GALERIE ALEXIS BORDES

PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS

FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE 20TH CENTURY

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« There is truly no such thing as beautiful style, beautiful drawing, or beautiful color: there is only one beauty, that of truth revealing itself.» Auguste RODIN (1840 – 1917)





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FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE 20TH CENTURY



VERSION FRANÇAISE

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Catalogue written by Mégane OLLIVIER

Exhibition from Tuesday, March 25th to Friday, May 16th 2025

> Galerie Alexis Bordes 4, rue de la Paix – 75002 Paris Stairwell 2, 2nd floor on the right

Opening hours : 10am to 1pm - 2pm to 7 pm Open Saturdays, March 29th and April 5th, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Preface

With the arrival of spring, we are delighted to present our splendid collection of paintings and drawings spanning from the Renaissance to the 20th century.

The catalog opens with a striking sheet, executed in pen and brown ink by Guglielmo Caccia, depicting the Holy Family and the Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

Originally from Piedmont and active at the end of the 16th century, this artist distinguished himself with subjects reflecting the ideals of the Counter-Reformation.

The journey continues with a powerful portrait of a young man wearing a beret against a green background, painted by Francesco Salviati. Elegant in his demeanor and imbued with deep melancholy, this young man is captured with striking realism by the artist, a devotee of the Bella Maniera in Florence during the early 16th century.

From Florence, we travel to 18th-century Venice with a rare pen and brown wash drawing by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. This faun and fauness are rendered with remarkable freedom and great economy of means, giving the illusion of "floating figures."

The visit continues with a pastel on vellum by François Boucher entitled La Nymphe surprise, a major rediscovery in the painter's body of work.

Like his master François Lemoyne and Maurice Quentin de La Tour, Boucher developed the use of this medium on paper or parchment in the 1750s.

Next, Jean-Baptiste Greuze captivates us with a double male academy drawing in three crayons from 1759, based on live models at the Academy.

At the end of the 18th century and the dawn of the 19th century, a female artist trained in the studio of Jean-Baptiste Regnault engages us with her gaze in a portrait of a young man in a frock coat, executed in black chalk and white chalk on buff paper.

Pastel also takes center stage with an Italianate landscape featuring a bridge animated by figures, created by Jean-Baptiste Pillement. Rendered entirely in shades of blue, ochre, and grisaille, this work is a rarity for the artist.

Corot is also honored with a watercolor of a mandolin player, a memento from one of his stays in Italy.

Our journey continues with The Regattas at Asnières, a lively watercolor by Albert Adam.

Edgar Maxence invites us into contemplation with a young woman in prayer, bringing a sense of calm and serenity.

We conclude our promenade with a breath of fresh air along the cliffs of Fécamp, where Claude-Émile Schuffenecker brings his canvas to life with vibrant colors and divided brushstrokes.

I invite you to come and discover these beautiful works at the gallery starting on March 25th.

Alexis Bordes Paris, March 2025

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, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Meudon...

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all those without whom this catalogue would never have come to fruition:

Monsieur Pierre ROSENBERG Honorary President of the Louvre Museum Madame Catherine GOGUEL Curator of Drawings at the Louvre Museum Monsieur Philippe COSTAMAGNA Former Director of the Palais Fesch Museum in Ajaccio and Doctor of Art History Monsieur Marc AGHEMIO Painting Restorer Madame Catherine POLNECQ Painting Restorer Monsieur Michel GUILLANTON Art Framing Specialist, restoration of antique frames Atelier Valérie QUELEN Art Framing Specialist Monsieur Michel BURY Photographer Monsieur Alberto RICCI Photographer

Madame Françoise JOULIE Art Historian **Monsieur Antoine CHATELAIN** Art Historian **Monsieur Nicholas TURNER** Art Historian Madame Chantal BEAUVALON Art Historian Madame Claire LEBEAU-DIETERLE Art Historian Mademoiselle Mégane OLLIVIER Art Historian Catalogue Editor Madame Julie LAZIMI Gallery Assistant **Monsieur Bernard MARINNES** Printer Monsieur Christophe BRISSON Graphic Designer

Guglielmo CACCIA, known as Il MONCALVO

(Montabone, 1568 – Moncalvo, 1625)

1 | The Holy Family, the Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine of Alexandria On the reverse: Studies of figures and a bust-length portrait of a man

Pen and brown ink with ink wash on laid paper $23.7 \times 18.5 \text{ cm}$

Provenance:

France, private collection

Bibliography:

• G. Romano, C. E. Spantigati, *Guglielmo Caccia detto il Moncalvo (1568-1625): dipinti e disegni*, [exh. cat.], Turin: Lindau, 1997

A prominent artistic figure of the Counter-Reformation, Guglielmo Caccia distinguished himself through his exclusive depiction of religious scenes. A native of Piedmont, the young artist trained in the same region under the guidance of Giovanni Francesco Biancaro, known as Il Ruscone (1546/1549 – 1588). Despite his youth, his talent quickly garnered attention, and his work soon achieved great success. As a remarkable representative of his native region, he earned the nickname *Il Raffaello del Monferrato* (the Raphael of Montferrat).

Summoned to the royal palace in Turin, he collaborated with Federico Zuccari between 1605 and 1607 on a monumental work commissioned by Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy. This was the decoration of the Grand Gallery, which connected the Palazzo Madama to the new ducal palace (1608–1610). Unfortunately, this masterpiece was lost in a fire in the early 18th century.

Praised for his dexterity with the brush and his mastery of grand compositions, Caccia received further commissions for ceiling decorations, including the vault of the apse and the dome of San Marco in Novara, as well as the Church of San Francesco in Moncalvo—the town he held dear, which would earn him his moniker. Around 1593, Caccia purchased a property there, later converting part of it into a convent that housed four of his daughters, including Orsola Maddalena, who would in turn make a name for herself in painting.



Ill. 3 Guglielmo Caccia *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* Oil on canvas 170 x 117.5 cm Private collection







back



Ill. 1
Guglielmo Caccia
Virgin and Child Surrounded by Musical Angels Appearing to a Saint
Pen and bistre over black chalk outlines
20.8 x 13.2 cm
Private collection

Beyond grand decorative schemes, Caccia also fulfilled commissions for various religious orders, travelling to numerous Italian cities such as Guarene, Vercelli, Sacro Monte di Crea, Turin, Chieri, Novara, and Milan.

Our drawing is an example of Counter-Reformation art, which dominated Italian painting in the late 16th century, as explained by Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti of Bologna in his treatise published in 1582. He emphasised that sacred images must move the faithful in order to be persuasive. Caccia responded to this demand. The aesthetic of his compositions, marked by an ingenious simplicity, makes sacred scenes feel tangible. The expressions on his figures' faces are humanised, allowing the viewer to engage more deeply with the religious narratives depicted.

To create his painted works, the artist produced numerous preparatory drawings, which were essential for the construction of his compositions. Caccia appears



Ill. 2
Guglielmo Caccia *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*Pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk outlines
39.8 x 26.5 cm
London, British Museum (inv. 1992,0725.11)

to have developed some of his sketches in series. The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine—an episode from *The Golden Legend*—is a recurring subject in his oeuvre, with an example held at the British Museum *(ill. 2)*. Our drawing was likely used in the execution of a painted work, several versions of which are known *(ill. 3)*.

Caccia consistently employed pen work, mastering its every nuance. This technique allowed for remarkable precision in rendering figures, which he imbued with an ethereal quality. His graphic style is delicate and poetic; his supple lines lend a lightness to his divine figures. Each figure is carefully studied, and no part of the sheet is left unused—the verso of our drawing contains various pen studies of figures, including a bust-length portrait that attests to the artist's creative genius and his continual quest for inspiration.

Francesco SALVIATI, also known as Cecchino

(Florence, 1510 – Rome, 1563)

2 Portrait of a Young Man in Bust with a Beret

Oil on panel (tondo) Diameter: 48.5 cm Old labels on the verso

Provenance:

- Constance Flower (1843-1931), born de Rothschild, Baroness of Battersea, London
- Her posthumous sale, Christie's, London, March 15, 1935, lot 48 (as Sebastiano del Piombo)
- D. Katz Gallery, Dieren, around 1936
- Gimbels Gallery, New York, 1945 (as Francesco Salviati)
- Collection of M...X... and various collectors, Me Rheims; Galerie Charpentier, Paris, June 1, 1951, lot 17, attributed to Francesco Salviati
- Acquired by Julius H. Weitzner, New York City, 1957
- Asbjørn Lunde (1927-2017), Staten Island, NY
- His posthumous sale, France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Art News, January 1, 1945 (reproduced as Francesco Salviati)
- Den Ville Natur: Sveitsisk og Norsk romantikk, cat. exp., Tromsø, 2007, (reproduced p. 11, ill. 2)
- Catherine Monbeig Goguel, *Francesco Salviati (1510-1563) ou la Bella Maniera*, [cat. exp.], Rome, Villa Médicis / Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1998, Milan, Paris, 1998
- Catherine Monbeig Goguel, «Francesco Salviati et la Bella Maniera. Quelques points à revoir. Interprétation, chronologie, attributions», in *Francesco Salviati et la Bella Maniera : actes des colloques de Rome et Paris, 1998*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 2001, pp. 15-68. (Publications de l'École française de Rome, 284)
- Catherine Monbeig Goguel, *Inventaire général des dessins italiens, I: Maîtres toscans nés après 1500, morts avant 1600,* Vasari et son temps, Paris, 1972

Exhibition:

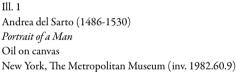
• Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbe Museum, 16de en 17de Eeuwsche Hollandsche, Vlaamsche en Italiaansche Schilderijen uit de collectie fer Fa. D. Katz te Dieren, 1936-37, no. 94 (as Francesco Salviati).

