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« It is always necessary to draw with the eyes when one cannot draw with the pencil. »

Jean-Auguste Dominique INGRES (1780 – 1867)







Catalogue written by Mégane OLLIVIER

Translated into English by Christine ROLLAND

Exposition

From Monday, March 18th to Friday, April 26th 2024

Galerie Alexis Bordes

4, rue de la Paix – 75002 Paris Stairwell 2, 2^{nd} floor on the right

Opening hours : 10am to 1pm - 2pm to 7 pm Open Saturdays, March 23^{rd} and 30^{th} , from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Foreword

We are delighted to present our new selection of drawings from the 16th to the 20th century this month of March.

The catalogue is enriched with numerous rediscoveries of unpublished works, notably including a drawing on blue paper by Lomazzo depicting a study of a young man draped in an antique style, contemporary to Raphael. Lomazzo skillfully employs brown wash with a brush to create transparency, and enhances the folds of the garment with sculptural white highlights.

The journey continues with a blue monochrome chinoiserie by François Boucher, serving as a study for a larger rococo period panel painting. Louis-Abraham Ducros takes us on his Grand Tour to Sicily in 1776 with two spectacular watercolour views of the amphitheatre of Taormina and Palermo.

Staying in Italy, Clérisseau leads us through ancient ruins with two superb pendant gouaches. Horace Vernet presents a brown wash drawing capturing the spirited horse race in Rome, executed with a vivacity reminiscent of Géricault.

A sketch on paper evoking studies of Neapolitan women by Maes-Canini (contemporary to Navez) touches us with its lively and unfinished subjects. Harpignies, nicknamed by Anatole France as "The Michelangelo of trees," takes us for a walk along the banks of the Aumance, with a magnificent watercolour executed at the beginning of autumn.

A close friend of Helleu, François Flameng brilliantly captures with pastel an elegant lady and her daughter crossing the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, rendering the carefree and light-hearted spirit of the Belle Époque like no other.

We invite you to come and discover all these works at the gallery from March 18th onwards.

Alexis Bordes Paris, February 2024

Acknowledgements

Located on Rue de la Paix, the gallery specializes in French 18th-century art.

Encouraged by major French and international institutions as well as numerous collectors, we provide advisory and expertise services for both buying and selling.

This catalogue is the result of extensive collaboration with the invaluable assistance of art historians and museum curators, whom we thank for their insightful advice and guidance.

We would like to express our appreciation to all the museums that have placed their trust in us by incorporating works from the Gallery into their collections:

Art Gallery of South Australia, Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy, École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Fondation Custodia, Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, Musée Louis-Philippe Château d'Eu, Musée de la Comédie-Française, Getty Research Center in Los Angeles, Cabinet des Dessins du Château de Fontainebleau, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Galeries Nationales d'Ottawa, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Musée National du Château de Compiègne, Musée National d'Art et d'Histoire du Luxembourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Troyes, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dôle, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Château de Versailles, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Tate Britain in London, Musée-promenade de Marly-le-Roi, Château de Lunéville, Musée d'Orsay, Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, Gorkums Museum, Musée du Grand-Siècle de Saint-Cloud, Musée du Louvre, Musée Émile Hermès in Paris...

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Art Historian

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Chief Heritage Curator

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Giovanni Paolo LOMAZZO

(Milan, 1538 – 1592/1600)

Study of a draped man walking in profile to the left

Black stone, pen, brown ink, brown wash, and white highlights on blue prepared paper 25.1×15.6 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

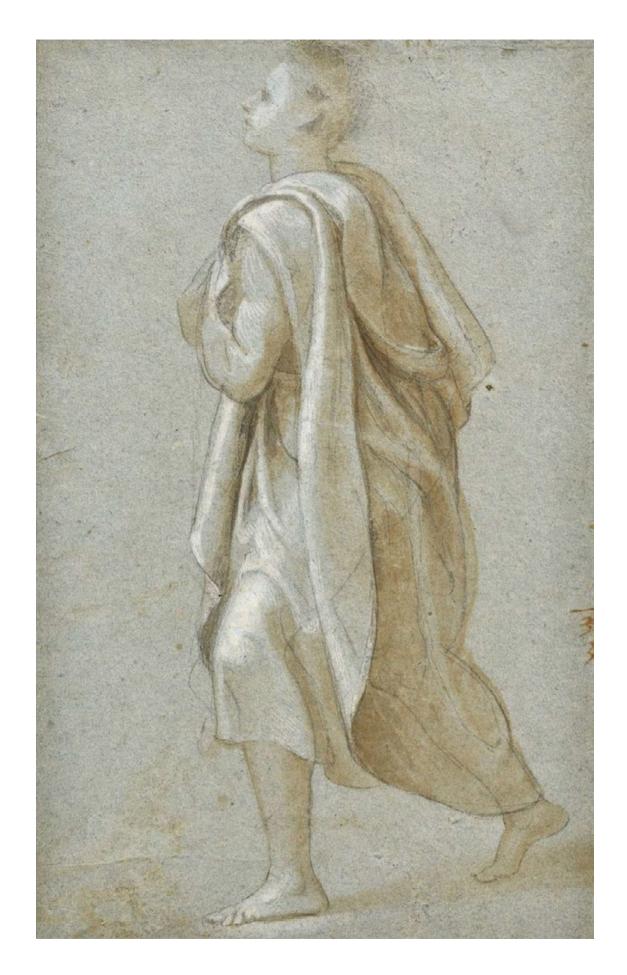
- · Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, Rime, 1587
- Lucia Tantardini, Rebecca Norris, Lomazzo's aesthetic principles reflected in the art of his time, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020

"In 1538, on April 26, a sacred day for Cytherea, I was born in Milan, at five o'clock. As I grew up, I always had a penchant for drawing, so much so that at the age of ten, I was sent to a master who taught me how to read and write, handle books, and then draw. That's how I began painting under the guidance of a disciple of Gaudenzio Ferrari, a respected painter by the name of Giovanni Battista della Cerva. He encouraged me, seeing that I was ready to succeed in this art. At that time, I executed various works: paintings, caprices, stories, friezes, grotesques, and various decorations with cartouches, trophies, landscapes, and fruits, which I painted in three styles."

Both a painter and a writer, Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo is an essential figure in Italian art of the sixteenth century. The taste for artistic practice was likely passed on to him by his father, Giovanni Antonio, who had presumably developed an interest in decorative and figurative arts. Of his four sons, three became artists and the fourth a embroiderer. When he completed his training in 1559, the artist was 21 years old. From then on, his ascent accelerated. His independent personality led him the following year to emancipate himself from parental guardianship. He chose to travel across Italy to understand the production of his time. A document dated 1564 mentions a contract with a student, Vincenzo Figini, aged 11, which thus placed Lomazzo as a master.



Ill. 1
Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo
Study for a prophet
1565/71
Black chalk, pen, and brown ink
on cream laid paper, grid applied.
19.1 × 12 cm
Princeton, Princeton University art collection
(inv. x1947-136)



Having become blind in 1571, the artist turned to writing artistic treatises. He thus published his Trattato dell Arte della Pittura, Scultura et Architettura in 1584, considered the first systematic treatise on painting. Three years later he published Rime and finally, in 1590, Idea del Tempio della Pittura. In his works, Lomazzo seeks, on the one hand, to categorise painting into different categories and, on the other hand, to redefine the essence of painting and the status of artists. The intellectualisation of his work positions his work as an essential source of inspiration for his contemporaries.

Until 1570, drawing held a prominent place in his production. Considered the genesis of the work, it is a certain means of apprehending technique and the construction of creative thought. Fascinated by Michelangelo, his compositions show movements and expressions inspired by the master's frescoes (ill. 1). Furthermore, the memory of Leonardo da Vinci's work inspires him to draw the contours of his figures in a scholarly manner. Our drawing demonstrates this observation. A comparison can be made with the one preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (ill. 2), both dated around 1565, allowing us to understand the importance of form and expression in the artist's work. These two works, almost identical in size and on blue paper, appear to have been part of the same set devoted to the study of movement. They also join more broadly the work carried out by Lomazzo on anatomical study.

Beyond these theoretical insights, Lomazzo deals in his writings with the practical approach to be adopted, including remarks on colours, perspective, and a particular interest in the study of the human body derived from a stereometric method, which he applies to his own work. The various positions of the bodies, sometimes in profile, sometimes in three quarters, highlight powerful musculatures. The muscle of the moving left arm is emphasised by a clever use of white gouache in hatching. This same process is found in the Metropolitan drawing.

The line, both supple and expressive, delineates the forms of this young man draped in antique garb. During his travels across the country, Lomazzo had observed antique statuary with great attention. From this study, he drew remarkable lessons in how to render the fall of drapery. Our drawing also reveals the artist's ability to render light. With the head slightly raised, the figure

turns its gaze upwards, as if strongly drawn by a light emanating from the left. The space is skilfully formulated by the shadow cast by the feet advancing towards the left. Finally, through limited use of mediums, Lomazzo manages to colour his work while treating volumes: the black stone delineates the form while brown ink and wash accentuate the volumes of the draped cloth falling down the figure's back.

Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's complete works place him both as an artist and as a writer. Beyond his rational treatises on art, the artist is fascinated by the intangible: astrology. At the end of his work Rime, he recalls having detected that the day of his birth was considered a day dedicated to Venus.

M.O.

¹ Translated from Italian in Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, Rime, pp. 529-530



III. 2
Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo
Homme debout, drapé, les mains levées
Vers 1565
Black chalk, brush and brown wash, heightened with white gouache, on blue-green paper.
25.4 x 16.1 cm
New York, The Metropolitan Museum (inv. 2004.292)



Etienne DUMONSTIER

(Paris, circa 1540 – 1603)

2 | Portrait of a Lady with a Ruff

Black stone, stump, red chalk, and pastel 33 x 23.5 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Léon de Laborde, La Renaissance des arts à la cour de France / études sur le seizième siècle, J. Claye et Ce, Paris, 1850
- Jules Guiffrey, «Les Dumonstier Portrait Drawers with Pencils (XVIth and XVIIth centuries)», in *La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, 1905, tome XVIII
- Louis Dimier, Histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XVI siècle, accompagnée d'un catalogue de tous les ouvrages subsistant en ce genre, de crayon, de peinture à l'huile, de miniature, d'émail, de tapisserie et de cire en médaillons. Paris and Brussels: Van Oest, 1924-1926.
- Alexandra Zvereva, *Portraits dessinés de la cour des Valois : les Clouet de Catherine de Médicis*, PhD Thesis in Modern History: Paris 4: 2005, Paris: Arthena, 2011

The epitaph of Etienne Dumonstier's tomb, which rested in the church of Saint-Jean-en-Grève¹, expressed the recognition the artist enjoyed for nearly 50 years in the service of five kings and a queen, introduced to the royal service at the age of thirteen:

«Here lies Estienne Du Monstier, noble, rare, and excellent in his art; he was a painter and ordinary valet of the Kings Henry II, Francis II, Charles IX, Henry III, of the very great Queen Catherine de Medici and of the King of the present, for a period of 50 years and more until the end of his life which was the 25th day of October 1603, aged 63 years. Pray to God for his soul, Amen.»

Du Monstier or Moutier, Etienne came from a dynasty of artists since the sixteenth century. His grandfather Jehan was an illuminator from Rouen, while his father Geoffroy was a miniature painter, engraver, and decorator. His two brothers, Pierre and Cosme, like him, were excellent draughtsmen. Historiography remembers him as an excellent portraitist, a highly sought-after «sketcher» by his contemporaries. Listed as «the elder,» it remains difficult, however, to identify his work since, unlike his nephew Daniel, Etienne did not sign his works.



Ill. 1 Etienne Dumonstier Portrait of a Man Black stone, red chalk, and highlights of colored pencils $30.7 \times 20.5 \text{ cm}$ Private collection



Appearing in the second half of the fifteenth century, drawn portraiture experienced a prosperous period in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Unlike neighboring kingdoms, France boasted very great artists who specialized in this field.

As queen of France, Catherine de Medici employed the greatest French artists, among whom Etienne Dumonstier was a favorite. «The perfection of drawing and a particular finesse of execution» ² allowed him to be pensioned by the crown, sometimes entrusted with diplomatic missions. Etienne was the originator of numerous drawn portraits intended for the queen mother's collection.

Although his artistic activity remains poorly known, it is known that Etienne Dumonstier was called upon to sketch the profiles of the highest figures of royalty as well as the nobility. Our portrait is an example of the fifteen works identified as his in Louis Dimier's work *History* of Portrait Painting in France in the Sixteenth Century. A lady of quality appears here in bust, dressed in the fashion of the time, emphasizing the importance of her rank. Inspired by Italian fashion, women wore a bodice as the main garment. As shown in our portrait, the hair was generally rolled up and topped with a kind of small headdress that held it all back. To this Italian influence was added the Spanish taste, very much in vogue at the end of the sixteenth century, reflected in an enthusiasm for elaborate collars. Our model here wears a ruff made of embroidery covering her chest and neck.

Drawn portraiture was highly successful because it was inexpensive and quicker to execute than a painted work. Originally made from a metal point, sixteenth-century portraits were executed in black stone enhanced with red chalk. This medium allowed for the tracing of fine contours, accentuating shadows such as the nose ridge and rendering meticulous details such as the hair drawn one by one, a treatment found in each portrait by Etienne Dumonstier. Red chalk also played a major role in adding color to certain parts of the face, such as the eye contours, nose, and lips here. For the hair, the use of this red chalk mixed with black stone added color. Finally, the stump was used to render volumes, the most notable element being the treatment of the hairstyles. Specialists recognize in Etienne Dumonstier a particular quality in rendering the realism of his subjects' psychology. The gaze, with the irises treated in transparency with blue pastel, here lends a certain serenity to this woman.

Etienne ranks among the best portraitists of the French Renaissance. The Dumonstiers contributed more broadly to the radiance of drawn portraiture conceived as a finished work, to which foreign artists only rarely resorted. As a result, drawn portraiture emerged as a typically French genre, commissioned by the greatest courts of Europe.

M.O

We thank Dr. Alexandra Zvereva for confirming the authenticity of our drawing after visual examination.

¹ Saint-Jean-en-Grève is a former church in Paris, destroyed between 1797 and 1800, located in the current 44 arrondissement, close to the City Hall.

² Louis Dimier, Histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XVI^e siècle, accompagnée d'un catalogue de tous les ouvrages subsistant en ce genre, de crayon, de peinture à l'huile, de miniature, d'émail, de tapisserie et de cire en médaillons. Paris and Brussels: Van Oest, 1924-1926.



French school around 1710

Wedding Scene and Picnic by the Lake

Fan Design Gouache on vellum 23 x 39.5 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Lille au XVII^e siècle des Pays-Bas espagnols au Roi-Soleil, [exhibition catalogue], Palais des beaux-arts de Lille, Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 2000
- Autant en porte le vent : éventails, histoire de goût [exhibition catalogue], Bordeaux: Musée des Arts décoratifs, Somogy éditions d'art, Paris, 2004
- Monique Maillet, Une dynastie de peintres lillois, les Van Blarenberghe, B. Giovanangeli, Paris, 2001

In 1668, the conquest of Lille and part of Flanders by Louis XIV definitively linked French and Flemish pictorial productions, which had already been closely related in the previous century. In this context, some Flemish artists adapted their production and opted for naturalization. French painters, meanwhile, absorbed and filtered the main artistic characteristics of their colleagues. At the beginning of the 18th century, the northern influence is widely found in pictorial production but often remains difficult to detect, as currents and contacts between artists intertwine. Although Lille was officially attached to France by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, it remained deeply imbued with its Flemish and Dutch roots. Our gouache, which can be dated to the end of the reign of Louis XIV, bears witness to this crossroads of identities.

Painters assimilated Northern techniques of composition, particularly a special attention to detail, which they put to use in French commissions such as fans. Historiography recognizes Catherine de Medici for importing the Italian fan fashion into France, which led to a growing demand in the 17th century. This enthusiasm gave rise to the emergence of master fan-makers¹ who, working closely with painters, produced true miniature paintings that served as models for the fan leaf. The heart of this production was located in Paris, around the rue Saint-Denis. Originally made

of wood or perfumed skin, the making of a fan involved several steps by the end of the 17th century. The frame was carved and sculpted by a fan maker, while the painting required the contribution of several painters who created preparatory drawings to which colors were added later. The division of labor explains the absence of signatures on most fan leaves produced at that time. Our leaf seems to have been created by one or several Flemish hands, probably in Paris where the demand was highest.

Most fan designs were painted with gouache. The delicate cutouts visible on our leaf indicate that it was designed for a so-called «broken» fan, whose ribs would be arranged on a support made of wood, ivory, or bone. Once completed, the object could be fully folded thanks to a small nail placed in the lower part, called the rivet.

