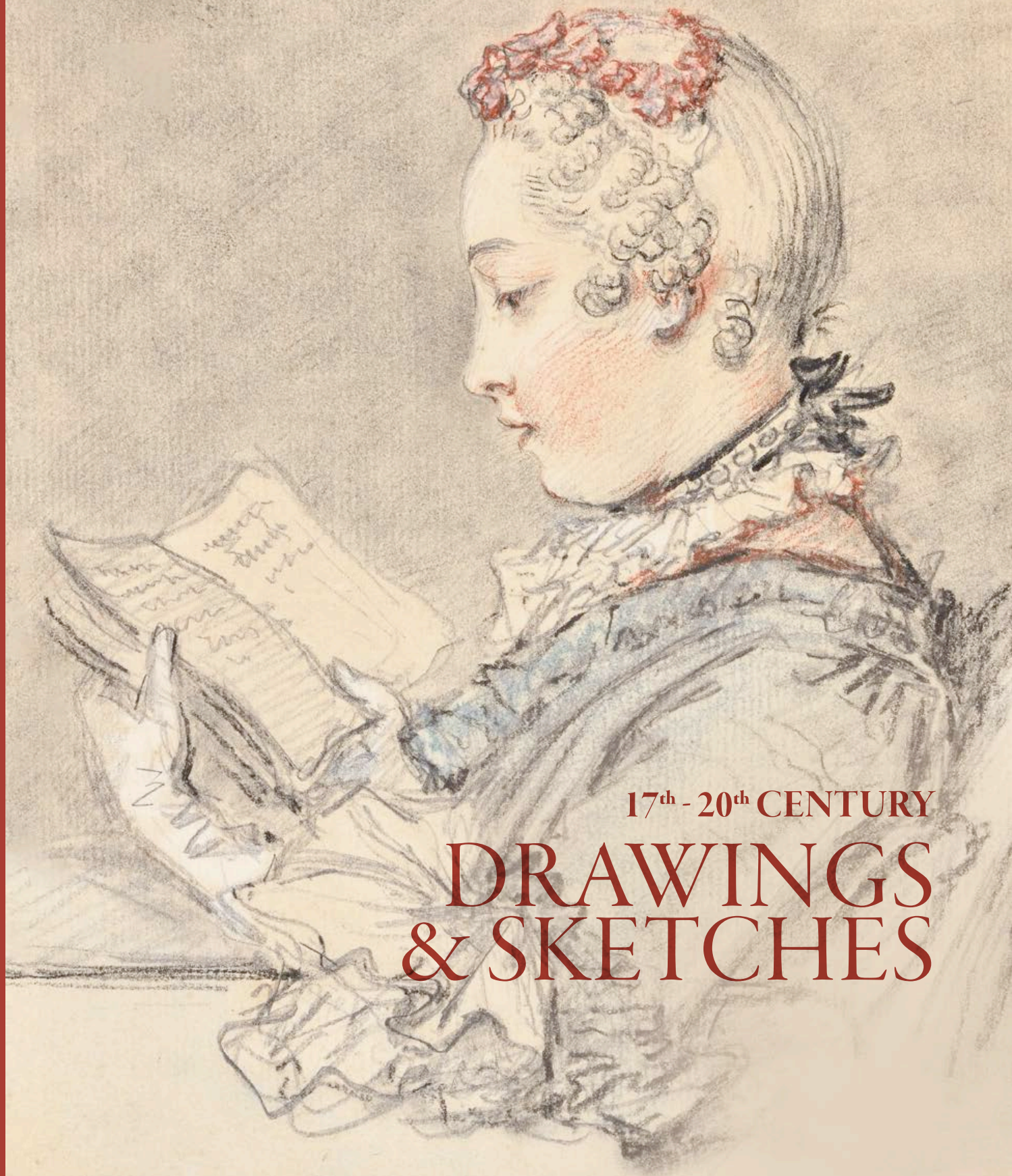


GALERIE
ALEXIS BORDES



17th - 20th CENTURY

DRAWINGS
& SKETCHES

Sales Conditions

Dimensions are given in centimeters, height before width.

Works are sold mounted and framed.

Prices upon request.

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*“One must always draw with one’s eyes
when one can’t draw with a pencil”*

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres





17th - 20th CENTURY
DRAWINGS
& SKETCHES

Catalogue by Mégane Ollivier



VERSION
FRANÇAISE

www.alexis-bordes.com/23dessinsfr

English translation by Christine Rolland

Exhibition

From Tuesday, March 21st to Friday, April 28th, 2023

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. - 2-4 p.m.
Open Saturday, March 25th, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

| *Preface*

During this month of March, we are happy to present you with our new selection of works on paper. As usual, the French 18th century has the pride of place with the rare rediscovery of a miniature by Hyacinthe Rigaud depicting a gentleman with a red cape.

With striking psychological acuity, Rigaud knew how to capture the very spirit of his sitter and also brilliantly render the effects of fabric.

The visit continues with a ravishing reader of Heloïse and Abelard by François Boucher.

This little gem realized in black chalk, highlighted with red chalk and blue pastel, takes us into the refined elegant lifestyle of Louis XV's reign.

Landscape collectors will not be outdone with this beautiful burnt sanguine drawing by Hubert Robert which reflects the taste of the time very well for dramaticized and reinvented Nature.

Romanticism has not been forgotten, with the head of a bulldog by Theodore Gericault.

With its virtuoso treatment, an amber preparation and brushed touch, the animal intrigues us with its vivaciousness and disturbing almost hallucinatory eyes.

From drawing to sketch is only a single step, and General Prim so proudly depicted on his hot-blooded black stallion by Henri Regnault is preparatory to his famous painting conserved in the Orsay Museum.

This work constitutes beautiful evidence of a trip taken by the artist to Spain. He disappeared very young and in full glory during the War of 1870.

To close our visit, a superb pastel by Leon Lhermitte lets us evoke peasant life in France in the late 19th century with a vibrant touch which captures the light with virtuosity.

I invite you to discover all of these nuggets starting March 21st in the gallery.

*Alexis Bordes
Paris, March 2023*

| *Acknowledgement*

Situated on rue de la Paix, the gallery has a penchant for the French 18th century.

Encouraged by the great French and foreign institutions, as well as by many collectors, we assure the role of advisor and provide expertise both for purchasing and selling works.

This catalogue is the product of long maturation with the precious help of art historians and museum conservators whom we thank for their advice and enlightened views.

We would like to honor all of the museums who have shown their trust in us by integrating works from the Gallery into their collections :

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

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

Madame Ariane JAMES-SARAZIN
Art Historian

Mr. Bruno CHENIQUE
Art Historian

Madame Françoise JOULIE
Art Historian
Former Project Manager, Louvre

Mr. Alastair LAING
Art Historian

Mr. Michel BURY
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Madame Catherine POLNECQ
Painting Conservator

**Mr. Michel GUILLZNTON
and Sebastien BARBIER**
Old frames and gilt restorers

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**Ms. Julie AKOUN
and Marianne PORCHER**
Gallery Assistants

Madame Christine ROLLAND
Art Historian
English translation of catalogue

Mr. Christophe BRISSON
Graphic Designer

Michel CORNEILLE The Younger

(Paris, 1642 - 1708)

1 | *The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem*

Sanguine over black chalk lines

36.5 x 54.5 cm. (14 ³/₈ x 21 ⁷/₁₆ in.)

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.



Ill. 1
Charles Le Brun (1619-1690)
The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem
Oil on canvas
Paris, Louvre Museum (inv. 2883),
on loan to the Museum of Modern
Art in Saint-Etienne.

A student of his father Michel Corneille the Elder, Michel Corneille the Younger (or Firstborn) was trained in painting practices from his earliest childhood, as was his younger brother Jean-Baptiste Corneille (1649-1695) a few years later. Recognized very early for his artistic gifts, he was taught by the most famous painters in the kingdom, including Charles Le Brun (1619-1690), the king's painter, and his main rival, Pierre Mignard (1612-1695).

After winning a prize created by the Academy, Corneille arrived in Italy in 1659 where he assiduously copied the works of the Old Masters. His instruction continued in Bologna, when he entered the *Accademia degli Incamminati* founded by the Carracci. The refusal of Mannerist artifice and the return to Antique forms as the supreme references in art inspired the young artist who

henceforth also extolled the importance of drawing as a means of synthesizing observed reality and desired ideal. Upon his return to Paris in 1663 at the age of 21, he was received with honors into the Academy where he would also be appointed professor in 1690. Acclaimed by his contemporaries, Corneille le Jeune was called to work at Meudon, Fontainebleau and Versailles by the king, while benefitting from the patronage of Louvois and his many commissions, including some tapestry cartoons for the Gobelins Manufactory.

His Italian experience made it possible for the artist to develop a more personal [visual] language. As Michel Corneille le Jeune was a terrific draughtsman, the quality of execution of his surviving graphic production is extremely high. In terms of his taste for Antiquity, he





Ill. 3
 Michel Corneille the Younger
Seated Antique Warrior Guerrier in left profile
 Sanguine
 44.2 x 52 cm. (17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
 Signed and dated lower right: *Corneille L'ainé*
 Paris, École nationale des Beaux-Arts (inv. EBA 2832).

realized a great number of studies taken from Greek mythology, and also of religious scenes, of which our sanguine is a marvelous example. It depicts the *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem* (Luke, 19, 28-44), a subject which had already begun to interest the artist during his Italian sojourn under Carracci influence, as can be seen in a brown ink and wash study conserved in the Louvre in Paris (Graphic Arts Dept. inv. 25425 recto).

The generous dimensions of our folio signal an ambitious layout, learned from observing his father, as well as his teacher, in the choice of subject depicted a few years earlier by Le Brun (*ill. 1*). Using a horizontal format, Corneille places Christ surrounded by women and a child on the left. On the right, a male figure is depicted standing with his bust turned three-quarters as if being questioned, his gaze fixed on Christ. By thus placing the figures, our composition is comparable in every way to Le Brun's. The work can be read in two stages: women and children precipitate towards the Messiah, while the men gradually lay their cloaks and fabrics on the ground



Ill. 4
 Michel Corneille the Elder
The Visitation
 Pen and brown ink
 Stockholm, National Museum (inv. NMH
 2465/1863).

to wait for his arrival. For his final work, Le Brun had produced multiple preparatory sketches from which Corneille could draw inspiration, such as the study of *A Donkey following a Donkey Foal* (Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Dept. inv. 27710 recto).

Certain stylistic details have practically the same value as a signature in Michel Corneille le Jeune's oeuvre. Among his many studies, the handling of thick curly hair and beard seems to be drawn from observation of his father's work, as does the drapery wrapped around Christ's waist in thick, almost sculptural folds, which were characteristic of his father's late period. Although Corneille the Younger does not always respect the Antique canon on anatomy, his rigorous drawing is enriched by intense study of the rendering of flesh traced in sanguine. Musculature is made powerful through a play of hatching used in most of his studies of male bodies, such as the study of a *Seated Antique Warrior in left profile*, conserved at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (*ill. 3*).





Ill. 5
 Michel Corneille the Younger
Studies of Heads, copied from "The Discovery of Moses" by Raphael
 Sanguine, white chalk, and pink pastel highlights
 26.7 x 45.5 cm. (10 ½ x 17 ¼ in.)
 New York, The Metropolitan Museum (inv. 1992.204).

Corneille seems to give particular importance to his characters' gaze and their eyes are often exorbitated and emphasized by heavy eyelids. Here again, comparison is necessary with Michel Corneille the Elder's work in the handling of the man's profile on the right in our composition, and that depicted in *The Visitation*¹ on the left side of the composition (*ill. 4*).

Finally, according to his studies of the 16th century Italian grand masters, Corneille rendered women's hair with great acuity. Here they are braided and tied the way he could have observed in Raphael's works, sometimes through hatching, sometimes through undulating curves. (*ill. 5*)

An indefatigable worker, Michel Corneille the Younger died in 1708 in his work environment, at the Gobelins Manufactory, a fact which earned him the name of Corneille of Gobelins. Having stayed a long time in his master's circle, the artist suffered from Charles Le Brun's fame and the two artists are often confused with each other in the attribution of their works, thus considerably reducing Corneille's corpus. We propose to return this drawing to this admirable artist whose production had been long eclipsed by his father's production and his masters' influence.

M.O.

¹ *The Visitation*, painted version, is conserved at the Château of Blois, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 80.14.1).



Hyacinthe RIGAUD

(Perpignan, 1659 – Paris, 1743)

2 | *Bust Portrait of a Man Wearing a Velvet Cape and turned three-quarters to the right*

c. 1720

Miniature in oil with white gouache highlights on paper laid down on rigidified playing card

7.5 x 5.5 cm. (2 15/16 x 2 3/16 in.)

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Stéphan Perreau, *Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743): catalogue concis de l'œuvre*, Nouvelles Presses du Languedoc, Sète, 2013.
- Ariane James-Sarazin, *Hyacinthe Rigaud 1659-1743*, Doctoral Thesis in Art History, Paris, École pratique des hautes études, Éditions Fatou, Paris, 2008.

The famous French painter Hyacinthe Rigaud was actually born Spanish in what was then North Catalonia. In 1659, Perpignan was still under Spanish domination before being ceded to the kingdom of France a few months later by the Treaty of the Pyrenees which brought peace between the two monarchies. Rigaud was the son of a master tailor, a fact which probably triggered the artist's precocious taste for fabrics and their sensitive rendering which distinguished his oeuvre.

Upon leaving the Pyrenees, young Rigaud began an apprenticeship in Montpellier (Languedoc) in 1673, when he entered the studio of the painter Antoine Ranc (1634-1716). Through reference to Anthony Van Dyck's oeuvre (1599-1641), Ranc taught him Flemish painting techniques of which Rigaud would make great use. The evolution of the Catalan's career was as spectacular as it was dazzling. It culminated in his appointments as First Painter [to the King] and then Director of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Praised for the virtuosity with which he rendered his portraits, although the genre was still considered minor according to André Félibien's theories (1619-1695), he met with fabulous success. In Europe, he was the favorite painter of the elite and dominated portrait production in the 17th, and even more so, in the first half of the 18th century.

Shortly after arriving in Paris in 1681, between hours devoted to large ceremonial formats, easel paintings, and drawings, Rigaud became interested in the art of miniature. Recently the discovery of manuscripts



Ill. 1
Notebook which belonged to Hyacinthe Rigaud
Authenticated by Ariane James-Sarazin
Annotated *Hyacinthus Rigaud 1729*, and
discovered in the Jaubert de Passa Collection
Perpignan, Departmental Archives.

from the collection of the Historian Jaubert de Passa, acquired by the *Département* [County] of the *Pyénées Orientales* [Eastern Pyrenees] which have been studied by the specialist on the artist, Ariane James-Sarazin, led to the revelation of a small notebook which had belonged to Rigaud (*ill. 1*). It seems that the artist was working on his own treatise on miniatures inspired by a few extracts conserved in this notebook of a text dated 1672 and





Ill. 3
Hyacinthe Rigaud
Self-Portrait, 1681
Oval miniature, painted on canvas laid
down on mahogany panel
6.5 x 5.25 cm. (2 ⁹/₁₆ x 2 ¹/₁₆ in.)
Private Collection.
(Catalogue P.5 in the catalogue raisonné).



Ill. 2
Hyacinthe Rigaud
Portrait of an Unknown Man, 1684
Miniature in oil
9.5 x 7.8 cm. (3 ³/₄ x 3 ¹/₁₆ in.)
Private Collection.
(Catalogue P. supp.42, catalogue raisonné).

entitled, “*Treatise on Miniatures for Easily Learning to Paint without a Master, with the Secret of Making the Most Beautiful Colors, browned gold and seashell gold,*” by an older artist, the miniaturist Claude Boutet.

Our work is a terrific example of this narrow aspect of Rigaud’s miniature production, which is deduced from some known evidence concerning the artist, including a *Self-Portrait* (ill. 2) and a *Portrait of a Man* recently added to the supplement of the catalogue raisonné of his work (ill. 3). In our small-scale picture no more than 7.5 centimeters (2 ¹/₁₆ in.) in height, the artist presents a male sitter in a bust-length view, his shoulders turned to the right with the fully frontal face looking straight at the painter. The close-up composition and simplicity of the pose are recurring components in Rigaud. Currently anonymous, the sitter’s physiognomy is expressed through the penetrating gentleness of the gaze heightened by a lightly sketched smile. The man is attired in a wide, bright red, velvet cape lined with gold brocade silk from which an elegantly tied lace cravat escapes. His not-very-high wig centered on his face, as well as the carefully organized and lightly geometrized cape folds, indicate a work dating to the late 1720s.

The treatment of the fabrics and silks are a mark of Rigaud’s workmanship. Skillful use of white highlights

allows the rendering of wig powder fallen on the shoulder, on the one hand, and the brilliance of the thick red velvet, on the other, while the gold brocade is finely treated in oil.

The figure stands out from a background which is between coppery green and brushed brown tones and allows the viewer’s attention to focus on the sitter’s facial features: almond-shaped eyes with thick eyebrows, not to mention the shaved mustache. Finally, Rigaud’s ingenious hand adds minute details such as the point of light on the bridge of the nose and the finely traced shadow on the pinkish cheeks.

Hyacinthe Rigaud turned the portrait into the rival of history painting. Between François de Troy (1645-1730) and Nicolas de Largillierre (1656-1746), the artist gained recognition for the excellence of his depictions in painted portraits, especially male portraits, as did Largillierre in female physiognomies.

Having produced more than 2700 canvases, Hyacinthe Rigaud was one of the most important portraitists of his time. In addition to all of these portraits, – be they for the court, ceremonial, intimate, in informal indoor dress (amateurs, collectors, artists), familiar or narrative – Rigaud’s genius also found its outlet in the art of miniatures.

M.O



Hubert ROBERT

(Paris, 1733-1808)

3 | *A Watermill with a Figure seen from behind standing on the Bridge and a Dog standing on the Shore*

c. 1775

Sanguine on laid water-marked paper

Stamped to the lower right of the drawing by the picture mounter François Renaud (L. 1042)

28.4 x 36.5 cm. (11 ³/₁₆ x 14 ³/₈ in.)

Provenance:

- Former Collection of Countess Odon de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Château de Courtanvaux, Bessé-sur-Braye, her Sale, George Petit Gallery, Dec. 9th – 10th, 1929, lot n° 8;
- Former collection of Count Raoul de Montesquiou-Fezensac;
- Anonymous Sale, Christie's, London, July 8th, 2008, lot 106;
- Succession of Alexis Gregory, sold for the profit of the Alexis Gregory Foundation;
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Pierre de Nolhac, *Hubert Robert 1733-1808*, Goupil & Cie, Paris, 1910.
- Jean de Cayeux, *Les Hubert Robert de la collection Veyrenc au Musée de Valence*, Valence, 1985.
- Sarah Catala, *Les Hubert Robert de Besançon*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2013.
- Guillaume Farout (dir.), *Hubert Robert, 1733-1808: Un peintre visionnaire*, Somogy and Louvre Museum, Paris, 2016.

Born in France, Hubert Robert was to acquire an Italian education. The young man turned towards an artistic career when during his studies at the *College* of Navarre, he demonstrated a precocious gift for handling a pencil, as is seen in a drawing by his hand conserved by one of his masters, the Abbé Batteux. At the age of 17 years old, he left the establishment to enter the studio of the sculptor Michel-Ange Slodtz (1705-1764), before - through a chance orchestrated by the Count of Stainville recently appointed Ambassador to the Pope - entering the French Academy in Rome while adeptly avoiding the official competition: "Sir the Ambassador of France protects a young man who has a taste for painting architecture."¹

In Rome he was the youngest of the twelve boarding students and received the same advantages. While studying after antique models available to him in different studios, the young artist also pursued his education by persevering in depictions of architecture. Hubert Robert wanted to be the painter of landscapes, which in Italy, led



Ill. 1

Hubert Robert

A Watermill, a Man on the Bridge, a Dog in the Foreground

Counterproof in red chalk

26.5 x 36.6 cm. (10 ⁷/₁₆ x 14 ⁷/₁₆ in.)

Sale Christie's Paris, Dec. 16th, 2005, lot n°126.



him to become a painter of architecture inspired by his Italian elder, Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691-1765). Upon returning to France in 1765, he was an accomplished artist who became exemplary of the Academy by adapting his Italian style to French landscapes.

Midst his large painting production, Robert left a vast production of thousands of drawings. Of his chalk, ink, and pen sketches which he carefully conserved in his sketchbooks, it was beside Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), student at the Academy since 1756, that Robert multiplied his elaborate sanguine drawings. As experimental as they were spontaneous, these complete and enrich understanding of his paintings.