«[...] as much a poet as he was a painter [...] in both fields, he expressed his views and ideas with more sensitivity and care than anyone else.»¹

The son of a Florentine velvet weaver, Francesco de' Rossi showed an early talent in the handling of the pencil. He grew up alongside his childhood friend, the famous painter and architect Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). Together, they studied the drawings and works of the masters of the previous generation, and like many Florentine artists, the young artist completed his training in a goldsmith's workshop. When he arrived in Rome in 1531, Francesco was 21 years old. He chose the pseudonym Salviati after his first patron, Cardinal Giovanni Salviati. Becoming a full member of this scholarly collector's household, the young painter, nicknamed *creato*, gained new fame. Salviati's patronage allowed him to enter the circle of the *gentiluomini* and forge relationships with many patrons in the Eternal City, including some prominent members of the powerful Farnese family. From then on, Vasari defined him in his *Vite* as a virtuoso and universal painter.







Salviati and Vasari proudly illustrate, alongside Primatice and Bronzino, the second generation of Mannerism, which reached its peak between 1540 and 1570. Indeed, by the 1540s, commissions were multiplying: Salviati was designated one of the finest painters of Holy Families and was praised for his large decorative works. In 1544, Duke Cosimo I de' Medici summoned the painter to Florence to decorate the audience hall of the Palazzo Vecchio.

Admiring Michelangelo's work, from which he derived the elegance of figures and tried to perfect his style, Francesco Salviati more broadly illustrated the quintessence of 16th-century Italian art: the *Bella Maniera*, grace and artifice as the culmination of all artistic activity.

Beyond religious painting and grand secular Mannerist decoration, Salviati was dedicated to portraying this *maniera* in the art of portraiture. As a political and social tool of the elite, the painted portrait was used as an instrument of communication, celebrating the memory of the commissioner for posterity.

This style became popular when the Medici, wealthy merchants driven out of Florence at the end of the 15th century, returned to the forefront of political life. Salviati also painted the portrait of Giovanni de' Medici, known as Giovanni delle Bande Nere (John of the Black Bands).

As seen in our portrait, figures are often depicted in busts or half-length, detached from austere, solid backgrounds in bright or darker greens. Gradually, Bronzino, Sarto, Salviati, Pontormo, who became court painters, received





Ill. 2 Francesco Salviati *Head of a Young Man, Frontal View, Wearing a Beret* Red chalk Paris, Musée du Louvre, Department of Graphic Arts (inv. 2760, Recto)



Ill. 3 Francesco Salviati *Portrait of a Young Lute Player* Oil on wooden panel Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André (inv. MJAP-P 835)

special recognition. They were regarded as intellectuals and essential to the development of power.

The creation of a portrait demands a lengthy process of observation. Salviati studied, sketched on the spot, and made many drafts to faithfully capture the physical marks of power through the psychological intensity of the gaze and expensive clothing. Our model is a nobleman in a black doublet with a turned-down collar, wearing the latest fashion of the day. From 1515, men's haircuts became shorter, and among the hat styles, the round, flat felt beret worn here was particularly popular. Our model seems to have been interrupted mid-thought. The cold hardness of the gaze, with slightly sunken eyes as seen in Salviati and Bronzino's works, became a feature of portraits from this decade (1540-1550). The models' posture, with elegant stiffness, reflects a certain serenity and a melancholic expression. Although recent discoveries open the door to new findings, Francesco Salviati's painted work remains rare. However, it was extremely varied: sketches, tapestry designs, book illustrations, frescoes, allegorical figures, religious works, and finally noble portraits, of which the one presented here is a spectacular example. In search of high-ranking patrons, Salviati found his way in the elitist society of princely and episcopal courts. He traveled through Florence, then Rome, Venice, and made a brief stay in France in 1556-1557, in the service of Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, before returning to Rome, where he settled permanently until his death in 1563.

М.О

¹ Annibale Caro (secretary to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese), Letter to Vasari, May 10, 1548, Frey, 1923-1940, I, CXII, p.220



Johann Paul EGELL

(Berlin, 1691-1752)

3 | Study for a Roman Emperor

Pen, brown ink, and grey ink wash Traces of black chalk grid 30 x 18.8 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Stefanie Michaela Leibetseder, Johann Paul Egell (1691–1753). Der kurpfälzische Hofbildhauer und die Hofkunst seiner Zeit. Skulptur, Ornament, Relief, Petersberg, 2013.

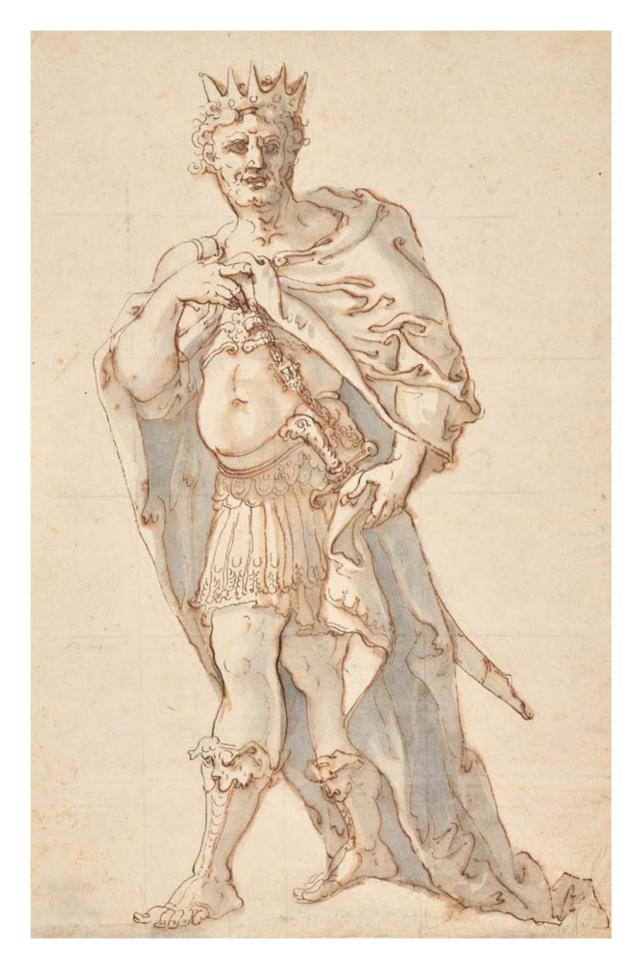
Celebrated during his lifetime yet unjustly forgotten by history, Johann Paul Egell was one of the artists whose work played a decisive role in the transition between the Baroque and Rococo styles in early 18th-century Germany. The early years of his life, as well as his training as a sculptor, remain shrouded in mystery. Born in Waibstadt, in the Palatinate, his exact date of birth is only known to us thanks to the year 1691 inscribed on an engraved portrait of him. His first documented work was a commission completed in 1715: a 90 cm-high crucifix delivered to the Saint Michael Monastery in Bamberg. Egell was then 24 years old.

In 1720, the artist settled in Mannheim, where he remained until his death in 1752. Established as a master in his field and recognised by his peers, he was invited to join the court of Elector Palatine Karl III Philipp (1661–1742) and was appointed official court sculptor in 1729.

Following the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the city of Mannheim was left in ruins. A great patron of the arts, the Elector launched an ambitious reconstruction programme, enlisting some of the finest artists of his time. Egell contributed to this grand project by designing decorative elements—now lost—for the prince's private residence, built to rival Versailles. The sculptor created no fewer than 300 balustrade figures, as well as ornamental stuccoes for the Hall of Knights and the main staircase. Within a few years, Mannheim became one of the most modern and prosperous cities in Europe. Considered one of the finest artists of his time, Egell rarely signed his graphic or sculptural works. Few confirmed examples of his hand have survived. Yet, he received numerous illustration commissions, a lesser-known aspect of his oeuvre. Seventeen drawings have been identified as preparatory studies for copperplate engravings in *Scriptores Historiae Romanae Latini Veteres*, a three-volume work published in Heidelberg from 1743.