In a landscape delimited by a few trees and a ruined building in the background on the left, and a town on the right, no less than 24 characters appear. Peasants, bourgeois dressed for hunting, and a newlywed couple are ingeniously arranged in three groups, revealing a narrative. Reading from left to right, a picnic is prepared by a group of peasants, while the festivities, presumably organized for the couple coming from the right, are celebrated in the center. Finally, the last group placed on a boat on the left joins the rest of the composition.





Ill. 1 French School circa 1700 Venus at Vulcan's Forge Fan design Gouache on vellum 17.4 cm x 50.5 cm Private collection

The finesse and precision displayed in our work reflect the skill of the artist's hand, who carefully preserves the memory of the Flemish pictorial tradition. From this synthesis of influences, the artist, attentive to the rendering of the smallest details, can be linked to the artistic milieu of Lille in the early 18th century. The bourgeois are clearly distinguished from the peasants by the refinement of their fabrics. The women wear feathered hats to hold their hair during the hunt. It is amusing to note the delicate mise-en-abyme in the center of the composition, featuring a female character holding a glass of wine in one hand and an open fan in the other.

The image of life outside of Paris, conveyed through the iconography of rural pleasures, found a real enthusiasm during the 18th century. The theme of marriage and picnics in our gouache marks a clear opposition to the previous century, which mostly featured mythological themes. Their representation on fan leaves reminds us that this object is primarily dedicated to pleasure, a mirror of taste and elegance.

After the French conquest, the northern part of the kingdom experienced economic prosperity, which led to a certain artistic dynamism. Louis XIV intended to make Lille one of the most beautiful cities in the French territory, explaining the great wealth and finesse of the works produced there, among which fans held an important place. A symbol of wealth and social recognition, necessary for maintaining one's status, fans became an indispensable element in the education of young girls during the 18th century.

MO

¹ The fan makers formed a guild established under Louis XIV in 1678, granting them specific statutes and regulations.







Hyacinthe RIGAUD

(Perpignan, 1659 – Paris, 1743)

4 | Portrait of a Gentleman in Three-Quarter Bust, Wearing a Red Velvet Cape

Circa 1720

Oil miniature with gouache highlights on paper, laid down on 18th-century playing card cardboard

Giltwood frame decorated with stylized acanthus leaves, 17th-century punch-marked

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, PhD thesis in Art History, Paris, École pratique des hautes études, Éditions Faton, Paris, 2008

The renowned French painter Hyacinthe Rigaud was actually born Spanish, in what was then Northern Catalonia. In 1659, Perpignan was still under Spanish rule before being annexed a few months later to the Kingdom of France by the Treaty of the Pyrenees, establishing peace between the two monarchies. He was the son of a master tailor, which likely sparked this precocious artist's taste for fabrics and their nuanced rendering, which would become his distinctive mark in his work.

Leaving the Pyrenees, young Rigaud began his apprenticeship in Languedoc in Montpellier in 1673, where he joined the workshop of the painter Antoine Ranc (1634-1716), who taught him the techniques of Flemish painting through the work of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), which he would extensively utilize. Appointed First Painter and then director of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the evolution of the Catalan's career was as spectacular as it was rapid. His fabulous success was praised for the virtuosity with which he rendered his portraits, a genre still considered minor by the theories of André Félibien (1619-1695). In Europe, he was the preferred painter of the elites: he dominated the production of portraits of the Grand Siècle and even more so until the first half of the 18th century.



Ill. 1
Notebook belonging to Hyacinthe Rigaud,
authenticated by Ariane James-Sarazin
Annotated «Hyacinthus Rigaud 1729,»
discovered in the Jaubert de Passa collection
Perpignan, Departmental Archives.

Among the hours devoted to grand formats, easel paintings, and drawings, Rigaud became interested in the art of the miniature some time after his arrival in Paris in 1681. Recently, the discovery of manuscripts from the collection of the historian Jaubert de Passa, acquired by the department of Pyrénées-Orientales and studied by the specialist of the artist Ariane James-Sarazin, revealed





Ill. 2
Hyacinthe Rigaud
Self-Portrait, 1681
Oval miniature, painted on canvas,
mounted on mahogany panel
6.5 x 5.25 cm
Private collection.
(Listed as P.5 in the catalogue raisonné)



Ill. 3
Hyacinthe Rigaud
Portrait of an Unknown Man, 1684
Oil miniature
9.5 x 7.8 cm
Private collection.
(Listed as P.sup.42 in the catalogue raisonné)

the existence of a small notebook that belonged to Rigaud (ill. 1). It was discovered that the artist was likely working on his own treatise on miniature, inspired by some excerpts, preserved in this same notebook, from the treatise of his elder, the miniaturist Claude Boutet titled «Treatise on miniature to learn to paint easily without a master, with the secret of making the most beautiful colors, burnished gold, and shell gold» (1672).

Our work is a wonderful example of this narrow production, echoing some known testimonies of the artist including a self-portrait (ill. 2) and a portrait of a man recently added to the supplement of the catalog of his work (ill. 3). In a work no larger than 7.5 centimeters in height, the artist presents a male model in bust, with shoulders turned to the right, his face facing the viewer. The simplicity of the pose and the close framing are two recurring components in Rigaud's work. The model's physiognomy, still anonymous to this day, is expressed through the penetrating softness of the gaze, enhanced by a slight, sketched smile. The man is dressed in a wide cape of vibrant red velvet lined with silk brocade, from which elegantly emerges a tied lace cravat. His wig, low and centered on the face, as well as the carefully ordered and slightly geometricized folds of the cape, suggest a work dating from the late 1680s.

The treatment of fabrics and silks marks Rigaud's style. A skillful use of highlights in white allows, on the one hand, the rendering of the powdered wig fallen on the shoulder, and on the other hand, the brilliance of the thick red velvet, while the gold brocade is finely treated with oil. The figure stands out against a plain background between a coppery green and a brushed brown, allowing the viewer's attention to be focused on the facial features: almond-shaped eyes, thick eyebrows, not forgetting to render the model's shaved mustache. Finally, the ingenuity of his hand fixes meticulous details such as the highlight on the nose bridge or the finely drawn shadow of the rosy cheekbones.

Hyacinthe Rigaud made portraiture the rival of history painting. Between François de Troy (1645-1730) and Nicolas de Largillierre (1656-1746), the artist found recognition in the excellence of painted portraiture, particularly male, akin to Largillierre, a painter of feminine physiognomy. With over 2700 paintings produced, Hyacinthe Rigaud was one of the most important portraitists of his time. Among these portraits of the court, ceremonial, intimate, casual (amateurs, collectors, artists), familial, or historical, Rigaud's genius also expressed itself in the art of the miniature.

M.O



François BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703-1770)

5 | Sketch for The Gallant Chinese

36.2 x 51.3 cm

Pen and black ink, oil in blue monochrome on paper mounted on canvas

Provenance:

- Sketch likely presented to the King's services in 1742.
- France, private collection.

The sketch for *The Gallant Chinese* is preparatory to the painting of the same subject held in the Davids Samling in Copenhagen (inv. B 275). The painting is signed and dated 1742, similar to its counterpart The Tea in the Chinese Style (Aurora Art Fund)¹. The preparatory sketch on paper studied here is valuable for its refined execution and the insights it provides into François Boucher's craftsmanship. Examination of this enhanced drawing reveals an underlying setup with black ink pen, very diluted and light in the bright backgrounds, and heavily applied in the decorative arabesques of the foreground, where it is visible under the blue and white brushstrokes applied in oil. This underlying technique with the pen, accompanied by some discreet hatching, immediately places the drawing before 1745, as in the following years it would likely have involved the use of stumping to distribute the masses. Therefore, the use of only black ink pen here aligns perfectly with the known date of the painting for which the sketch is prepared.

Comparing the sketch and the painting reveals multiple subtle differences in the arrangement of leaves, branches, and scrolls, demonstrating the creative process at work: the artist, in transitioning to the execution of the painting, substantially respects his initial idea without being bound by detail. Several elements also indicate that this evolving thought process is cautious in some areas, leading François Boucher to lightly arrange certain elements, such as the lattice stretched above the characters, which will be clearly defined in the painting. The two central characters are also treated with restraint and almost preciousness, particularly in the attire of the seated woman, where the artist endeavors, despite the difficulty of monochrome tones, to suggest the fur lining of the coat, the reflections of the silk tunic, and the stripes of the dress in small touches, in a treatment entirely consistent with that of the painting. The faces and hands of the characters appear somewhat stiff, with the monochrome tones primarily serving to express the different planes and chiaroscuro effects of the whole: for example, it is evident that the young seated Chinese man is positioned near the foreground of arabesques and will therefore be treated in dark tones approaching this foreground, while the woman in the background is lightly positioned with blues lightened by white, distancing her into the background of the composition. The highly detailed decorative arabesque in the foreground suggests that the main objective is the integration of a wood panel into the decor, with the Chinese genre scene including curiosities, bamboo, and palm trees being purely decorative, without a true subject.

François Boucher always worked based on sketches, most often on canvas, sometimes on paper or cardboard. These sketches allow him to define his initial idea and present a precise project to a potential client. The artist then reserves the right to separately revisit certain figures and slightly modify postures or chiaroscuro effects before proceeding to the final execution of the painting. Sketches are recommended to artists and commonly practiced because, regardless of their support, they allow the clear expression and almost capture of the initial thought: Roger de Piles, a theorist of colorists from the late 17th century, provides the exact definition of this practice in his 1708 "Cours de peinture par principes," stating that colored sketches are made "for the rest and relief of the painter's memory." 2 For these sketches, monochrome grisaille is recommended, as it is "like a washed drawing where one observes the degradation of objects to form distant views and make objects flee by weakening the tones. The lights and shadows must be observed." ³ In







III. 1
François Boucher
The Gallant Chinese
1742
oil on canvas $104 \times 145 \text{ cm } (40\,^{15}/_{16}\,\text{x }57\,^{15}/_{16}\,\text{in.})$ Copenhague, David's Samling, inv. B 275.

Boucher's case, these monochrome sketches are often in grays or shades of brown, and less frequently in pinks or blues⁴. The choice of blue is imperative here because the painting for which this sketch is prepared must be painted in blue tones and inserted into an existing blue and white decor, inspired by Chinese porcelain. The cool blue-green tones of the sketch, familiar to Boucher, who often used them, especially in his landscapes of the Île-de-France in the 1740s, will be adjusted in the final execution of the painting, as it is painted in deep ultramarine blue tones to integrate with the decor of the Blue Chamber of the Château de Choisy, already installed and partially furnished.

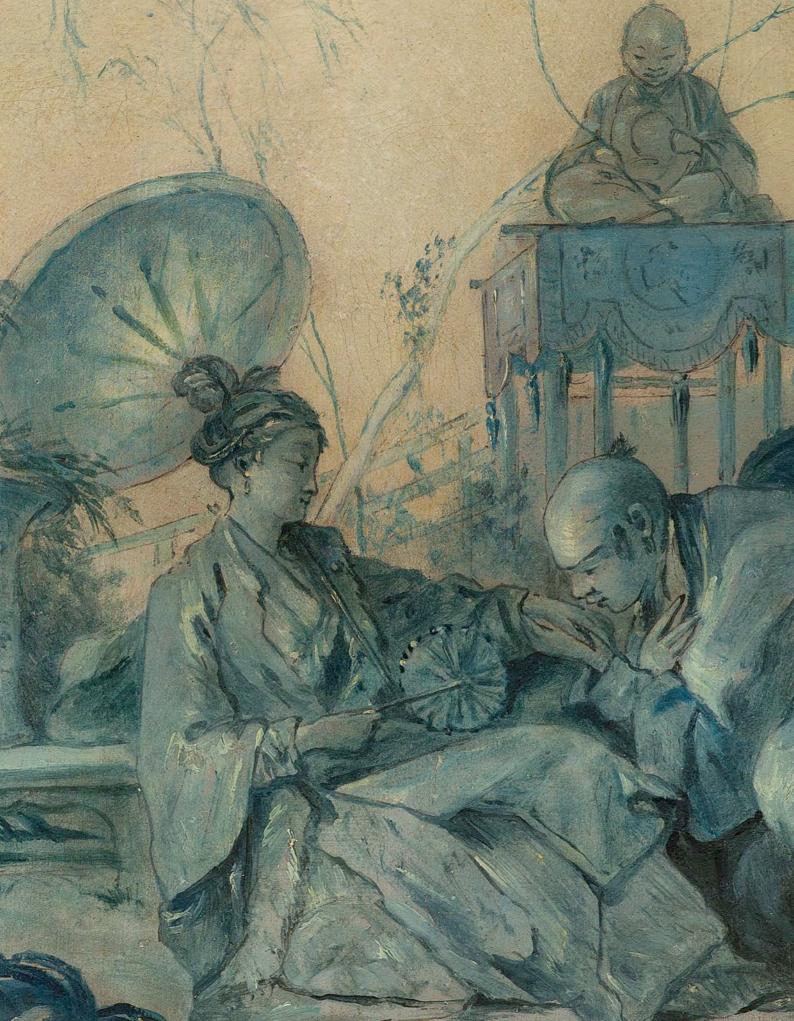
The king purchased Choisy in 1739 and immediately began renovations. Above his apartments, which he wanted on the ground floor⁵, Louis XV had the bedroom of Madame de Mailly-Nesle installed. This favorite had offered him yards of blue silk, which he decided to use to create a "blue room" for her, in which he had made in 1741 "a bed of blue and white moire with tapestry and seats of the same; [...] to match this furniture, the entire room up to the cornice was painted in blue and white." ⁶ The fashion was for chinoiserie, and the blue room initially received a temporary decoration in lacquer and Chinese, Japanese, and Chantilly porcelain, ordered

from the merchant-mercier Julliot with additional fabric ordered from the upholsterer Sallior. But the project was more luxurious: in June 1742, the merchant-mercier Hébert delivered blue and white Chinese porcelain objects that accentuated the exotic aspect of the decor and matched the refinement of sumptuous chests of drawers and corner cabinets decorated with Western lacquer in blue and white Martin varnish, ordered from the cabinetmaker Criaerd, delivered at the same time. And three door tops were commissioned from François Boucher in the same color scheme: one for the retreat cabinet was described as "a door top in camaieu representing Chinese," and the other two intended for the bedroom as "two door tops identical to that of the cabinet." The care taken with this preparatory drawing is explained by the importance of this royal commission, as it was customary for artists to present their sketch work to the architect before the final execution. The architect Gabriel, for example, asked François Boucher in 1747 for the Dauphin's apartments, to "have his sketches approved and worked on" (Archives Nationales, Fonds O1 des Bâtiments du Roi, 1921 A). This was likely the case here as well.

Contemporary with the eight sketches by the painter for The Chinese Tapestry, exhibited at the Louvre salon between August 25 and September 21, 1742, these paintings, which appear to be Boucher's first easel paintings on Chinese subjects, borrow from the tapestry certain motifs and characters such as the seated woman in The Tea in the Chinese Style, directly inspired by the one placed in front of the emperor in The Emperor of China's Feast (Besançon, Museum of Art and Archaeology, inv. D 843 -1-2), confirming the simultaneity of their execution. The tapestries on these Chinese motifs were produced in the Beauvais workshops from July 1743 and were exported to China. However, the Chinese-style paintings painted in 1742 for Choisy seem to accompany the arrival at court of a new favorite, Madame de La Tournelle, the future Duchess of Chateauroux, sister, and rival of Madame de Mailly, the previous mistress of the king whom she manages to supplant in the spring and finally drive out of the court in the course of autumn 1742. as referenced in the Memoirs of the Duke of Luvnes. Madame de Brancas, and the Duke of Richelieu. In this luxurious blue room at Choisy, where it is known she stayed between November 12 and 16, 1742, Madame de La Tournelle surrenders at the end of November. However, it turns out, whether by chance or by a well-determined choice on her part, that she appeared to the king on February 6, 1742, during the Mardi Gras carnival at the Dauphin's in Versailles, "masked as a Chinese woman" in a quadrille entirely dressed in blue and white⁸.