In a pastoral landscape which has been identified as the Roconval Mill in the outskirts of Paris, the artist offers the viewer a peaceful image of rural restfulness. Far from the city reigns the tranquility of the countryside enlivened by a dog in the foreground, a peasant in mid-ground, and birds flying into the sky in the background. Robert doesn't depict Nature without looking at it. He confronts it by sketching the scene before him from life. By drawing from Nature, the artist assures himself of never betraying nor pretending to embellish it, because "*it is always as beautiful by itself, and it is all the more difficult to imitate; one must begin by knowing it well and, as long as one studies it, follow it with the most perfect obedience.*"²

In addition to learning from ruins and the many views of the the Eternal City, the artist was interested in life and activities which he could use in his compositions whether in Italy or France. Without ever overshadowing the architecture, Robert cleverly inserted beggars, musicians, dancers, shepherds, pilgrims, or as in our work, a peasant enjoying the simplicity of life in order to energize the whole composition. Our sanguine thus proves to be a finished piece associated with the main body of a type of work which the artist considered to be pictures in their own right.

His interest in sanguine, although considered out of fashion, developed in the late 1750s and gradually came to dominate his drawing production. Although this technique was becoming rare, his contemporary Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) also used it regularly. Through its potentially crumbly nature, use of the red chalk led artists to produce counter-proofs of their works, including an example made from our

composition which was sold in 2005 (*ill. 1*). The procedure consisted of putting the drawing in a press and thus transferring the excess chalk onto the second sheet of paper. This technique made it possible to duplicate the original drawing without damaging it, and to obtain a unique reproduction which was printed in reverse of the original composition. The excess matter (chalk) was thus released, the counterproof of a black chalk drawing produced a paler grey, whereas that of a sanguine came out a pinkish orange.

The artist demonstrated the same technical rigor in most of his drawings. The architectural elements are drawn with a ruler, whereas the natural elements are drawn in rapid lines making it possible here to render the foliage in the left foreground of the composition. Robert exploited the range of possible hues in sanguine by tracing contours more or less heavily in order to create tonal nuances and reinforce perspective effects. The elements in the foreground are thus thicker and darker than the bridge and sky which are rendered in broader lighter lines.

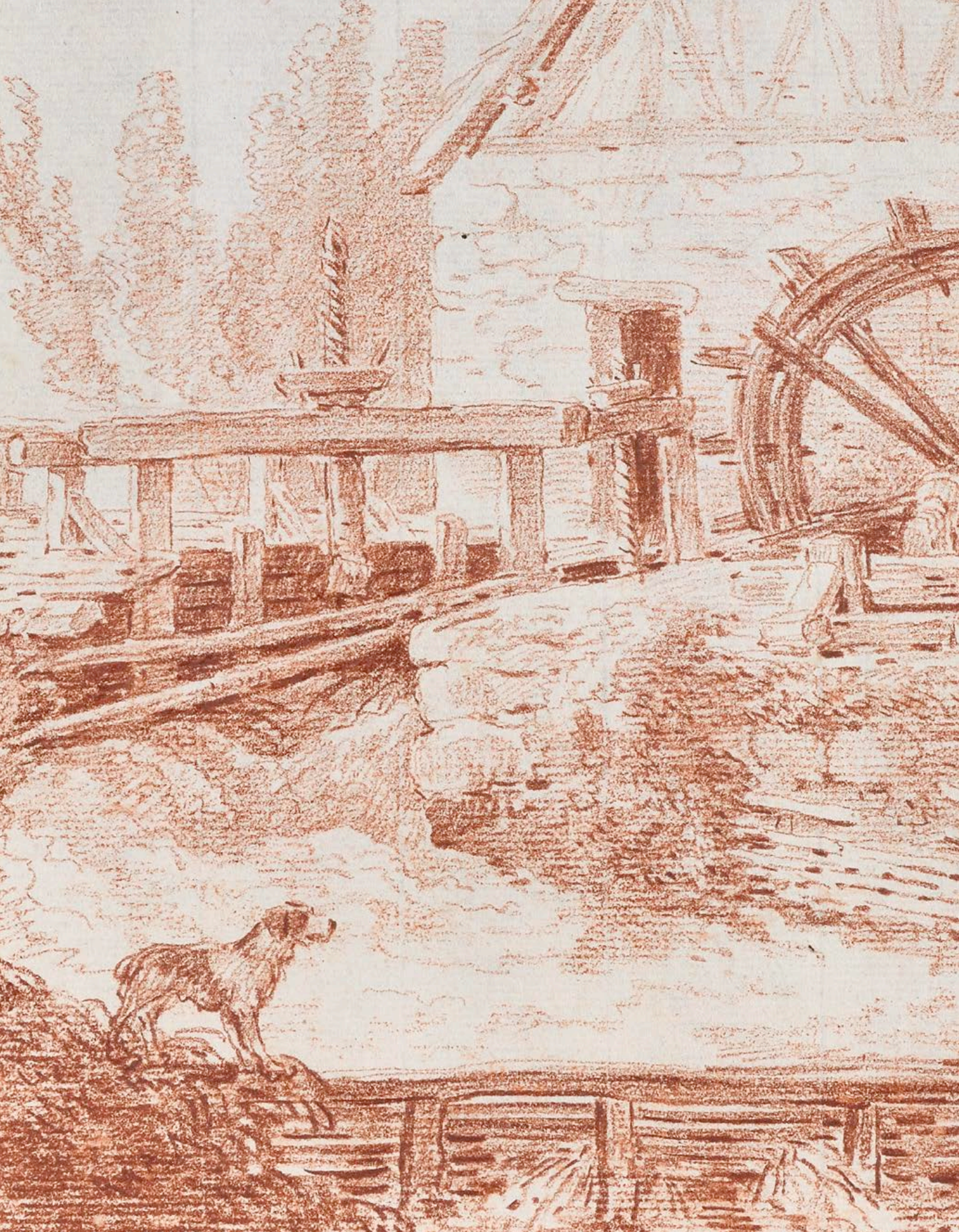
Given his joyful, obliging, generous personality, Hubert Robert did not suffer from any jealousy at his early success. In a production where architecture took up so much room, "Robert of the Ruins" skillfully introduced some signs of life without seeking either complexity or glory in the depiction. A painter in the Academy even before being officially approved (*agrégé*), the artist knew how to surround himself with the most important figures and patrons of his time and managed to become established as the heir of the great painters of Franco-Italian landscapes.

Furthermore, Hubert Robert used his gifts for the depiction and creation of gardens by becoming the "Draughtsman of the King's Gardens." Louis XVI put him especially in charge of the gardens of Versailles and Rambouillet. In addition, he received private commissions, among which the most marvelous examples remain the gardens of Méréville and of Ermenonville.

M.O.

¹ Letter from Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777) dated Nov. 26th, 1754 to M. de Marigny.

² Cochin's Doctrine conserved by the Marquis de Marigny in Pierre de Nolhac, *Hubert Robert 1733-1808*, Goupil & Cie, Paris, 1910, p.23.







François BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703 - 1770)

4 | *Half-length Profile View of Seated Young Woman Reading “Abelard and Heloise”*

Black chalk, stump, sanguine, white chalk, and blue pastel highlights

20.7 x 15.5 cm. (8 1/8 x 8 1/8 in.)

Beautiful sculpted gilt Louis XV frame decorated with shells, flowerets, et curlicues

Provenance:

- Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-1898) Collection ;
- M. Casimir Ignace Stralem (1886-1932), by bequest to his wife, Mme Casimir Stralem ;
- France, Private Collection.

Exhibition:

- New York, Galleries of the Duveen Brothers, *French Drawings of the Eighteenth Century: A Loan Collection arranged by Mr. Richard Owen*, 1934, n° 12.

Bibliography:

- Alexandre Ananoff, *L'œuvre dessinée de François Boucher*, catalogue raisonné, vol. I, F. de Nobele, Paris, 1970, cat. 360, fig. 71, p. 110.
- Alexandre Ananoff, *Boucher*, Lausanne Paris: la Bibliothèque des arts, 1976.
- Pierrette Jean Richard, *L'œuvre gravé de François Boucher dans la Collection Edmond de Rothschild*, Paris, 1978.
- Pierre Rosenberg and Alastair Laing, *Boucher*, exh. cat. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1986), Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts (1986), Paris, National Galleries of the Grand Palais (1987), Paris, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1986.
- Françoise Joulie, *François Boucher : hier et aujourd'hui*, exh. cat. Paris, Louvre Museum, Oct. 17th, 2003 – Jan. 19th, 2004, Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003.

François Boucher's education began under his father Nicolas Boucher (1671-1743), a master painter and draughtsman at the Academy of St. Luke. At the age of 18, he entered the studio of the famous François Lemoyne (1688-1737) which launched his real career. Winner of the Prix de Rome in 1723, Boucher attended the French Academy there from 1728 to 1731, where he did studies after Antiquity. After his return to Paris, he entered the Royal Academy in 1734 as a history painter. Very rapidly and very much appreciated in his lifetime, the artist received all the honors to which a painter of his generation could aspire. His brilliant career was awarded with numerous titles, including 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 Manufactories of Beauvais and Gobelins, while enthusiastically teaching his style in his studio.

In the 1760s, he produced female portraits in which the faces are stamped with new elegance, probably as a consequence of Caylus, an honorary amateur member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, who started a competition of “heads of expression” in 1759.¹ This renewal is especially recognizable in Boucher's work in the width of the sitters' foreheads and their large eyes elongated across the temples under perfectly arched eyebrows, as can be marvelously seen in the sketch of a *Bust-length View of a Young Girl* (ill. 1). The handling of the female profile in black chalk with pastel highlights,





Ill. 1
 François Boucher
Bust View of Young Girl
 Black chalk and pastel highlights
 19 x 15 cm. (7 ½ x 5 ⅞ in.)
 A. Beurdeley collection mark (L., 421) reproduced
 in A. Ananoff, *L'œuvre dessinée de François Boucher*,
 Catalogue raisonné, vol. I, F. de Nobele, Paris, 1970,
 cat. 360, fig. 71, p. 110.

as well as its almost identical dimensions to our sheet, makes it a comparable work in every respect. Preferring to seduce the eye more than the soul, Boucher breathes remarkable sweetness and sensuality into the image. A gracious young woman seen in a profile bust-length view is seated in an armchair and gazes delicately at a work which she is holding in her gloved hands, giving a peaceful image of daily happiness in a refined 18th century space.

The work on rendering facial expression and the finesse of the features suggest that the artist sketched the sitter in person. A certain lyricism emanates from this young face heightened by a refined hairdo held by a few flowers from which carefully arranged curls escape. Our drawing also shows the artist's interest in rendering details and textures of the muslin dress from the collar to the lacy edges of the sleeves handled nervously with a few



Ill. 2
 Gilles Demarteau (1722-1776), engraver
 After François Boucher (1703-1770)
Woman Reading "Eloyste and Abailar."
 Engraving heightened by black, green, and sanguine
 crayons
 22.4 x 16.9 cm. (8 13/16 x 6 1/16 in.)
 Signed lower left: *f. Boucher in. del.*; on the right:
Demarteau l.né scul.;
 lower center: "*Treizieme Estampe à plusieurs Crayons:
 vert, noir et sanguine. à Paris chés Demarteau Graveur du
 Roi, rue de la Pelleterie à la Cloche. N°218.*"
 (transl: Thirteenth Print in several Crayons: green,
 black, and red. In Paris, at Demarteau, Engraver to the
 King, Rue de la Pelleterie, at the Clock, No. 218.)
 Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Department (inv.
 19374 LR/ Recto)

rapid strokes of black chalk, sometimes undulating and sometimes geometricized.

This image was diffused in the course of the 18th century through an engraving by Gilles Demarteau (1722-1776) (*ill. 2*), an engraver from Lieges established in Paris since the mid-century. Demarteau became known for his engravings after the works of Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) and Carle van Loo (1705-1765), among others, and above all, for those of François Boucher with whom he became friends.

Realized in reverse from our sheet, Demarteau's work reveals a few light differences in composition in terms of the hairdo, as well as in the handling of colors, as the highlights are in black and green crayons. Demarteau even adds a title to the work which the sitter holds in her hands, and entitles his engraving, "*Woman Reading*



Eloïse and Abelard,” and signs on the edge, “*Thirteenth Engraving in several Crayons. In Paris at Demarteau’s, Engraver to the King, rue de la Pelleterie, at the Clock. No. 218.*”²

Did Boucher confide the work’s title to Demarteau or was it a personal addition? The story of Heloise and Abelard, a medieval work published under Louis VI (1081-1136), aligns perfectly with the intimate nature of the young woman’s innocent image. A passionate story in which Pierre Abelard, 36 years old and Master of Theology at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris met Heloise, 21 years younger than he was, and fell madly in love. In spite of the spiritual education they’d received, the couple gave birth to a child and secretly married. The end of their lives, punished and separated, remained idyllic through a passionate correspondence which the young sitter in our drawing seems interested in reading.

Within a restrained framework, Boucher pays particular attention to the least details through rigor and a quality of execution which makes a very finished study. The highlights in color are skillfully placed, and by mixing pencil and pastel, the artist plays with textures.

François Boucher probably began using pastel when he was present at Maurice Quentin de la Tour’s sittings (1704-1788) when that artist came to his home to depict Madame Boucher as a submission to his first Salon. Fascinated by the variety of shades de la Tour could bring to his drawings, Boucher thus mixed black chalk with pastel and displayed striking mastery of them. The grain of the pastel is used here for outlining the flowers in the hair, as well as to render volume in the dress. The clever handling of light renders, on the one hand, the grace and sweetness of the modeling in the face all in roundness from the hairdo to the chin. On the other hand, it illustrates the luxurious silk of the dress colored

blue to make it reflect and soften the light.

The use of sanguine makes the black chalk luminous. In the sitter’s face, it is used to brighten the flesh tones in the cheeks under the light, thus bringing out the whitened tints caused by generous use of powder.

The monochromatic background consisting of light hatching is carefully stumped, a technique which is equally used for the edges of the desk, armchair, and sketchy lace sleeve. The sitter thus bathes in an atmosphere of sweetness and lightness.

Incontestably representative of 18th century painted portraits, François Boucher also was an excellent draughtsman and pastelist. He knew how to win his colleagues’ admiration, as well as that of his prestigious collector patrons eager for his female figures which he placed in the foreground of his works. Our drawing, recently rediscovered, had entered the collections of eminent art collectors during the following centuries, including Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-1898), then Casimir Ignace Stralem (1886-1932), probably next inherited by his son, Donald Sigmund Stralem (1903-1976), who was also a collector.

M.O.

We would like to thank Mr. Alastair Laing for having confirmed the authenticity of our drawing.

¹ Françoise Joulie, *Esquisses Pastels et dessins de François Boucher dans les collections privées*, exh. cat. Oct 12th, 2004 – Jan. 9th, 2005, Versailles, Lambinet Museum, Somogy Éditions d’art, Paris, 2004.

² *Treizième Estampe à plusieurs Crayons. à Paris chés Demarteau Graveur du Roi, rue de la Pelleterie à la Cloche. No. 218.* Engraving reproduced in Pierrette Jean Richard, *L’œuvre gravé de François Boucher dans la Collection Edmond de Rothschild*, Paris, 1978, p. 208, n° 783.



Nicolas VLEUGHEL

(Paris, 1668 – Rome, 1737)

5 | *Diana Sleeping*

Verso: Study for the portrait of a man

c. 1725

Black chalk, stump, and highlights in white chalk on blue paper

Verso: black and white chalk, pastel highlights

22.5 x 48.5 cm. (8 7/8 x 19 1/8 in.)

Provenance :

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Bernard Hercenberg, *Nicolas Vleughels: peintre et directeur de l'Académie de France à Rome, 1668-1737*, Léonce Laget, Paris, 1975.
- Neil Jeffares, "VLEUGHEL, Nicolas," *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*, online edition.
- Emmanuelle Brugerolles (dir.), *François Boucher et l'art rocaille dans les collections de l'École des beaux-arts*, ENSBA, Paris, 2003.

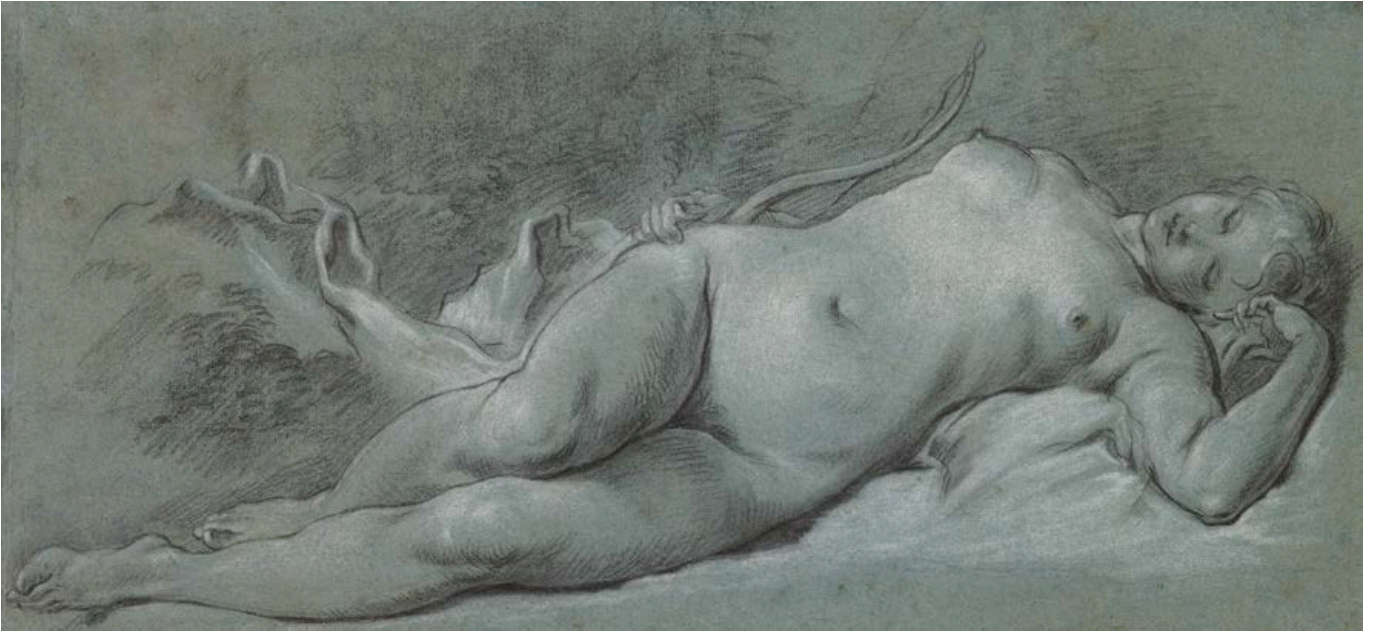
Of Flemish descent, Nicolas Vleughels was nonetheless born in Paris and trained in art practices under his father Philippe Vleughels, a portraitist. We only have a few biographical elements concerning young Vleughels' beginnings where he grew up amidst the Flemish colony near Saint-Germain-des-Prés and "became attached to Pierre Mignard who directed him in his studies for a while"¹ at the Academy.

Very early, Vleughels demonstrated an interest in Italy. He stayed in Rome in 1707 and returned there many times. He also visited Modena, Parma, and Venice, but it is really Rome where the artist settled once he was appointed by the Duke of Antin to co-direct and then to direct the French Academy there in 1724. Between a family with Flemish origins, a French environment, and a passion for Italy, Nicolas Vleughels' oeuvre is complex. The various influences are discerned via those he considered his masters: Rubens, Veronese and Watteau. The attribution of his works has thus often been confused with some of those of his contemporaries.

On a sheet of blue paper which was highly valued in the 18th century, our drawing depicts an academy of a



Ill. 1
Nicolas Vleughels
Head and Arm of a Woman
Pastel, black chalk and sanguine on beige paper
26.3 x 15.9 cm. (10 3/8 x 6 1/4 in.)
Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Department (inv. 33306, Recto).



verso



Ill. 2
 François Boucher (1703-1770)
Diana Sleeping
 Sanguine and chalk highlights on brownish paper
 23.2 x 37.8 cm. (9 1/8 x 14 7/8 in.)
 Paris, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts (inv. EBA 593).

reclining young woman holding a bow half-hidden behind her nude body. Vleughels was a history painter, thus when religious figures are not involved, the artist's female figures are often allegorized. This image could be a study for a larger scale work depicting Diana the huntress at rest, or one of Venus and Cupid. On the verso is a second image with the portrait of a man in black chalk with white chalk and pastel highlights.

During a period marked by quarrels between the *Rubenistes* and *Poussinistes*, Vleughels, following his father's teaching, belonged in the first category. Although the details of his early career are slim, Vleughels demonstrates a refinement and mastery of drawing in which he almost systematically adds color. Endowed with an excellent artistic culture, he studied the Old Masters without becoming a copyist, and went beyond his apprenticeship by being inspired by them, and reinvented by synthesizing their influences. An assiduous colorist, he mixed Rubensian coloring from his Flemish heritage with Venetian warmth and elegance. In Venice, his encounter with Rosalba Carriera

(1673-1757) was determinant. She made it possible for him to learn to handle pastels, a technique in which the artist demonstrated great ease.