In early 18th-century Italy, the connection to realism was diminishing, as Mannerism and Baroque influences merged. The taste for heightened expression, conveying an intense sense of grace, was highly prized. Our drawing exemplifies this confluence of artistic influences.

On a sheet of warm-toned paper, the artist outlines a full-length figure dressed in classical attire, holding a sword and wearing a crown. This appears to represent a Roman emperor, similar to three other sheets of the same dimensions—marked with a black chalk grid now housed at the Albertina Museum in Vienna (illus. 1, 2, and 3). Our drawing and those in the Austrian collection share remarkable similarities, as if part of a series. For sculptors, drawing was an essential step in outlining forms and studying how light interacts with drapery. Here, Egell first traced the contours in pen before reinforcing them with ink, while the volumes were rendered using grey wash. Sculptural in its conception, this drawing was likely a preparatory study for a sculpture, bas-relief, statue, or stucco decoration. Unfortunately, none of these sheets have been directly linked to a finished work.





Ill. 1 Paul Egell *Emperor Vitellius* Pen, brown ink, and grey ink wash 30 x 20 cm Vienna, Albertina Museum (inv. 43912)



Ill. 2 Paul Egell *Emperor Augustus* Pen, brown ink, and grey ink wash 30 x 20 cm Vienna, Albertina Museum (inv. 43911r)



Ill. 3 Paul Egell *Emperor Titus* Pen, brown ink, and grey ink wash 30 x 20 cm Vienna, Albertina Museum (inv. 43909r)

The Albertina figures each bear an ink inscription beneath the depicted character, identifying the emperor: Vitellius, Augustus, and Titus. In our drawing, the black chalk annotation was not reinforced in ink and is therefore partially faded. The first letter appears to be a «V», suggesting that the figure may represent Valerian I or Volusian, identifiable by his beard (illus. 4).

Spanning drawings, sculptures in stone, stucco, wood, metal, and ivory, Johann Paul Egell's body of work is remarkably diverse. It ranges from architectural sculptures to small-scale statuettes and reliefs. Our drawing is a rare example of this sculptor's graphic production—a testament to his pursuit of grandeur and his admiration for Antiquity as a means of elevating artistic expression in 18th-century Germany.

М.О.





Roman Coin, 251-253 AD Bust of Volusian, facing right, with radiate crown and draped. Below the bust, a pellet. Base silver coin London, British Museum (inv. 1948,0602.20)



Francesco ALBANI

(Bologna, 1578 - 1660)

4 | Study of a Young Man's Head in Profile, Facing Left

Red chalk on laid paper with black chalk underdrawing 24.5 x 18.5 cm On the reverse, stamped with a crest featuring a lion surmounted by a crown

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- Antonio Bolognini Amorini, Vita del celebre pittore Francesco Albani, Bologna, 1837
- Françoise Viatte, Le dessin italien sous la Contre-Réforme, Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1973
- · L'Albane, L'Albane 1578-1660 [exh. cat.], Paris, Musée du Louvre, 2000-2001, Les dossiers du musée du Louvre, 2000

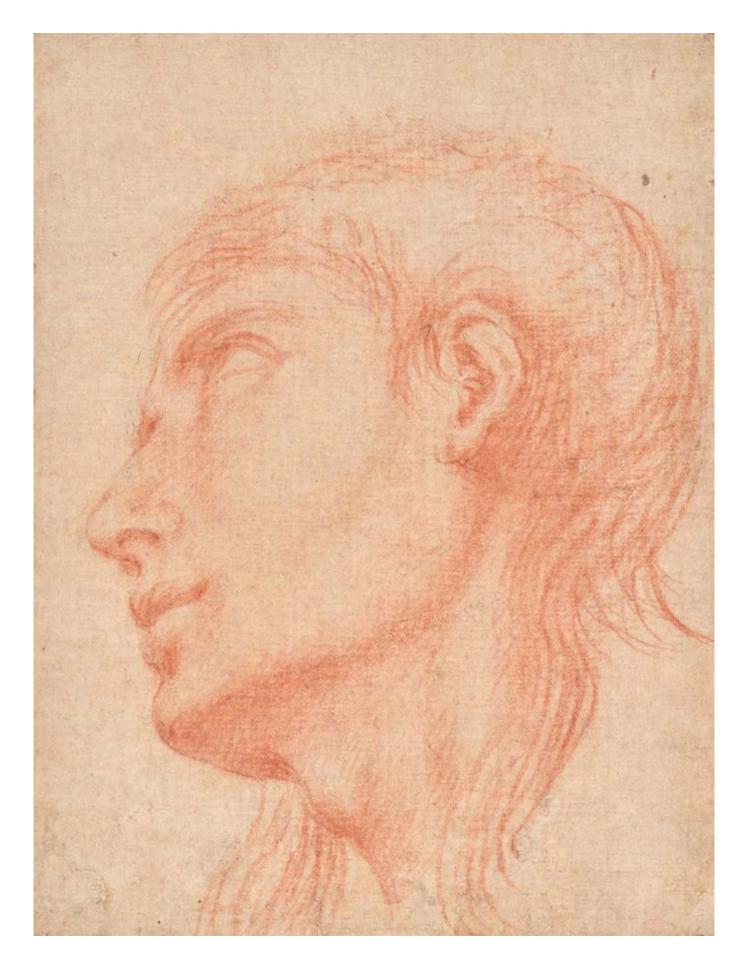
Albani, "the most charming painter, and one of the most learned to have ever existed." ¹

In Bologna during the final decade of the 16th century, the Carracci—Ludovico and his cousins Agostino and Annibale—paved the way for a new approach to nature. Initiating successive reforms, the three artists advocated a synthesis between the classicism of the High Renaissance and the ideal of antique sculpture, thus bringing an end to Mannerism. Their art sought a direct and unembellished treatment of nature, revealing it in all its truth. To promote this new artistic vision, the Carracci founded an academy in 1582, initially named *dei Desiderosi* and later *degli Incamminati*, aimed at those leading the evolution of art.

Among the academy's students was the young Francesco Albani, who likely joined in 1595 at the age of 17. Having received early training under Denys Calvaert (1540–1619) and later under Guido Reni (1575–1642), alongside his contemporary Domenichino (1581–1641), Albani developed a well-rounded artistic knowledge. Under the guidance of the Carracci, he practised fresco painting and large-scale church commissions, both of which required extensive preparatory studies. This experience reinforced his understanding of drawing as the foundation of his compositions. Seeking to revitalise Bolognese art, the academy placed great emphasis on drawing as an essential element of all artistic creation. The study of nature was paramount, allowing artists to capture facial expressions and body postures with spontaneity. This aesthetic was deeply rooted in lessons from the Old Masters, drawing inspiration from Rome through the works of Michelangelo and Raphael, Venice through Veronese, and Parma through Correggio. In this new method, the antique model was regarded as the ultimate reference for beauty.

The *Academia degli Incamminati* required its students to achieve a balance between drawing and colour, realism and idealism. As part of this training, artists were encouraged to study a wide range of subjects, including artisans and peasants, who gradually became central figures in the works of Bologna's most renowned 17th-century painters.

Likely a preparatory study for a painted work, the present drawing depicts a young boy in profile, his gaze directed towards the sky as though captivated by something to his left. The precision of Albani's draughtsmanship is evident in his masterful use of red chalk. He conveys volume through delicate hatching, particularly around the neck and chin, extending up to the nose and beneath the eyes. His treatment of the boy's hair consists of flowing, sinuous lines from the crown of the head down to the nape of the neck. Red chalk was extensively employed by the Carracci, its chalky properties allowing for nuanced depictions of flesh and subtle tension. Other drawings by Albani,







Ill. 1 Francesco Albani *Study of a Young Woman's Head* Red chalk, black chalk, and white chalk on toned paper 32.4 x 32 cm Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland



such as *Study of a Woman's Head* (*ill.* 1), demonstrate his mastery of this medium, as do his numerous studies of profiles, including *Study of a Man's Head* (*ill.* 2).

"Annibale Carracci had more intensity, Guercino more mystery, Domenichino more strength and truth, and Guido Reni more sentimentality. Yet Albani alone, in his time, infused his paintings with that joyful sensuality that unites and blends natural beauty with allegorical beauty."²

Introduced to France in 1625 during Cardinal Francesco Barberini's legation to the court of Marie de' Medici—intended to appeal to the queen's well-known appreciation of Italian art—Albani enjoyed considerable success among the French aristocracy. Despite lasting only three decades (1590–1620), he played a pivotal role in a transformative period in the history of drawing. Revered as *L'Albane* in France, he was collected by Europe's most influential figures, including Louis XIV, who greatly admired his work and amassed a significant collection of his pieces. His influence was particularly notable at Versailles, where his classicising compositions served as inspiration for the artists responsible for decorating the Marble Trianon.