Françoise Joulie

- ¹ For the presentation of the two paintings, see L. Mulheron and Y. Rimaud in *Une des Provinces du rococo, la Chine rêvée de François Boucher*, Paris Editions in Fine 2019, nos. 84 and 85.
- ² Roger de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes*, 1708, reissued with a preface by J. Thuillier, 1989, p. 129. In the Color Controversy that opposed, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV, the defenders of drawing or Poussinists to those of color or Rubenists, R. de Piles places Rubens above all other painters. François Boucher, like his master Lemoyne, belongs to this current known as colorists or Rubenists, which triumphs at the Royal Academy when it comes under the direction of Charles de La Fosse.
- ³ Dom Antoine-Joseph Pernety, Dictionnaire portative de peinture, sculpture et gravure, Paris 1757.
- ⁴ F. Joulie, François Boucher fragments d'une vision du monde, Paris, Somogy, 2013, no. 81.
- ⁵ *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la cour de Louis XV*, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1863, IV, p. 205.
- ⁶ Luynes, IV, p.274.
- ⁷ Etat général des tableaux qui sont au magazin le 20 juin 1757, 1757, Paris, Arch. Nat. O1 1346-154 (Choisy).
- ⁸ Luynes, IV, p. 92.



François BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703-1770)

6 | Young Woman Holding a Sheet Music

Black chalk and white chalk highlights on watermarked chamois paper 34.5 x 28.5 cm

Provenance:

- Cabinet de Bayser, Salon du dessin, 2013
- France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Alexandre Ananoff, L'œuvre dessinée de François Boucher, Catalogue Raisonné Volume 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*, [exhibition catalogue], New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1986), Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts (1986), Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais (1987), Paris, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux. 1986
- Françoise Joulie, *François Boucher : hier et aujourd'hui*, [exhibition catalogue], Paris, Musée du Louvre, 17 October 2003 19 January 2004, Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003

François Boucher began his apprenticeship under his father, Nicolas Boucher (1671-1743), a master painter and draftsman at the Academy of Saint-Luc. At the age of 18, he joined the studio of the famous François Lemoyne (1688-1737), through whom the artist truly launched his career. After a period in Italy residing at the French Academy, where he studied from antiquity, he returned to Paris and joined the Royal Academy in 1734 as a history painter.

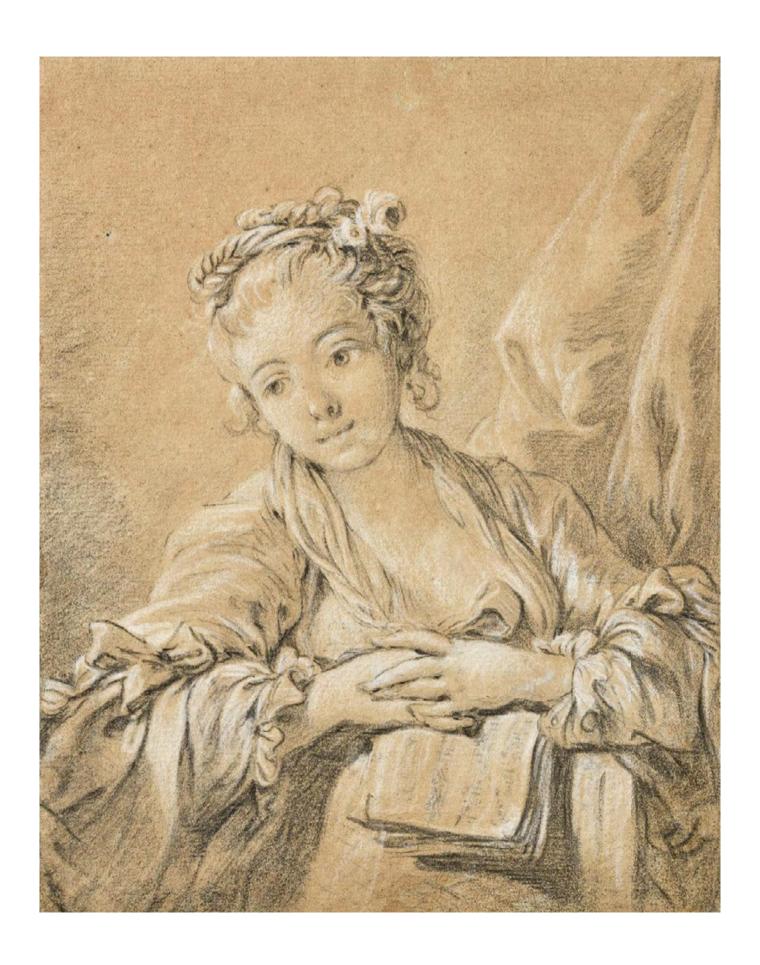
Highly esteemed during his lifetime, with an extremely rapid evolution, the artist received all the honours a painter of his generation could hope for. His illustrious career was rewarded with numerous titles, including that of professor, director of the Royal Academy, and first painter to the king. Until the 1760s, the artist fulfilled several hundred commissions for prestigious patrons including the Marquise de Pompadour and the Duke of Chevreuse, as well as for the royal manufactories of Beauvais and the Gobelins, and enthusiastically taught his methods in his studio.

In the 1760s, he produced portraits of women whose faces exuded a new elegance, likely following the initiative

of Caylus, director of the Academy, who established a competition for expressive heads starting in 1759. This renewal is particularly recognizable in Boucher's work by the broadness of the models' foreheads and their large eyes elongated towards the temples under perfectly arched eyebrows, of which the sketch *Bust of a Young Girl (ill.* 1) is a wonderful example.

Preferring to charm the eye before the mind, Boucher imbues this image with remarkable sweetness and sensuality. A graceful young woman, seen from the waist up, leans on what appears to be the back of a chair upon which musical scores are arranged. She does not seem interrupted by the painter's intervention. Lost in thought, she gently turns her gaze to the left: a captured moment from the daily life of a likely musician in her intimate surroundings.

The attention to detail in rendering the expression of the face and the delicacy of the features suggests that the artist sketched his model before his eyes. A certain poetry emanates from this youthful face, enhanced by a braided hairstyle adorned with a few flowers from which carefully arranged curls escape. Our drawing also testifies to the





Ill. 1
François Boucher
Bust of a Young Girl
Black chalk and pastel highlights
19 x 15 cm
Collection mark A. Beurdeley (L., 421) reproduced in A. Ananoff, The Drawings of François Boucher,
Catalogue Raisonné Volume I, F. de Nobele, Paris,
1970, cat. 360, fig. 71, p. 110



Ill. 2
Gilles Demarteau (1722-1776), engraver
After François Boucher (1703-1770)
Bust of a young woman holding a music sheet
Crayon manner, sanguine print
32.7 x 23.2 cm plate mark
Signed lower left: Boucher in del
Lower right: Demarteau lne Sculp
Lower center: à Paris chez Demarteau l'ainé
rue de la Pelterie à la cloche

artist's interest in rendering the details and textures of the muslin of the indoor dress, from the bows of the sleeves to their lace-trimmed ends. The folds of the fabric and the drapery falling behind the figure are nervously treated with some more or less accentuated strokes of black chalk, sometimes undulating, sometimes geometrically shaped.

This image was disseminated during the 18th century through the engraving by Gilles Demarteau (1722-1776) (*ill.* 2), a Liège engraver 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 after those of François Boucher, with whom he became friends.

On a small-format sheet, Boucher pays particular attention to the smallest details through a rigor and quality of execution that make it a highly accomplished study. Colour is brought by the use of white chalk to render textures. His brilliant mastery of light highlights the grace

and softness of the model's rounded facial features, from the coiffure to the chin, and also illustrates the luxurious silk of the dress that seems to reflect light. Playing with the reserve of the chamois paper, the model is bathed in an atmosphere imbued with sweetness and lightness.

An undeniable representative of 18th-century French painted portraiture, François Boucher was also an excellent draughtsman and pastellist. He won the admiration of his colleagues and prestigious collector patrons eager for his female figures, which he placed at the forefront of his works.

M.O.

We thank Mr. Alastair Laing and Ms. Françoise Joulie for confirming the authenticity of our drawing after visual examination.

¹ Françoise Joulie in *Esquisses Pastels et dessins de François Boucher dans les collections privées*, exhibition from October 12, 2004, to January 9, 2005, Versailles, Musée Lambinet, Somogy Art Editions, Paris, 2004.



Jean-François GILLES called COLSON

(Dijon, 1733 – Paris, 1803)

7 | Two Studies of a Forearm and a Study of a Young Girl wearing a Fichu

Sanguine with white chalk highlights on chamois colored paper 27.2×43.2 cm. ($10^{11}/16 \times 17 \times 10^{11}$) in.)

An old label for the sale of the Jacques Auguste Boussac Collection on frame verso.

Provenance:

- Former collection of Jacques Auguste Boussac, collection mark stamped in ink, lower right: (L. 729b), Sale, May 10th-11th, 1926, George Petit Gallery, Paris, Maîtres Rémard and Lair-Dubreil, n°188, ill. p. 80 (as "Lépicié (B)");
- Former collection of Charles Férault, collection mark stamped in ink, lower right: (L. 2793a), Sale, November 25th December 15th, 1927, n°67 (as "Lépicié");
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Trois peintres bourguignons du XVIII^e siècle: Colson, Vestier, Trinquesse, exh. cat. Dijon, Museum of Fine Arts, 1969.
- Pierre Quarré, "Dessins d'architecture de Colson," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1970, pp. 115–23.

Famous for his work entitled The Nap [literally "The Rest" (ill. 1), pendant to Action, both conserved in the Museum of Fine Arts in Dijon, Jean-François Colson's life remains nonetheless very little known. His act of baptism mentions that the child born in Dijon is named of Jean-François Gilles, to which the second name of Colson is added. The British tonality of the latter goes back to the Irish origins of his grandmother, and the artist's father had been strongly advised to forget the name "Gilles," which was associated with simpletons, inanity, and poltroons. Colson's father, Jean-Baptiste, was a pastel and miniature portrait painter who had been introduced to Versailles by Charles Parrocel (1668-1752) and Jean-Baptiste Van Loo (1684-1745), before leaving for the provinces and settling in Dijon in 1733. Jean-François thus began his education under his father. In following his parents, the young boy continued his training in Avignon where he had lessons from a Carthusian monk, and then Grenoble, Lyon where he frequented Donatien Nonnotte's studio (1708-1785) - and Toulouse under Jean-Baptiste Despax (1710-1773).

Upon arriving in Paris, his ambition to become a history painter was supplanted by an innate gift for depicting genre scenes, in which his work *The Nap* or *A Young Girl*



Ill. 1 Jean-François Gilles, called Colson (1733 - 1803) The Nap, 1759 Oil on canvas, 93 x 73 cm. (3 ft. % in. x 2 ft. 4 ¾ in.) Dijon, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. CA 252).





Ill. 2
Jean-François Gilles, called Colson (1733 - 1803)
Young Girl Sleeping
Sanguine, 31 x 25 cm. (12 1/16 x 9 1/16 in.)
Formerly Jacques Auguste Boussac Collection, sale,
May 10th – 11th, 1926, George Petit Gallery, Paris,
Maîtres Rémard and Lair-Dubreil, n°159, ill. p. 80.

Surprised in her Sleep, remains the most outstanding. It was later engraved by the artist's uncle, Nicolas Dupuis (1798-1771). Our drawing is one of the rare known studies from the artist's hand and preparatory for a painted work.

On a piece of beige paper, Colson draws the hands and face in sanguine, two of the most complex elements to render in paint. The work illustrates the artist's will to seek a good balance in movement of the young girl's right hand. In the final version, a bird attached by a ribbon to the fingers of her left hand is being stalked by a cat. The girl's right hand rests on her dress. Here the movement is not yet fully developed: twice on the same page of studies, the artist redoes the position of the fingers which should give the exact movement, as well as the handling of the edges of the sleeve ruffle.

Furthermore in the upper right of the paper, the artist has attempted to depict the young girl's sleepy drooping head. Wearing a lace or muslin fichu, her head is turned to the right here, which is the opposite in the painted version.

In order to render flesh and shadow effects, Colson uses hatching which can be seen in the forearm. The use of white chalk makes it possible to indicate volumes and accentuate the soft smoothness of the child's flesh.

The skillfulness and rareness of our sketch naturally captivated erudite 20th century drawing collectors, such as Jacques Auguste Boussac (1885-1962), a Parisian industrialist whose precocious interest in the graphic arts led him to compose an exceptional collection, and Charles Ferault (1877-19??), a famous antiquarian and dealer of drawings between Paris and Biarritz, a fervent admirer of French 18th century masters.

We know a second sketch by the artist's hand which comes out of the Boussac collection. Probably a study for the same painted work, it depicts a half-length three-quarter view of a Young Girl Sleeping drawn from life (ill. 2). At the sale of the same collection in 1926, a work in black chalk attributed to Chardin entitled The Embroiderer (ill. 3) was presented. Once again, it depicts a young girl wearing a fichu with handling comparable in every respect to our work. Indeed, Colson was enchanted with Chardin's paintings and his "fine magical extremely bold technique1" which largely inspired him and which probably led to some attribution mistakes. Colson was a portraitist above all, and only required a two hour sitting to produce a portrait. Nobles, clergy, military men, scholars, actors,² musicians, and children: his subjects were diverse and varied. At the age of 19 years old, he did a portrait of his father which remains one of his best, and which he exhibited at the Salon of 1793 (Portrait of Citizen Colson the Father, under number 226). Although he never became a member of the Academy, this highly appreciated painter published a Traité de perspective élémentaire à l'usage des peintres, sculpteurs et architects (Treatise on elementary perspective for the use of painters, sculptors, and architects) and gave courses in perspective between 1765 and 1766 which were in high demand at the Lycée des Arts in Paris.

M.O



Ill. 3 Attributed to Jean Simeon Chardin (1699-1779) The Embroiderer Black chalk, 21.5 x 17 cm. (8 %6 x 6 $^{11}\%$ 6 in.) Former Jacques Auguste Boussac Collection, Sale, May $10^{th}-11^{th}$, 1926, George Petit Gallery, Paris, Maîtres Rémard and Lair-Dubreil, $n^{\circ}154$, ill. p. 68.

¹ Jean-François Colson, Observations sur les ouvrages exposés au Sallon du Louvre, ou Lettre à M. le Comte de***, Paris, 1775.

² Thanks to his brother who preferred the stage to easels, the painter was introduced to theater circles.





Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe DUCROS

(Moudon, 1748 – Lausanne, 1810)

Panoramic View of the Theater at Taormina (Sicily)
with Mount Etna in the background and enlivened by a Shepherd Couple
View of Naples from the heights of the Capodimonte Hill,
enlivened by a group of travelers

Pen, ink wash and watercolor over black chalk lines Pendants $52.5 \times 73.8 \text{ cm. each } (20 \frac{11}{16} \times 29 \frac{1}{16} \text{ in.})$

Provenance:

• France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jörg Zutter (dir.), Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros: un peintre suisse en Italie, exh. cat. Lausanne, Cantonal Museum of Fine Arts, Milan, Skira, 1998.
- Pierre Chessex, "Tradition et innovations dans la peinture de paysage à l'époque de la Révolution française: l'exemple de Louis Ducros (1748-1810)," *L'art au temps de la Révolution française*, Strasbourg: Alsatian Society for the Development of Art History, 1992.
- Daisy Agassiz, "Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Du Cros, peintre et graveur 1748-1810," Revue historique vaudoise, n° 35, 1927, pp. 3-14, 33-40, 65-76, 97-104, 128-138.
- Laurence Barghouth, "Ducros, Bridel et Francillon: trois amateurs d'art autour de 1800," *Revue historique vaudoise*, n° 103, 1995, p. 337-368.

A native of the Vaud region in Switzerland, Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros supposedly began his career in commerce before deciding on practicing art: "He was a born painter; he could only be a painter: initially he was occupied with secretly drawing monuments during his daily occupations; soon he was seized by disgust for commerce: he quit the counter and Geneva, crossed Italy, and arrived in the sanctuary of the arts." At the Cantonal Museum of Fine Arts in Lausanne, Ducros' work figures with those of his contemporaries Jacques Sablet, Jean-Pierre Saint-Ours, and even Angelika Kauffmann, thus joining the production of Swiss artists who spent a large part of their career in Italy.

Ducros left for Italy in 1776. He wanted to be a painter of landscape, architecture, and Nature for whom confrontation with the ancient world would be his principal source of inspiration. With this perspective, he began to do his own Grand Tour while perfecting his skills. During his travels, he frequented the most spectacular Mediterranean landscapes and thus



Ill. 1
Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros
View of an Interior, and the Gradins of the Syracuse Amphitheater
Watercolor with chalk highlights
32.6 x 93.6 cm. (1 ft 13/16 in. x 3 ft. 7% in.)
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (inv. RP-T-00-493-83)

practiced making the topographic views which would mark the success of his career.

The minutiae of his brush allowed him to sell his works to a distinguished clientele including English admirals and diplomats stopping in Italy. His work was









III. 2 Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros Overall View of the Greek Theater of Taormina, with travelers, seen from the heights. Lead point and watercolor, 53.3×75 cm. $(21 \frac{1}{16} \times 29 \frac{1}{2} \text{ in.})$ Private Collection.

widely collected in Great Britain during his lifetime and participated in the development of the art of 18th century watercolors. Today, some of his works still embellish English palaces, such as Stourhead (Wiltshire), Dunahm Massey at Altrincham (Cheshire), and Coughton Court at Alcester (Warwickshire).