In Rome, Vleughels' teaching at the Academy included the realization of female academies marked by full forms, an instruction which was rigorously imparted to his students, especially François Boucher (1703-1770), Etienne Jeurat (1699-1789) and Pierre Subleyras (1699-1749). An anatomical detail in particular is comparable to Vleughels' hand who often chose to bring out one shoulder - here it is the left one - and tended to let the other disappear. An instant sense of volume was created which allowed the positioning of the figure in space on a surface which was nonetheless flat. This complexity was the artist's own which can be found in several works by his hand, such as the *Female Study* conserved in Paris in the Graphic Arts Department of the Louvre ((inv. 33306, Recto, *ill. 1*).

True to the artist's female models, our academy displays Rubens' influence in the pose, the twisted position of



Ill. 3
Nicolas Vleughels
Étude d'une tête de Minerve
Pastel on blue paper
25.5 x 24.2 cm. (10 x 9 ½ in.)
Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts (inv. 33295, Recto).



Ill. 4
Nicolas Vleughels
Portrait of a Woman
Pastel, black chalk and sanguine on beige paper
24 x 18.6 cm. (9 7/16 x 7 5/16 in.)
Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Department (inv. 33298, Recto).

the body, and the powerful musculature paradoxically rendered fleshy and limp by the roundness of the modeling. The artist brings out his skillfulness through the ingenious use of white chalk to convey the light, while hatching in black chalk exposes this flesh which is so exaggerated in Rubens' work. A few anatomical details in the almond-shaped eyes and tentacular elongated fingers of the sitter also recall Flemish instruction. Finally, the artist arranges drapery around the recumbent body so that it accentuates forms and adds additional volume to the whole. It is interesting to compare our work with François Boucher's *Sleeping Diana* conserved at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris ((inv. EBA 593, *ill. 2*). A student of Vleughels at the French Academy in Rome, Boucher could work from the same models as his master and use the exact same composition here, although handled in sanguine highlighted with white chalk.

Vleughels was an excellent colorist, and his drawings reflect his work on color. On grey, beige or blue paper, the artist systematically highlighted his drawings with pencil, chalk and pastel which makes them very finished (*ill. 3 and 4*). The verso of our academy displays this technique.

Although only sketched, Vleughels accentuates the sitter's presence through fine handling of the gaze and strives to bring an additional dimension to his work by coloring the cheeks in sanguine and orangey pastel, as well as the lips with flamboyant red pastel tending towards pink.

Bernard Hercenberg's extremely precious monograph makes it possible to grasp Nicolas Vleughels' oeuvre better, an artist who is a bit forgotten on the market and for whom most of his drawings remain to be discovered. His highly developed relationships with the great names of his time, such as Antoine Watteau with whom the artist lived for a while in Paris, and the financier, collector and patron Pierre Crozat (1661/5-1740), makes it possible to place Nicolas Vleughels as an eminent figure in French painting: a talent rewarded by his appointment as Director of the French Academy in Rome where he remained until his death in 1737.

M.O.

¹ A.A.F. *Abecedario de P.J. Mariette*, T. VI, 1859-60, pp. 89-90.





Jean-Louis PREVOST known as The Younger

(Nointel, 1745 – Paris, 1827)

6 | *Still Life with a Flower Basket, Vases, Books and Manuscripts on a Pedestal Table*

Pen, ink wash, watercolor, and gouache

19 x 26.3 cm. (7 ½ x 10 ⅜ in.)

Signed lower left: *Prévost le Jeune*

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Gabriela Lamy, “Les Prévost, peintres de fleurs: des jardins de La Celle-Saint-Cloud à l’expédition La Pérouse en passant par Trianon,” *Bulletin du Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles*, France, February 2017.
- Eik Kahng, Marianne Roland Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster: peintre à la cour de Marie-Antoinette*, exh. cat. Marseilles, Museum of Fine Arts, Galleries of the *Vieille Charité*, April 12th – June 23rd, 2003.



Ill. 1

Jean-Louis Prévost (1745-1827)

Still Life with a Flower Vase and a Tea Service

1810

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University, England (inv. 614223)



Ill. 2

Jean-Louis Prévost (1745-1827)

Still Life with a Vase of Flowers on a Table Set for a Meal

c. 1810

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University, England (inv. 75894)

An excellent flower painter, Jean-Louis Prévost, called The Younger, grew up in flourishing artistic surroundings. Between 1754 and 1762, among the Prévost brothers, Jean-Louis, Guillaume, and Jean-Jacques each received lessons in turn in drawing plants given by the famous animal painter Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724-1806) at the Sèvres porcelain manufactory.

The three brothers became known for their participation in important 18th century garden art research when together, between 1763 and 1768, they put together an exceptional painted herbal of the plant collection

“distributed by class, genre, and species following the order observed in the King’s Garden of Plants at Trianon”¹ entitled *Horti Cellensis Plantarum Icones*.” The Garden constituted a veritable open air curiosity cabinet demonstrating the increasing late 18th century taste and interest for Botany and horticulture. Employed by Jacques-Jérémie Roussel (1712-1766), a tax-farmer and great botanical collector, the Prévost brothers produced more than 1800 drawings for this work which depicted all of the plants in the garden of the La Celle Saint-Cloud palace, Roussel’s property.





Ill. 3
 Jan van OS (1744-1808)
Still life with fruit and flowers
 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University, England
 (inv. PD.35-1975)



Ill. 4
 Jean-Louis Prévost (1745-1827)
Still Life with a Nest and a Bouquet of Flowers in a Vase
 Oil on canvas
 Private Collection.

Guillaume Prévost joined La Pérouse's expedition between 1785 and 1788 accompanied by his nephew Jean-Louis-Robert, Jean-Louis' only son whom he never would see again. During this time, Jean-Jacques and Jean-Louis joined the Academy of Saint Luke, and thus followed a more academic career than their brother Guillaume. Jean-Louis was a member from 1791 to 1810.

Our work shows the influence of the artist's experience of his father's instruction, as well as his personal taste for admired ceramic objects at the porcelain manufactory. In our work, attention is naturally drawn towards the center of the composition presenting a terrific example of a vase with low reliefs inspired by Antiquity traditionally embellished with *putti* or bacchanalia, and here mounted on a gilt bronze pedestal.

In addition to plant studies, we know some more ambitious compositions which the artist embellished with new elements to demonstrate his virtuosity in depicting silent objects around him. In the illustration

of set tables decked with drawing portfolios such as can be seen here in the foreground, Prévost almost systematically included one or more ceramic elements, such as a tea service (*ill. 1*), plates (*ill. 2*), or as on the right in our composition, a goblet inspired by Antiquity with dancing maenads.

Jean-Louis Prévost follows the Nordic tradition of painters such as Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750) and Jan van Os (1744-1808) (*ill. 3*) who integrated antique elements into their still life paintings. His works evoke his refined education, as well as his years of assiduous study which made it possible for him to render each floral species with great precision in the bouquet depicted on the left of our composition.

The overall clarity is the result of attentive study of light effects, especially in the depiction of the low relief on the vase which seems to have fascinated the artist, because it can be found on several other works (*ill. 4*) as well as in those of artists of his generation whom he inspired,



Ill. 5
 Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744-1818)
Flowers in a Terracotta Vase, Peaches, and Grapes
 Oil on canvas
 122.24 × 113.98 cm. (48 1/8 × 44 7/8 in.)
 Dallas Museum of Art Foundation (inv. 1998.51)

including the famous Anne Vallayer-Coster² who also reproduced this sculpted vases (*ill. 5*).

The meticulous rendering of surfaces and objects is evidence of the artist's interests. As a good colorist, he thus heightened the veined red marble *trompe l'oeil* support with touches of brighter colors echoing the tabletop on which the objects are placed. Although the surface of the work is flat, the eye is thus tricked by skillfully reproduced perspective. Prévost perfects his work by making the vase shine: the light reflected there is rendered with fine white gouache brushstrokes. The whole composition stands out from a brushed light brown background which can be seen in the works of many of his contemporaries, including Vallayer-Coster.

The taste for Botany, initiated by the role of the Royal Garden of Plants founded in 1635, and then the Royal Academy of Science created in 1666, continued in the 18th century with precise studies of flora in the form



Ill. 6
 Jean-Louis Prévost (1745-1827)
 “‘La Roussel’ Tulip, Double Red Peony, ‘Canada Reinette’ Apple Blossom or ‘Trianon Reinette,’ ” in Gault de Saint-Germain, *Collection des fleurs et des fruits peints d’après nature par Jean-Louis Prévost*, Paris, Vilquin, 1805, pl. 9. Paris, BNF, Estampes, Jd 34.
 © Bibliothèque nationale de France

The text for this plate informs us that the “Canada Reinette” was cultivated at Trianon near the end of Louis XV’s reign, thus explaining its name as “*Reinette de Trianon*” in various French provinces.

of drawings, engravings, watercolors on paper, and miniatures on parchment. In 1805, the *Collection des fleurs et des fruits, peints d’après nature par Jean-Louis Prévost* (*Collection of Flowers and Fruit painted from Life by Jean-Louis Prévost, ill. 6*) was published. The work served as a model for new decorative ideas for craftsmen, such as cabinet-makers, gold and silver smiths, embroiderers, or porcelain painters.

Collected during his lifetime, Jean-Louis Prévost’s work can be found in French public collections today, such as the Fine Arts Museums of Angers and of Besançon.

M.O

¹ BNF, Estampes, Jc26 : *Catalogue de Plantes peintes d’après nature par les soins d’un amateur, distribué par classes, par genres et par espèces, suivant l’ordre observé au Jardin des plantes du Roy a Trianon.*

² Eik Kahng, Marianne Roland Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster : peintre à la cour de Marie-Antoinette*, exh. cat. Marseille, Museum of Fine Arts, galleries of the *Vieille Charité*, April 12th – June 23rd, 2003.



Léonard Bauseux



Attributed to Antoine VESTIER

(Avallon, 1740 – Paris, 1824)

7 | *Portrait of a Woman in a Fine Transparent Muslin Dress with Ruffle and a Blue Bow*

Miniature on vellum

Diameter: 7 cm. (2 ¾ in.)

Provenance:

- Ader Sale, February 6th, 1978, reproduced under no. 110 ;
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Anne-Marie Passez, *Antoine Vestier*, La Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, 1989.

A delicate portrait of a young woman attired in the pastoral fashion launched by Queen Marie-Antoinette in the late 18th century figures here on a vellum support no more than 7 centimeters (2 ¾ in.) in diameter. We propose an attribution of this miniature to the hand of Antoine Vestier, a painter who specialized in portraiture, and for whom the fine handling of some of his known miniatures is comparable to our work.

Antoine Vestier was often compared to his elders who inspired him, such as Perronneau, Roslin, Duplessis, Greuze, and Drouais. The artist was able to develop his virtuoso brushwork through attentive observation of their pictures.

Born to a family alien to the art world, young Vestier had some difficulty both in introducing himself into this milieu and in financing courses at the Academy. By the age of 35, the artist was producing beautifully crafted oils and miniatures which displayed his great graphic ease. He set himself up as a portraitist and genre painter whose many commissions brought him closer to the aristocracy. Approved for membership in the Academy in 1785, the artist took advantage of this nomination to increase his production in hopes of catching the attention of the Court.

Our work can be placed in the most fertile years of the artist's career, between 1782 and 1792. Amateurs and collectors were particularly attached to the artist's ability to convey French distinctiveness through the youthful passion and charm which was common in most of his figures. Far from ceremonial portraits with their frozen faces, Vestier devoted himself to easel painting as well as miniatures as means of expressing not only his sitters' elegance but, above all, their intimacy.



Ill. 1
Antoine Vestier
Madame de Montesson (1738-1806)
Miniature on ivory
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum (inv. NMB 1316)

Antoine Vestier left several dozen miniatures whose handling is very close to ours (*ill. 1*). Among these female portraits which were in high demand and often depicted wives with clothes and hairdos in the latest fashions, our picture depicts a young woman full face with her torso elegantly turned slightly to the right. Using a very small format, Vestier pays particular attention to his sitter's





Ill. 2
Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun
*Gabrielle Yolande Claude Martine de Polastron, Duchess
of Polignac*
Versailles, National Museum of the Châteaux of
Versailles and of Trianon (inv. MV 8971)

physical details. The young lady wears carefully applied make-up so as to bring out her pearly skin and long powdered curly hair, in which the individually drawn strands are reminiscent of the queen's official royal portraits. Our sitter is attired in a dress of fine transparent striped cotton muslin decorated by an elegant blue bow on her bosom, in keeping with the dresses worn by some of her most illustrious contemporaries, such as the Duchess of Polignac (*ill. 2*).

The artist is known for his gifts as a colorist. His supple handling of his brush allows him to render the portrait in all its elegance and harmony, as he plays with matching vaporous effects which echo each other in the hairdo and the light aerial dress fabric.

In addition to his apartment in the Louvre which he received in 1796, Antoine Vestier enjoyed his fame for seven years before the Revolution broke his career. The precocious virtuosity of his brushwork justified the number of private commissions he received before being approved for the Academy: he was the official painter of some particularly powerful families, including the Hozier family for whom he painted six portraits.





Atelier de François-André VINCENT

(Paris, 1746 – 1816)

8 | *Arria and Poetus*

Black chalk, pen, and brushed black ink wash
41.5 x 48.5 cm. each (16 ³/₁₆ x 19 ¹/₈ cm.)

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean-Pierre Cuzin, *Vincent Entre Fragonard et David*, Arthena, Paris, 2013.

Born into a Genevan family, young François-André Vincent's training began in Paris under his father, the miniaturist François-Elie Vincent (1708-1790), a professor at the Academy of Saint Luke which had been established in the capital in 1733. According to the writings of Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard (1766-1823), the painter Alexander Roslin (1718-1793) was the one "who convinced the artist's father to let him go beyond the workshop counter; he entered Mr. Vien's studio."¹ Thus the 15 year old François-André's education continued in the studio of Joseph-Marie Vien (1716-1790), who was a professor at the Royal Academy and a famous painter of Athenian women who certainly predetermined the young painter's infatuation for subjects from Greco-Roman Antiquity. Throughout his career, Vincent remained very attached to his master's teaching.

The young artist's gift for handling a brush led him to carry the Prize for Expression in 1767, a prize established seven years earlier by the Comte de Caylus. He won the Grand *Prix de Rome* the following year, and left for Rome in 1771. He then stayed in Italy until 1775, before returning to Paris and entering the Royal Academy two years later. Vincent is considered one of the most eminent painters of his generation, a reputation which he cultivated through a prolific studio. Our drawings are two probative examples of the quality of Vincent's teaching at the end of the 18th century.

In the middle of the 1780s, Vincent was confronted with the mounting success of his contemporary Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), who presented the *Oath of the Horatii* at the Salon of 1785, a work which had been finished the previous year. As a royal commission,

Vincent produced *Arria and Poetus*, a subject from Roman Antiquity which he rendered in two canvasses dated 1784 for the first, and 1785 for the second, which was a larger format.

The story of Arria and Poetus, taken from Pliny the Younger's correspondence (c. 61 – 113 C.E.) is selected by the artist for its moral value. Arrested for having participated in a rebellion against Emperor Claude (10 B.C.E. – 54 C.E.), Poetus was imprisoned in Rome. As he was condemned to kill himself without being able to bring himself to do it, his wife Arria joined him in order to convince him to die honorably: she stabbed herself in front of him and handed him the knife.

Vincent's work conveys the Neoclassical spirit in its purest expression. It illustrates a tragic but violent act, dramatized with cold elegance. In the first work dated 1784, Arria, attempting to convince her spouse, kills herself and holds out the dagger at which he stares with terror. In the second one of 1785; Arria has just stabbed herself, and held up by a servant, holds out the dagger to Poetus who throws himself towards her with his arms raised.

For his final works, Vincent produced several preparatory sheets. For the 1784 version, a pen sketch with a larger setting than the final painted version and indexed in the artist's catalogue² (cat. 436 D) depicts three figures including the servant in the middle ground which was eliminated from the final version. For the 1785 version, Vincent produced an ink and brown wash sketch with white highlights in which the figures' poses also differed from the painted version (cat. 435D). The differences





Ill. 2
 François-André Vincent
Arria and Poetus, 1785
 Oil on canvas
 322 x 257 cm. (10 ft. 6 ¾ in. x 8 ft. 5 ⅙ in.)
 Amiens, Museum of Picardy (inv. M.P. 2004.17.177)



Ill. 1
 François-André Vincent
Arria and Poetus, 1784
 Oil on canvas
 101 x 121.9 cm. (3 ft. 3 ¾ in. x 4 ft.)
 Missouri, Saint Louis Art Museum (inv. 27-2008).

and variations in relation to the painted versions reflect the artist's thinking process in constructing his works.

Our two drawings illustrate the rigor with which the studio studied the master's work. In works of identical format, as opposed to the final canvasses, the scenes are depicted with great acuity. These are very complete drawings which do not omit any detail in the composition.

The adept use of black chalk on large scale sheets of paper shows that our drawings are by the hand of a painter. Neoclassical directives are perfectly mastered in the intersection of strong diagonals which both energize and stabilize the composition. The drawings also reveal particular attention given to the handling of powerful light accentuating the theatricality of the scene. The minute work on ingeniously lit facial expressions makes it possible to render the precise tragic atmosphere by which Vincent captures the viewer's gaze.

After his return to Rome, Vincent was one of the favorite history painters of his generation. His talent, nonetheless, was threatened by David's genius which he had to confront. Thus by 1781, two years after the success of David's *The Sabine Women*, Vincent responded with an original subject taken from Titus Livy (I, 12) and Plutarque (*Life of Romulus*, 19): *The Sabines* or *The Battle of the Romans and the Sabines Interrupted by the Sabine Women*³

The two exceptional canvasses depicting the history of *Arria and Poetus* in the Salon of 1785 inspired the master's studio, and seemingly became models to be studied from which our two drawings were taken.

M.O.

¹ Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, 1806, pp.97-98.

² Jean-Pierre Cuzin, *Vincent : Entre Fragonard et David*, Arthena, Paris, 2013.

³ Angers, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 2013.22.53).







Jacques-Antoine Marie LEMOINE

(Rouen, 1751 – Paris, 1824)

9 | *Portrait of Pierre Paul Royer-Collard (1763 - 1845)*

1796

Black chalk, stump and red chalk highlights

Signed and dated, center right: *Lemoine del. 1796*

23 x 19 cm. (9 1/16 x 7 1/2 in.)

Provenance:

- Maison Boin-Tabouret Collection, Paris, in the late 19th century;
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Alfred Poussier, *Notice biographique sur Lemoine (Jacques-Antoine-Marie) peintre miniaturiste (1751-1824)*, 1914.
- Neil Jeffares, “Jacques-Antoine-Marie Lemoine,” *Gazette des beaux-arts*, vol. 133, n° 1561, Feb. 1999, pp. 61-136.
- Charle Christophe, “Royer-Collard (Pierre, Paul),” *Les professeurs de la faculté des lettres de Paris – Dictionnaire biographique 1809-1908*, Institut national de recherche pédagogique, Paris, 1985. pp. 155-156.

Biographical notices on Jacques-Antoine Marie Lemoine or Le Moyne remain rare. Originally from Rouen, Lemoine seems to have settled in Paris in about the year 1806. His name is mentioned on a list of members of the Society of Emulation,¹ as an artist-painter who had frequented the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, “student of M. la Grenée the Younger”² and Maurice-Quentin de “La Tour” (1704-1788), from whom he learned to handle pastels. The many drawings signed by his hand which have come down to us show that Jacques-Antoine Marie Lemoine was an excellent draughtsman who “especially devoted himself to the genre of portraits in miniature and large-scale. He did several portraits for the Lecoulteux family of Rouen.”³

In a spirit of praise and glorification of illustrious personalities of his time, Lemoine shows the features of Pierre Paul Royer-Collard, an influential political figure and man of letters.

In 1789, Pierre Paul Royer-Collard was an established lawyer in Paris. The same year, he opted for a political career by becoming a member of the Municipal Council of Paris, a position which he would occupy for three years, before giving an address in the name of his section at the Convention on voluntary enrollment against the insurrection in the West. He took refuge

in Sompuis after the Girondins were crushed. His political career gradually grew in scope until his proud election as a deputy to the Council of Five Hundred in 1797. From that moment, his political life tumbled. His election was annulled the following year after the coup d'état of 18 Fructidor: after having been favorable to the Revolution, Royer-Collard rallied to the constitutional monarchy. In developing close relationships with Louis XVIII's representatives, he was nominated a member of the royal council which he occupied until 1803. His name doesn't appear any more until 1814, except in the domain of literature where he gained new recognition. Collard became a Professor of the History of Philosophy at the Faculty of Letters in Paris. The fall of the Empire gave new life to his career and allowed him to become President of the Commission of Public Instruction until 1819. At the same time, he was elected deputy of Marne, a function he would occupy until his death in 1845.