We extend our thanks to Professor Nicholas Turner for suggesting the attribution to Francesco Albani.

М.О.

¹ Landon, 1805, p. 4

² Vaudoyer, 1913, p. 360



Giovanni Battista TIEPOLO

(Venice, 1696 – Madrid, 1770)

5 | Faun and Fauness Holding a Cornucopia

Pen, brown ink wash over black chalk strokes on laid paper with watermark Circa 1740 23.1 x 35.9 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Detlev Baron Von Hadeln, The Drawings of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Volume I, The Pegasus Press, Paris, 1928

• Hélène Gasnault, Giulia Longo, *Les Tiepolo: Invention et virtuosité à Venise*, [exh. cat.], Beaux-Arts de Paris, Cabinet des dessins et des estampes Jean Bonna, 22 March - 30 June 2024, Paris: Beaux-Arts de Paris éditions: Ministère de la Culture, 2024

• William Barcham, *Tiepolo's Pictorial Imagination: Drawings for Palazzo Clerici, the Annual Thaw Lecture 2016,* New York N.Y.: Drawing Institute, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2017

It was in Venice that the artistic genius of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo emerged. From an early age, he demonstrated a keen interest in drawing and painting. As a result, he was apprenticed to Gregorio Lazzarini (1655–1730), a renowned painter in the city. Little is known about the period between the beginning and the end of his training, which concluded when he was 23 years old and married Cecilia Guardi, the sister of the famous vedute painter. His early works already revealed an innate talent for the precise rendering of figures and a brightened palette, in stark contrast to the style of Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (1682–1754), who had fascinated him just a few years earlier.

Moving in aristocratic circles, his work reflects the carefree atmosphere that characterised the Republic of Venice in the 18th century. Praised for his boldness and fertile imagination, Tiepolo elevated grand decorative painting to its highest level of refinement. He was commissioned for numerous projects in Udine, Milan, Bergamo, Vicenza, and Verona, allowing him to acquire several private estates in the Venetian province, among others.

Leaving the Veneto to travel to Lombardy, Tiepolo, then only thirty-five, painted in Milan. He received a commission to decorate the ceilings of a house on Via Olmetto, owned since the early 18th century by the



Ill. 1 Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770) *La Course du Char du Soleil* Italy, Milan, Palazzo Clerici

Archinto family. Around the middle of 1740, he was commissioned to work on Palazzo Clerici and Palazzo Dugnani. His second stay in Milan lasted three years due to the large number of commissions he received, which he completed either alone or with the assistance of a few pupils. Palazzo Clerici, today the seat of the Civil Court, had belonged to Charles Visconti since 1653 before being acquired by Doctor Charles Clerici. In 1736, it became the property of Marshal George Antoine Clerici, who was determined to restore it into a sumptuous residence. For this purpose, he chose the most grandiose Venetian painter of the time.





Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770) *Faun and Fauness* Pen, brown ink, and brown wash over black chalk sketch Paris, Beaux-Arts (EBA. 389)

Tiepolo painted *The Course of the Sun* on a vault measuring over 22 metres in length and 5 metres in width. The chariot of Phaëthon sets off, accompanied by Mercury and Aurora in a magnificent display of swirling fabrics reminiscent of *The Triumph of Venice* by Veronese. Light, the centre and subject of the composition, was intended to represent the radiance of the intellect. In this daring composition, figures and trompe-l'œil architectural elements intermingle, merging modern civilisation with echoes of antiquity. Within this scheme, fauns and faunesses, painted in grisaille, are arranged in the spandrels, framing a pediment (*ill.* 1).

For such large-scale works, Tiepolo produced numerous sketches. Our drawing likely served as an inspiration for the poses of these hybrid creatures. His exceptional capacity for invention led to other studies of fauns—a recurring yet ever-evolving theme—one of which is preserved in the Beaux-Arts de Paris (*ill.* 2). Some sketches can be directly linked to fresco decorations, while others are considered purely graphic exercises, a repertoire of forms that could be used in future projects.

This sheet highlights the remarkable modernity of Tiepolo's art during the decade 1740–1750, often regarded as the most prolific period of his graphic work. The master pushed beyond the superficiality of the elaborate Rococo conventions, achieving a powerful plasticity built through his sketches. In painting, his brush is skilful and dynamic, upholding the tradition of an art dedicated to refined invention and the beauty of form. In drawing, his swift hand reveals great economy of means, seeking to render a brilliant light by emphasising the intensity of shadows. Our sheet thus demonstrates remarkable technical qualities: figures full of joy, whose supple contours are treated with washes. The use of ink wash creates striking contrasts and depth. This technique also imparts an evanescent, shimmering effect, instantly evoking the ethereal atmosphere so characteristic of the artist's hand.

In the decorative splendour that defined 18th-century Venetian art, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo distinguished himself through the refinement and grace of his subjects. Endowed with a boundless and adventurous imagination, he cultivated a sense of grandeur, leaving his mark on sumptuous residences whose careful preservation reminds us today that each of his works is a lesson in erudition. His fame extended beyond Italy, reaching as far as Germany, where he was invited to decorate the Würzburg Residence—a spectacular fresco over 30 metres long, illuminating the grand staircase and crowning his career.







François BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703 - 1770)

6 | The Surprised Nymph

1754

Pastel on vellum stretched on a frame, dated 1754 at the lower right 42 x 70.5 cm

Provenance:

• Collection Jean Sénac de Meilhan, lecteur de la Chambre et du Cabinet du roi, sa vente Paris, December 3, 1783, n°21: Le Fleuve Scamandre surprenant une jeune fille au bain, pastel by the same artist (Boucher); this subject was engraved by J. Daullé; H. 17 inches, L.25 inches; Paris, private collection.

• Paris, Private Collection.

In the summer of 1745, during the Salon at the Louvre, the king's painter François Boucher presented framed drawings for the first time to art lovers, rather than paintings. In doing so, he paved the way for a new way of collecting drawings, proposing that they be exhibited rather than kept in portfolios. Art lovers quickly embraced this idea, with some even going so far as to live in a home adorned with around 500 of the artist's works in all techniques, hung from floor to ceiling. Clearly, François Boucher derived this idea of framed drawings from his practice with pastels, which, due to their fragility, could only be preserved when framed and under glass, or they would turn to powder.

The artist frequently used pastels, among other techniques. Like his entire generation, he knew its traditional use for preparing figures for a painting, as practiced by Lebrun, La Fosse, Coypel, or his mentor François Lemoyne. He was also familiar with the pastel works of Barrocci and Bassano, kept in French collections. Around 1720, he may have met Rosalba Carriera during her visit to Paris, as he is known to have copied one of her female portraits. However, his great skill with the medium came even more after 1735 through his acquaintance with the young pastel artist Maurice Quentin Latour, who chose François Boucher's young wife, Marie-Jeanne Buseau, as the model for his first pastel portrait in 1737. On this occasion, the artist grasped all the possibilities of the pastel technique, which «can be abandoned, picked up again, retouched, and finished whenever desired,» as Lacombe wrote in his Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts (1759), and which offers a very rich color palette. Throughout his life, Boucher used pastels in various ways: to study a face (as seen in *Esquisses, pastels et dessins de François Boucher dans les collections privées*, Versailles, Musée Lambinet, 2004, no. 33), to retouch or complete a drawing, enhancing shadows with deep touches of rich black pastel, or accentuating a drawing, sometimes in black chalk, most often with three crayons, as seen in certain studies of standing or seated women whose dresses are subtly tinted with pink or gold (*F. Joulie, François Boucher: Fragments of a Vision of the World,* Paris, Somogy, 2013, nos. 34 and 35), or in studies of nymphs surrounded by blues and greens of the water (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Department of Graphic Arts, inv. RF 3879).