The artist's first works reveal a fantasized voyage across Antiquity which renders homage to a grandiose era commemorated through architectural ruins dispersed among remarkable landscapes. His production allows us to trace his route between Rome, Naples, Sicily and Malta, from plains to waterfalls, hills, and views of ports. The settings are systematically grandiose. They communicate a feeling of the immensity of nature rendered through terrific panoramas. To achieve this effect, Ducros ingeniously chose plunging points of view which almost overwhelmingly opened the perspective so as to reinforce monumentality. Furthermore, he studied Piranese's oeuvre (1720-1778) and was inspired by it to amplify the scale of the monuments in relation to the figures who from then on only occupy a narrow position: their almost episodic presence only serves to enliven the composition. For the realization of less important figures, the artist collaborated on several occasions with Giuseppe Mazzola (1748-1838) whose elegance can be recognized in certain watercolors of the Neopolitan period.

Ducros did not limit himself to the depiction of the ruins of the Eternal City. In the summer of 1778, he left for Sicily with some companions. After leaving Naples, they stopped at Avellino, Paterno, Canosa, Bari, and then Tarente, rented small boats and finally arrived in Sicily. They spent a few days at Messina before gaining Taormina where the artist probably realized, among others (ill. 1), the gouache presented here.

The Greco-Roman theater whose construction goes back to the 3rd century B.C. remains among the city's ancient vestiges. Remarkably conserved, the theater is fascinating in its magnificence, a souvenir of an idealized antique era of which the artist drew several watercolors (*ill. 2*). The view offers an infinite perpective allowing the viewer's eye to wander all the way to the sea, and then, in its continuity, to Mount Etna which can be seen in the distance in its entirety.

From Paolo Panini (1691-1765) to Hubert Robert (1733-1808), ruins exercised a real fascination on the artists in search of historical powerfulness. Nonetheless, Ducros did not seek to copy the work of his elders, but rather to be inspired by them so as to integrate them into his own conception. In his documentary landscapes, he gradually yields to a veritable ode to Nature. At the dawn of Romanticism, Nature asserts her rights over man and invades most of his compositions. As for the ruins, they express new aesthetic literary



Ill. 3 Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros The Greek Amphitheater of Syracuse Watercolor 54.6 x 76.2 cm. (1 ft. 3 ½ in. x 2 ft. 6 in.) London, Victoria & Albert Museum (inv. P.4-1950).

tendancies and sensitivity to their authors, such as Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and the sublime, or William Gilpin (1724-1804) and the picturesque. Ducros understands and reinvents this sensitivity. From then on, his works assume another form and History takes second place. The second watercolor presented here illustrates this concept. Pulling back from the heights, the artist seeks landscapes hitherto unexplored by his colleagues, and takes advantage of vegetal dominance although it is interrupted here on the right by the construction of a villa.

"The sky is to the landscape what the face is to the human figure; it is the sky which, through accidents of light and shade, spreads a sad or gay, somber or serene, peaceful or agitated mood appropriate to the character under which one wishes to depict it."²

Through his dazzling technique, Ducros raises watercolor to its most demanding level so it attempts to rival oil painting both in format and in skillful handling of color.

He sketches on site and captures shifting effects of light with great acuity. In his atmospheric perspectives, the sky, which alternates between strongly contrasting clouds and rays of sunlight, as well as Nature itself, are handled in skillful blue and green hues which instantly breathe gentleness and an undeniable freshness into the composition.

Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros holds a prominent place in the collections of the Cantonal Museum of Fine Arts of Lausanne, the city where the artist died in 1810. The museum takes pride in conserving the contents of the studio which the artist brought back to Switzerland when he returned from Italy.

At a time when landscape was still considered a minor genre, Ducros succeeded in establishing himself as one of the best of his generation. His fascination for Nature and for the poetry of ruins makes his work comparable to that of Pre-Romantic artists. Through his compositions, he communicated his own feelings: the sublime spectacle of skies troubled by the arrival of a storm (ill. 3) recalls the end of his Italian sojourn and the uneasy temperament of an exiled artist in an era convulsed by the Revolution.

Jean-Louis-Philippe Bridel, "Lettre sur les artistes suisses maintenant à Rome," Mélanges helvétiques, 1790.

² Philippe Secretan, *Journal de voyage*, BCU, Ms, Fonds Pellis, fol. 61.



Jean-Guillaume MOITTE

(Paris, 1746 – 1810)

Portrait of a twelve-year-old girl

1777

Black chalk and stump in tondo

Diameter: 15.8 cm

Annotated on the back of the framing cardboard in pen: "... ait par mr moitte sculptor (sic)... aged 12 years 3 months 1777"

Provenance:

- Sale on March 22, 1928, Catalog of prints and drawings mainly from the French school of the 18th century composing the collection of Mr. George Haumont, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, room n°VIII, under number 103 «Portrait of a young girl represented in half-length, in profile to the right»
- France, private collection.

Bibliography:

- Gisela Gramaccini, *Jean-Guillaume Moitte (1746-1810): Leben und Werk, Akademie Verlag*, Berlin, 1933, reproduced p. 187 under number 87
- Journal inédit de Madame Moitte, femme de Jean-Guillaume Moitte, membre statutaire de l'Académie des beaux-arts, 1805-1807, Paris, Plon, 1932, p. 234.

Son of the painter and engraver Pierre-Etienne Moitte (1722-1780), Jean-Guillaume was confronted from a young age with artistic exercises. He began his training by studying sculpture with the great French names: Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714-1785) and then Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1704-1778), and naturally won the first Prize in Rome for sculpture in 1768. He thus entered the Royal School of Protected Pupils and learned the art of drawing under the guidance of the director Louis Michel van Loo (1707-1771).

Before becoming a sculptor, Moitte was a terrific draftsman. Inspired by the neoclassical wave, whose origins date back to the first excavations of Herculaneum in 1738, and those of Pompeii ten years later, the artist developed an enthusiasm for ancient civilizations, thus contributing to the renewal of Italian prestige. His stay in Italy allowed him to draw from nature the bas-reliefs, helmets, swords, armor, and various antique statues. There, he revealed his talent for drawing, which he would refine throughout his career.

Upon his return to France in 1773, Moitte was quickly noticed and joined the workshop of the king's goldsmith, Henri Auguste (1759-1816), for whom he made over a thousand drawings. Drawing thus occupied a prominent place in his production, the majority



Ill. 1
Marie-Adélaïde Castellas-Moitte (1747-1807)
Series of five drawings depicting various half-length
portraits of men, women, and children, four of which are
double-sided
Pen, black and brown ink
33.3 x 20 cm
Private collection



of which was devoted to preparatory studies for his sculptures and ornamental projects.

The profile of this young girl, in an intimate format, forms a rare work in the artist's corpus. Its restricted dimensions bring the work closer to miniature, which saw a surge during the second half of the 18th century. The attention and profusion of details suggest that the artist was familiar with his model. Jean-Guillaume's wife, Marie-Adélaïde (1747-1807), was also an artist in her own right and had the habit of portraying profiles of their daily surroundings, including boarders mentioned in her diary. Although the profiles in the drawings cannot be identified, there is mention of a chambermaid as well as Augustine Hardier, aged 15, and Marianne and Emilie Pibaleau, aged 11 and 12 respectively. The young girl in our drawing could thus be one of them. She wears a negligee in the fashion of casaquins: a small jacket fitted with three-quarter sleeves adorned with lace, which would fall to her hips. This almost masculinelooking jacket formed a top that was worn with a skirt usually of a lighter shade than the jacket.

Through this work, the artist expresses all the ingenuity of his hand. Unlike the first part of the century, which favored the technique of three pencils including red chalk and pastels appreciated for their sensual effect, the second half demonstrates the widespread use of black chalk, the preciousness of which heralds the great principles of neoclassicism in vogue. The pursuit of truth and *quiet grandeur*¹ requires accurately rendering the modeling and exalting the forms. Using only a single medium, the artist manages to capture both the

delicacy of the features of this youthful face and the psychological truth of an innocent gaze. A soft light skillfully illuminates the face and the modeling of the flesh rendered by the contrast between the thickness of the line, sometimes more pronounced to accentuate volume and mark shadows. The rigor and accuracy of the technique, reminiscent of his preparatory drawings for sculpture, evoke the teaching of the virtues of noble simplicity and wisdom.

Caught between two centuries, Jean-Guillaume Moitte knew how to adapt to all political regimes. With dual training in drawing and sculpture, he gained recognition under the monarchy by executing the funerary monument of Louis XV at Saint-Denis. Under the Directory, the eminent artist was appointed as commissioner tasked with collecting artworks in France to join the collections of the Louvre.

His talents as a draftsman were put to use in the realization of large Parisian decors such as the Pantheon, for which he executed the pediment, the theme of which, dedicated to the Motherland crowning Civic and Heroic Virtues, earned him great success, though destroyed upon the return of the Bourbons to the throne of France. Several statues of great generals of the army who fell in battle also emanated from his hand: the Count of Custine for the Palace of Versailles, the tomb of General Desaix at the Monastery of Grand-Saint-Bernard, as well as that of Leclerc, husband of Pauline Bonaparte, at the request of the Emperor.

M.O

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Réflexions sur l'imitation des œuvres grecques dans la sculpture et la peinture écrits, 1755



Jean-Baptiste LEPRINCE

(Metz, 1734 – Saint-Denis-du-Port, 1781)

10 | Rest on the Flight to Egypt (recto) Sketch of a Landscape with a peasant and his donkey (verso)

Signed and dated lower right: *le Prince 1769* Black chalk, sanguine, grey and sanguine wash on watermarked paper with a crowned fleur-de-lys blazon 34.8×32.1 cm. $(13 \frac{11}{6} \times 12 \frac{5}{6}$ in.)

Provenance:

• France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (Metz, 1734 Saint-Denis du Port, 1781): le voyage en Russie: collections de la ville de Rouen, exh. cat. Museum of Fine Arts, Drawings Department, Rouen, 2004.
- Jean-Baptiste Le Prince, exh. cat. Éditions du Musée de Metz, Museum of Modern Art, 1988.
- Mary-Elizabeth Hellyer, *Recherches sur Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (1734-1781)*, Doctoral Thesis, Art History and Archaeology, Paris IV, 1982.
- Jules Hedou, Jean Le Prince et son œuvre, Baur and Rapilly, Paris, 1879.
- Jean-Baptiste Le Prince, Gilles Demarteau, *Principes du dessin dans le genre du paysage*, A Paris chés Demarteau Graveur du Roi, rue de la Pelterie, à la Cloche, Paris, c. 1773.

Jean-Baptiste Le Prince spent his childhood in the city of Metz, and was the son of a master cabinet maker-sculptor and gilder, a fact which probably caused his precocious taste for the arts to develop. By adolescence, the young man's skill in drawing was noticed by the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, military governor, and it is undoubtedly under his protection that Le Prince entered François Boucher's studio in Paris. His first drawings can be dated to the years 1755-1757, when the artist did some work on the Abbé de Saint-Non's etchings under the patronage of Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Hubert Robert.

The first examples of his graphic work attest to his master's influence in their depictions of French landscapes enlivened by figures. His personality is already asserted in the precise rendering of nature which he conserved throughout his career.

At the age of 22, Le Prince went to Saint Petersburg upon convocation by the Imperial Chancellery of Buildings to join the workshop of painters decorating Empress Elisabeth's



Ill. 1
Jean-Baptiste LEPRINCE
The Prophet Punished for his Disobediance
Pen, bistre, wash, and white highlights on blue paper
30.7 x 41.6 cm. (12 1/16 x 16 1/2 in.)
Vienna, Albertina Museum (inv. 12338)





III. 2 Jean-Baptiste LEPRINCE Landscape with Shepherds, 1777 Black chalk 26.2 x 38.9 cm. (10 1/16 x 15 1/16 in.) Vienna, Albertina Museum (inv. 12345)

apartments in the Winter Palace. Commissions for him to do 45 over doors for the Tsarina and 39 for Peter III in the fashion of the day – that is to say, allegories, mythological scenes and landscapes - can be found in the archives. Following Catherine II's ascension to the throne, the painter traveled throughout the Russian Empire before returning to France in 1763: "Le Prince's delicate health did not adapt well to this rigorous temperature, and near the end of 1763, he had to return to France under the threat of succumbing to the effects of an illness that got worse every day." After these ten years spent abroad, Le Prince returned with an ample collection of drawings from nature which was then useful to him when he introduced himself to the Academy. He was received there "with general approval" as a master of genre scenes, as is mentioned in the Correspondance littéraire of 1765.

His "Russeries" were highly appreciated, especially by Diderot who encouraged the artist on the occasion of his first Salon the same year. Le Prince was broadly praised for his talents in the graphic arts.

With the engraver Gilles Demarteau, specialist in facsimiles of pencil work, the artist brought out *Principes*

du dessin dans le genre du paysage² (Principles of Drawing in the Genre of Landscape). The work demonstrates the importance the artist gave to studying nature that our work also evokes, in that nature takes up most of the composition. His production reveals the influence of Dutch art from the preceding century, especially that of Rembrandt, of whom the artist owned 73 engravings by or after the master, and of Wouwerman, [a record of] whose entire oeuvre he owned in the form of engravings by Jean Moyreau. In Le Prince's landscapes, the place given to figures is minimal. They enliven the scene without ever supplanting the role of Nature (ill. 1). Among the drawings in the original holdings of the Albertina Museum in Vienna, the work entitled Landscape with Shepherds, (ill. 2), is an example. At the Salon of the same year, Dupont de Nemours found he had "the merits of the French and Flemish Schools combined."3

Without real certainty, it is possible that the iconography of our drawing could be related to an episode in the New Testament of the Rest of the Virgin, Joseph and the Child in his cradle, accompanied by their donkey during their flight from Judea to Egypt (*Matthew*, 2, 13-23).



From his Nordic influences, Le Prince retained the foreshortening of figures seen from behind, such as the man depicted here in the foreground. As opposed to his contemporaries, Vigée-Le Brun, Tocqué, and Doyen whose work had been exported from France to Russia, Le Prince did the opposite. Diderot, at the Salon of 1767, while praising the artist's concern for precision in the depictions of his figures' attire, evoked his main merit as "the one who dressed well." In the group of figures in the lower left, the female figure facing the viewer wears a headdress framing her face similar to a Kokochnik reminiscent of popular Russian costumes. In terms of Dutch influence, the conception of the foliage is comparable to that of Salomon van Ruysdael, van Goyen and even Cornelis Decker, some of whose paintings were in his possession. Le Prince "had his own manner of rendering the foliage of oaks with art and great verity."5 The compositional balance is established through a few skillful masses of tufted branches rising and forming verdant fans which seem to move with the wind, thus energizing everything. After that, the artist works on foliage details with fine strokes of wash and sanguine which give the desired volume. Willows,

beaches, oaks, Le Prince observes Nature which he sketches on site. His hand renders the particular shapes of leaves, as well as those of the tree trunks with great acuity, thus making it possible to distinguish the different tree species, such as the beech in our composition.

Friends with Renou, Pajou, Wille, and Fragonard among others, Le Prince was a painter who enjoyed a great reputation in his lifetime. He was also associated with the art of tapestry for which he produced six cartoons of Russian Games for the Beauvais Manufactory.

¹ Jules Hedou, *Jean Le Prince et son œuvre*, Baur and Rapilly, Paris, 1879, p.27.

² Jean-Baptiste Le Prince, Gilles Demarteau, *Principes du dessin dans le genre du paysage*, A Paris chés Demarteau Graveur du Roi, rue de la Pelterie, à la Cloche, Paris, c. 1773.

³ Dupont de Nemours (ed. 1908), p. 58 (Salon of 1777).

⁴ Seznec and Adhémar, III, p. 218 (Salon of 1767), 1963.

⁵ Lecarpentier, 1821, p. 296.





Marguerite GÉRARD

(Grasse, 1761 – Paris, 1837)

11 | Portrait of a Young Woman wearing earrings

c. 1794-1795

Oil on canvas miniature fixed under glass Signed lower left: M^{te} gerard Diameter: 6.8 cm. (2 $^{11}/_{16}$ cm.)

Provenance:

• France, Private Collection.

Exhibition:

• Marguerite Gérard Artiste en 1789 dans l'atelier de Fragonard, Paris, Cognacq-Jay Museum, 2009, pp. 124-125, n° 32.

Bibliography:

• Carole Blumenfeld, Marguerite Gérard 1761-1837, Montreuil, 2019, p. 223, reproduced under n° 100P.