“(…) *The Professor can only hope to be of use to his Students by always being at their disposition. It is for them and not for himself that he should hold Class. His purpose being to engrave in their memory the principal deeds in History (...), he should not seek another source of interest beyond the simple exposition of historic deeds and the natural links between them: he should avoid at*





Ill. 1
Portrait of Lord Seymour
Black chalk and gouache highlights
34.5 x 26 cm. (13 ⁵/₁₆ x 10 ¹/₄ in.)
Signed and dated *Lemoine 1796 Juillet*
Private Collection.

*all costs everything that could draw the Students into the Political sphere and serve as alimentation to discussion of the Parties (...)*²⁴

Under Charles X, after a well-filled career, the political persona lost his influence. In 1830 at the age of 67, Royer-Collard was a Knight of the Legion of Honor and an active member of the French Academy to which he had been elected three years earlier. Among his quite diverse fields of action, man of letters that he was, he had striven to reshape instruction and teaching, and thus through several directives in the form of letters, had called for change.

In an oval format contributing to the intimate aspect of the work, Royer-Collard is depicted here bust length and torso slightly turned to the left, while the fully frontal face looks straight at the artist. The sitter is attired in Directory fashions: a wide white collar tied around his neck appears from under his “over jacket” and double-breasted waistcoat with lapels. As an attentive observer, Lemoine captures his sitter’s physical features with great acuity and communicates a tranquil state of mind through his calm gaze. Royer-Collard thus poses serenely

for the artist. In fact, it is not unlikely to think that the two men knew each other very well.

An excellent draughtsman, Lemoine’s virtuosity can be seen here in the use of black chalk enhanced by sanguine which highlights the cheeks, lips, and the sitter’s gaze. The artist’s ingeniousness is expressed through the care given to each detail of the composition, from the utilization of stump bringing an effect of gentleness to the whole composition, to the delicate handling of the light illuminating the pure and exact lines of the face, not to mention the treatment of the cleverly messy hair, drawn strand by strand.

The work is dated 1796, the year in which Lemoine realized the portrait of *Lord Seymour* (ill. 1), which is interesting to compare to our work for the artist’s subtle manipulation and use of black chalk to play with light and shade effects on his sitters’ faces. The *Portrait of Lord Seymour* evokes the artist’s taste for these male portraits for the grand families and aristocracy, such as the Seymours, among others. Other oval format bust portraits in black chalk by the artist’s hand with similar dimensions to our portrait (ill. 2 and 3) have come down to us. Some of them were exhibited in the Salon of 1796



Ill. 2
Portrait of Adolphe Edme Theodor Archambault
Regnard des Coudrées
 Black chalk and white chalk highlights
 21.8 x 17 cm. (8 5/16 x 6 11/16 in.)
 Private Collection.



Ill. 3
Half-length Portrait of Pierre-Nicolas Dury
 Black chalk and white chalk highlights
 25.8 x 22.3 cm. (10 3/16 x 8 3/4 in.)
 Private Collection.

in particular, which catalogues five portrait drawings and “several portraits.” The absence of dimensions of physical details about the sitters does not make it possible to determine if our drawing was exhibited that year.

*(...) past misfortunes having deprived him of part of his fortune, he thought that work itself was the veritable fortune (...)*⁵

Our artist’s homonyms have led to confusion as to his body of unsigned works. Nonetheless, according to the evidence in his daughter’s precious correspondence, it is known that Lemoine acquired a solid reputation as a portraitist which was his claim to fame. During his lifetime, his works were collected in France and abroad: *“there are a lot of other works by him in France and at foreign courts.”*⁶ At the Salon, Lemoine’s work was appreciated for the quality of his “portrait drawings” of citizens, (male and female), artists,⁷ and sitters known and unknown to the public which illustrated his sure taste for this genre which he practiced up until his death in 1824.

¹The “Free Society of Emulation of Commerce and Industry in Seine-Inférieure,” was founded in Rouen in 1792.

²M. S. Rocheblave, “Les Artistes Normands à l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris, de 1765 à 1789,” *Congrès du Millénaire normand (Congress of the Norman Millennial)*, Vol. II, p. 425.

³Letter from Mlle Agathe Lemoine to Juste Hoüel, Corresponding Secretary of the Society of Emulation in Rouen, dated June 7th, 1824, transcribed in Alfred Poussier, *Notice biographique sur Lemoine (Jacques-Antoine-Marie) peintre miniaturiste (1751-1824)*, 1914, p. 5.

⁴“Royer-Collard Pierre-Paul. 18. 9 novembre 1818: Lettre de Royer-Collard, président de la Commission de l’Instruction publique, aux proviseurs des collèges royaux parisiens, jointe à l’arrêté du 9 novembre (extraits),” *L’histoire et la géographie dans l’enseignement secondaire. Textes officiels*, Vol. 1: 1795-1914, Institut national de recherche pédagogique, Paris, 2000. p. 113.

⁵Letter from Mlle Agathe Lemoine to Juste Hoüel, Corresponding Secretary of the Society of Emulation in Rouen, dated June 7th, 1824, *op. cit.* p. 8.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷The Salon of 1785 mentions a “Portrait of Mme Lebrun, seated on a rock in a landscape,” and the Salon of 1798, “portrait drawings in black chalk of Citizen Fragonard.”

M.O.

François-Joseph HEIM

(Belfort, 1787 – Paris, 1865)

10

Perseus and Andromeda

Oil and gouache highlights over black chalk lines on laid paper
12.8 x 15.8 cm. (5 x 6 ¼ in.)

Provenance:

- France, private collection

Bibliography:

- *De David à Delacroix: La Peinture française de 1774 à 1830* (exh. cat.), Paris, Grand Palais, 1974.
- Jean-Pierre Cuzin, "François-Joseph Heim (1787-1865): peintre d'esquisses," *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire de l'Art français*, 1991.

François-Joseph Heim's artistic education began in Belfort in 1789. His father, Joseph Heim, who was a drawing professor, gave him his first lessons before sending him to the central school in Strasburg where the young boy won first prize in drawing at the age of 11. His undeniable talent encouraged his father to send him to Paris five years later to enter François-André's studio (1746-1816). Rapidly, François-Joseph was surrounded by the best artists of his time whom he frequented in Vincent's studio, including Horace Vernet (1789-1863). Seeking the *Prix de Rome*, Heim produced a work entitled *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (current location unknown) for which he won second prize. He won First Prize the following year by presenting *Theseus, Conqueror of the Minotaur*, a canvas which, in addition to its academic character, already indicates his skillfulness in handling colors (Paris, ENSBA, inv. PRP 45).

After his stay at the French Academy in Rome between 1808 and 1811, the artist returned to Paris and regularly exhibited in the Salon, including in 1812 and 1817, and won the First Class medal twice. Heim received many honors in his lifetime, including Knight of the Legion of Honor in 1827, and Officer of the Legion of Honor in 1855. In 1829, he became a member of the Institute in the painting section, by assuming the chair of Jean-Baptiste Regnault who had died that same year. Furthermore, he became Vice President, and then President of the Institute in 1853.



Ill. 1

François-Joseph Heim
*The Death (or Dream?) of a Hero from
Antiquity*

Oil on paper laid down on canvas
12.5 x 17 cm. (4 15/16 x 6 11/16 in.)

Private Collection.

From his apprenticeship under Vincent, Heim developed a major interest in grand historical, religious, and mythological subjects, as can be seen in his choice of subject for his 1807 shipment.

Praised for the quality of execution of his works, he rapidly met with success through many official commissions to which he responded enthusiastically. In Versailles, he produced works for the Gallery of Battles; in Paris, he realized more than ten pictures for Parisian churches. The artist stood out equally well in secular painting by producing some works for the National Assembly (decoration of the Lecture Room), as well as several ceiling paintings for the Louvre.





Ill. 2
 François-Joseph Heim
Temperance
 Oil on canvas
 25 x 15,5 cm. (10 x 6 1/8 in.)
 Belfort, Museum of Art and
 History.



Ill. 3
 François-Joseph Heim
Prudence
 Oil on canvas
 25 x 15,5 cm. (10 x 6 1/8 in.)
 Belfort, Museum of Art and
 History.

To produce these mostly large-scale works, Heim did multiple very small scale oil sketches on paper and on canvas. Our work seems to be an example of this production. Comparison with certain known sketches by the artist's hand, such as *The Death of a Hero from Antiquity* (ill. 1), turns out to be completely coherent. Realized in oil on a sheet of paper no more than 13 cm. high, it displays the powerful use of color as an instrument in constructing composition. Our sketch depicts Perseus and Andromeda, a subject from Antiquity treated many times by peers such as Gustave Moreau (*Andromeda*, Gustave Moreau Museum, inv. 15499). Appreciated for its dramatic propensities, the subject perfectly illustrated the Romantic strain which gripped the early part of the century. According to mythology, Andromeda, an Ethiopian princess sent to be sacrificed, was attached to a rock so she could be devoured by a sea monster. On the way back from his glorious battle against Medusa – whose head can be seen on his shield – the Greek hero Perseus riding his winged horse Pegasus, saved the young woman.

As a result of the extreme precociousness of his artistic practices, the artist attracted much recognition for his gifts as a draughtsman. Heim is also considered an assiduous colorist, a passion which he applied to his drawings. He drew inspiration from older artists, especially Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863), whose works he seems to have appreciated for their rendering of feelings through color. Furthermore, the artist could have been inspired by works such as the *Saint Georges Fighting the Dragon, also called Perseus Delivering Andromeda* (Paris, Louvre Museum, inv. RF 1396) by this master of color.

His sketches reveal the ingenious process of creating the work in two phases. First he traces the contours of his figures, and then brings them to life through color. Our oil displays this technique by leaving the construction lines visible over which he constructs his work between an oily preparation and a skillful use of gouache.

With a systematically free touch, his sketches are impetuous. Heim did not seek detail, but ideas. He



Ill. 4
François-Joseph Heim
The Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Sketch
Oil on canvas
29 x 35 cm. (11 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Paris, Louvre Museum (inv. RF 1971-1).

suggests more than he marks down, and he regularly only works his figures' faces very briefly, and in some cases, even leaves them without any expression (*ill. 2 and 3*). His figures are often elongated: in our work, the horse's mane is abnormally stretched out, as are the legs of the figure of Perseus. In addition, the horse, an animal broadly depicted in Romantic artists' paintings, provides a very interesting figure of comparison in Heim's work. In the sketch which he produced for his picture, *The Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans* (*ill. 4*), the steed's vivacity is rendered through skillful rapid brushstrokes which are sometimes swirling and sometimes elongated, a technique of fiery energy which can also be found in our sketch.

François-Joseph Heim remains a little-studied figure in Art History who was nonetheless highly appreciated during the Second Empire. Between his production of sacred and secular works resulting from official commissions, his varied career brought him success in his lifetime and let him easily traverse the different French

political regimes. Heim only occasionally responded to private commissions.

Most of his graphic work is conserved in the Louvre Museum in Paris; his final painted works are exhibited in a few eminent French museums, including the Museum of the Château of Versailles which conserves large-scale history paintings, such as *The Defense of the Château of Burgos, October 1812* (inv. MV 1764), *The Chamber of Deputies present the Duke of Orleans with the act Calling Him to the Throne, August 7th, 1830* (inv. MV 1814), and *The Battle of Rocroy, May 19th, 1643* (inv. MV 2721).

M.O.





Jean-Baptiste GREUZE

(Tournus, 1725 – Paris, 1805)

11 | *Self-Portrait*

c. 1785

Oil on oval canvas

61.5 x 51 cm. (24 3/16 x 20 in.)

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean Martin, *Œuvre de J.-B. Greuze : catalogue raisonné, suivi de la liste des gravures exécutées d'après ses ouvrages*, H. Piazza, Paris, 1905, pp. 70-71.

“This talent for expressing the passions on canvas is very rare, and Mr. Greuze carries it to the highest degree.”

An incomparable draughtsman who kept his distance from French rococo taste which he judged too frivolous, Jean-Baptiste Greuze emphasized the glorification of his subjects' feelings which he thought should lift the viewer's soul. Trained in the studio of the Lyonnais master Charles Grandon (1691-1762), whom he followed to Paris in 1750, Greuze subsequently received lessons from Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777) at the Academy. He did not take the official route of competing for the *Grand Prix de Rome*, but nonetheless was approved (*agréé*) in 1755, thanks to his *Father of the Family Reading the Bible to his Children* (Paris, Louvre Museum, inv. RF 2016 3).

After a sojourn in Italy from which he only retained his work on facial expressions, Greuze initiated a new genre which left the critics overwhelmed. It consisted of genre scenes in which the arrangement of elements evoked the grand tradition of history painting, but in which expression of sentimental feelings reigned, an interest which was unprecedented in French painting and came out of multiple drawings from life. Known for his genre scenes, Greuze was also a talented portraitist whose commissions multiplied and who liked to depict children. Among these figures, the artist realized a few private portraits, that is, his own self-portraits.

“Greuze, says M. Lecarpentier, who knew him, was of medium height; he had a strong head, a very broad

*forehead, lively and well separated eyes, a spiritual face. His manner spoke of candor and a man of genius; it was even difficult not to say: “Here is Greuze, almost without ever having seen him.”*²

In essence, self-portraits do not require commissions. They are personal, intimate works exempt from all artifice, appreciated for the psychological exercise they procure. Of this production, history has retained more than ten portraits of Greuze “by him himself” realized all through his career.

The first known example is dated around the year 1763 (*ill. 1*). Through a very sketchy technique similar to our work, the artist presents himself to the view in studio attire, slightly turned three-quarters to the right, his face seen straight on: a position which the artist assumed in most of his self-portraits. This first version depicts the artist at about 40 years old, vigorous, when his flamboyant production was flourishing.

More than a portrait, self-portraits reflect not just the person, but also the artist: the flat surface incarnates the dialogue between a painter and his mirror. Beyond aesthetic qualities, the work thus posits the artist's reflections on his own condition. In comparison to the version conserved in the Louvre (*ill. 2*), our unpublished work could date to around the year 1785. Greuze was then about 60 years old, he appears more fragile and diminished, but his calm gaze communicates a certain self-confidence. As was his custom, Greuze shows himself bust length and turned three-quarters to the right. His white curly hair is lightly powdered.





Ill. 1
Self-Portrait
 Oil on wood
 c. 1760
 Paris, Louvre Museum (inv. MI 1071)



Ill. 2
Self-Portrait
 Oil on canvas
 c. 1785
 73 x 59 cm. (28 ¾ x 23 ¼ in.)
 Paris, Louvre Museum (inv. 5034)



Ill. 3
Portrait of François Babuti
 Salon de 1761
 Oil on canvas
 59.7 x 48.2 cm. (23 ½ x 20 in.)
 Private Collection

Under his brown jacket with its blue turned-down collar, he wears a flowing white cravat and a lace jabot caught in a yellow vest.

Greuze doesn't hide the physical traces of his age so as not to risk mishandling the dialogue with himself. He even seems to have a certain sympathy for the depiction of profiles of older men as can be seen in the portrait of his father-in-law François Babuti in 1761 (*ill. 3*).

This last phase of the artist's career gives way to a sketchier handling of his subjects: the artist abandons precision in lines and contours while privileging the use of color as an element for expressing the passions on canvas. The minute work in achieving a faithful depiction of flesh through touches of pink, which are sometimes brushed, and sometimes supple and enveloping, can be appreciated in our *Self-Portrait*. Special attention is given to the treatment of the face and even more so, to the psychological intensity of the serene gaze.

Although a certain austerity emanates from the work, the overall vision tends to gentleness and (sensual) pleasure: the limited chromatic range highlighted by the neck of the jacket with its blue turned-down collar is delicately handled with a few skillful long brush strokes. The gentle sensation is reinforced by the oval format of the work, as

well as by the quick lines which define, on the one hand, the solid pale coppery green background, and on the other, the rest of the torso, blended in shades of brown, symbolic of a modesty which he radiates.

*"(...) above all, his portrait which he just painted of himself is applauded."*³

Jean-Baptiste Greuze's delicate painting is touching to the eye and soul of the curious viewer who is intrigued by the gentle sensual brushwork which the painter demonstrates in each of his pictures. A painter of laborious felicity, of drama, of childhood, but above all, of portraits, Greuze was an artist who addressed the sensitivity of his time, depicted and personified feelings on the flat surface of the canvas: an ingeniousness which led to his success and glory.

M.O.

¹ Anonymous, "Exposition de peintures, sculptures et gravures," *L'Année littéraire*, supplement, 1761 (Deloynes n° 1272).

² Charles Blanc "Étude sur Greuze," *L'Artiste Greuze sa vie et son œuvre Sa statue Le musée Greuze*, 1868, p. 119.

³ C.-L. F. Lecarpentier, *Notice sur Greuze lu dans la séance de la Société libre d'Emulation de Rouen*, [Rouen], 1805, p. 7.



Theodore Géricault

(1791-1824)

12 | *Head of a Bulldog*

c. 1818-1820

Oil on canvas

24.2 x 32.2 cm. (9 ½ x 12 ¼ in.)

Verso: Old Inscriptions in black ink, upper left, on a stretcher probably dating to the mid 19th c.: *C. M. MATHIEU.*

Provenance:

- Sale, Collection M. Mathieu, E. Girard, commissaire-priseur, Féral, peintre-expert, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, salle n° 7, lundi 11 décembre 1876, n° 5: “Tableaux/Géricault (Théodore)/*Tête de chien/ Belle etude*” [Pictures/Géricault (Theodore)/*Head of a Dog/ Beautiful study*];
- Paris, Edmond Courty (1896-1972) Collection;
- Paris: Private Collection.

Scientific Examinations:

- Picture cleaned in 2020 by M^{me} Laurence Baron-Callegari (*Restaurateur* [English: Conservator] *du Patrimoine*, diploma from the IFROA).
- Picture examined by ARTMYN (Paris), July 2020. Multispectral photographic examination: *raking light; ultraviolet reflectography; infrarouge and false color reflectography.*

Authenticity:

- This work will be included in the *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux de Théodore Géricault*, currently being prepared by M. Bruno Chenique.

A Rediscovered Picture

This *Head of a Bulldog*, a magnificent and powerful picture by Theodore Géricault (1791-1824) has remained completely unknown to the artist’s specialists although to their knowledge, it had already been signaled as of 1876.

If time was never taken to devote a study to the depiction of dogs in the art of the painter of *The Raft of the Medusa*, a rapid survey of his production reveals a strong presence, a strong interest in the subject. One could almost speak of a real leitmotif. Indeed, dogs play an important role: sometimes they are aggressive, resting, or fulfilling their assigned role as man’s faithful companions. In 1989, Robert Rosenblum devoted a small book entitled *The Dog in Art : from Rococo to Post-Modernism* in which Géricault figured, but with only one picture reproduced in black and white.¹

Bazin, catalogues an early drawing, maybe realized by 1808, depicting *Two Dogs near their Doghouse*.²



Ill. 1

Charles Aubry

Bull-Dog, after a Study painted by par Géricault, 1824

Lithograph

21.4 x 26.3 cm. (8 ⅞ x 10 ⅜ in.)

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Department of Prints and Photographs.



In about 1812-1814, the theme of the greyhound is present in many drawings of the so-called Chicago Album which often depicts Géricault's family universe at Chesnay (near Versailles), that is to say, the chateau of his uncle Jean-Baptiste Caruel and his young wife, Alexandrine-Modeste (*née* de Saint-Martin).³ A greyhound, probably their dog, figures in these drawings.⁴ A little further on, a hunting dog⁵ can be found, and in another drawing, this dog is curiously attributed a seemingly human face.⁶

In the domestic dogs can be found *The Procurator*, a dog which belonged to Laure Bro, Géricault's friend and neighbor from the rue des Martyrs.⁷ The dog, a type of mastiff or mongrel, is being ridden by little Louis Bro.⁸ Clément informs us that it was the painter's dog:

"[n°] 57. *Galoor*. A dog, of the mastiff or mongrel species which belonged to Géricault. He is lying down, half of his body outside of his stone doghouse. – Watercolor. – To Colonel O. Bro de Comères. H. 155 – L. 155 mill." [6 1/8 x 6 1/8 in.]⁹

Other pictures by Géricault on the same theme were sold in the 19th century and have not always been relocated:

"[n°] 46 *Blidah*. A hunting dog which belonged to Lord H. Seymour. [n°] 47 *Two shepherd dogs*."¹⁰

Finally, in the Géricault's production, the theme of the aggressive dog, can be found, such as in a magnificent copy of a detail of Jean-Baptiste Deshayes' large canvas, *The Martyrdom of Saint André* (Museum of Fine Arts, Rouen).¹¹ A copy which can be dated to the years 1812-1814 and which is somewhat the antithesis of this *Head of a Bulldog* in which gentleness and calm reign.

