constitutes the essence of Delmotte's art. The painter places himself as a demiurge, who makes motifs surge out of the substance which he masters and subjects to a virtuoso use of glazes which gives the oil a polish, shine, and transparency of enamel or lacquer. Delmotte wrote that

*"Technique is linked to feeling. The tool is forged by it and, as soon as the artist touches it and completely reveals itself in the least parcel of his work, technique comes before reasoning, and opens horizons whose existence he had never suspected."*

In order to render all the strength in this smooth, brilliant, shimmering brushstroke, the artist preferred monumental dimensions and hard supports such as the prepared wood here.

A.Z.









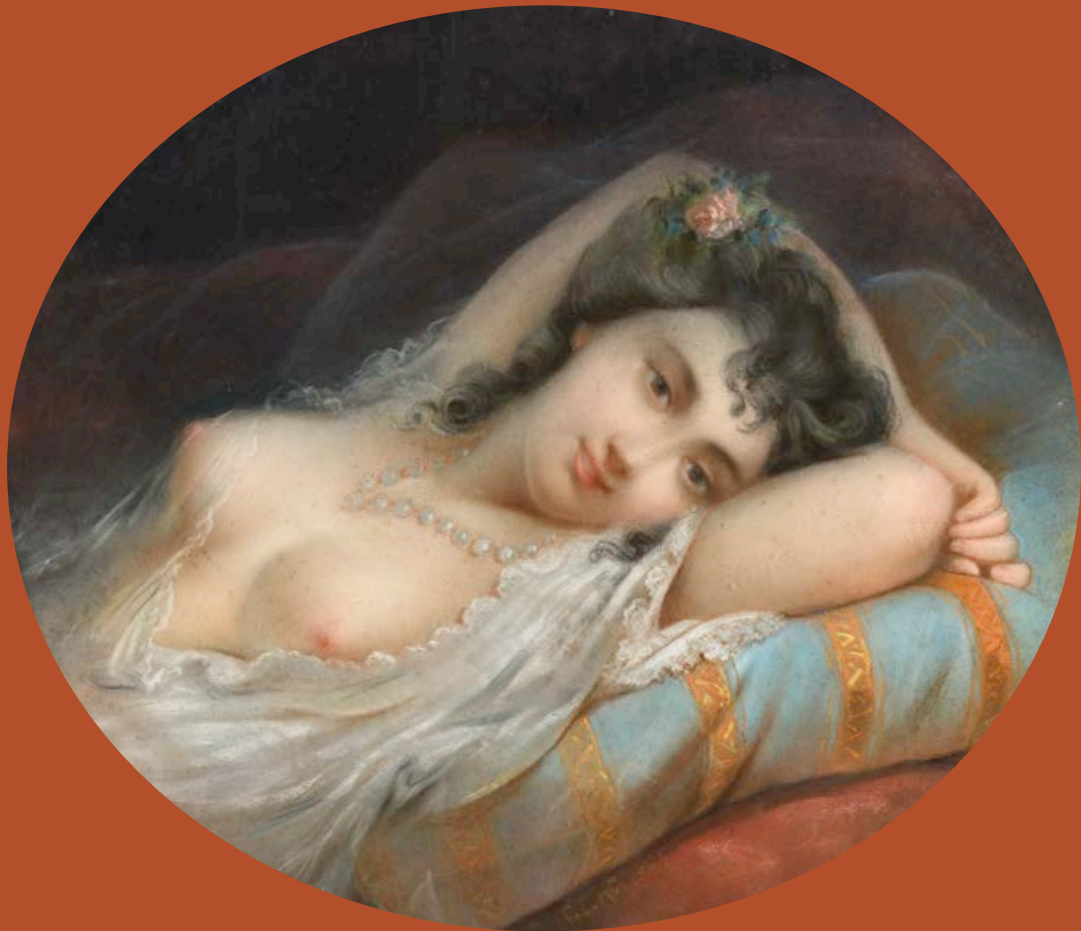


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**Galerie Alexis Bordes**

4, rue de la paix – 75002 Paris

Tél. : 01 47 70 43 30

Fax : 01 47 70 43 40

mail : [expert@alexis-bordes.com](mailto:expert@alexis-bordes.com)

[www.alexis-bordes.com](http://www.alexis-bordes.com)