"At a very young age, while forewarned and still unknown, [Miss Gérard] timidly hid behind the reputation of her master and brother-in-law, Fragonard, [in order] to tear a tribute of praise from this often unjust audience which sometimes it refused, with superb prejudice, to award to youth and obscurity." ¹

Trained under her sister and brother-in-law, the eminent Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), the young lady from Grasse easily developed her talent in handling the brush. Inspired by the work of the man whom she considered her master, she paid special attention to his teaching of smooth delicate handling. Strongly influenced by him in the first years of her career, she freed herself in the 1780s and handled charming subjects which conveyed part of her delicate personality, including domestic scenes, lessons, teaching, and reading, in which the female figure held a dominant place.

In contrast to most of her contemporaries, Marguerite Gérard did not seek to enter the Academy and thus did not benefit from royal patronage. She was not represented in the first salons which were renewed until 1799, but rather entered those of the Society of Friends of the Arts. The artist preferred to find her social recognition in the choice of subjects and her own manner which made it possible to distinguish her from her colleagues.

The end of the century saw the development of the art of the miniature as an entirely separate specialty. Marguerite Gerard took advantage of this particularly favorable economic context and used this sudden craze to power her social recognition and once more demonstrate the meticulousness of her brush.

At a time when the demand for genre scenes became scarce, this new production marked a real turning point in her career and considerably increased her income. Her dexterity makes it possible to distinguish her work from her sister's, the miniaturist Marie-Anne Fragonard, who worked in the style of her husband whose work he willingly retouched. In both women's work, the figures of children, as well as of women, held a central role in small portraits.

Our portrait could date to the end of the Terror, in about 1794. To realize these miniatures, Marguerite Gérard preferred an especially delicate technique in which she made small oil on canvas paintings which she fixed under glass. This procedure made it possible to accentuate the minute details of the face in the handling of the cheeks, from the shadows under the eyes to the reflections in the gold ear rings which the sitter is wearing. These same details are found in some of her other works, as can be seen in the portrait of a young woman conserved in the Louvre Museum (ill. 1).





Ill. 1
Marguerite Gérard
Portrait de jeune femme
Miniature fixed under glass
Diameter 8 cm. (3 1/4 in.)
Signed Mte gerard
Paris, Louvre Museum, Graphic Arts Department (inv. RF. 2059).



Ill. 2
Marguerite Gérard
Portrait of a Young Woman with Ear Rings
Miniature fixed under glass
Diameter 6.5 cm. (2 %6 in.)
Signed Mte gerard
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum (inv. NMB 921).

Her virtuosity is also expressed in the care given to naturalism and individualization of the profiles. She judiciously chose to depict them bust length in order to display her ability to render physiognomy and the process of depicting flesh (ill. 2).

Whether working on an easel painting or a work whose diameter was no more than seven centimeters, Gérard paid great attention to the play of light and shade. Her brush, with an extreme finesse, allowed her to give the illusion of fabrics and layers. In our portrait, this handling is especially visible in the bow of the fichu, in the fold of fabric marking the bosom or even in the fine shawl with embroidered ends which covers the young woman's shoulders. This play with transparent materials also evokes a feeling of spontaneity and authenticity, while revealing a personal relationship between the artist and sitter.

In beginning her career the year in which Louis XVI was crowned, and painting her last picture when Charles X mounted onto the throne, Marguerite Gérard was one of the rare women artists to have known such a prolific career. She managed to raise her genre scenes to the level of history painting, a talent for which she was praised by critics who further complimented her for a talent in realizing miniatures which were systematically handled with the tenderness and feeling which she portrayed right up until her last portrait on the eve before the July Monarchy.

¹ Mémoire en cassation, pour le citoyen [Jacques-Louis] Bance... [1806], p. 477.



Charles-Louis CLÉRISSEAU

(Paris, 1721 – Auteuil, 1820)

12 | Architectural caprice enlivened by figures in front of a triumphal arch Architectural caprice with an ancient fountain enlivened by washerwomen

Gouache (bodycolor), brown wash over pen and ink lines, with contour in India ink forming pendants

First picture: signed and dated lower right 1781 Second picture: Signed and dated lower left 1782 61 x 47 cm. (2 ft. x 18 ½ in.)

Verso: ink inscription mentioning N° 12 and N° 15 respectively

Provenance:

• Private Collection, Paris, in the same family since about 1965.

Bibliography:

- T. J. McCormick, "Piranesi and Clérisseau's Vision of Classical Antiquity," Colloquium Acts, *Piranèse et les Français*, 1978.
- Louis Réau, Correspondance de Falconet avec Catherine II, 1767-1778, Paris, E. Champion, 1921.
- Florent-Antoine de Gille, Musée de l'Ermitage impérial: notice sur la formation de ce musée et description des diverse collections qu'il renferme: avec une introduction historique sur l'Ermitage de Catherine II, Saint-Pétersburg: Imperial Academy of Science Press, 1860.
- Charles-Louis Clérisseau: 1721-1820: dessins du Musée de l'Ermitage, Saint-Pétersbourg, exh. cat. Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1995.

An enigmatic figure in the art of painting ruins at the dawn of Neoclassicism, Charles-Louis Clérisseau combined his gifts for drawing and for architecture which placed him among the most famous ones in his generation. His works have been confused with those of his most eminent Italian and French contemporaries, such as Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691-1765) and Hubert Robert (1733-1808).

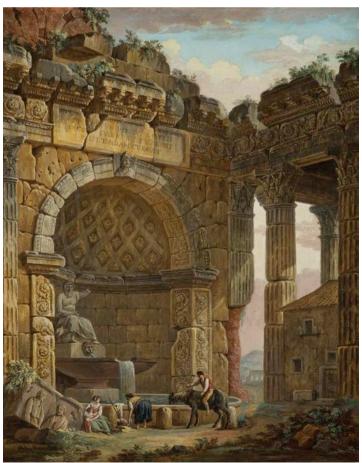
As a young prodigy, Clérisseau naturally won the *Prix de Rome* in 1746, although he didn't arrive in Italy until three years later. Like his fellow students, he studied at the Academy under Giovanni Paolo Piranesi (1720-1778), the uncontested master of architectural painting who was then teaching the art of perspective. Fascinated by the poetry of the ruins which surrounded and inspired him, he executed many drawings and bodycolors based on his environment.

At the end of his training, Clérisseau, who had become a prolific artist, decided not to return to France



Ill. 1 Charles-Louis CLÉRISSEAU Triumphal Arch of Septime Sévère in Rome, 1783 Body color, pen and brown wash, India ink contours 46 x 59.3 cm. (18 ½ x 23 ¾ in.) Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum (inv. OP-11485)





immediately. He only returned 15 years later, in 1767. His talent in the practice of gouache was applauded by the Royal Academy where he was received in 1769. Our two works, dated 1781 and 1782, thus date from the French period of his career.

Like his fellow architects, Marie-Joseph Peyre (1730-1785) and Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1781), he willingly adhered to the Neoclassical wave which invaded Europe and whose aesthetic and ideological characteristics fit him in every respect. The famous Archaeologist and Historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) who described the foundations of Neoclassicism became friends with Clerisseau. He admired and encouraged the artist's work via productive epistolary exchanges. In his works, the artist was committed to transcribing the noble simplicity and calm grandeur evoked by Winckelmann in *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Sculpture and Painting*, published in 1755.

Admiring a perpetually creative Antiquity, Clerisseau chose to use vestiges in Rome to the utmost as his main repertory for forms. These monuments are considered as *mementi*, guardians of History as prodigious and remarkable as they were evocative of the emperors whose regrets are expressed architectural ruins and statues. Antiquity became the ultimate reference in art, the embodiment of wisdom and ideal beauty establishing a continuity between ancient Rome and the modern era. Wars and victories are sculpted in the stone of triglyphes, metopes, and lintels of multiple temples and triumphal arches.

Clerisseau's work was known internationally, especially in Russia where Empress Catherine II had reigned since 1762. Skillfully advised, she purchased most of the artist's production in 1780, that is to say, eighteen portfolios of drawings and bodycolors which instantly were incorporated into the Hermitage collections. During her 34 year reign, the Empress' acquisition policies allowed her to assemble several thousand paintings and drawings which make it one of the most prestigious collections of European art. In 1867, a work catalogued the collections of the Imperial Gallery (Imperatoriskij Ermitazh). Among the 11,880 drawings constituting the collection, "CHARLES-LOUIS CLERISSEAU (painter of architecture, born in Paris in 1721, died in the same city in 1820): 1148 views of Rome, Naples, and other Italian cities, including many drawings of ancient buildings and monuments (N^s 1842-2621, 11444, 11686, 11756, 11777).1

Choosing to conserve only a small part of his collection – that from which our two bodycolors seem to have come – Clerisseau wished to instruct the younger generation of artists and prepare them for the trip to Italy. The catalogue of his post-mortem sale thus mentions the bodycolors, collections of sketches, and fifteen portfolios containing compositions, views of Italy, architectural details, and figures from the artist's "better times."

These two works form a skillful mix of existing elements and fantasies blending different atmospheres and elements of ruins which could have been admired during fifteen years spent in Rome. In his work, architectural caprices are systematically enlivened by scenes of daily life. His bodycolors thus illustrate a relationship which sometimes bear a tragic and sometimes hedonistic relationship to life when the pagan joy of the figures meets ancient divinities.

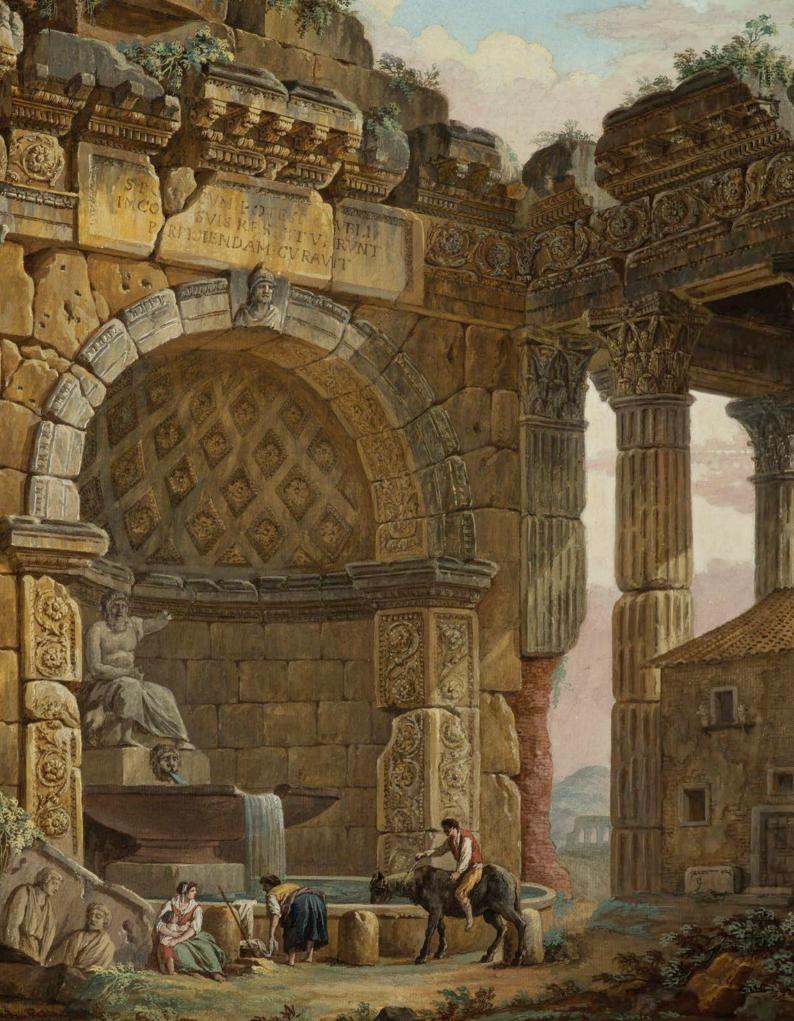
Of all the different arches raised by the Roman emperors Clerisseau was probably inspired by that of Titus Septimus Severus – which he had, for that matter, previously studied (ill. 1) or that of Constantine when he imagined the ruins in the first bodycolor. His façade presents a pediment decorated with Latin inscriptions including SPQR, the emblematic Roman motto which signified Senatus populusque Romanus (the Senate and the Roman people), symbol of the Republic founded in 509 B.C. On the lintel, the low relief presents different trophies of arms and helmets as an allegory of war and of a victorious epic.

The second bodycolor illustrates a semi-circular niche with a cupola embellished by a coffered vault in pumice stone characteristic of the Roman era, and evidence of the technical prowess whose popularity was launched with the construction of the Pantheon during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117-138).

Two washerwomen and a traveler mounted on a donkey are resting near a triumphal fountain under the cupola. The vestige of a marble fountain, it is topped by a statue depicting the sovereign Roman god Jupiter, a power symbol associated with celestial harbingers associated with divination practices. Since then, the god incarnates the superiority of ancient Rome. The original version of Jupiter, known as the Verospi Jupiter, is a marble model now conserved in the Vatican museums (ill. 2).

Constructed on the basis of drawings sketched on-site, the artist meticulously reworked his pictures in the







III. 2

Seated Statue of Jupiter, called the Verospi Jupiter

Marble, IIIrd century

Only the upper part of the torso to the legs is ancient; the arms, certain parts of the face and and hair, and the rest of the body were integrated into the sculpture in the 18th century.

Rome, Vatican Pio-Clementino Museum Gallery of Busts, 77 (Inv. n° 671)

studio. Bathed in a soft summery atmosphere, our two bodycolors fully illustrate the artist's technical dexterity in ingeniously placing the light accents on a few figures who enliven and give rhythm to the compositions.

The spectacular format of our sheets, usually reserved for painting, recall those which were delivered to the Hermitage. The utilization of gouache is not anodyne: situated between drawing and painting, this technique allows rapid yet delicate production. The harmony of the whole is rigorously studied in the willingness to balance colors in shades of ochre and grisaille with mass and volume. Gouache allows one to render the effects of transparency and surfaces of materials, such as the texture of the stone, polished in places and grainy in others, as well as the gentleness of Nature which claims its rights and gradually invades the ruins.

In Italy, Clerisseau prolonged the Antique era which he blended with the modern world. The elegance emanating from his works recalls the classicism of ancient Greece exploited by the Romans whose aesthetic was founded on equilibrium and rationality, an intellectual and refined art with which Clerisseau identified.

The artist was very successful in his lifetime. His influence extended through Italy, France, and – following his encounter with the architect brothers Robert and James Adam – England, as well as the New World. Fascinated by the *Maison carrée* in Nimes, Thomas Jefferson, when Ambassador of the United States to France (1784-1789) solicited Clerisseau for the construction of the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond.

¹ Collection des dessins: Galerie no. XII Ermitage impérial, Imperial Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, 1867, pp. V-VI.

John FLAXMAN, attributed to

(York, 1755 - Londres, 1826)

13 | The Teaching of Socrates

Pen, brown ink wash, and highlights of white gouache on black chalk lines 37×63.5 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- David Irwin, John Flaxman 1755-1826: sculptor, illustrator, designer, London: Studio Vista: Christie's, 1979
- Robert R. Wark, *Drawings by John Flaxman in the Huntington collection*, San Marino, Calif.: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1970

Born in York with fragile health in 1755, John Flaxman was obliged to be confined at a very young age. Thus began his artistic training in his father's workshop, the modeller John Flaxman known as John I. By his side, he drew and modelled figures in wax or clay. At the same time, the young man showed an early taste for Antiquity through diligent study of Greek and Latin. At the age of 12, he was noticed at the Free Society of Artists for a drawn copy from the antique, and the following year, for a bust. Naturally, he joined the Royal Academy in 1769, where his talent in sculpture made him the youngest sculptor of his generation. The same year, he received his first medal. He remained at the Academy for 18 years, during which he produced numerous drawings, the subjects mainly drawn from mythology destined for the decorations of the ceramics of the famous firm of MM. Wedgwood.