Calm and Gentleness

The first known allusion to dogs which is of interest to us dates to the period of Géricault's death. As homage to the painter, his friends exhibited some of his works at the Salon of 1824, and Charles Aubry, for his part, exhibited this lithograph realized after a canvas by Géricault (*ill. 1*):

SAZERAC et DUVAL, boulevard des Italiens, passage de l'Opéra, escalier A.

"[n°] 2141 – *Head of a bull-dog*, after Géricault, by M. Aubry."

(*Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie et architecture des artistes vivants*, Paris, Ballard, 1824, p. 226).

Aubry's lithograph, published by Villain (legal deposit

indicated on May 14th, 1824) bore a slightly different title and sub-title: "*BULL-DOG / After the study painted by Géricault*."¹² The picture thus reproduced entered Maurice Cotier's collection and to this day, has not yet been located.¹³

The magnificent picture we present here was totally unknown to Clément, Grunchev, Eitner, and Bazin, who furthermore did not know of the existence of the Mathieu sale of 1876. It is true that the generic title, *Head of a Dog*, did not make it possible to establish any kind of link with the Géricault's series of Bulldogs. It is the old stamp in black ink on the upper left of a stretcher which probably dates to the mid 19th century, "*C.M. MATHIEU*," which makes it now possible to add an important element to this beautiful file.

Several details, such as the (pointed) form of the ears, and the orientation of the dog's left ear, the absence of a bump over the left eye, the position and size of the muzzle and neck simply suggested by brilliant brushplay, prove that this picture was not the model for Aubry's 1824 lithograph. We are thus confronted with another version, maybe the very first, that is, a true study from life. Theodore Géricault thus wished above all to concentrate on the bulldog's head and expression.

For it is indeed a portrait before us. The eyes are not bloodshot and nor do they betray the least sign of ferociousness. Bazin is imprisoned by the verb "inject" when he affirms that the animal "appears to growl."¹⁴ Here, these little touches of red are in no way a symbol of anger. Completely the contrary: this bulldog seems gentle and affectionate. That's due to a technique of fragmenting a close-up, Géricault has created a truly psychological portrait, a vibrant sensitive dialogue between the animal, the painter (his master), and the viewer. Quite justly, Robert Rosenblum could write, "As he is presented here, the animal achieves a degree of personification that we are given the fairly disturbing impression of addressing him [the dog] on equal footing."

The dialogue is fascinating here. The pictorial technique is at the service of this mute *tête-à-tête*. The surface is lively and rapid. Brushstrokes are deliberately left visible, revealing delightfully unctuous paint. The economy of colors and speed of brushplay, engorged with black, brown, red, and white, perfectly renders the dog's coat of fur. The painting is executed with straight colors. Géricault did not use half-tones nor passages softened in the light. The power of this canvas is even more unquestionable. This brilliant

texture demonstrates solid knowledge of pictorial means and a very elaborate technique at the service of powerful expression and a subtly balanced troubling monumentality.

According to the criteria of Romantic aesthetics, one can not speak of an unfinished canvas. This is, on the contrary, a real study, taken from life (undoubtedly in a single sitting, without any subsequent retouching), which essentially conveys what the painter felt and wanted to communicate.

We would like to thank M. Bruno Chenique, member of the Union française des experts, for his assistance in composing this notice.

¹ Robert Rosenblum, *The Dog in Art. From Rococo to Post-Modernism*, London: John Murray Publishers, 1989.

(French edition: *Le Chien dans l'art. Du chien romantique au chien post-moderne*, Paris, Adam Biro, 1989, pp. 29-33, 48.)

² Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, vol. II, *L'œuvre, période de formation*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1987, p. 334, n° 22, ill. Bazin, mistakenly in our opinion, refuses the authenticity of this work from the artist's youth.

³ Michel Le Pesant, "Documents inédits sur Géricault," *Revue de l'Art*, n° 31, 1976, pp. 73-81.

⁴ Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, vol. III, *La gloire de l'Empire et la Première Restauration*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1989, pp. 146-147, n° 718, ill.; pp. 147-148, n° 721, ill.; p. 205, n° 874, ill.

⁵ Bazin, vol. III, 1989, p. 149, n° 725, ill.

⁶ Bazin, *ibid.* n° 726, ill.

⁷ Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, vol. V, *Le retour à Paris*, Paris, Wildenstein Institute & Bibliothèque des arts, 1992, pp. 221-222, n° 1681, ill.

⁸ Bazin, vol. V, 1992, pp. 243-244, n° 1735, ill.

⁹ Charles Clément, *Géricault. Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre du maître*, [1866-1867 and 1868], 3rd edition with an added supplement, Paris, Didier, 1879, p. 338, n° 57.

¹⁰ *Catalogue des tableaux, dessins, esquisses et croquis laissés par Abel de Pujol et des tableaux et dessins qui garnissaient son atelier dont la vente aura lieu, par suite de son décès*, Boussaton, Lafontaine et Guelon-Dubreuil, commissaires-priseurs, Petit, expert, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, room n° 4, Dec. 7th, 1861.

¹¹ Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, vol. II, *L'œuvre, période de formation*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1987, p. 442, n° 338, ill.

¹² W. Mc Allister Johnson, *French Lithography. The Restoration Salons 1817-1824*, Kingston, Agnes Etherington, 1977, pp. 95-96, n° 155, 164, ill.; Bazin, vol. V, 1992, p. 220, n° 1674 A, ill.

¹³ Paul Mantz, "La galerie de M. Maurice Cottier," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. V, May 1st, 1872, p. 382. Note another example of good quality which belonged to the Burette Collection (Bazin, vol. V, 1992, pp. 219-220, n° 1674, ill). As to an example given to the Louvre in 1878, by His de La Salle, it is, quite rightly, no longer considered by the museum to be an authentic work by Géricault's hand. (Isabelle Compin and Anne Roquebert, *Catalogue sommaire illustré des peintures du musée du Louvre et du musée d'Orsay. Liste des tableaux déposés par le Louvre* (by Élisabeth Foucart-Walter), vol. I, *École française*, A-K, Paris, RMN, 1986, p. 279, ill). For the different versions, we refer to the expertise in M. Bruno Chenique's file.

¹⁴ Bazin, vol. V, 1992, p. 73.





Jean-Baptiste ISABEY

(Nancy, 1767 – Paris, 1855)

13

Portrait of the Russian Ambassador, Baron Peter von Meyendorff (Piotre Kazimirovich Meyendorff) (1796-1863)

Miniature on parchment

Signed and dated: *Isabey 1842*

Diameter: 4.5 cm. (1 ¾ in.)

Provenance :

- Collection of the Isabey descendants;
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Edmond Taigny, *J.-B. Isabey: sa vie et ses œuvres*, E. Panckoucke, Paris, 1859.
- Cyril Lecosse, *Jean-Baptiste Isabey: petits portraits et grands desseins*, CTHS: Institut national d’histoire de l’art, Paris, 2018.

Isabey [...] has the good taste to keep the best for the end: for drawing and color, he’s got just the touch / which will make a lot of people envious for a long time. / If everyone resembled him, what would I do in this place? / It is among defects that the satyr finds pleasure. / Let’s look at other objects. I need to vilify.”¹

Jean-Baptiste Isabey was famous in his lifetime for the vivacity with which he brought his “little portraits” alive. Trained in Jacques-Louis David’s studio (1748-1825), “the master’s influence was short and the lessons he received from him only added purity of drawing to the delicacy of his pencil, without altering the elegant character of his talent in any way.”² Isabey was an excellent draughtsman who received the highest praise at Salons and became the uncontested master of late 18th century French miniatures. Traditionally reserved for great men, portraiture underwent an unprecedented expansion during this period. In a constantly evolving cultural, social, and political climate between his birth and death, Isabey chose not to limit himself in the choice of his sitters. Thus, midst the many public figures upon whom he founded his reputation, some anonymous sitters were also present, a fact which didn’t cease to astonish and disturb critics.

Our work depicts Baron Piotr Kazimirovich Meyendorff wearing the insignia of the Legion of Honor. A military man who participated in the Russian Army’s foreign campaigns between 1813 and 1814, Mayendorff stood out for his strategic talents, which led him to enter diplomatic service. Rapidly he became one of the major figures in Russian-Austrian liaisons, and was appointed Advisor to the Russian Embassy in Austria, along with a mission as chargé d’affaires to the Netherlands. Between 1839 and 1850, he was known as the Russian Ambassador. Sent to Prussia to participate in the Conference of Olmütz, he was the representative of Austria and Russia opposite Baron Otto Theodor von Manteuffel (1805-1882), the President-Minister of Prussia. On November 29th, 1850, he signed the treaty which brought an end to the tensions that had existed between the three entities since 1848. During his many trips to Austria, Meyendorff met his future spouse, Countess Sofya Rudolfovna Buol von Schauenstein (1800-1868), sister to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Produced much more rapidly and less expensively, miniatures were much appreciated both by the artists and the purchasers, and thus were subject to very heavy





Ill. 1
Jean-Baptiste Isabey
Portrait of a Gentleman, c. 1795
Miniature on ivory
Diameter: 6.4 cm. (2 ½ in.)
Private Collection.

production between 1780 and 1800. Broadly represented at the Salon, their price varied according to the quality of the execution, technique, and support. Parchment, ivory, pasteboard... Isabey ventured onto different materials contributing to his success.

Among the parchment miniatures, of which our portrait is a terrific example, critics spoke of the great mastery of “the effect of light” and the drawn heads which had “life and a lot of expression.” As of the 1790s, Isabey preferred very fashionable medallion formats (*ill. 1*), as well as monochrome backgrounds so as to guide the viewer’s gaze to essentials. Thanks to a very rigorous stippling technique on a support that was no more than five centimeters, our portrait minutely renders the volumes and details of hair and the jacket with its gold-embroidered collar, while conserving a smooth surface which is flattering and leaves visible the many strokes of pencil and watercolor which render the facial flesh tones.

Caught between two centuries, Jean-Baptiste Isabey pursued his rise through all the regimes which he traversed. Considered the most skillful of his contemporaries in the area of miniatures, Isabey himself admitted to having sought to “*pass for the founder of a new school*,” a separate genre *by which he avoided any dangerous comparison, and could fix attention on his [drawings].*” Under the First Empire, having become a regular guest at Malmaison, he did portraits of the Bonaparte clan, including many of Napoleon, as well as of Josephine and her children with whom he became friends.

M.O.

¹ *Critique sur les Tableaux exposés au Salon en l’an IV*, Paris, Impr. de Madame Hérissant Le Doux, coll. Deloynes, vol. XVIII, n°476, 1795, p. 6-7.

² Edmond Taigny, *J.-B. Isabey sa vie et ses œuvres*, E. Panckoucke, Paris, 1859, p. 7.



Luigi SABATELLI the Younger

(Milan, 1818 – 1899)

14

Anatomical Studies of Horses

Pen and iron gall ink

29 x 21 cm. (11 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)

Signed lower edge, right of center: *Sabatelli Luigi Figlio*

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- *Luigi Sabatelli (1772-1850) disegni e incisioni: catalogo*, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi (dir.), L. S. Olschki, Florence, 1978.

Born in Milan in 1818, young Sabatelli bore the same name as his father Luigi Sabatelli, called “the Elder” and considered a precursor of Romanticism in the early 19th century. As opposed to his father, we have very few biographical elements concerning the son. The youngest, he seems to have been a better student than his two brothers Francesco and Giuseppe in his handling of a pencil, as he was chosen from a very early age to work with his father. His precocious training made it possible for him to improve and rapidly become his father’s closest collaborator.

Among the official commissions received by Sabatelli the Elder, the young artist put his gifts to use in fresco painting, of which today a few examples can be found now in Milanese churches. His oeuvre essentially seems to involve the depiction of Biblical episodes in response to Church commissions.

At the dawn of the 19th century, Luigi Sabatelli the Elder was considered as a precursor to Romanticism in Italy. In his tendency to express feelings on a flat surface, he was naturally interested in studying wild animals (*ill. 1*), as well as horses. He transmitted this interest to his son, and our sheet of drawings is a terrific example. Sometimes wild, sometimes tame, the horse is a subject which was especially appreciated throughout the 19th century. Between fiery spirits, wrenching separations, and vitality, the animal incarnates the expression of human feelings. Probably inspired by the work of contemporaries such as Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) (*ill. 2*), Sabatelli the Younger found the necessary vocabulary for rendering emotions by studying horses.



Ill. 1

Luigi Sabatelli I called “The Elder” (1772-1850)

A Lion Couple at the Foot of an Antique Monument

Black chalk

27 x 45 cm. (10 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.)

Private Collection.

Our drawing illustrates the artist’s creative thought process. On a sheet of beige paper, Sabatelli traces a few horse studies in ink. Probably sketched from life, he reproduces the animal’s anatomical particularities with great acuity. The musculature is rendered through skillful play with hatching, the figures are outlined with a more emphasized line in brown and iron gall ink, formerly used by his Italian predecessors from the 16th and 17th centuries. The work includes two studies of heads, a study of a muzzle, two studies of legs, as well as a study of a horse seen from behind, and thus demonstrates the artist’s ability to render foreshortened figures.



In the course of the 19th century, midst this intellectual effervescence caught between industrial progress and animal power, European societies witnessed the development of a real equestrian culture. In addition to aesthetic criteria, the horse had remained the favored means of transportation since Antiquity, thus it was necessary for any history painter to know how to depict it. Sabatelli does not escape from this exercise and takes advantage of many studies which he integrated into his frescoes.

A little known artist forgotten by Art History, Luigi Sabatelli the Younger was nonetheless very appreciated for the frescoes which he realized for many churches between Milan and a few other Northern Italian cities. The quality of our sheet is a reminder that before becoming a fresco painter, the artist was an excellent draughtsman who is worthy of all our attention.

M.O.



Ill. 2
Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863)
Three Horse Heads and a Smiling Bearded Man
Black pencil
20.4 x 27.8 cm. (8 x 10 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Private Collection.





Labatelli Luigi Figlio

Henri-Joseph HARPIGNIES

(Valenciennes, 1819 – Saint-Privé, 1916)

15 | *View of the Luxembourg Gardens*

Watercolor and ink wash over black pencil lines

Signed and dated lower left: *Harpignies 1882*

Inscribed lower right: *Paris*

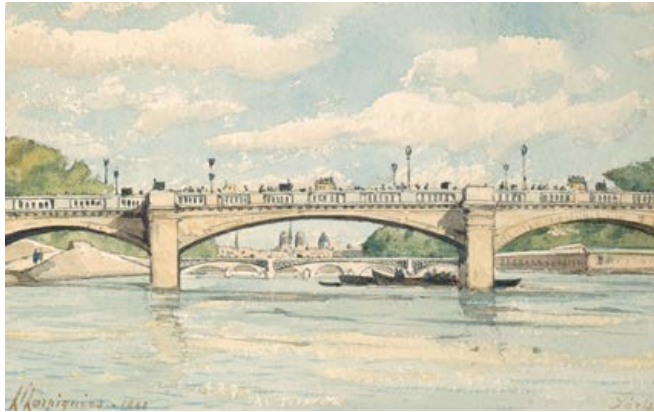
25.5 x 36.5 cm. (10 x 14 3/8 in.)

Provenance :

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean-Pierre Cappoen, *Henri Harpignies, 1819-1916: peindre la nature*, exh. cat. Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire, Museum of the Loire, June 4th – November 26th, 2016.



Ill. 1

Pont de la Concorde, Notre-Dame de Paris in the background

Signed and dated, lower left: *H Harpignies 1881*

Situated lower right: *Paris*

Graphite, watercolor

14.3 x 22.9 cm. (5 7/8 x 9 in.)

Private Collection.

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

Captivated by Italy which he visited twice, he immersed himself in the tranquility of the Roman countryside which was the subject of most of his works from these travels. Upon returning to Paris, his talent was acclaimed at his first exhibition at the 1853 Salon on account of an open-air painting entitled *View of Capri*. Subsequently he won several prizes and medals by which he carved out a prominent place for himself among the landscape painters of his generation. Harpignies deeply admired the painters of the 1830s school, especially Corot whom he considered his master and who largely inspired him at the beginning, until he gradually developed his own style, expressing his personality through delicate works which delighted perceptive viewers.

As of 1850, Harpignies did watercolors which became his favorite means of expression and enabled him to convey Nature's variations according to the seasons. More known for his naturalist landscapes, Harpignies nonetheless produced some Parisian views and studied the city's appearance at different times of day (*ill. 1*). Our view of the Luxembourg Gardens is an excellent example.

Halfway between painting and drawing, the watercolor technique lets him handle the urban landscape atmospherically through the use of wash and very diluted colors. Nature is always present in Harpignies' views. It is illustrated here with finesse through the different chromatic green nuances depicting blossoming trees on the left part of the composition. The work seems to have been sketched from life in the springtime.

On the right side of the composition, Luxembourg Palace stands out distinctly against a clear blue sky, while



the two towers of the Church of Saint Sulpice can be perceived in the left background. In this view, the artist transcribes a garden which seems suspended in time with a calm tranquil air cadenced by the depiction of figures rendered in fine black watercolor touches.

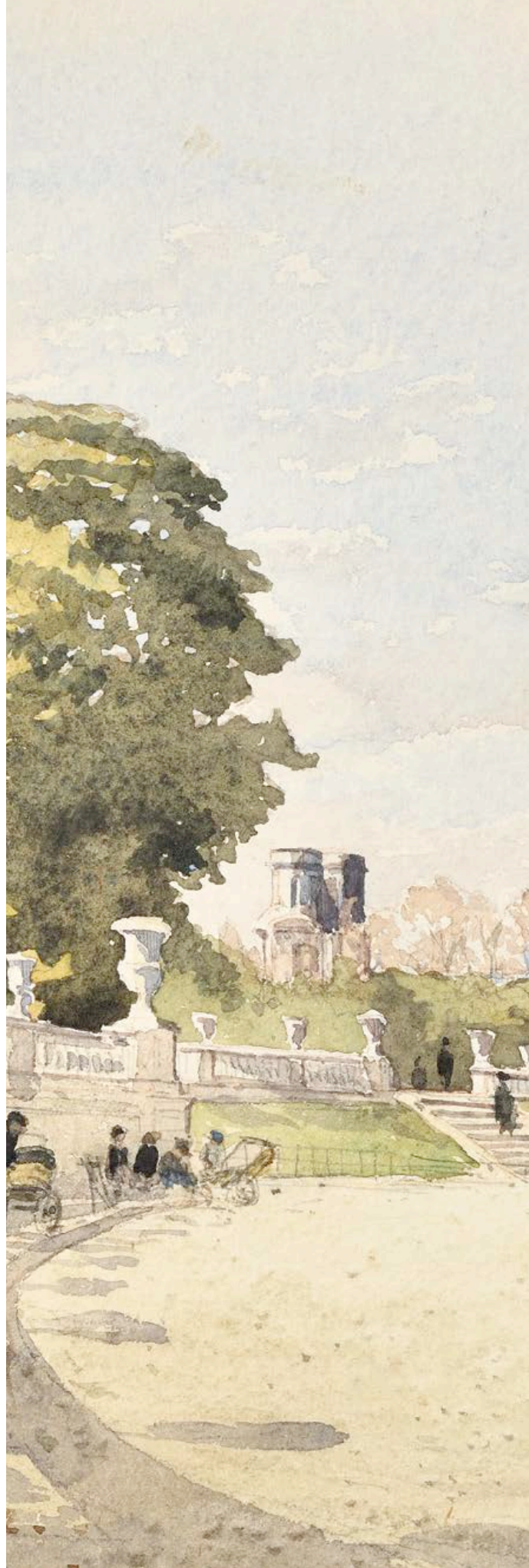
In the course of the 19th century, the practice of outdoor drawn and painted sketches was very common in Europe. Outdoor painting enabled the artist to practice from reality: weather conditions and perpetually shifting light required excellent mastery of drawing and color. More ambitious compositions came out of this production of sketches.

An excellent draughtsman, Harpignies encountered lively success as a watercolorist when he exhibited at the New Watercolour Society in London. Nicknamed in his lifetime as the “Michelangelo of Trees,”¹ the artist fascinated his audience with the quiet peacefulness emanating from his work and permeating each of his pictures, whether they were sketches, watercolors, or paintings.

Probably conserved in the artist’s personal collection, this study, like most of the others, was not destined either to be exhibited or sold. Essential resources for creating, these sketches made it possible to rework his pictures in the studio and instantly rediscover the freshness and spontaneity of a specific moment.

M.O.

¹ Artist’s nickname given by Anatole France (1844-1924), writer and literary critic during the Third Republic.





Henri REGNAULT

(Paris, 1843 – Buzenval, 1871)

16

Study for the Arrival of General Prim before Madrid on October 8th, 1868, with the Spanish Revolutionary Army

Oil on canvas

54 x 45.5 cm. (21 ¼ x 17 ⅝ in.)