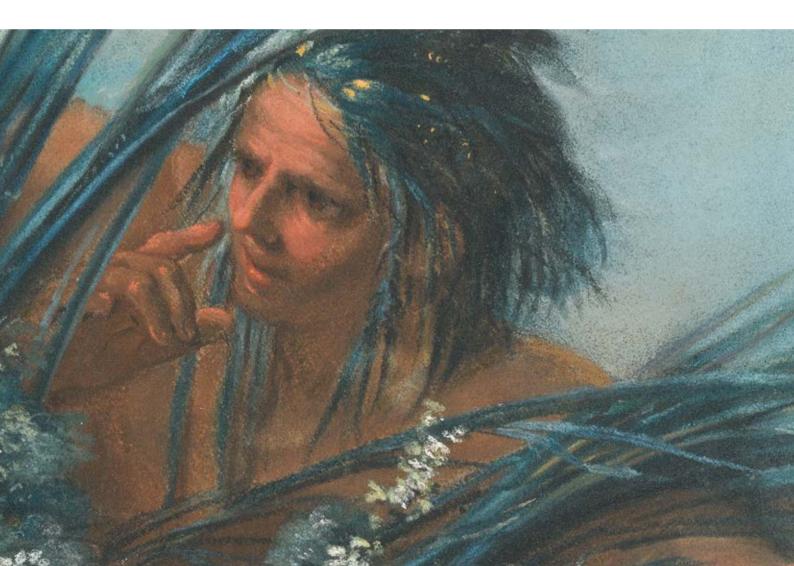
He also created finished pastels on thick paper or parchment that could rival paintings: using pastel crayons, the artist produced numerous portraits from the 1750s onwards, which were easier to execute than painted portraits, as pastel is a «type of painting with a particular ease, [which has the advantage of] not emitting any odor, not causing any mess, being able to be interrupted and resumed at will, and lending itself to all positions, regardless of where the light comes from.»¹ Chaperon, in his Traité de la peinture au pastel (1788), continues, writing that «no other technique comes so close to nature, none produces such true tones, it is flesh, it is Flora, it is Aurora.» Thus, many portraits of women were produced, and in 1761, the rare male portrait of his friend Sireul in a grey velvet suit (Geneva, Private Collection²) was created. Alongside this production of portraits in his maturity, Boucher also produced a few finished pastel versions of paintings, most likely commissioned works: these include The Child with



the Parsnip from the Art Institute of Chicago (inv. 1971-22), signed and dated 1738, demonstrating Boucher's perfect technical mastery at the time; the two putti from *Epic Poetry* of 1741 (formerly Schab Gallery, New York); or the *Study of a Foot* from the Musée Carnavalet, created about ten years later (Paris, Musée Carnavalet, inv. D. 4353).

These small, meticulously crafted «painted pastels» could be collected alongside miniatures, gouaches, or watercolors, which Boucher also created from time to time. However, their main flaw compared to these other techniques was their fragility, which was feared by collectors, at least until the 1750s. In 1753, after extensive research, a chemist named Loriot «found a way to fix pastel painting,» a process he demonstrated but refused to disclose, reserving the exclusive rights

until 1780. Artists could now confidently create refined pastel copies of some of their paintings to meet the demand from certain collectors. As a result, pastels by François Boucher dated from the 1750s-1755 appear among the works of his friends Randon de Boisset, Sireul, Varanchan, and Marigny, reproducing some of his paintings and, sometimes, certain of his drawings. The Surprised Nymph studied here is one such refined pastel version, created on parchment, giving it a particularly velvety and refined appearance. The date of 1754, discreetly marked by Boucher in the lower right corner, places this pastel among the commissions for pastels that multiplied from the early 1750s to 1755; it is a reproduction of a painting Boucher created in 1742, as evidenced by the date on the identical and high-quality canvas now held at the Musée de Dijon (*ill.* 1).



The 1742 painting from which this pastel derives represents a theme already treated in a less explicitly erotic manner in another work from the same year, The Scamander River, known from an engraving by Nicolas de Larmessin published in 1743 with the caption «For your young Apas, the burning Scamander / Rises from among its reeds, it is a god who loves you.» The subject seems identical in both works, showing the young nymph Idaea surprised by the young god Scamander hiding among the reeds. The male figure is the same, but the young woman, who in the first painted version, gravely seated and removing her sandal, is here almost entirely naked, with the drapery barely covering her. This particular approach to the subject, with more emphasized eroticism, may explain the commission of a second version, produced in pastel, whose format and technique make it more intimate than a canvas. 1742

was an important year for François Boucher, during which he painted *Leda*, which was taken to Sweden by Count Tessin, and created sketches for *The Chinese Tapestry* for Beauvais; however, the patron of the painting he would later reproduce in pastel twelve years later remains unknown, as it cannot be the Marquise de Pompadour, who only appeared at court in 1745 during the *Ball of the Yew Trees*.

Nevertheless, it is possible that Boucher freely created his pastel version at the Marquise's, as he was one of her regular visitors, and between 1745 and 1760, she acquired the painting. Two engravings were made of it in reverse by Jean Daullé, one dated 1760, the other 1761 (*ill.* 2), and one of them mentions, «To Madame de Pompadour, Lady of the Queen's Palace... from her very humble and obedient servant Jean Daullé; the original painting belongs to Madame the Marquise de Pompadour» (*ill.* 2)³.



Ill.1 François Boucher, *La Baigneuse surprise ou le Fleuve Scamandre* Huile sur toile 46 x 68 cm Dijon , Musée des Beaux arts, (inv. J 138 ; 179)



Ill 2 Jean Daullé d'après François Boucher *La Baigneuse surprise* Paris, musée du Louvre , collection Rothschild (Inv 18468 L.R)

Upon the Marquise's death in 1764, this painting, which Daullé called *The Surprised Bather* in his two engravings, entered the collection of her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, Superintendent of the King's Buildings, and was later described in the catalogue of the sale of his collection in 1782. However, there was some confusion in the description, suggesting that the subject could also be *The Scamander River*, as the painting was listed under number 12 as *The Scamander River*, a very pleasant subject showing a naked woman in the pose of surprise at seeing a man through the reeds. This subject was engraved by Daullé under the title *The Surprised Bather*. Given the various names attributed to the same subject, the early history of this pastel is difficult to establish. A single pastel version of *The Scamander River* engraved by Daullé, formerly in the Marigny collection, is listed by Neil Jeffares in his *Dictionary of Pastellists*, but it is oval (no. 1.173.858). A nymph bath pastel by Boucher, «a very piquant piece,» mentioned in the posthumous sale of Monsieur de St. Julien in Paris on December 10, 1759, under no. 376⁴, could be our pastel, as could another depicting a satyr and a nymph, mentioned in a Parisian sale in 1876⁵. However, it is also possible that this piece, remaining in the same family, has gone unknown until today.



Ill .3 Photo infrarouge du pastel *La nymphe surprise* copyright Catherine Polnecq.

Boucher created this second pastel version with care but with some liberty compared to the model. An advanced infrared examination conducted by the restorer Catherine Polnecq revealed a change on the nymph's right arm, as well as subtle differences in the details of flowers, trees, and draperies compared to the engraved or painted versions. This examination also clearly showed the rapid preliminary work done in black chalk that the artist applied to the parchment before moving on to the pastel crayons that completely covered it. A rare example of a pastel copy of one of his own paintings, this refined work offers valuable insights into the work of François Boucher as a pastellist (*ill.* 3).

- ¹ Chaperon, *Traité de la peinture au pastel*, Paris, 1788, p.9 and 10
- ² New York, the Frick Collection, 2003

³ For these two engravings by Jean Daullé, inv 18468 LR and inv 6045 LR, advertised in the Mercure of 1761, both in the Musée du Louvre's Department of Graphic Arts, see Pierrette Jean - Richard, *Les gravures de François Boucher dans la collection Edmond de Rothschild au musée du Louvre*, Paris, RMN, 1978, no. 585 BIS and no. 585.

⁴ Neil Jeffares, op. cit 1 173 695

⁵ Neil Jeffares, op. cit, 1 173 7477.





Jean-Baptiste GREUZE

(Tournus, 1725 - Paris, 1805)

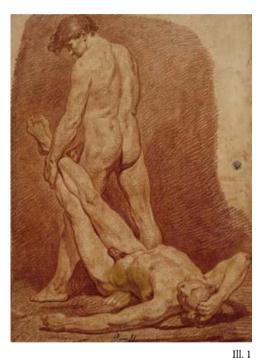
7 Double men's academy

1759

Black chalk, stump, red chalk, and white chalk highlights on prepared tan paper Signed and dated in pen at the bottom right: *Greuze 1759* 56.3 cm x 41 cm

Born in Tournus in 1725, Jean-Baptiste Greuze trained under the Lyon-based painter Charles Grandon (1691-1762) before moving to Paris, likely around 1750. There, he attended the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and, thanks to the support of sculptor Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714-1785), was able to present works to the Academy members, who elected him as an associate member in June 1755, as a genre painter. His first Salon was a success, and he was noticed by Abbé Gougenot, who invited him to travel to Italy. Greuze stayed in Italy until 1757. Upon his return to France, he gained wide popularity and became the «favourite of the public¹» with his art, influenced by Northern European schools, yet largely renewed by his study of nature. His large moralistic compositions fascinated audiences. Greuze is considered the inventor of a new genre, combining the elements of history painting with a naturalistic style. Works like The Village Betrothal² (1761) and *Filial Piety* ³(1763) explore sentimentality, which was prevalent in the second half of the 18th century, with a remarkable sense of narrative. The theatrical arrangements used by the artist contributed to the emotional impact of the scenes depicted. His drawings were quickly sought after and were, according to Mariette (1694-1774), «paid extremely well by some collectors⁴.»