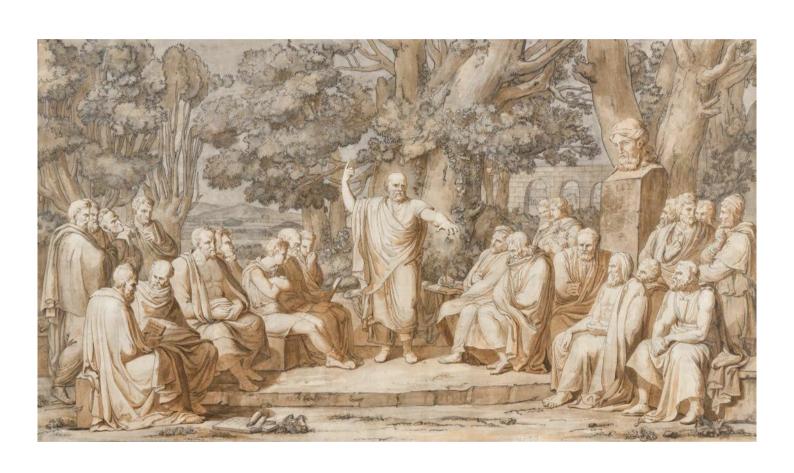
Caught in the wave of Neoclassicism that swept through Europe in the 18th century, with the revelation of Herculaneum in 1738 and Pompeii ten years later, Flaxman followed the extraordinary fad for using Antiquity as a model of reference. A sculptor but also a brilliant draftsman, the artist quickly understood that substituting English style for the antique would bring him great success. From England, he thus participated in the revival of the prestige of Italy and notably Rome, considered the source of Western European civilisation. The journey to Italy appeared as an indispensable complement to his training: in the autumn of 1787, the newspapers announced the departure of the young prodigy. Upon his arrival, Flaxman was 32 years old, and he was now considered one of the greatest artists that Britain had produced.

From his academic training, Flaxman tackled classical subjects as well as historical subjects, mainly selecting those drawn from Greek Antiquity, rarely translated into painting, a telling evocation of his rigorous culture. In Italy, he tirelessly copied bas-reliefs, statues, and ancient monuments that fed his repertoire of forms and nourished his inspiration for his sculptures.

The predominance of drawing in his career places Flaxman both as a draftsman and as a sculptor. This practice perfectly responds to the Neoclassical phenomenon: the rigor and precision of his lines allow him to express its grand principles. Powerfully figurative, his drawings abstract from colour and the carving of space. The interest lies in educating the viewer's eye to the *exemplum virtutisi*, which mixes heroism and virtues, the watchwords of ancient civilisations. For this, he also draws on the legacy of Poussin as a reference with strong moral significance.

In the last decade of the century, Flaxman gained recognition by producing series of engravings illustrating the tales of the most famous authors of Greek Antiquity such as Hesiod, Aeschylus, and Homer, which he had already read in his father's workshop. His drawings were translated into engravings by Tommaso Piroli (1752-1824) and then gathered into collections, thus allowing the expansion of his name in Europe.

Flaxman cherished scenes of sacrifices, battles, the theme of the funeral bed glorifying the death of heroes, abductions, but also scenes of teaching as evidenced by the work presented here. He favoured the composition in frieze,





Ill. 1
John Flaxman
Projet de frise d'après un sarcophage romain : La première visite de Bacchus à Ariane
Pen, black ink, and grey wash on grey paper, 24.9 x 64.4 cm.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 61.129.2)

privileging the statism and gravity of the actors, frozen like statues, which recall his dual training (*ill.* 1 & 2).

At the centre of the composition appears Socrates, imparting his knowledge to an assembly of scholars. More than a philosopher, the figure of Socrates embodies the virtue of teaching and the greatness of ancient Greece. The great ancient principles are evoked through his silhouette alone, while the transmission of knowledge is symbolised by his right arm raised towards the sky. This detail symbolises Greek philosophy, widely represented by his contemporaries (ill. 3), but the most famous representation remains undoubtedly Raphael's 'The School of Athens' (Room of the Signature of the Vatican Museums).

Flaxman was proficient in Greek. This language, a written symbol of a bygone era that he cherished so much, finds its place in some drawings, such as here on the column to the right supporting a bust of a philosopher – probably Sophocles – bearing the letters sigma, iota, and omega (Σ I Ω).

The dexterity with which he traces the outlines of his figures is a characteristic element of his production that brings our drawing closer to his work. The pen allows for

meticulous and refined lines that highlight details such as Michelangelesque hair and beards, musculature down to the phalanges or even the toes of the figures. The whole is complemented by a skilful use of brown wash that renders shadows, adds volume, and emphasises foreshortenings. The artist would be recognised for the clarity of his drawings and the ingenious simplicity of understanding his works that exalt ancient moral values. The significant dimensions, the thickness of the sheet, and the complexity of the technique suggest that this is not preparatory work for a bas-relief, but indeed a finished work that probably was to join an album.

When death interrupted him, John Flaxman was a recognised artist, at the peak of a prolific career. His sculptural talents were put to use for the commemoration of public buildings such as the new Houses of Parliament, the commemorative shield of the 1851 Exhibition, and the Albert Memorial; other sculptures and bas-reliefs adorn the Covent Garden Theatre and the monuments of Chichester and Westminster.

¹ Expression of the art historian Robert Rosenblum (1927-2006).



Ill. 2 John Flaxman *Oreste poursuivi par les furies* Pen and black ink, 18.28 x 80.2 cm London, Victoria & Albert Museum (inv. 83-1899)



Ill. 3
Jacques Louis David (1748–1825) (et atelier?) *La mort de Socrate*Vers 1782
Pen, black ink, and grey ink wash on black chalk.
24.4 x 37.8 cm
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 2013.59)





Félicité LABOREY

(Active around 1793-1815)

14 | Portrait of a female artist at her desk, leaning on her portfolio, in front of a window opening onto a landscape

Black stone, stump, and white highlights 24×21.5 cm Signed at the bottom right Felicité A.

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Exhibition:

• Probably Salon of 1793: «Portrait of a Woman Leaning on a Table», under number 291

Bibliography:

- · Olivier Blanc, Portraits de femmes, artistes et modèles à l'époque de Marie-Antoinette, pages 21, 65, 68, 85-87.
- Camille Mauclair, *Histoire de la miniature féminine française : le XVIII^e siècle l'Empire la Restauration*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1925

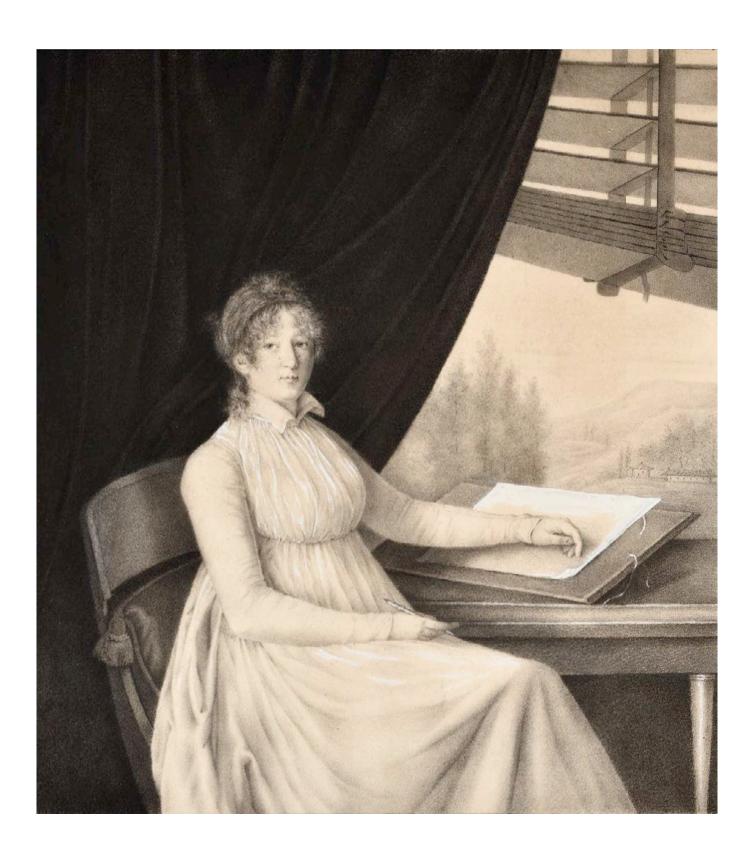
The life and work of Citizen Laborey remain mysterious. Nevertheless, she was a diligent female artist who exhibited at the Salon at the end of the revolutionary period in 1793, as well as during the first year of the Directory in 1795. Emmanuel Benezit mentions that she gave her address as 23 rue Vendôme in the Marais, then rue Saint-Denis in 1795: at the end of the 18th century, miniature painters were tenants and moved regularly, a providential choice as many landlords were professionally linked to art. The artist's production seems to have continued into the Empire period (*ill.* 1) and until the early years of the Restoration, around 1815.

The Salon of 1793 mentions that the artist exhibited under number 291 a work titled «Portrait of a Woman Leaning on a Table.» Our drawing depicts the same subject, and the dating of the woman's clothing and furniture corresponds to this period. In the last decade of the 18th century, choices of fabrics evolved, silk and velvet were abandoned in favor of wool for men and light, airy fabrics for women. The young woman here wears a cinched waist dress made of muslin, which appears light and airy. In vogue at the time, the cinched waist dress would later be adopted during the Directory and then during the Empire, becoming lighter and



Ill. 1
Félicité Laborey
Portrait of a woman in a white dress wearing a red cashmere shawl
Watercolor and gouache on ivory
9 x 7.8 cm

Location: The Tansey Miniatures Foundation (inv. 10416), Cologne, Germany





Ill. 2
Anne Guéret (1760-1805)

Portrait of an artist leaning on a portfolio,
likely a self-portrait of the artist

Black chalk, stump, pen, gray wash, and highlights of white gouache on buff paper
32 x 40.4 cm

Exhibited at the Salon of 1793 under number 765

Private collection



III. 3
French School circa 1790
Portrait of a woman at her window holding a fan
Black stone and white highlights
22.5 x 20.5 cm
Private collection

more décolleté. The emerging taste for Antiquity also influenced hairstyling, which sought to replicate those of ancient statues. The Titus hairstyle was all the rage, for both men and women, worn here by the model. Hair was cut or pulled up at the nape, a true revolution in contrast to the fashion under the Ancien Régime. The woman's hair here seems to be tied in a bun; a ribbon encircles her head, elegantly holding the hair, with curls cascading down the front and temples. This hairstyle would be popularized during the Empire by Hortense de Beauharnais, who wore it in most of her effigies.

Precision seems to be one of the major qualities of our artist, which she employs in the production of small portraits. The work could also be a *mise en abyme*: the artist may have depicted herself leaning on a drawing board, a position found in many self-portraits. The same year, Anne Guéret exhibited at the Salon a portrait of a woman leaning on a portfolio, now considered a probable self-portrait (*ill.* 2). At the border of miniature, the restricted dimensions of our drawing highlight the dexterity of the artist's hand. Her virtuosity is expressed through the care given to every detail of the composition, from the use of stump to soften the overall effect, to the delicate treatment of light illuminating the precise and pure lines of the face that render its psychology, to the treatment

of each individually drawn hair. Subtle use of white emphasizes the volume of the folds of the dress and highlights essential elements such as the drawing board, an attribute of the artist.

Before being a miniaturist, Félicité Laborey was an excellent portraitist. A recently surfaced drawing can be compared to our work, both in technique and dating (*ill.* 3). The work depicts a young woman seated at her window overlooking a landscape, holding a fan in her hand. The use of black stone and stump renders the details of the model's physiognomy with similar acuity to our drawing. The whole is also highlighted with white, emphasizing here the fine veil covering the hair.

Miniature as well as small portraits saw a real boom at the end of the century. Their reduced format allowed for lower prices and made them accessible to a wider audience, thus forming a new source of significant income. Félicité Laborey joined this community of female artists in search of recognition. While the participation of miniature painters at the Salon of 1791 remains modest, the presentation of her work in 1793 and then 1795 has allowed us to restore the memory of an artist whose dexterity readily compares to the great names of her time.

M.O



Horace VERNET

(Paris, 1789-1863)

15 The Wild Horse Race during Carnaval in Rome

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, and white gouache highlights 11×16 cm. $(4\%16 \times 6\%16$ in.)

Provenance:

- · Paris, Galerie de Bayser
- France, Private Collection.

Bibliography:

- *Horace Vernet (1789-1863)*, exh. cat. curated by Valérie Bajou and Élise Tandeau de Marsac, Dijon: éditions Faton; Versailles: Château de Versailles, 2023.
- Pierre Sanchez, Horace Vernet dessinateur lithographe 1816-1838. Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre lithographié, Dijon, L'Échelle de Jacob, 2016.
- Horace Vernet (1789-1863), [exh. cat.], Rome, French Academy; Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, March-July, 1980
- Félix de Bona, Une Famille de peintres: Horace Vernet et ses ancêtres, Lille, Desclée, de Brouwer and Co. 1891.

As he was from a family of artists, Horace Vernet became familiar at a young age with a variety of techniques, including drawing, engraving and painting. He was the grandson of the famous Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-1789), seascape painter *par excellence*, and son of Antoine-Charles-Horace, called Carle Vernet (1758-1836), who stood out for his military paintings. He learned technique from his father and developed a particular attraction for equine depictions. In the paternal studio, Horace Vernet had the fortune to encounter the Romantic master, Theodore Gericault, with whom he developed a friendship. Horace Vernet, by the way, did a portrait of Gericault in 1824, the year of his premature death.

A few years later, Vernet entered François-André Vincent's studio, and crowned his training by winning the *Prix de Rome* in 1810. Very appreciated by the Bonaparte clan, he was to be chosen to do several portraits of Napoleon before the latter's eviction, even as he became close to Jerome, King of Westphalia who also commissioned an equestrian portrait.

Horace Vernet remained faithful to the Empire, even after its collapse. During the first years of the Restoration, his prolific studio was frequented by many artists and other illustrious people who were hostile to Louis XVIII's reign. Paradoxically, Vernet received valuable



Ill. 1
Theodore Géricault (1791-1824)
Wild Horse Race in Rome, 1817
Oil on paper laid down on canvas
45.1 x 60 cm. (17 ¾ x 23 ¾ in.)
Lille, Palace of FineArts (inv. P. 475)

support from Louis-Philippe which enabled him to exhibit certain works in his studio which were considered antiroyalist and refused for the Salon. Nonetheless, because of the artist's incontrovertible talent, he stood out in the Salons of 1826 and 1827, and was appointed Director of the Academy of France in Rome in 1829, a position which he occupied until his death in 1835.





III. 2
Horace Vernet
Wild Horse Race in Rome, 1820
Oil on canvas
46 x 54 cm. (18 ½ in. x 21 ¼ in.)
New York, Metropolitan Museum (inv. 87.15.47)



Ill. 3 Antoine-Charles-Horace, called Carle Vernet (1758-1836) Race of the Barbary Horses in Rome, Carnaval Scene 95 x 138 cm. (3 ft. 1 ¾ in. x 4 ft. 6 ¾ in.) Avignon, Calvet Museum(inv. 827.2)

The career of a military painter entailed rigorous study of the cavalry through observation of horse anatomy. Like his predecessor Gericault, Vernet displayed brilliant ease in execution of it. Our drawing shows the influence of the stay in Italy on the artist. The subject is familiar and was handled by Gericault in 1817 (ill. 1): it consists of one of many sketches which were to serve in the execution of a work measuring about ten meters wide which in the end was never realized.

The picture depicts the departure of a race of wild horses in Rome, also called the *Race of the Barbary Horses*. Like his predecessor, Vernet depicts a few horses who have just exited their enclosure and struggle violently to escape the hands of the grooms who have a hard time holding them back. The work expresses the extreme fiery nervousness and excitement of these two rearing horses. To do so, Vernet sketched the forms close up in a very limited format with rapid pen strokes which communicate omnipresent tension.

The almost oppressive sense of animal energy and power is transmitted through the use of brown wash with accentuates the shadows, on the one hand and on the other, by clever use of white gouache which brings out the musculature of the horse on the right as a dominant compositional element. In this Romantic trend inspired

by Gericault, Vernet thus illustrates the domination of the animal, and beyond that, of wild Nature over man, by exacerbating this uncontrollable power.

On can easily think that Vernet, like Gericault, realized this work in Italy after having attended this popular festival known as the Carnaval of Rome during which parades took place in the streets between *Piazza del Popolo* and *Piazza Venezia*, and horse races were held on the famous Corso.

With this sketch, Vernet demonstrates his undeniable gift for equestrian depictions. The work is imbued with a verve and fiery spirit characteristic of the Romantic trend which makes it possible to evoke the artist's emotional sensitivity.

This sketch probably served as a *première pensée* for the realization of the oil on canvas painting by the artist in 1820 now conserved in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (*ill. 2*) and which probably inspired the artist's father to produce a canvas depicting the same subject on an even more ambitious scale. The wider composition made it possible to bring attention to the large crowd present in the bleachers in the background who are waiting impatiently for the show to begin (*ill 3*).

M.O.



Jean-Baptiste-Louis MAES called MAES-CANINI

(Ghent, 1794 - Rome, 1856)

16 | Four Studies of Women and Children

 2^{nd} quarter of 19^{th} century Pencil and oil on prepared paper laid down on canvas 44×58.35 cm. (1 ft. 5 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. x 1 ft. 11 in.)