Provenance:

- Exhibited at *Chevaux and Cavaliers*, Charpentier Gallery, Paris, 1948;
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- *Henri Regnault (1843-1871)*, Municipal Museum of Saint-Cloud, exh. cat. Oct. 16th, 1991 – Jan. 5th, 1992, Saint-Cloud, 1991.
- *Manet Velázquez: la manière espagnole au XIX^e siècle*, exh.cat. Orsay Museum (2002-2003), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2003), RMN, Paris, 2003.

“In the middle of so many vulgar types, he was an incomparable diamond whose sparkle I loved (...)

He rose as do the most talented.”

The son of the influential Director of the Sèvres Manufactory, Alexandre-Georges-Henri Regnault grew up at the Park of Saint-Cloud under an imposing paternal figure. Victor Regnault was a brilliant Polytechnician at the origin of fundamental discoveries in the areas of Physics and Chemistry, and a member of the Academy of Science. In addition to his functions at the Sevres Manufactory, he was president of the French Society of Photography, thus demonstrating his particular artistic interest which he was cultivating when he discovered his son’s precocious gifts for drawing which he started practicing at the age of four years old. Henri Regnault gradually asserted a taste for painting while fascinated with his colorist predecessors whom he admired during his visits to the Louvre.

Caught in a tormented artistic period, witness to the birth of the *Salon des Refusés*, young Regnault nonetheless joined the official route at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. He followed the teaching of Antoine-Alphonse Montfort (1802-1884), a student of Gros and Horace Vernet, and Géricault’s friend, and of Louis Lamothe (1822-1869), a student of Ingres and Flandrin who brought him quite a contrasting vision of contemporary painting. At *Beaux-Arts*, he was also



Ill. 1

Henri Regnault
Juan Prim, October 8th, 1868
1869

Oil on canvas, signed and dated lower left: *H. Regnault Madrid 1869*

315 x 258 cm. (10 ft. 4 ⅛ in. x 8 ft. 5 ⅙ in.)

Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. RF 21).





Ill. 2
 Henri Regnault
Automedon bringing Achilles' Chargers back from the Shores of the Scamander
 1868
 Oil on wood
 55 x 45 cm. (21 7/8 x 17 1/16 in.)
 Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. RF 2380).

pushed towards academism by Alexander Cabanel's advice (1823-1889), before he chose to separate himself from it, and thus avoided succumbing to the success of a painting so ardently "licked" or over polished.

In a burst of nationalism, Henri Regnault died prematurely at the age of 27 during the last battle of the War of 1870, called the Battle of Montretout-Buzenval. Notwithstanding his short career, he left a large production of drawings, watercolors, and paintings behind which show that despite a totally academic education, the young artist easily deployed his own style inspired by his travels between Morocco, Italy and Spain. 19th century Art History has retained the powerful aura of Spanish painting for the Golden Century in French painting. By 1838, critics evoked "a Franco-Spanish school."²²

"(...) Courbet, Manet and Ribot came to learn in the dark harsh galleries where Zurbaran, Ribera, Velasquez, and Goya proclaimed their exalted convictions and their intense feelings about life."

Regnault did not escape this influence. Fascinated during his Italian sojourn by the Spanish brushwork of

Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874), Regnault decided to gain the country on the other side of the Pyrenees in 1868. In Madrid, he sketched daily life in the capital's streets directly from life. They served as models for his painted works. He also covered the Prado Museum galleries where he admired Velazquez' virtuosity in its monumentality. His large majestic equestrian portraits in particular led him to conceive his portrait of Juan Prim, considered as one of the masterpieces of his career. (*ill. 1*) Upon arriving in Madrid in August, Regnault witnessed a revolution a month later led by Juan Prim (1814-1870) which brought Isabelle de Bourbon's reign to an end. A politician and military general, Prim was famous for having led a campaign against Morocco in 1859, as well as the expedition to Mexico with the French and English troops in 1862. Through his many letters, Regnault described the tumultuous Spanish political situation to his father, and drew close to the instigators, including General Prim himself who entrusted him with the task of his triumphant portrait. In November of the same year, Regnault thus presented his ambitious project:

"On my canvas, Prim arrives from the right (...); he has just climbed a slope; having arrived at the summit, he stops his horse short (...) and salutes both liberty and his



Ill. 3
Henri Regnault
Soldier on Horseback
Oil on laminated pasteboard on wood
70 x 62 cm. (27 ⁵/₁₆ x 24 ⁷/₁₆ in.)
France, Private Collection.

*fatherland which he is allowed to see again, no longer as an outlaw, but almost as a master. Behind him, further back in space, armed Catalans and peasants carrying flags are rising up.*³⁴

For his final painted works, Regnault multiplied drawings and sketches in pencil, watercolor and oil (*ill. 2 et 3*). Our work constitutes terrific evidence of the artist's creative thoughts: a completed thought-out sketch in an easel format on a canvas support. Exempt of superfluous details, the work becomes a space for reflection making it possible to realize the organization of the composition, the rendering of forms, as well as the color harmonies. This sketch already brings the powerful heroic figure of the general into focus as he dominates the center of the composition which is rendered with more attention than are the figures of the revolutionary soldiers and Catalan peasants in the background with their bodies and faces suggested by colored masses.

It is interesting to compare our sketch with a second, from a private collection, in which the details are gradually affirmed (*ill. 4*), and bring out a few slight compositional variations in relation to our work, such as the height of the red standards in the middle ground on the right.

Quite immersed in the works of his predecessors Theodore Gericault (1791-1824) and Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863), Regnault is an inventive colorist. His fiery palette is composed of intense deep hues going from red to English green via blues. Black is used skillfully here to give a preponderant place to the figure of the horse and rider which form a dark dense blob filling the viewer's field of vision. With the opposition created by their head movements, the group instantly creates a powerful dynamic line which assures compositional stability. The rest of the canvas is worked in warm and sometimes brilliant colors such as the red of the standards, as well as the ochre and yellow of the clouds which unravel in the light as synonyms for hope and renewal. The ensemble blends into dull earthy colors of the revolution, spilled blood and ground trampled by war. Volume is added through the effects of impasto and whirling brushstrokes charged with pigment which bring sky and earth together.

Regnault's work was praised for his lively colorist powerfulness, rather than for minute attention to detail, but by exercising the depiction of passions on the canvas. With these figures which are only sketched, Regnault suggests more than what he puts on paper:



Ill. 4
 Henri Regnault
The Arrival of General Prim before Madrid (c.1869)
 Oil on canvas
 41.3 x 33 cm. (16 ¼ x 13 in.)
 Signed lower left: Regnault
 Private Collection.

more than a portrait of General Prim, the work is intended as an allegory of victory.

After a long process of thinking about how to elaborate his masterpiece, the equestrian portrait of Juan Prim was presented at the Salon of 1869⁵ and won the Gold Medal. This monumental canvas was certainly one of the most admired in Regnault's lifetime and was acquired by the State a year after his death. It was exhibited in the Luxembourg Museum and then the Louvre before being hung in the Orsay Museum.

The boldness of Henri Regnault's works assured that they were particularly original among Second Empire paintings and ahead of his time in their anticipation of many 20th century painters:

"France lost a great artist in Regnault, a future leader of a school who should have renewed art annoyed by affectations or degraded by realism, and instead continued the glorious traditions of French Painting."

(Henri Baillièrè at the exhibition, *Henri Regnault* in 1872, p. 100)

M.O.

¹ Ernest Hébert, Director of the Villa Medici, in speaking of Henri Regnault (René Patris d'Uckermann, *Ernest Hébert 1817-1908*, RMN, Paris, 1982, p. 143).

² Mercey, May 1st, 1838, p. 388.

³ Rosenthal, 1914, p. 248.

⁴ Letter by Henri Regnault to his father, dated November 5th, 1868 (Duparc, pp. 216-217).

⁵ The picture was presented to the Salon of the Champs-Élysées Palace under number 2010.



Léon LHERMITTE

(Mont-Saint-Père, 1844 – Paris, 1925)

17 | *The Entrance to a Village enlivened with Peasants*

1905

Pastel on paper laid down on canvas

Signed lower left: « *L. Lhermitte* »

44 x 57 cm. (17 5/16 x 22 7/16 in.)

Bibliography:

- Monique Le Pelley Fonteny, *Léon Augustin Lhermitte 1844-1925: catalogue raisonné*, Cercle d'art, Paris, 1991, ill. no. 508 (black & white), p. 248, entitled “*Une route en Artois*” (*A road in Artois*).

Provenance:

- Boussod, Valadon & Cie, 21058 ;
- Glaenger Collection ;
- France, Private Collection.

[...] *There's surprising mastery in everything he [Lhermitte] does, excelling especially in modeling, he perfectly satisfies everything which honesty demands.*¹

Vincent Van Gogh

In 1882, the French State acquired the monumental work, *The Reapers' Wages* 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 him his congratulations in a letter to which the artist responded that the sculptor was part of the “*very small number whose appreciation is precious to him.*”² Subsequently identified as one of the major representatives of peasant painting under the IIIrd Republic, Lhermitte was particularly fond of depicting the surroundings of his native village, Mont-Saint-Père in the Aisne region. Inspired by Corot, the Barbizon School, and Jules Breton among others, the artist moved around regularly and drew in *plein air*, so as to sketch the landscapes in the Picardy countryside on site using pastels and charcoal.

The Revolution of 1848 rejected mythological subjects privileged by the Academy. In the 1850s, the peasant population represented 75% of the French population, and naturally carved a major place for itself at the heart of the arts, the principal ones being painting and literature.



Ill. 1

Two Peasants Resting in a Wheat Field

Signed and dated: *L. Lhermitte / 1913*

Pastel on paper, laid down on canvas, mounted on a stretcher

45 x 55.3 cm. (17 11/16 x 21 3/4 in.)

Private Collection.



Lhermitte drew close to and benefitted from the aura of Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884), an outdoor painter celebrated by Zola in his *Complete Works*.³ With Bastien-Lepage, he developed his taste for working outdoors, as he followed and studied the peasants going about their daily occupations. The public appreciated the sincerity in his work that neither sought to embellish the figures nor to remodel the landscapes. (*ill. 1*)

Leon Lhermitte was a painter of reality, as was Jean-François Millet (1814-1875). As much in his figures as in the Nature that surrounded them, the artist wished above all to capture the present instant. For that, he privileged pastel and charcoal, which were very much in fashion in England, did not require preparation, and made it possible to produce instantly. In our work, his direct observation of nature reveals a sensation of immediate reality indicated by the rapidity of the lines.

Through the use of pastel, the artist plays with the paper's grain and creates a blended effect which adds volume. Our picture presents the characteristics of a piece sketched outside and then reworked in the studio. The four figures in the foreground are handled in transparencies and play with the background which has already been sketched in. Thus they give the impression that the oeuvre was thought out in two stages, a first version capturing peaceful country life, and a second version enlivened in both the foreground and the background. His works were skillfully constructed, often geometricized, as can be seen by the orthogonal line formed by the dirt road in our picture which instantly establishes a strong diagonal which energizes the composition.

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 decoration for the *Hôtel de Ville* and the Sorbonne, Leon Lhermitte was a much appreciated artist in his lifetime and turns out to be an emblematic figure in 19th century peasant painting.

M.O.

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

² Letter from Léon Lhermitte to Rodin, June 17, 1882, Paris, Rodin Museum.

³ *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 12, pp. 1022-1023, Paris, Cercle du livre précieux, 1969.





James TISSOT

(Nantes, 1836 – Chenecey-Buillon, 1902)

18 | *Seated Portrait of Méry Laurent holding her little Japanese Dog “Princess” tightly*

Pen and brown ink wash applied with a brush

49.5 x 34.5 cm. (19 ½ x 13 ⅝ in.)

Signed and dedicated, lower right

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- James Tissot, *L'ambigu moderne*, [exh. cat.], RMN-Grand Palais, Paris, 2020.
- Nancy Rose Marshall, Malcolm Warner, *James Tissot: Victorian Life, Modern Love*, London: Yale University Press, New Haven, 1999.

Contrary to accepted beliefs, Jacques-Joseph, called James, Tissot, was not born in England but in Nantes, the former capital of the Dukes of Brittany, in 1836. His name was only anglicized upon his profitable trip to London in 1871. Jacques-Joseph was the son of a pair of merchants who ran a fashion and novelty shop, a fact which probably inspired the young man in his depictions of fabrics and silks which occupied a preponderant place in his work.

In France, young Tissot's art education began at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris where he had lessons from Louis Lamothe (1822-1869) and then Hippolyte Flandrin (1809-1864). Very few biographical elements of the painter's youth are known, and no letters or evidence evoke the young artist's complex artistic ambitions. Between his arrival in Paris in the late 1850's and his departure for London in 1871, Tissot met the greatest artistic figures of his time, who encouraged him to embrace the art of portraiture. He was friends with Whistler, Manet, and Degas who did his portrait in 1867 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. 39.161), as well as of the Belgian Alfred Stevens who communicated his charming vision which mixed academism with Impressionist modernity.

More than a glimpse of society, Tissot's oeuvre evokes a decisive period of modernity in late 19th century Occidental art. In France, the artist illustrates life under the Second Empire, inspired by new aesthetic aspirations between a crisis in the hierarchy of genres and an overturning of academism, motivated by the painter's expression of his own originality.



Ill. 1
Edouard Manet (1832-1883)
Méry Laurent Wearing a Black Hat (Autumn)
Pastel
54 x 44 cm. (21 ¼ x 17 ⅝ in.)
Dijon, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 2958).

During his lifetime, Tissot enjoyed great notoriety which was constantly renewed during his career through various events and exhibitions which honored him in France and in England. In London, he focused on Victorian society and depicted the outings of Navy officers with young discreet women who accompanied them.



Tissot's fortunate period in England would nonetheless have unhappy repercussions when his companion, Kathleen Newton, died prematurely in 1882. The artist's life and work were disrupted. Upon returning to Paris that same year, Tissot sought through his portraits, nonetheless, to render the essence of femininity. His "silent elegants" could be evoked, pensive, evasive, and almost haunted in a new melancholic vision of female representation, probably a form of nostalgia for his companion who had disappeared.

With this image of daily bourgeois life, Tissot's work became really famous.

Our drawing is evidence of the close attention he paid to these high society women. The sitter is no other than Méry Laurent, whose maiden name was Anne Rose Suzanne Louviot (1849-1900), and who served as a muse for many painters in Paris, including Henri Gervex, James Abbot McNeill Whistler, and even Edouard Manet (*ill. 1*). She was also a source of inspiration for the greatest writers, such as Marcel Proust and Emile Zola whom she welcomed at her literary salons. An actress, comedian, and model, Méry Laurent became an unavoidable popular figure in the second half of the 19th century. She is described by her contemporaries as a joyful smiling woman, character perfectly rendered by Tissot in our drawing.

Before being a painter, James Tissot was a terrific draughtsman. In a close-up view on a large sheet of paper, the artist depicts the young woman seated in an armchair and holding her little dog "Princess" tightly against her. From the beginning, Tissot assembled a catalogue of photographic reproductions of his paintings which he mounted in an album which he conserved carefully, like a catalogue raisonné or a sale catalogue which allowed him to show potential future clients samples of his compositions. The art of photography, which had only recently come into fashion, was a medium commonly used by painters. With it, the artists could reduce the length of time considerably in which sitters had to pose. It also made it possible to capture light in a new way. Tissot certainly worked from photographs. For our work in particular, the artist probably was inspired by a Paul Nadar photograph depicting Méry Laurent holding her little dog in her arms (*ill. 2*).

Although done only in pen and brown ink wash, Tissot renders his figure quite vivaciously and plays with the effects of different shades of ink so as to yield a work

in several tones. Sometimes using a lot of water so as to give the effect of watercolors, sometimes loading his pen with ink, the artist emphasizes certain lines in order to work on light and shade effects in the face, as well as to reinforce the effects on luxurious fabrics such as hat feathers and the fur of the coat collar worn by his sitter who is attired in the latest fashions. The little dog is skillfully entwined in fabrics on the left of the composition: a little fantasy which brings more energy to the composition.

A few years before his companion's death, Tissot abandoned society subjects in order to devote himself entirely to his religious convictions. Right up to the end of his career, he displayed Biblical subjects which were nourished by his travels in Palestine and Jerusalem, and inspired by the mystic visions of his contemporary Gustave Doré (1832-1883).

Among his contemporaries, Tissot was a resolutely modern artist who gained much recognition, was successful throughout his career, and was defended by the greatest merchants of his time, including the famous Adolphe Goupil (1806-1893) who scattered his works across France, England and the United States.

M.O.



Ill. 2
Paul Nadar (1856-1939)
Méry Laurent, Seated, Wearing a Fur Coat, and holding her small Japanese Dog, "Princess" tightly against her
Original photograph
14.2 x 10.1 cm. (5 5/16 x 11 in.)
Private Collection.



Elisabeth SONREL

(Tours, 1874 – Sceaux, 1953)

19 | *Twilight Landscape with Vestals*

Black chalk, wash, pencil, watercolor, and white highlights on chamois paper

31 x 49 cm. (12 3/16 x 19 3/16 in.)

Signed lower left: *Elisabeth Sonrel*.

Provenance:

- Christie's, New York, February 16th, 1993, lot 278;
- England, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

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

Trained from a young age in art by her father Nicolas Stéphane Sonrel who was an amateur painter, Elisabeth grew up in a family milieu favorable to an artistic career. Her first known work dates to 1890 when Elisabeth was 16 years old. Although access to the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris was denied to women until 1897, she was able to finish her education by entering the Julian Academy in 1891 under the teaching of Jules Lefebvre (1836-1911), a painter and teacher famous during his lifetime.

Caught between two centuries, Sonrel followed early 20th century decorative artistic trends in placing the female figure and Nature at the center of attention. Between Symbolism and Art Nouveau, her works also display a certain mysticism which she conveys through the wise and serious beauty of her sitters. Her mainly feminine subjects are imbued with two aesthetic qualities dear to the artist: tenderness and elegance.

The delicacy of her work was partly triggered by a trip to Florence at the beginning of the century which profoundly affected her style. Thus, all her female figures are marked by a grace derived from Botticelli, and depicted in settings scattered with trees, as a result, among other places, of numerous visits to the Breton Forest of Broceliande, the Concarneau countryside, and Plougastel.

In the second half of the 19th century, as a reaction to the economic upheavals and the social impact provoked by the Industrial Revolution, France saw a resurgence of interest in the Middle Ages. Idealization



Ill. 1

Maurice Denis (1870-1943)

Holy Women at the Tomb (Easter Morning)

1894

Oil on canvas, 74 x 100 cm. (29 1/8 x 39 3/8 in.)

Saint-Germain-en-Laye, musée départemental Maurice

Denis (Inv. PMD 976.1.107)

of this past inspired many artists and naturally placed the sacred at the heart of their work. This mystic vein intensely affected Sonrel's work and brought it close to that of her contemporaries Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (Lyon, 1824-Paris, 1898) and Edgar Maxence (Nantes, 1871-Labernerie-en-Rets, 1954) in the prevalence of the sacred and their pantheistic vision of Nature.

Our work is an ode to beauty in the simplicity of Nature. In a dreamy landscape with an ivy-covered castle fort in the middle ground, three silhouettes of young women resembling nymphs float through the air above a lake.



Elisabeth Sonnet.

One seems to lead the other two. Caught as twilight invades the sky with its warm reddish light, everything seems to come straight out of the artist's imagination. Nature, omnipresent in Sonrel's work, makes her comparable to her contemporary Alphonse Osbert (1857-1939) in that most of the female figures seem to be meditating muses appearing and strolling through natural landscapes.