This large, previously unpublished drawing enhances the known corpus of Greuze's academy studies. Since he did not follow the traditional curriculum at the Royal Academy, it is difficult to place the artist within its highly codified training system. However, his connection to the institution is confirmed by his portrait (signed 1755) of Joseph⁵, one of the Academy's models. We also know from Abbé Gougenot's testimony that Greuze practiced life drawing, an exercise he continued during his stay in Rome when he was received at the Mancini Palace.



III. 1 Jean-Baptiste Greuze *Double men's academy* Red chalk on laid paper Height: 52.6 cm; Width: 38.2 cm Saint Petersburg, The Hermitage Museum, inv. OP-14751

According to the inscription at the bottom right, this drawing is from after his time in Italy. To our knowledge, it is one of only two double academy studies by Greuze, the other ⁶ being housed at the Hermitage Museum, among some thirty other academies that Greuze sold to Betskoy in 1769^{7} (*ill.* 1). This drawing depicts two men struggling, one standing with the head of the other pressed against his thigh. The muscular, curved back of the reclining model subtly evokes the torso of the Belvedere Apollo. While life studies became more





Ill. 2 Jean-Baptiste Greuze *Academy* Red chalk, black chalk, and stump work Height: 38 cm; Width: 49 cm Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, inv. Réserve B-6 (E-13)-Boîte Fol.

formalised during the 18th century⁸, Greuze chose to portray contrasting poses for the two figures, reflecting the positions favoured by the Royal Academy⁹.

Unlike most of Greuze's academies, which are drawn only in sanguine, this sheet employs a more painterly technique, combining sanguine, black chalk, stumping, and white highlights. The choice of technique is difficult to explain other than by the search for colourful effects that were particularly in vogue between 1740 and 1760. The artist first established a rapid layout with black chalk, evidenced by slight corrections in the left arm of the standing figure, then reinforced certain outlines with sanguine to enhance the light effects. The combination of widely stumped black chalk and white highlights, complemented by sparing touches of sanguine, effectively captures the modelling of the bodies. The blurred background contrasts with the muscular definition, a technique that can also be seen in a sheet held at the National Library, which is very similar to this one ¹⁰(*ill.* 2). This drawing once belonged to Bishop Nicolas de Livry (1715-1795), who may have acquired it through Jean-Gorges Wille (1715-1808), one of Greuze's close friends¹¹. The expressiveness, large dimensions, and high degree of finish make these sheets highly desirable objects for collectors. Originally exercises for artists, academies became sought-after drawings during the century, with some even being engraved in a manner resembling sanguine, demonstrating the sustained enthusiasm among collectors¹².

- ¹ "Exposition des tableaux au Louvre. Second Extrait", Journal encyclopédique, t. VII, second part, October 15, 1761, p. 53.
- ² Oil on canvas, H. 92; W. 117 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 5037.
- ³ Oil on canvas, H. 115 ; W. 146 cm, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. ΓЭ-1168.
- ⁴ Pierre-Jean Mariette, Abecedario, ed. Philippe de Chennevières and Anatole de Montaiglon, Paris, Dumoulin, 1853-1854, t. II, p. 331.
- ⁵ Oil on canvas, H. 68.8 ; W. 58 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. R.F. 1115. The model is identified in the sale catalog of the Comte de Vence, which mentions a portrait of "Joseph. Modèle de l'Académie royale, tenant une poêle à feu", see Edgar Munhall in cat. *exp. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, 1725-1805*, Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, December 1, 1976-January 23, 1977, San Francisco, The California Palace of Legion of Honor, March 5-May 1, 1977, Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, June 11-August 7, 1977, p. 34, no. 5.
- ⁶ Sanguine on laid paper, H. 52.6 ; W. 38.2 cm, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. OP-14751.
- ⁷ On the drawings acquired by Betskoy, see Irina Novosselskaya in cat. exp. New York, Los Angeles, 2002, pp. 28-37.
- ⁸ Emmanuelle Brugerolles and Camille Debrabant in cat. exp. L'académie mise à nu: l'École du modèle à l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, Paris, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, October 26 2009-January 29 2010, p. 4.
- ⁹ Martial Guédron, De chair et de marbre : imiter et exprimer le nu en France, 1745-1815, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2003.
- ¹⁰ Study, red chalk, black chalk, stump, H. 38; L. 49 cm, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, inv. Réserve B-6 (E-13)-Boîte Fol.
- ¹¹ Perrin Stein in cat. exp. Promenades de papier: dessins du XVIII^e siècle des collections de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, Williamstown Massachussetts, Clark Art Institute, December 17, 2022-March 12, 2023, Tours, Musée des Beaux-Arts May 12-August 28, 2023, cat. exp. curated by Pauline Chougnet, Corinne Le Bitouzé, Charlotte Guichard and Meredith Martin, p. 52-53, no. 1.
- ¹² Sophie Raux in cat. exp. *Quand la gravure fait illusion. Autour de Watteau et Boucher, le dessin gravé au XVIII^e siècle, Valenciennes, musée des Beaux-Arts, November 11, 2006-February 26, 2007, p. 79.*

Antoine Chatelain



Antoine WATTEAU

(Valenciennes, 1684 – Nogent-sur-Marne, 1721)

8 Study of a Young Woman in Profile and Two Studies of Hands On the Reverse: Study of an Arm and a Hand

Red chalk over black chalk outlines 18.3 x 11 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Louis Antoine Prat, Pierre Rosenberg, *Antoine Watteau, 1684-1721: Catalogue raisonné des dessins*, Paris: Gallimard-Electa, 1996

Adored during his lifetime yet somewhat neglected shortly after his premature death in 1721, the work of Jean-Antoine Watteau regained its prominence at the dawn of the 19th century, and even more so in the latter half of the century.

Watteau was born in 1684 in Valenciennes, a Flemish city that had only recently been ceded to France by the Spanish Netherlands. His artistic training began in the workshop of J.-A. Gérin. At the age of 18, he moved to Paris, where he refined his technique by copying Flemish religious paintings, including those by Vleughels and Spoëde. Most of the artist's works from this period are now known only through engravings.

From 1703 onwards, he discovered the print shops on Rue Saint-Jacques, owned by Pierre II Mariette and his son Jean. There, he was introduced to the works of Titian, Rubens, Callot, and Picart, which profoundly influenced him and led him to adopt a more fluid and colourful technique.

The creation of his masterpiece, *The Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera*, in 1717 brought him the recognition he had long sought. He was admitted to the Royal Academy as a painter of a new genre, given the title *painter of fêtes galantes*.

Interweaving poetry, friendship, and love, Watteau immerses the viewer in sumptuous, dreamlike settings where figures stroll and interact with the utmost elegance, harmonising with the surrounding nature.



III. 1 Antoine Watteau Étude de femme en pied tenant un fuseau et tête de femme de profil, tournée vers la droite Circa 1714 Red chalk New York, The Metropolitan Museum (inv. 23.280.5)





Ill. 2 Jean-Antoine Watteau *Feuille d'étude de neuf têtes Circa* 1715 Red chalk, black stone and white highlights 27,5 x 42 cm Paris, Petit Palais, musée des Beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris (inv. DDUT972)

«They have a novel taste, a grace so intimately tied to the spirit of their creator that one might say they are inimitable. Each figure from the hand of this excellent man bears a character so true and natural that it can stand alone, capturing and satisfying the attention without needing the support of a larger composition. Moreover, the reputation he acquired, both in France and abroad, justifies the belief that even the smallest of his works are precious and should be sought after with great care.»¹

To create these majestic works, the artist produced numerous life studies, serving as an infinite source of inspiration for the various poses and expressions of his figures. The artwork presented here is a remarkable example of these studies. On a sheet of modest dimensions (likely taken from one of the artist's sketchbooks), Watteau traced in red chalk the delicate profile of a young woman with remarkable sensitivity. Throughout his career, he worked on developing a characteristic female type and exploring the variety of their poses and attitudes. As an attentive observer, he paid meticulous attention to detail. Contemporary fashion also played a significant role in his work, with the details of dresses and hairstyles rendered with exceptional precision. In this study, we can observe a carefully tied ribbon in the model's hair, extending from the top of a chignon and falling onto her forehead, a motif also seen in other studies (*ill.* 1 and 2).

With extraordinary skill, his hand captured the subtle tremor of flesh with the mere indication of red chalk. His earliest biographers praised the freedom, finesse, and lightness of his line, which arguably represents the most fascinating aspect of his work. Watteau himself was deeply attached to his drawings.