Provenance:

• France, private collection

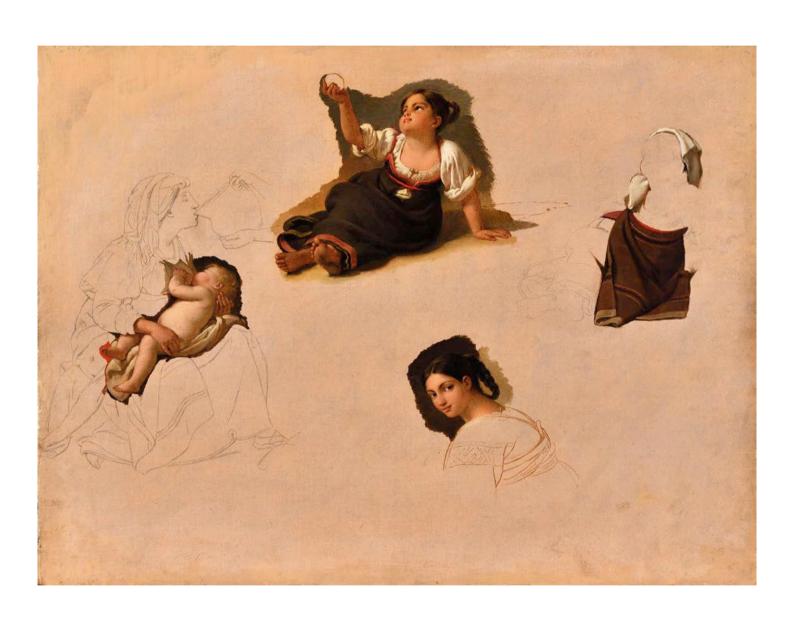
As opposed to someone like François-Joseph Navez (Charleroi, 1788 – Brussels, 1869) who, having left for Rome to perfect his education, only stayed there for four years, certain of his contemporary Belgian painters chose to stay there permanently. Such was the case with Martin Verstappen from Antwerp (1773 – Rome 1852) and the painter from Ghent, Jean-Baptiste-Louis Maes, called Maes-Canini. While the first found his place in landscape painting, the second established himself by the mid 1820s as one of the painters most in demand in Rome for a popular genre of "Italian scenes."

Trained in the Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, Jean-Baptiste-Louis Maes demonstrated an early talent. He thus swept up the prizes for the school Fine Arts competitions in which he participated: in Mechelen in 1810, Ghent in 1817, Brussels in 1818, Antwerp and Amsterdam in 1819. Elected a member of the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Ghent in 1820, he was accorded an annual allowance by the city for two years in order to pursue his training in foreign countries. From Paris where he stayed along with the landscape painter François Vervloet (Mechelen, 1795 - Venice, 1872), he successfully competed for the Academy of Antwerp's *Prix de Rome* in 1821. Flush with a subsidy from the Belgian government, he rapidly set off for the Eternal City in the company of Vervloet. Leaving Paris in mid-August 1821, the two artists arrived at the destination on September 16th.

When he entered Rome, Jean-Baptiste-Louis Maes was a confirmed artist who had already worked in various genres: History painting, allegory, portraiture. New commissions for painting came from his native city, including a large altarpiece: *The Holy Family with*

Saint Anne and Saint Joachim for the Church of Saint Michael. These marks of interest for his painting filled the artist with enthusiasm and furthered his ambition to become a History painter: "I just learned with a great deal of satisfaction that the Church of Saint Michael [in Ghent] just commissioned me to make a picture for the Chapel of Saint Anne," he wrote on June 30th, 1824 to Lievin De Bast, the Secretary of the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Ghent, "now I am very happy to have occasion to be able to devote myself entirely to historical genre; and I will do the most to acquit myself honorably in meeting the general expectations of the public and of my compatriots; here I am content and happy to find myself always in the midst of masterpieces."

With a small group Belgian and Dutch compatriots, including Vervloet and Verstappen who were already cited, Hendrik Voogd (Amsterdam, 1768 - Rome 1839), Cornelis Kruseman (Amsterdam, 1797 -Lisse, 1857), Philippe Van Brée (Antwerp, 1786 - Saint-Josse-ten-Nood, 1871), and the sculptor Mathieu Kessels (Maestricht, 1784 - Rome, 1836), Maes went on excursions into the Roman countryside, visiting the Alban Hills, Castel Gondolfo, Genzano, Nemi, Palestrina, Zargalo, Fracati, Grottaferrata, and places known for the beauty of the villagers and their shimmering colorful costumes. He also frequented more cosmopolitan circles. Thus in July 1823, he found himself at the Santa Scolastica Convent in Subiaco, in the company of Vervloet, the mysterious Russian Abasettel, the Frenchmen Louis Etienne Watelet (Paris, 1780 – 1866), Raymond Quinsac Monvoisin (Bordeaux, 1790 – Boulogne-sur-Seine, 1870), and François Antoine Leon Fleury (Paris, 1804-1858).4 He also frequented Germanic artists.



Stimulated by his colleagues and by the special atmosphere of the Eternal City, he turned more and more towards the then-fashionable genre of Italianate scenes. He announced to Lièvin de Bast in his letter of June 30th, 1824: "I have the honor of announcing to you that I just sent three pictures at the beginning of the month, depicting a St. Sebastian, an old woman praying, and the third, the *Pifferari* before a Madonna; at the beginning of next month, I will send another whose subject is a young and beautiful *Vignerola* with an old man, a life-size group." These pictures figured in the Ghent Salon of 1824.

From then on, and with the exception of a few new religious paintings, such as *The Good Samaritan* of 1825 (fig. 3), he mainly devoted himself to "Italian scenes," and became one of the specialists in this genre in Rome. His success was such that in 1834, he ran a studio in which he employed several young artists in order to complete his numerous commissions. Gifted with an incontestable mastery of drawing, as well as of rendering surfaces and materials - whether it be the delicate flesh tones of young girls, the roughness of old cracked walls, the heavy fabrics of wool or the light linen shirts, - he delighted in flattering his clients' taste with somewhat simpering or affected depictions of picturesque Roman country people. Furthermore, certain works are not without evoking, in insipid mawkish affected modes, the paintings of Leopold Robert (La-Chauxde-Fonds, 1794 – Venice, 1835), with whom, as Denis Ciejekberghs suggests, he undoubtedly was in contact. Jean-Baptiste-Louis Maes explored themes belonging to the genre by depicting pilgrims, hermits, shepherds, peasants, and *pifferari*.

In 1827 in Rome, Jean-Baptiste-Louis Maes married Anne Maria, the daughter of the engraver Bartolomeo Canini, and settled permanently in the city. From then on, he added his wife's name to his own. From their marriage a son Giacomo was born in 1828 who was to become a painter as well. Maes-Canini remained a useful relay for Belgian artists arriving and staying in Rome.

Until now, we did not know of any preparatory studies for pictures by the artist. This sheet of studies in pencil and oil is thus the first piece of evidence on his manner of working. Four studies of figures are discovered: one of an Italian mother drinking from a water pitcher which is held out to her while she is nursing her child; the second depicts an Italian girl seated on the ground and holding out an object in the right hand to a figure who is not shown, but at whom she gazes with a smile; the third study is of a young Italian woman seen from behind and turning her head towards the viewer; the last study seems to combine two figures, an Italian woman also seated on the ground over whom the artist has superposed a woman's bust with her head covered in a white scarf.

It has been possible to compare two of these studies to pictures by the painter: the study of the young woman seen from behind in relation to *Portrait of a Young Italian Woman*, dated 1828 (fig. 1), and the study of a seated girl, which is inverted compared to the painting, *The Preparations for a Ceremony*, dated 1852 (fig. 2). These discoveries obviously provide a chronological range stretching over almost a quarter of a century.

It is testimony to the Maes-Canini's meticulous work in perfecting his figures. Trained in rigorous Neoclassical technique, he defined the silhouette of each of them with a light pencil outline. He then colored his figures by giving them body and volume through subtle gradations of light and shade. As with Navez or his compatriot from Ghent, Joseph Paelinck (Ghent, 1781 – Ixelles, 1839), Maes-Canini's painting appears to be a successful synthesis of the Flemish masters' colorist tradition and the firm draughtsmanship of Davidian Neoclassicism which the painter from Ghent had made a point of studying during his Parisian sojourn.

Alain Jacobs

¹ For J.B.L. Maes-Canini, refer especially to L. De Bast, Annales du Salon de Gand et de l'école moderne des Pays-Bas, Ghent, P.F. De Goesin-Verhaeghe, 1823, pp. 135-136; D. Coekelberghs, Les peintres belges à Rome de 1700 à 1830, Brussels-Rome, Belgian Historical Institut in Rome, III, 1976, pp. 404-406; and A. Jacobs & P. Loze, 1770-1830. Autour du Néoclassicisme en Belgique, exh. cat. Ixelles, Municipal Museum, 1985/86, pp. 243-245, 433.

² This is *The Holy Family with Saint Anne and Saint Joachim*, 1827, oil on canvas, 285 x 215 cm. (9 ft. 4 ¾6 in. x 7 ft. ¾ in.) Chent, St. Michael's Church.

³ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-D-2017-888.

⁴ D. Coekelberghs 1976, p. 340.







Henri-Joseph HARPIGNIES

(Valenciennes, 1819 - Saint-Privé, 1916)

17 | The Aumance Valley

1873

Watercolor

Dédicated, siged and dated, lower left: à *l'ami Dubufe HJ Harpignies 1873* ("To Friend Dubufe HJ Harpignies 1873") Situated lower right: *La Vallée de l'Aumance* 28 x 48 cm. (11 x 18 % in.)

Provenance:

- Sale, Maître Bellier, Hôtel Drouot, Jan. 28th, 1955, n° 24;
- France, Private Collection.

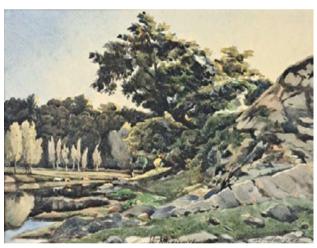
Bibliograpy:

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

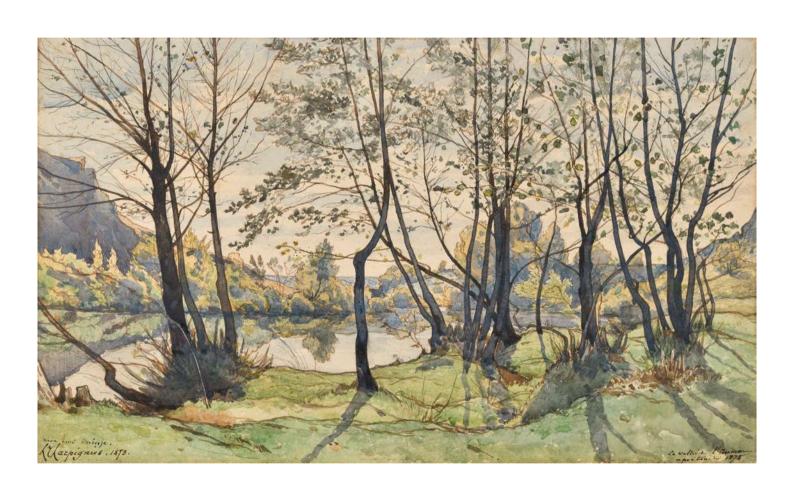
Henri-Joseph Harpignies began a career as a traveling salesman before devoting himself to his artistic passions when 27 years old by taking lessons from the landscape painter Jean Achard (1807-1884).

Passionate about Italy which he visited twice, he fully immersed himself in the sweetness of the Roman countryside which occupied most of his works from these travels. Upon returning to Paris, his talent was praised during his first exhibition at the Salon in 1853, thanks to an open-air painting entitled View of Capri. He subsequently won many prizes and medals which made it possible for him to carve a choice place among the landscape painters of his generation. Harpignies avowed real admiration for the painters of the School of 1830, especially Corot, whom he considered his master and from whom he drew inspiration in the beginning before gradually developing his own style, an expression of his personality through delicate works which ravished the eyes of viewers seeking a change of scenes.

Inspired by the writings of the philosophers, contemporary scientific questioning, and Nature's lyricism, painters had been venturing outside the studio since the mid 18th century, and the practice of outdoor sketching flourished throughout Europe in the following century.



Ill. 1 Henri Joseph HARPIGNIES (1819-1916) The Shore of the Armance Watercolor Signed lower center: HJ Harpignies; dedicated right: à Guigné 25 x 33 cm. (9 ½ x 13 in.) Private Collection.





Ill. 2 Henri Joseph HARPIGNIES (1819-1916) The Banks of the Aumance Watercolor, Signed lower left: h.j. Harpignies 24 x 46.5 cm. (9.4 18 18 16 in.) Private Collection.

to the views drawn from his productive Italian travels, Harpignies joined the path opened by the Barbizon painters, and introduced forests, seas, streams and rivers from French territory to his pictorial repertory. This peaceful vision of Nature handled unpretentiously recreates the artist's grand sensitivity with obvious spontaneity. The artist seems to have set his easel in the Allier in the early 1870s. He multiplied views of the Aumance Valley there, a stream which crossed more than ten towns (*ill. 1 and 2*). The considerable format of our folio augurs a painted work of an even more ambitious size. This watercolor could thus have served as a *première pensée* for the painted version depicting the same subject which is conserved today in the Museum of Fine Arts in Valenciennes (*ill. 3*).

All of our composition is devoted to Nature. In addition

Outdoor painting allowed the artist to be brought face to face with an exercise from reality: the weather conditions and natural light in perpetual movement demanded excellent mastery of drawing and of color. These precious works were realized directly on site, inspired by Nature's poetry in its pure state, lauded for the beauty of its simplicity. The exercise required rigorous study of light which the artist seems to have studied in particular for this composition. The fleeting effects of light traversing the branches make shadows in the trees dance, while their meager foliage announces spring's arrival.

Our work is evidence of this taste for Nature's truth, communicated here in transparencies, thanks to the use of watercolor, a practice situated between painting and drawing. It makes it possible here in this drawing to communicate the wind's caresses on foliage, the texture of grass heated by the sun, even as the sky's reflection in the resting stream seems to be frozen in time.

An excellent draughtsman, Harpignies met with lively success as a watercolorist when he exhibited at the New Watercolour Society in London. Nicknamed the "Michelangelo of trees" during his lifetime, the artist fascinated his public with the sweetness which emanated from his work and which he managed to breathe into each of his works, whether they were sketched, watercolor, or painted.

Probably conserved in the artist's personal collections, this study, like most, was not meant to be exhibited or sold. Essential resources for creation [of paintings], the sketches made it possible to rework pictures in the studio and instantly find the freshness and spontaneity of a particular moment.

M.O.

¹ Artist's nickname given by Anatole France (1844-1924), writer and literary critic under the IIIrd Republic.



Émile CLAUS

(Waregem, 1849 - Deinze, 1924)

18 View of a quay on the Thames in London, effects of fog

1918 Pastel on paper 30 x 23 cm

Signed, dated, and located at the bottom left: «E. Claus 18 London»

Provenance:

- Collection Baron Maurice Lemonnier (1860-1930)
- France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Camille Lemonnier, Émile Claus, G. van Oest & Co., Brussels, 1908
- François Maret, Émile Claus, De Sikkel for the Ministry of Public Instruction, Antwerp, 1949
- Constantin Ekonomidès, Émile Claus (1849-1924), Bibliothèque de l'image, Paris, 2013

«He simply let his heart speak and expressed through colors all the music that sang within him.»
(Camille Lemonnier)

In the midst of the industrial revolution, the mid-19th century witnessed numerous societal upheavals prompting artists to depict a new daily reality and a popular truth endowed with a naturalism of light, of which Émile Claus became the leading figure in Belgium.