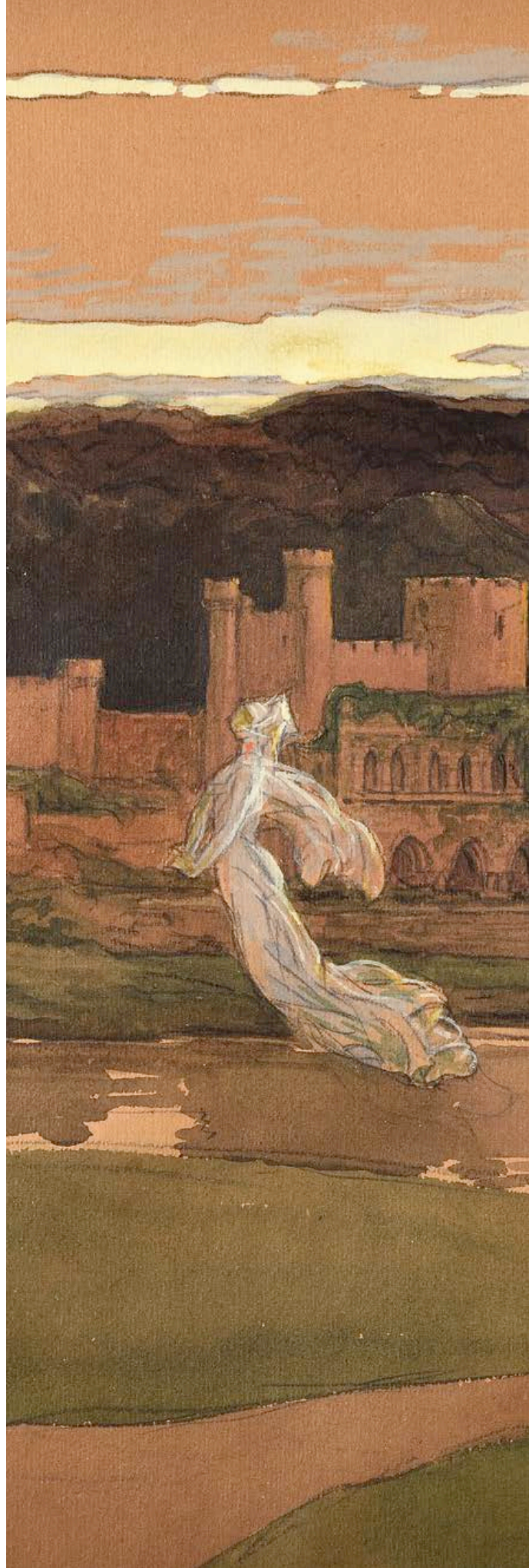
In the remarkable predominance of the pious female figure, Sonrel's works are sometimes related to devotion images, an undeniable souvenir of her bourgeois education largely impacted by Catholicism. These silhouettes symbolize virtue and piety, directly inspired by the reassuring figure of the Virgin Mary. Floating in the air, as is the case here, they are also mystical and transfer the artist's ideal unreal vision onto a flat surface which is reinforced by the use of watercolor to create an evanescent effect like Italian *sfumato*. Sonrel plays with pastel coloring: the green, yellow and orange are so pale in places that they accentuate the spiritual dimension in a way that is comparable to some of Maurice Denis' religious works (*ill. 1*). The viewer is invited to meditation or contemplation in both artists' *oeuvres*.

Our picture was probably done in Brittany, one of the artist's favorite places. She knew how to capture the marvelous landscapes between Concarneau, Plougastel, Pont-l'Abbé, Bréhat, and even Loctudy where on a card, she described, "*the simple, calm, restful life (...) the incomparable sunrises and sunsets, the cloud effects, the unreal and fantastical atmospheres.*"¹

Exhibiting in the Salon of French Artists, as well as that of the Society of French Watercolorists between 1893 and 1939, Elisabeth Sonrel was universally acclaimed. The ultimate Symbolist, 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 the pictorial art of the first half of the 20th century.

M.O.

¹ Handwritten card by Elisabeth Sonrel, written at the l'Hôtel des Bains in Loctudy (Finistère).





Alphonse OSBERT

(Paris, 1857 – 1939)

20

The Morning Prayer

1905

Oil on canvas

40.2 x 27.2 cm. (15 ¹³/₁₆ x 10 ¹¹/₁₆ in.)

Signed, dated, titled and dedicated, lower right: *À ma fille chérie / Cette prière du matin en souvenir de sa première communion / 8 juin 1905 / A. Osbert* [To my darling daughter / This morning prayer as a souvenir of her First Communion / June 8th, 1905 / A. Osbert]

Provenance :

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography (unpublished work):

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

*“Working, producing and creating is good for one. It’s a little bit like seeing one’s soul in a mirror And seeing the passing dream in which one likes to believe ...”*²¹

Trained by Henri Lehmann at the School of Fine Arts, Osbert nonetheless did not follow his master’s advice in terms of following the path opened by Leon Bonnat. By going to Spain, the young painter found inspiration in the Old Masters such as Velasquez and Ribera whom he copied assiduously, especially in the rendering of the power of anatomies. Beyond these observations, the trip turned out to be even more enriching: it revealed light to him. By working on the relationship between light and spirituality, Osbert really found his way and his place as undeniably one of the pioneers of Symbolist painting. The year 1892 marked the beginning of his triumph. Acclaimed and defended by the critics, the artist gradually developed his own poetic conception of landscape as a means to express Nature’s tranquility and the restfulness of the spirits. Sensitive to silence, he immersed his work in mysterious effects in which throughout the image, calm soothing skies evoke a suspended moment, a certain nostalgia.

His works are the silent depiction of dreams and emotions suspended in time. In choosing graceful

female figures, Osbert evokes gentleness, while the curved lines evoke the calm and tranquility of peaceful havens in which they appear. Throughout his painting, Osbert seeks an aesthetic inclusive of the environment which approaches pious emotion. In this passion for sensitive painting, lines and colors interpret a form of idealistic and spiritual imagery in which figures resemble priestesses incarnating an invitation to meditation.

In our oneiric landscape probably inspired by the area around Vichy, an inexhaustible source of themes for his landscapes (*ill. 1*), the female figure is depicted in a three-quarter view, her hands crossed on her bosom, and head turned towards the sky, as if called to meditate. In a line as skillful as it is precise, the artist gradually refines his lines, makes his figures paler, and delicately traces contours.

This work constitutes sensitive evidence of the tenderness between the artist and his daughter realized as a souvenir of her First Communion. Beyond being just a painter, the artist becomes a poet by revealing his dreams, using Nature as a reflection of the state of his soul and his pious sentiments. Lines play a major expressive role in the artist’s work: horizontal lines express restfulness and harmony, whereas vertical lines illustrate the bond between earth and heaven, here between his daughter and God.



a ma fille chérie
cette prière du matin, en souvenir de
son 1^{re} communion 8 Juin 1905
A. Besant



Ill. 1
Alphonse OSBERT
At Malavaux, Vichy
Between 1857 and 1939
Oil on wood
27.5 x 18 cm. (10 ¹³/₁₆ x 7 ¹/₁₆ in.)
Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. 85179).



Ill. 2
Alphonse OSBERT
*Time Indicating the Route to a New Year and
holding the Book of Destiny,*
Sketch for the Cover of Figaro-Modes
1906
Oil on canvas
55.5 x 46.5 cm. (21 ⁷/₈ x 18 ⁵/₁₆ in.)
Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. 85237).

Osbert worked from life, evoking here his daughter's features by pastel coloring between shades of mauve and blue, a hue which was omnipresent in his work (ill. 2). Like a few of his contemporaries, such as his friend Alexandre Séon (1855-1977), Osbert developed and applied his own chromatic symbolism, and only worked with hues which let him express his inner emotions. Thus he hoped to touch the viewer's soul. Blue, considered the deepest color, is the symbol of melancholy, white that of purity and used here to incarnate his daughter's innocence and youth, and green is hope. Caught between sunrise or sunset, between silence and contemplation, Osbert's works systematically seem like an Arcadian dream of an ideal world in which all material detail is superfluous.

From its discovery in 1888 to his death in 1939, Alphonse Osbert remained very attached to Symbolism. Broadly acclaimed during his lifetime, he frequented the most famous end-of-the-century painters, including Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Maurice Denis, and even Emile Bernard. Loyal to many artists' groups which aimed to give art a new spiritual and decorative dimension, including *La Plume* [The Feather / The Quill Pen], *L'Épreuve* [The Test] and the *Rose+Croix* [Rose+Cross], Osbert participated in the most important events and created a choice place for himself on the artistic scene. His talent earned him fame throughout France and beyond its borders: Boston, Saint Petersburg, Tokyo, Madrid, Liverpool, Brussels, Milan, as well as Riga in Lithuania where he distinguished himself by winning a gold medal.

We would like to thank Madame Valerie Dumas for having confirmed the authenticity of our work which will be included in the catalogue raisonné being prepared on the artist.

M.O.

¹ Alphonse Osbert, 1938.



Lucien LEVY-DHURMER

(Alger, 1865 – Le Vésinet, 1953)

21 | *Portrait of Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925)*

1901

Pastel

46 x 35 cm. (18 1/8 x 13 3/4 in.)

Dédicated, signed and dated lower left: *à M. Léon Bourgeois / en sincère et vive cordialité / L. L. Dhurmer / 1901*
("to Mr. Leon Bourgeois / in sincere and keen cordiality / L.L. Dhurmer / 1901")

Provenance:

- Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925) to his wife ;
- Sotheby's, London, March 26th, 1980, lot 100 ;
- England, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- *L. Lévy-Dhurmer*, [exhibition], Georges Petit Gallery, Paris, 1896.
- *Exposition des oeuvres du maître français Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer*, Brussels, Gallery of French Artists, Dec. 20th, 1927- Jan. 3rd, 1928.
- *Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer: visionnaires et intimistes en 1900*, [exh. cat.] Paris, Grand Palais, March 3rd, 1973, Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1973.

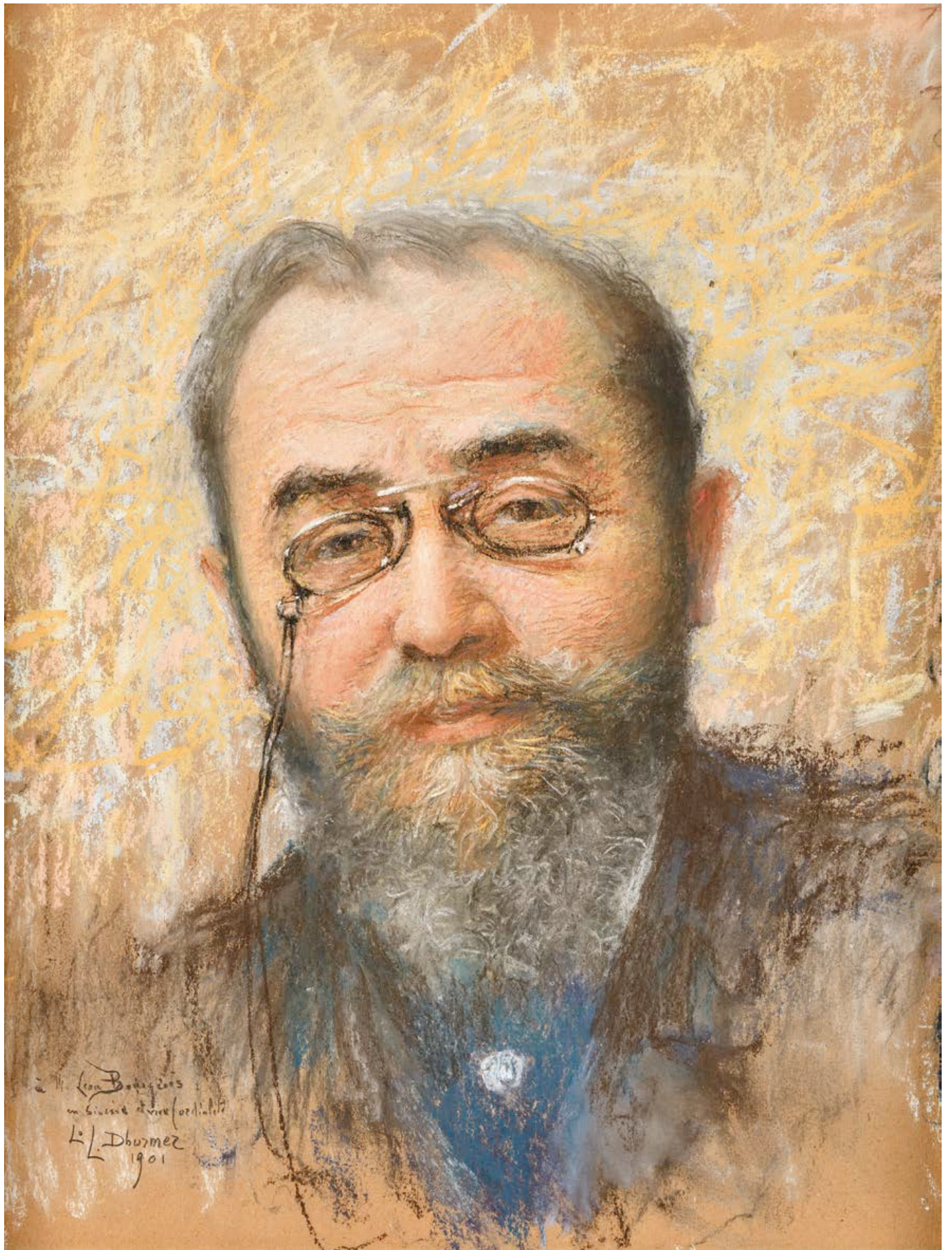


Ill. 1
Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer
Portrait of Georges Rodenbach, c. 1895
Pastel
Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. RF MO AG 2016 5).

Painter, sculptor, and ceramicist, Lucien Levy-Dhurmer was a polyvalent artist. Trained at the Municipal School for Sculpture and Drawing in the 11th Arrondissement of Paris, the young artist followed the instruction of Raphael Collin (1850-1916) and Albert-Charles Wallet (1852-1918), both of whom had been students of the famous Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889) whom he admired, and whose *Birth of Venus* he reproduced for his first exhibition at the Salon of French Artists. For a while he was interested in the art of ceramics by passing some time at the Clement Massier's faïence

manufactory who had founded the modern ceramic industry in Vallauris. He also researched the effects of metallic reflections on faïence.

He exhibited periodically at the Salon of French Artists starting in 1882, mainly with paintings, but also pastels, a technique in which the artist felt completely fulfilled. Furthermore his talent was applauded at the collective exhibition of *Peintres de l'âme* (Painters of the Soul) in 1896 in Paris, with a choice position among his eminent contemporaries such as Emile Gallé (1846-1904), Carlos Schwabe (1866-1926) and Alphonse Osbert (1857-1939).





Ill. 2
 Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer
Portrait of Renée Vivien (1877-1909)
 Pastel
 Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. RF MO AG 2016 5).



Ill. 3
 Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer
Florence, c. 1898
 Pastel
 Paris, Orsay Museum (inv. RF 54401, Recto).

The artist's encounter with the poet Georges Rodenbach (1855-1898) marked a definite turning point in his career. Thanks to Rodenbach, Lucien Lévy, now Lévy-Dhurmer as he had added his mother's maiden name to his, was able to take advantage of his first monographic exhibition. Here his talent as a draughtsman was fully revealed and instantly made him famous.

In addition to the exhibitions dedicated to him, the artist also took on a lot of private commissions. He did the portrait of his friend Rodenbach (*ill. 1*), the poet Renée Vivien (*ill. 2*), and important political figures of his time, of which our portrait is an example. It depicts Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925), a friend, patron and especially, an eminent politician who was the French Prime Minister from November 1st, 1895 to April 29th, 1896. Bourgeois also was one of the founding fathers of the Society of Nations, and decorated with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920.

In addition to his allegorical figures such as *Florence* (*ill. 3*), Lévy-Dhurmer's private commissions illustrate the artist's virtuosity in the art of the portrait and the psychological verity which emanates from his sitters.

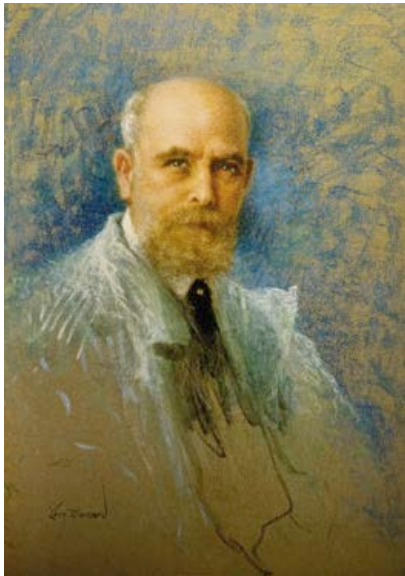
In our pastel, the artist concentrates on depicting Mr. Bourgeois' social intelligence by giving particular attention to how he handles the gaze. From behind the narrow lenses of the sitter's glasses, the calm benevolent gaze instantly conveys bonds of friendship which existed between the two men.

Here a profound sense of peaceful tranquility exudes from the artist's own poetic universe. The sitter appears amidst lively multicolor lines in pastel which are carefully scattered around his face like confetti. He thus seems caught in a whirlwind of color which is reminiscent of the artist's mysterious universe which can be found in most of his portraits influenced by the Preraphaelites and the Italian Renaissance.

The artist's palette grew lighter with time. As in his pastel *Self-Portrait* (*ill. 4*), his sitters came to life in a fugitive, hardly intelligible, almost unreal vision. Irradiated in sunlight, the sitter seems to bathe in a halo of light like an apparition. The artist's mastery of pastels lets him render fabrics: clothes are barely sketched through broad black strokes and flesh is worked in stumped hatching which creates a vaporous almost evanescent blurr which spreads to the sitter.

à // Leon Bourgeois
en signe et vice (ordinaire)

L. L. Dhurmez
1901



Ill. 4
Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer
Self-Portrait
Pastel
Paris, Petit Palais (inv. PPD3429).

“You certainly know, Sir, what the aesthetic character of the Rose+Cross is; you only have to write to me in February then, and I will go invite your works from your place (...)”¹

Although cordially invited by the famous Josephin Peladan, the artist never exhibited at the Salon fo the Rose+Cross. Daily themes, realistic depictions, or those straight out of a dream, Levy-Dhurmer’s mystical universe never ceased to fascinate his contemporaries, including the artists Emile Bernard and Gustave Moreau whom he had met through Rodenbach.

Levy-Dhurmer had a particular predilection for using pastels. The harmony and intensity of the colors they brought out led to many commissions right up until his death at the age of 88 years old.

M.O.

¹ *Letter from Sar Peladan*, undated, Documentat Archives, Orsay Museum.





Paul DELVAUX

(Antheit, 1897 – Furnes, 1994)

22 | *View of a Canal*

Fusain

5.5 x 13 cm. (2 3/16 x 5 1/8 in.)

Stamped on verso: *Paul Delvaux Carnet n°7 Page 3 B*

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

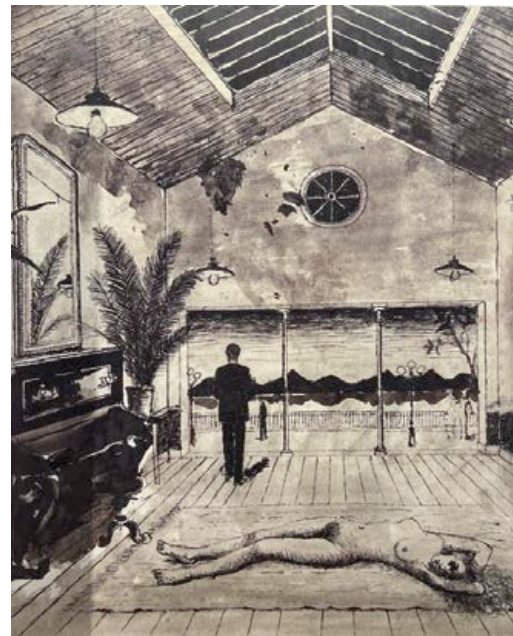
Bibliography:

- Virginie Devillers, *Paul Delvaux: le théâtre des figures*, Editions of the University of Brussels, Brussels, 1992.
- Z. Barthelman et J. Van Deun, *Paul Delvaux, odyssée d'un rêve*, Fondation Paul Delvaux, Saint-Idesbald, 2007.

Classified as a Post Impressionist, Expressionist, and then Surrealist, Paul Devaux' career was as rich as it was varied. A child enthralled with drawing which he started doing while very young, Delvaux naturally oriented his career towards the practice of art.

After training at the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts under the Symbolist painter Jean Delville (1867-1953), Delvaux discovered and became fascinated by James Ensor (1860-1949), and then Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), whose oeuvre let him understand Surrealism during the de Chirico exhibition in Brussels in 1934. Eternally unsatisfied, Delvaux destroyed many of his works in the 1920s. After a few works which sometimes classified as a parallel Realism, sometimes as Surrealism, he was finally invited to exhibit with the Surrealists in Paris in 1938.

Intrigued by René Magritte's work (1898-1967) whose ingenious compositions profoundly impressed him, Delvaux began to work and select some themes and subjects that became recurrent and then omnipresent in his pictures. They included nude women and men clothed in suits with a frozen hieratic pose caught in phantasmagorical urban views reproducing a form of personal reality.