Nonchalance, insouciance, artifice, and refinement are the defining elements of Antoine Watteau's oeuvre. In the early 18th century, the heroic certainties of the Baroque era gave way to the elegant subtleties of the style pioneered by this genius of French painting. His work conveys a world of reverie: conversations held in enchanted gardens unfold to the rhythm of eternal minuets. Through these graceful figures, imbued with a certain melancholy, Watteau expresses his own contemplative musings, a reflection of his fragile condition, which brought him great suffering. At the age of 35, Watteau travelled to London to consult a physician. The harsh English winter proved fatal, and the artist passed away prematurely upon his return to France in 1721.

M.O

¹ Jean de Jullienne, Figures de différents caractères, de Paysages, et d'Études dessinées d'après nature par Antoine Watteau, preface to etching collections published between 1726 and 1728



Jacques RIGAUD

(Puyloubier, 1680 - Paris, 1754)

9 | View of the Village and Château of Meudon from Fleury

Black chalk, pen and grey ink wash 20 x 43 cm

Provenance:

- France, private collection
- The drawing was acquired by the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Meudon in 2024.

Bibliography:

• Emmanuel Benezit, Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs, 1885



Ill. 1 Jacques Rigaud View of the Château de Meudon and the Village Taken from the Opposite Height on the Issy Side Engraving 21.2 x 43 cm Paris, Musée Carnavalet, History of Paris (inv. G.17273)

Jacques Rigaud was often confused with others who bore the same name, which complicated the identification of some of his works. However, their signatures, as well as their specialities, are quite distinct.

Born in Puyloubier near Marseille in 1681, Jacques Rigaud developed a strong early interest in detailed representation. In Marseille, he studied royal galleys and produced several studies of their construction. Experts tell us that the artist wished to enter the service of Monsieur Le Pelletier, then Director General of Fortifications in France, a desire that already reflects his interest in topographical views. Leaving the city in 1720, Rigaud moved to Paris the same year and established himself as an engraver and print dealer on Rue Saint-Jacques.

Our work can be dated to the 1730s, when the artist undertook one of his most ambitious projects, which remains essential to our current historical knowledge: Les Maisons Royales de France, a collection compiling grand views of Paris and its surrounding region. The work was completed by the artist's nephew, Jean-Baptiste Rigaud (1720- ?). Another book is also known, comprising 130 views of French châteaux. The piece presented here was created for engraving. Indeed, the drawing is deliberately mirrored, meaning it is shown in reverse so that the correct perspective could be obtained during engraving and printing.

Royal and later imperial, the Meudon estate was intimately linked to power from its creation until its destruction. Mentioned in records since the 12th century, the château's physical appearance was only revealed from the early 16th century, when it was gifted to Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess of Étampes, by Francis I. Falling from grace after the sovereign's death, the duchess ceded it to Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine. The château remained in the Guise family for a century before passing into the hands of Abel Servien,





Ill. 2

General Map of the Parks and Gardens of Meudon and Chaville & Their Surroundings by Alexandre Lemoine, 1723 Pen, Indian ink, and watercolour 104 cm x 170 cm Departmental Archives of Yvelines, Royal Administration Collection, 17th-18th centuries (Reference FR/ FR-AD078/A 165)

Superintendent of Finances under Louis XIV, and later to the Secretary of State for War, François Michel Le Tellier, Marquis of Louvois. It was on Louvois' initiative, continuing Servien's work, that Le Nôtre, the architect of the gardens of Versailles, designed the vast park depicted in our drawing. Following the Versailles model, the French formal gardens' fountains were supplied by an elaborate hydraulic system.

Unlike the original château, known as the Château-Vieux and dating from the 16th century, the Château-Neuf, visible here to the left of the main building, was only built in 1695 at the request of the Grand Dauphin, following designs by the renowned Jules Hardouin-Mansart.

Serving as true historical documents, the few panoramic views of Meudon immortalised by Rigaud illustrate the estate at the height of its splendour in the first third of the 18th century. The artist almost systematically produced engravings based on them (*ill.* 1). Here, the view is taken from the village of Fleury, a location that offers a perspective on some of the village's emblematic landmarks (*ill.* 2). In the midground to the left, one can discern the parish church and the cluster of village houses, where today the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Meudon stands. In the background, the two châteaux proudly dominate the landscape, surrounded by their terraces, cultivated fields, and a few bourgeois residences. Finally, the forest borders the entire scene.

«[The works of Jacques Rigaud] are generally animated with figures whose execution recalls the best disciples of Antoine Watteau.»¹

Rigaud left nothing to chance. As in most of his works, a scene of daily life in the 18th century enlivens the foreground. In this drawing, a horseman converses with a traveller, two men are seated, a peasant guides his cart, and to the left, a group of gentlemen with their dogs is engaged in a hunting party.

During the Revolution, scientists chose the Château de Meudon as a privileged meeting place to debate the terms of the young Republic. The Château-Vieux was accidentally destroyed by fire and later demolished by order of the First Consul. A few years later, the Emperor assigned the Château-Neuf to his son, the King of Rome. He renovated the château while the estate, left unmaintained, gradually succumbed to nature.

In 1871, as Prussian troops occupied Meudon, the château was finally consumed by fire. From this era, only a few remnants of the park and buildings survive, including the Orangerie, which was classified as a historic monument in 1972 following several restoration campaigns.

М.О

¹ Emmanuel Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres sculpteurs dessinateurs et graveurs*, 1885







Pauline AUZOU

(Paris, 1775–1835)

10 Portrait of a Young Man, Bust-Length, Looking to the Left On the reverse: A Young Woman with a Muslin Veil, Leaning on Her Elbow, Depicted Half-Length

Black chalk, charcoal, stump, and white chalk highlights on chamois-coloured paper $54\,\mathrm{x}\,42\,\mathrm{cm}$

Provenance:

• France, private collection

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- A. S. Harris and L. Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950, Los Angeles, 1976
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- Amandine Corse, Introduction. Plumes et Pinceaux: Discours de femmes sur l'art en Europe (1750–1850) Anthology, Dijon, Les Presses du réel, 2012
- A. B. Sutherland Harris and L. Nochlin, Women Artists, 1550-1950, [exh. cat.], Los Angeles, Co. Mus. A., 1977

At the dawn of the Revolution, out of the 400 active «painter-artists» recorded, only 10% were women. Among them, the young Pauline Auzou (née Desmarquest) began her artistic training by joining the newly established women's studio of the renowned history painter Jean-Baptiste Regnault (1754–1829). Supervised by his wife Sophie, the studio, located in the painter's apartment at the Louvre, went on to train a record number of 34 female exhibitors at the Salon¹. Regnault was not the only one to support female artists: at the Salon, young students of David, Vincent, and Suvée—until his departure for Rome in 1801—competed in excellence. Naturally, Auzou was introduced to her master's specialities: portraiture and history painting. This required studying from live models, a practice hindered by notions of propriety at the time, which prevented female artists from attending life drawing classes featuring the nude. Like some of her contemporaries, however, Auzou seems to have had access to such privileged lessons.

With artistic ambitions equal to those of men, Auzou excelled in history painting and took great pleasure in practising portraiture through numerous sketches. Like our drawing, several other works by the artist



Pauline Auzou Portrait de jeune garçon de profil Pierre noire et estompe Collection particulière





III. 2 Pauline Auzou *Portrait of a young boy supporting his head on his right elbow* Black chalk, stump, and white chalk highlights 59 x 43 cm Private collection Ill. 3 Jean Baptiste Joseph Wicar *Portrait of Pauline Bonaparte, princess Borghese* Black chalk and stump on paper Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt, Bibliothèque Paul-Marmottan, Académie des Beaux-Arts

showcase studies captured in the moment, reworked with stumping and highlighted with chalk or pastel, often deliberately left unfinished (*ill.* 1). One such example is the study of a young boy resting his head on his right arm (*ill.* 2). On a sheet of chamoiscoloured paper similar to our piece, Auzou used black chalk reinforced with charcoal to outline the softly rounded features of the face, capturing the youthful innocence of the model. In her pursuit of truthful expression and the liveliness of the gaze, she applied white chalk with meticulous precision to highlight key points of light: a delicate touch enhances the bridge of the nose, while others bring the model's pupils to life. The remarkable quality of this sheet is further emphasised by the presence of a second drawing on the reverse, enhanced with coloured pastel. In this second study, the artist sketches the silhouette of a young woman standing in a half-length pose, leaning on what seems to be the back of a chair. The model gazes upward, as if imploring the heavens. The melancholic features of her face evoke those of the most distinguished profiles of the early 19th century, including Caroline and Pauline, sisters of Napoleon Bonaparte. Indeed, following her success at the Salon, Auzou gradually received commissions from the imperial family. In 1810, she proudly exhibited a work entitled *The Arrival of Empress Marie-Louise at Compiègne on 28 March*.



back

While studying the female profiles of the Bonaparte family, it is highly plausible that the artist reused her sketches as references for certain figures in her paintings. Princess Pauline, in particular—an iconic beauty immortalised by numerous artists, including Antonio Canova (1757–1822)—bears striking similarities to our model. Her evident grace left a lasting impression on her contemporaries (*ill.* 3). She is depicted wearing a delicate veil in the fashion of ancient Vestals and a light, low-cut Empire-style dress, simply cinched below the bust. One can imagine the young woman draping her shoulders with the red cashmere shawl on which she rests her elbow. With keen attention to detail, Pauline Auzou rendered her sitters' psychology with remarkable acuity. Her virtuosity is evident in the care she devoted to every element of the composition, from the individually drawn strands of hair—whose volume is accentuated through careful blending—to the subtle nuances of expression. The size of the work, its quality, and the finesse of execution reflect the dexterity of this remarkable female artist, praised by her contemporaries and exhibiting at the Salon from as early as 1793, when she was just 18 years old.