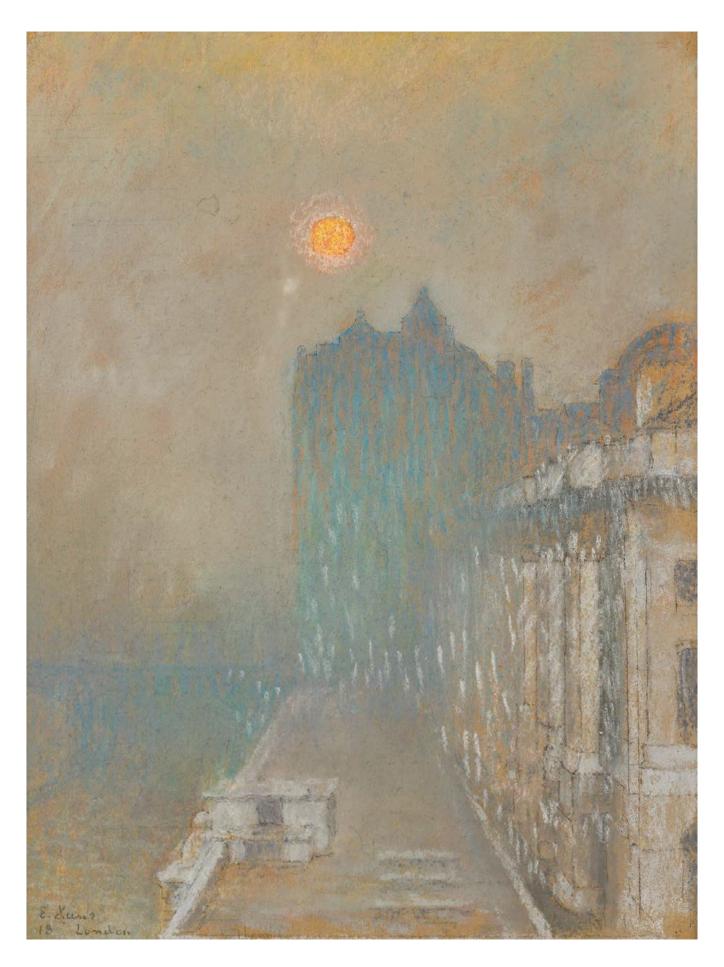
Passionate about drawing and painting, which he practiced from an early age, Émile Claus chose an artistic career at the age of 20 by enrolling at the Academy of Antwerp, where he completed his training. He remained in the region for 13 years before returning to his native land, buying a villa on the banks of the Lys in Astene, which he named Zonneschijn (Sunbeam).

During his time in Paris, an essential stage of his artistic career, he rented a studio for 3 years, which he occupied in winter while spending summers in Astene. There, he mingled with impressionist and symbolist artists, including Henri-Eugène Le Sidaner (1862-1939), who became more than a colleague, one of his most loyal friends.

An inveterate traveler, driven by boundless curiosity, Claus set off for North Africa in 1879. Between Morocco and Algeria, he discovered a new light that would mark his entire career. Thus, from 1891 onwards, his palette lightened, and light flooded his works, reflecting his joy for life. Furthermore, in 1904, the «Vie et Lumière» (Life and Light) group was created, of which he was a co-founder, aiming to rival Parisian dominance in the study of color and light and to assert Belgian impressionist identity under the name «Luminism.» Since then, Claus has been considered the leader of this movement.

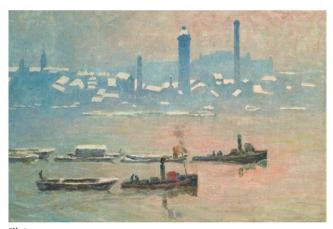
The location and dating of our pastel allow us to place the work in its context of creation: it is part of a series produced in London between 1914 and 1918. When the First World War broke out, Claus stayed in Astene for a few months before taking refuge in England, where he was protected by the Duchess of Somerset. He then worked in a London attic that he transformed into a studio on the 5th floor of Monbray House (Norfolk Street): «Here I have a room overlooking the Thames, where I am very warm and can work, because the spectacle from my window is magical. It has been a great consolation to me for three years.» (*ill.* 1).

The artist sought to transcribe the sensations, «the frenzy and the fumes» of the city, captured from his window. The series allowed him to focus on his subject to find a form of truth through repetition. In 1917, he exhibited 91 of his works at the Goupil gallery, including «33 English landscapes,» with the others





Ill. 1 Émile Claus (1849-1924) View of the Thames in London Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard 21.5 x 26 cm Signed, Located, Dated: E. Claus London 18 Private Collection



III. 2 Émile Claus (1849-1924) The Thames Under Snow Oil on canvas 27.8 x 40.8 cm Private Collection

appearing under the title «Reverberations on the Thames.» Upon his return to Belgium, a second exhibition of 130 works celebrated his work in 1921 at the Georges Giroux gallery, with the majority of his works titled «The Thames.»

Deaf to any Antwerp academic demands, Claus made his work a receptacle for his doubts and emotions: under the gentle light of a winter sun, this mysterious view is transcended by wonderful light effects of a setting sun, piercing through thick fog. Beyond the subject, the artist turned to a symbolic representation of his feelings that his work provided him. In this quest for truth, Émile Claus never forgot form. He studied light, decomposed it, and refracted it sometimes on paper, sometimes on canvas (*ill.* 2) to offer the viewer his own retinal sensations. The works from the English period are considered the best achievements of an artist at the peak of his art.

Belgium has just lost one of its most rightly renowned painters in Emile Claus. A disciple and almost contemporary of the master Claude Monet, Emile Claus had introduced into Belgian art the concerns that, from the beginning, animated impressionism here.

As the culmination of a career of exploration, the last years of his career prove that the artist had reached an expressive power in which the brushstroke disappears into the fusion of colors to express their full strength.

In 1919, the artist's return to Belgium marked the end of his career. After the war, the inspiration of this «charming talker with vivid language, with an observant mind» never returned. He spent the last years of his life peacefully traveling through Vendée and the mountainous region of Morvan.

M.O



Henri-Joseph HARPIGNIES

(Valenciennes, 1819 - Saint-Privé, 1916)

19 | View of the Roman countryside

Pen, ink wash, and watercolor Signed lower left Situated and dated lower right: *Rome 1851* 12 x 23.4 cm. (4 ¾ x 9 ¼ in.)

Provenance:

• Netherlands, Private Collection.

Exhibition:

• Brane and Lorenceau Gallery, Paysagistes du XIXe, Paris 2001, ill. p. 90-91.

Bibliography:

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



TII. 1

Henri-Joseph Harpignies View of the Roman Countryside (Lamentino Bridge) Watercolor

6.7 x 25 cm. (2 % x 9 % in.)

Paris, Petit Palais, Museum of Fine Arts of the City of Paris (inv. PPD1078).

"Love of the countryside, the desire to contemplate Nature's sights at leisure, and especially the ardent ambition to depict it accurately and truthfully have determined our profession."

By 1850, Harpignies was abundantly practicing watercolor which became his favored means of expression and made it possible for him to express chromatic variations in Nature according to the seasons.

In the course of the 19th century, the practice of *plein air* sketching and drawing was common in Europe, and Italy lay at the heart of this tradition. Our watercolor is dated 1851 during Harpignies' first trip to Italy. He only returned to France two years later. Similarly to the preceding watercolor presented in this catalogue, the artist gives rein here to an ode to the peacefulness, tranquility, and simplicity of rural life.



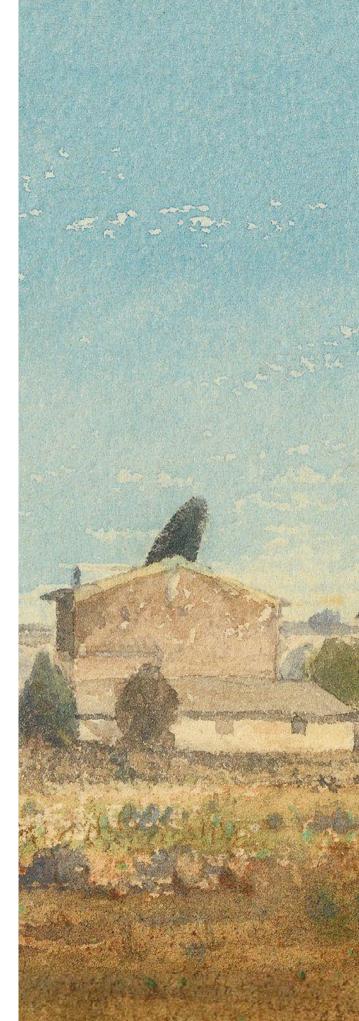
Like his colleagues, Harpignies found inspiration in Rome, as well as in its unpopulated countryside which inspired many of his sketches and watercolors handled without contrivances and sketched from life (ill. 1). Endowed with his portable materials and a portfolio under his arm, the artist studied the view which opened before him throughout the day. Bathed in powerful sunlight which seems to have reached its zenith, our work constitutes an excellent example of this production. Halfway between painting and drawing, the watercolor technique makes it possible to treat the sky atmospherically and the burnt earth through the use of wash and very diluted colors handled in shades of blues, browns, and ochres. These works form a genuine source of inspiration and hardly went out of the artist's circle. Usually destined for personal use, they served as experimental models for the handling of more ambitious compositions executed in the studio.

Both practical studies and documentary evidence, the work handled with great acuity conveys the artist's grand sensitivity. In this peaceful natural atmosphere with bucolic accents where time seems to be suspended, the view is troubled only by the presence of a few houses. The crushing heat seems to have overcome peasants and animals seeking a spot of shade where they can rest.

Conceived of as veritable small finished work, our watercolor embodies the typical example of outdoor painting exercises executed with spontaneity in which Harpignies engaged until the end of his career. In this charming vision, it is easy to imagine the painter attired in his painter's smock and seated before a modest country easel with an open watercolor box at his feet. Seemingly satisfied with his work, he took care to date and situate it in the still fresh pigment, proof of a work executed on site.

M.O.

¹ Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819), Elemens de perspective pratique à l'usage des artistes. Suivis de Réflexions et conseils à un élève sur la peinture et particulièrement sur le genre du paysage, 1800.





François FLAMENG

(Paris, 1856-1923)

20 | Elegant and young girl crossing the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne near the Arc de Triomphe

Pastel on canvas Signed lower left: François Flameng 92 x 73 cm

Provenance:

France, Private collection

Bibliography:

Alexandre Page, François Flameng (1856-1923): a painter in the Great War, self-published, 2019

Collected by the greatest museums in the world, the painter, draftsman, and pastelist François Flameng is a leading artist of the Belle Époque. Trained by his father, the painter and engraver Léopold Flameng (1831-1911), the young François began a rigorous apprenticeship before joining the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Under the guidance of Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889), he perfected his lines and developed his mastery of colour. His training concluded with Edmond Hédouin (1820-1889) and then with Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921), who, while advising him to study the great masters, directed him towards freeing his brushwork and use of colour. The fascination that the works of his eminent predecessors held for him led him to reproduce their paintings as plates for the exhibition catalogues of the Durand-Ruel gallery. His career took a decisive turn when the young artist, in his twenties, began exhibiting at the Salon.

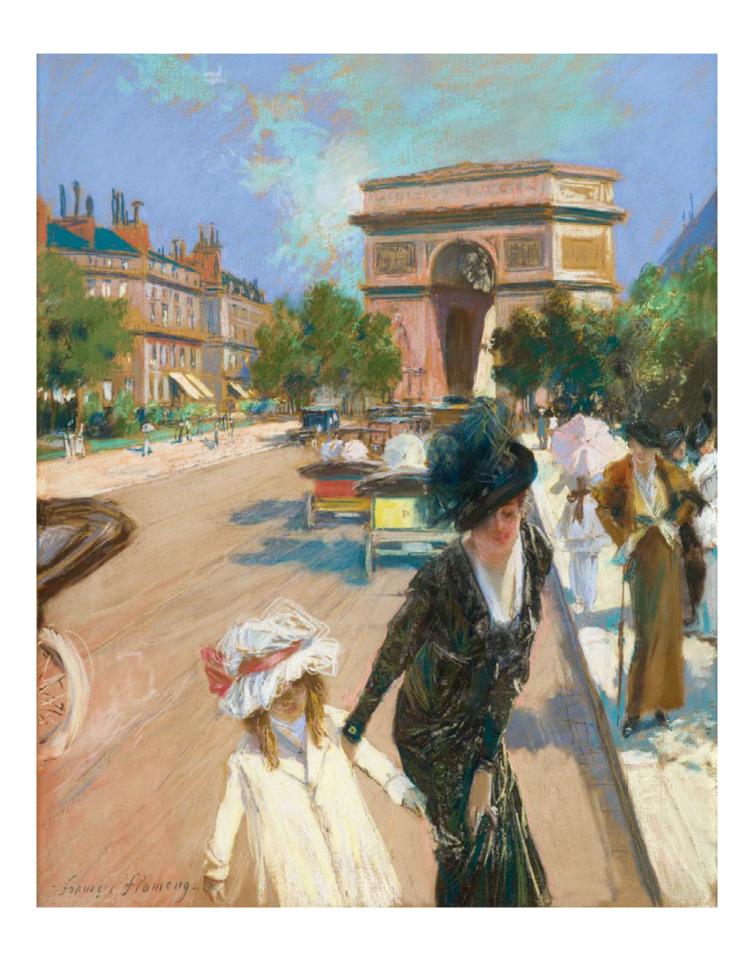
The Opera, the Grands Boulevards, the French Cancan, the circus Fernando (ill. 1), the young artist aimed to illustrate modern life, which he translated through powerful contrasts of light illuminating characters caught in the excitement of industrial progress. As a witness of his time, he became close to his contemporary Paul-César Helleu (1859-1927) with whom he formed a friendship. Together, they moved with ease in affluent social circles, between Parisian mansions and aristocratic and bourgeois homes in Normandy. They favored an impressionism that Helleu did not hesitate to describe as worldly. The figure of the elegant woman thus occupies a prominent place in Flameng's work (ill. 2), of which our pastel is a formidable testimony. On a warm summer



Ill. 1
François Flameng
Equestrienne Au Cirque Fernando
Oil on canvas
74 x 58 cm
Private Collection

day, the artist positions himself on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne and captures passing life.

At the end of the 19th century, fashion saw the emergence of supple and curved lines and reflected a relative carefree attitude, oscillating between a pervasive luxury in high society circles and a desire for lightness of spirit. Fashion





Ill. 2
François Flameng
Portrait of Marie-Louise Fould, Née Heine, 1903
Oil on canvas, 69 x 58,5 cm
Private Collection

was characterized by the wearing of hats - going out bareheaded or «in hair» during the day was practiced only by the most modest social classes - more or less adorned with flowers, fruits, feathers, or any other accessory conveying a spirit of form liberation launched by the Art Nouveau movement. In the foreground appears an elegant woman accompanied by her daughter, both dressed in the latest fashion: the woman wears a black ensemble, her hair is swept up under a feathered hat. The little girl also wears a hat matching her small ivory cotton coat. The background presents other passersby, mostly wearing hats, holding lace parasols protecting their pale complexion from the sun's rays.

In this artistic and intellectual effervescence, Flameng draws with a quick and nervous stroke. To capture the moment, the artist makes good use of pastel. By playing with the grain of the canvas, which he leaves reserved in some places, he creates a blending effect, thus adding volume to the whole. Speed is transcribed here notably by the ingenious representation of the carriage on the left, whose wheel raises dust illustrated by the use of

white chalk. With broad and generous strokes, the shapes are delicate, enveloping the models with graceful, supple lines. The sun invading the composition seems to reflect on the Arc de Triomphe in the background, whose underside of the arch as well as the right side of the facade are treated in beige pastel.

The models neither look at nor pose before the artist; Flameng seeks to convey a sense of spontaneity here. Beyond the two characters in the foreground, this is about illustrating a moment of simplicity in the bourgeois Parisian daily life. Through this symphony of colourful dresses and accessories, he turns his work into a metaphor for the economic prosperity that France experienced during the Belle Époque. Flameng always preferred movement to stillness. His drawings demonstrate such freedom in their strokes that they place him, despite himself, among the impressionist artists of his time.

M.O

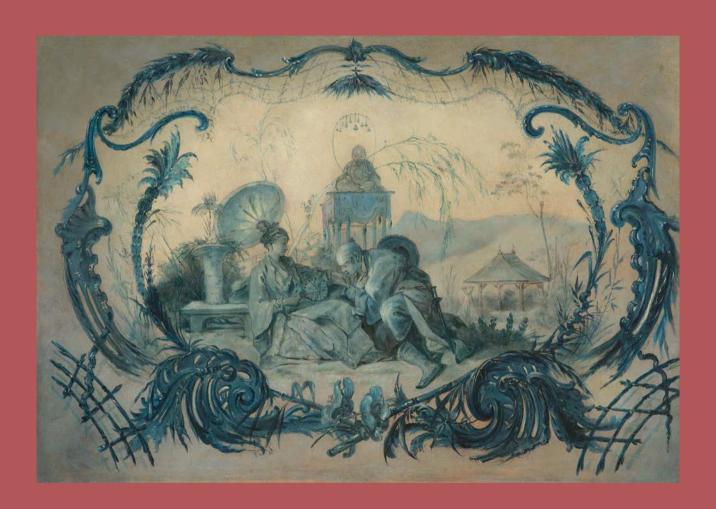
¹ The avenue du Bois de Boulogne, created by Napoleon III, didn't take the name avenue Foch until 1929.



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