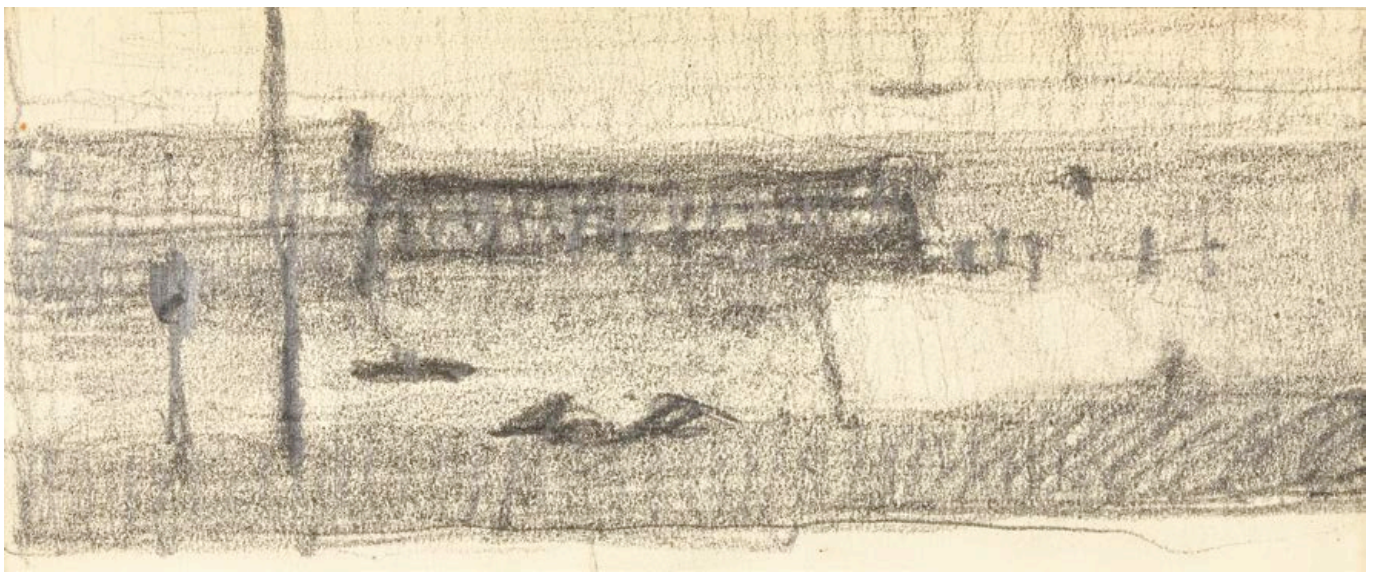


Ill. 1

Paul Delvaux
Abandonment

India ink

Brussels, private collection privée on loan to the Ixelles Museum.



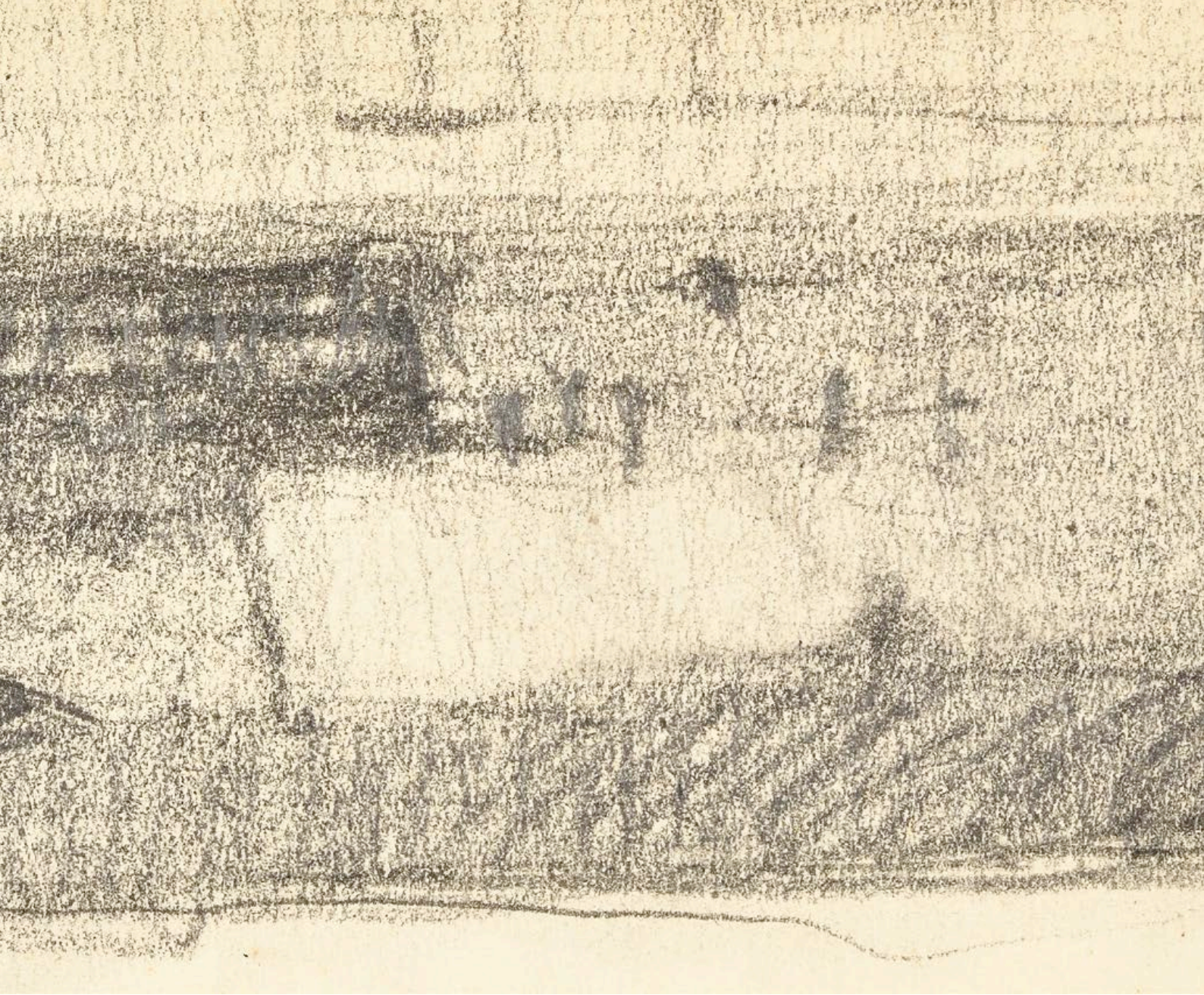


Our drawing depicts a canal probably inspired by one of the railways which he loved so much and which appear many times in his oeuvre. The railways are not only aesthetically interesting, but an allegory of progress and change reflecting his career.

In this drawing which seems to be preparatory for a more ambitious painted work, the artist uses fusain almost as if it were stump to depict the desired foggy atmosphere. Our composition probably served as inspiration for realizing part of his famous work *Abandon* and one of his preparatory India ink drawings conserved in the Ixelles Museum (*ill. 1*). The part of the work depicting an open

view towards the outdoors is close to our composition whose thick vertical line on the left side recalls the columns which structure the balcony in the final work. Particular to Surrealist works, the viewer is invited to let his imagination loose and adopt a second point of view: our drawing could be a depiction of a calm lake on which a few lively barges are floating enlivened by a few people.

Without ever joining the group of Surrealists created by André Breton, Delvaux nonetheless was inspired throughout his career by most of the great figures in this movement.



In 1979, fifteen years before his death, Paul Delvaux created the Paul Delvaux Foundation for the proper conservation of his pictures and the transmission of his work. Largely formed from his personal collection, the Foundation holds the largest collection of canvases, drawings and prints by his hand. Delvaux also bequeathed his archives, as well as the management of his copyrights.

M.O.

André LANSKOY

(Moscow, 1903 – Paris, 1976)

23

Abstract Composition

Gouache on paper

63 x 48 cm. (24 13/16 x 18 7/8 in.)

Signed lower right: *LANSKOY*

Provenance:

- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean Grenier, *André Lanskoï*, F. Hazan, Paris, 1960.
- *Lanskoï*, exh. cat. Paris, Galliera Museum, May 6th – June 5th, 1966.

“All the mystery of painting is contained in the brushstroke (...). It is not what enters the painter’s eye which enriches the picture, but what comes out of his brush.”

The precocious inclination for painting which André Lanskoï displayed in his childhood led him naturally to an artistic career. Lanskoï studied first in Saint Petersburg and then in Kiev in 1918 – where his family had taken refuge – by frequenting Alexandra Exter’s studio (1882-1949). He arrived in Paris in 1921 at the age of only 18 years, and exhibited for the first time in 1923 in *La Licorne* Gallery along with some other Russian artists, including the famous Chaïm Soutine (1893-1943).

Lanskoï frequented his most famous contemporaries. In the 1930s, he was regularly invited to exhibit his work at the Russian Art Exhibition along with famous artists such as Marc Chagall (1887-1985) and Michel Laronov (1881-1964).

He found artistic fulfillment as his drawing blossomed, and especially excelled in the use of gouache. Starting in 1938, after more than a decade of figurative art, Lanskoï turned towards abstraction and executed series of semi-figurative and then abstract gouaches. During this period he became close to Nicolas de Staël (1914-1955) who discovered his work at the exhibition *Gouaches et toiles d’André Lanskoï* (“André Lanskoï’s Gouaches and Canvases”) at the Jeanne Bucher Gallery in 1944. The two artists exchanged their artistic ideas and rapidly became friends.



Ill. 1

Straight Line, 1960

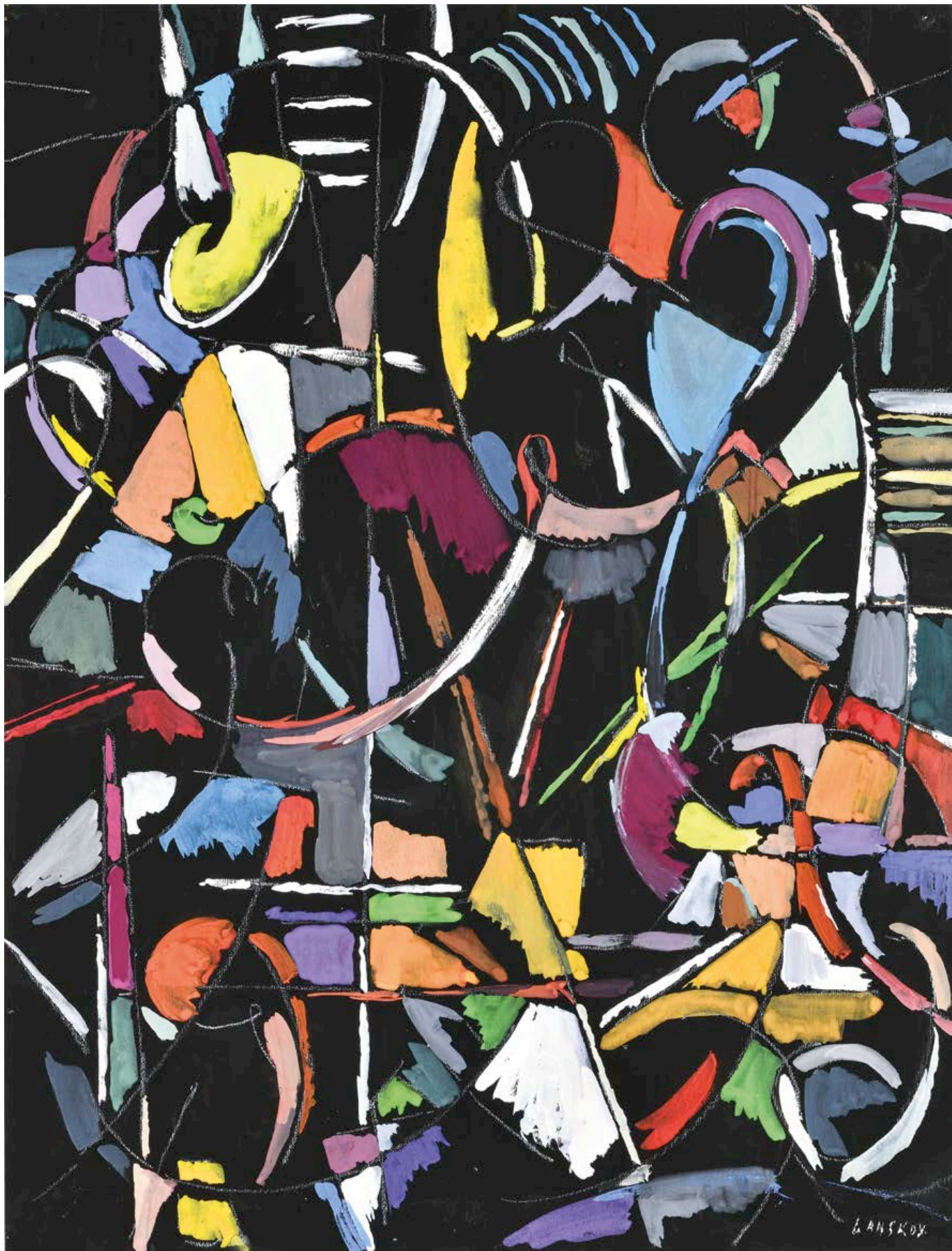
Gouache on paper

Signed lower left: *Lanskoï*

25 x 33 cm. (9 13/16 in. x 1 ft.)

Private Collection.

The 1940s marked a veritable turning point in his career. Lanskoï became more popular, his work was more and more appreciated by the general public and made it possible for him to exhibit alongside the greatest artists of his time, including Picasso, Braque, Léger, and Miro. In the 1950s, his work could be admired internationally, such as in Antwerp (1952), London (1953), and Stockholm (1955), and many retrospectives were organized in New York (1953, 1957, 1959, 1965), a city in which he encountered such success that the Guggenheim Museum bought his *Reading in a Low Voice* in 1957.



"I begin by sketching the composition with a few strokes of charcoal or pastel: it's the picture's skeleton which becomes more and more precise in the process. The first waves of color modify it, but do not make it disappear completely. Then I deepen the forms and study their relationships by concentrating on technique and color. Sometimes I introduce new graphics, black or white, in relation to the idea that served as my starting point or else following the demands of the rhythm and forms."²

Our work dates to the 1960s, considered the artist's mature period marked by the collective exhibition, *Russian Painters from the School of Paris* which met with resounding success. Lansky multiplied his works in gouache and his abstract compositions for which he received many requests (*ill. 1*).

After an initial period which was completely figurative, although he never went as far as a perfect depiction of Nature, the artist gave particular importance to a parallel pictorial reality. His dazzling compositions reflect an unknown universe which was his very own. He perceived his work as therapy for calming his spirit as well as for delighting the viewer's eyes. With a skillful sense of balance, the lines collide and get mixed up, thus forming a drawing which conveys his sensations and feelings. The use of gouache allows him sometimes to emphasize the work's depth, and sometimes its intensity. Lansky uses colors in our picture that are both dense and luminous and create a composition which is as rich as it is complex. The oeuvre is an invitation for the viewer to exercise his spirit of synthesis.

As he was an excellent colorist, his works also express his desire to organize and master color and the graphic power it can exude. Color is also used for its poetic resonance. It defines the rhythm and limits of the forms in a complex reading which seeks to be enriching.

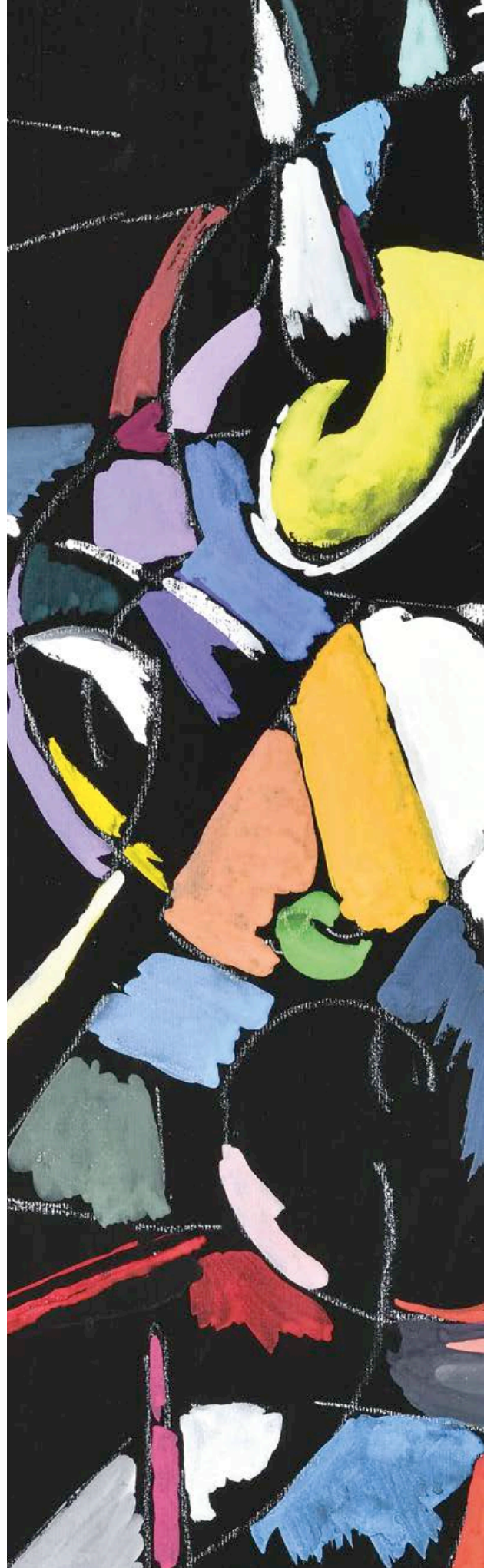
Lansky met with great success in his lifetime. He was among those artists who emigrated from Russia and whose oeuvre participated in the development of contemporary art in Western Europe and in France, in particular, where their activity was of capital importance in the creation and recognition of the Paris School.

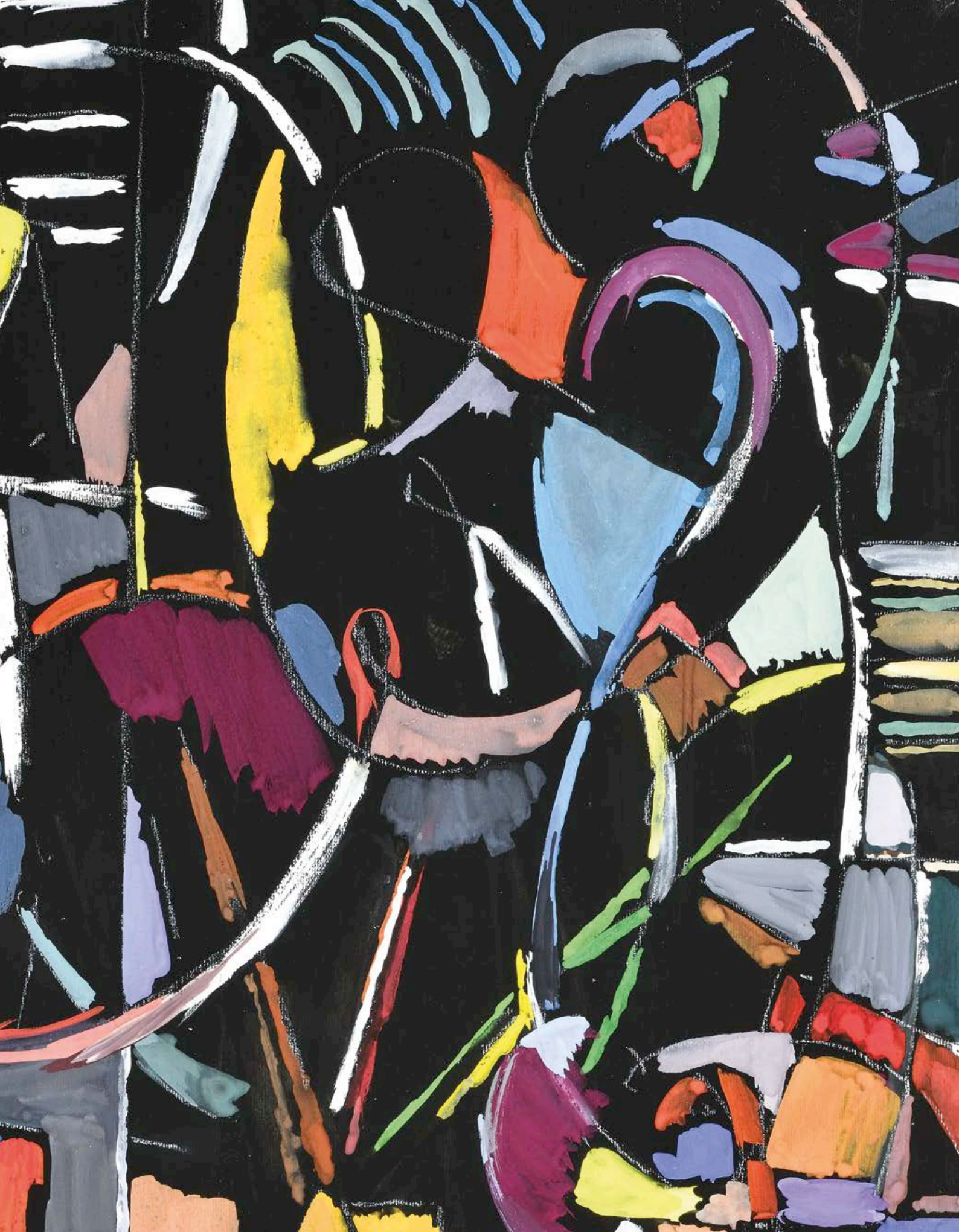
M.O.

We would like to thank the Lansky Committee for having confirmed the authenticity of our work which will be integrated into the catalogue raisonné in progress.

¹ R.V. Gindertael, Preface to *Lansky*, exh. cat. Paris, Galliera Museum, May 6th- June 5th, 1966.

² R.V. Gindertael, *ibid.*





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