М.О

¹ A. Spies-Gans, A Revolution on Canvas. *The Rise of Women Artists in Britain and France*, 1760-1830, Londres, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 2022.

Pauline AUZOU

(Paris, 1775-1835)

11 | Portrait of a Young Woman in Left Profile

Black chalk, charcoal, stump, and white chalk highlights on blue paper On the reverse: black chalk, pastel, and stump 47.5 x 34.5 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- V. P. Cameron, Portrait of a Musician by Pauline Auzou, in The Currier Gallery of Art, no. 2, Manchester, 1974
- Clement-Hemery, Souvenirs de 1793 et 1794, Cambrai, 1832

On a large sheet of blue paper, characteristic of Mme Auzou's drawn works, appears the profile of a young woman, whose soft, rounded treatment conveys a sense of gentleness and innocence. Like her master, Jean-Baptiste Regnault (1754–1829), Auzou specialised in portraiture. The numerous study sheets she produced reveal the great attention she paid to capturing the psychological depth of each of her models, which served as references for her painted works. The face of this young woman can easily be compared to that of Daria in her masterful painting *Daria or Maternal Terror (ill.* 1), which the artist presented at the Salon in 1810.

In this drawing, the profile is deliberately left unfinished. The artist focuses on authenticity, free from any embellishment. Her goal is to render the subject's expression with the utmost accuracy. The model appears to have been caught spontaneously, as if reacting to something happening to her left.



Ill. 1 Pauline Auzou *Daria ou l'Effroi Maternel,* 1810 Wilmington (Caroline du Nord, Etats-Unis), The Horvitz Collection

Trained in a prolific studio and exhibiting at the Salon until 1817, Auzou later shared her talent with younger artists by establishing her own atelier, which she directed for nearly 20 years.

M.O

¹ As named in the official Salon booklets.



Jean-Baptiste PILLEMENT

(Lyon, 1728-1808)

12 | Laundress, Shepherds, and Fishermen under a Bridge Covered with Vegetation

Pastel on prepared canvas mounted on a stretcher Signed and dated lower left: *Jean Pillement, Year 9, R* 30 x 38 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

- · Georges Pillement, Jean Pillement, Paris, Chez Jacques Hamont, 1945
- Nicole Riche, Laurent Félix, Maria Gordon Smith (eds.), *Jean Pillement, 18th-Century Landscape Painter*, Béziers, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Béziers, 2003.
- Maria Gordon-Smith, Pillement, preface by Alastair Laing, Krakow, Irsa, 2006.

The fifth son of a Lyonnais family rooted in artistic tradition for generations, Jean Pillement received both a family education and professional training, naturally choosing a career as a painter. From an early age, he displayed exceptional talent in handling various drawing techniques, including pencil, chalk, and pastel. He pursued his training under the guidance of Daniel Sarrabat II (1666-1748), an active painter in the region who had trained in Rome in the Baroque tradition. However, his master's influence did not shape his artistic inspiration, as Jean turned instead to the study of nature.

Arriving in Paris at the age of 15, he was admitted as a designer at the Manufacture Royale des Gobelins. The recognition he gained there helped him establish a solid reputation. Faithful to his admiration for nature, he created numerous easel paintings and embarked on a career as a landscape artist. His works, becoming increasingly decorative, found their way into numerous European courts. From 1745 onwards, Pillement embarked on extensive travels that continued throughout his career. He spent three years in Madrid, followed by a period in Lisbon in the 1750s, then in Italy and Austria. In London in 1754, he exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1760 and 1761, later returning to exhibit at the Free Society in 1773, 1779, and 1780.



Ill. 1 Jean Pillement Animated Landscape with Fishermen Pastel on paper 26.5 x 40 cm Private collection





Ill. 2 Jean Pillement *Pastoral Landscape with Peasants and Sheep* Pastel and black chalk on prepared canvas 23.6 x 33.8 cm Private collection

Throughout his career, Pillement was welcomed into aristocratic circles and easily developed an international clientele. After returning from Spain in 1775, he settled in Avignon. From that time until his death in 1808, he dedicated himself exclusively to landscape painting. The work presented here is dated Year 9 of the Republic (1800-1801).

At a time when painters were increasingly interested in nature, Pillement, too, sought a closer connection with the natural world. Like some of his contemporaries, he faced resistance from the prevailing academic hierarchy, which still favoured historical, religious, and mythological painting as the dominant genres in the 18th century. As a result, he remained on the margins of official French Salons throughout his career. By insisting on populating his landscapes with figures, Pillement aligned himself with the realist tradition of 18th-century French painting. His work synthesised two popular genres of the time: landscape painting and genre scenes. The figures in his compositions do not take on central roles but instead serve to animate and enhance the surrounding nature. In many of his works, the artist chose to depict the simplicity of daily life. In the idealised, Italianate landscape presented here, a laundress stands surrounded by two shepherds, while in the background, three fishermen are busy in their boat. The scene takes place along a riverbank framed by an arched bridge, a motif that appears in several of his other compositions (*ill.* 1).

Pillement set himself apart from his contemporaries by offering a vision that was neither utopian like that of Watteau nor moralising like that of Chardin



Ill. 3 Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728-1808) *Landscape with Goatherds* Pastel on paper, signed and dated lower left: *Jean Pillement 1804* 47 x 59 cm Private collection

or Greuze. His work sought to capture sensory experience, portraying what the eye sees without artificial embellishment. Inspired by the Dutch Golden Age masters, such as Nicolaes Berchem (1620-1683), he incorporated a wealth of details and placed great importance on botanical studies, rendering even the smallest leaf with precision.

Art theorists often compared painters to literary figures. Boucher was likened to Catullus, Greuze to Molière, Vernet to Buffon, and Chardin to La Fontaine. Pillement was no exception to this tendency, linking drawing and poetry by combining lightness with powerful descriptive qualities.

Among the many techniques he practised, pastel gradually emerged as his preferred medium. The lack of preparatory work allowed for immediate execution, while the chalky texture created a soft, blended effect that could convey both volume and the natural appearance of stone or vegetation, depending on the density of the strokes. In our painting, direct observation of nature evokes an immediate sense of reality, translated through the quick and confident handling of the medium.

Executed just eight years before his death, this work exemplifies the artist's mastery of pastel. Many of his most exquisite pastels are dominated by a monochromatic palette, sometimes blue (*ill.* 2), sometimes grey (*ill.* 3). In this landscape, Pillement employs a dual monochrome scheme of blue and ochre. The ochre tones are used for the genre scene and the bridge covered in vegetation, while the blues skilfully depict the sky and distant mountains.





Gaspard GOBAUT

(Paris, 1814 - 1882)

13 *View of Place Vendôme*

Pen and watercolor over black chalk with gouache highlights 12.5 x 18.5 cm Signed in black chalk at the lower left: *Gobaut*

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Sixtine Tardy-Joubert, *"Gaspard Gobaut, un artiste au service du Dépôt de la Guerre"* in *Revue Historique des Armées*, 020/3 No. 300, 2020, pp. 115-127.

Antoine Gobaut's natural talent for drawing destined him for an artistic career. Trained in the art of watercolor by the painter Jean-Antoine-Siméon Fort (1793-1861), the young artist simultaneously discovered the world of war. Fort, renowned for his battle scenes and masterful use of bird's-eye perspective, greatly inspired Gobaut. The depiction of panoramic battlefield views was made possible by the development of ballooning, which allowed artists to capture landscapes in meticulous detail. Gobaut pursued this path, which opened new perspectives for him. He completed his military service within the central administration of the Ministry of War. Praised for his drawing skills, he was invited to join the Dépôt de la Guerre as an auxiliary draftsman, responsible for documenting French military campaigns. Through this experience, Gobaut developed a keen eye for working from life, selecting colors, and capturing atmospheric effects with watercolor's fluidity. He also honed his ability to render precise details through keen observation and military discipline—qualities that he applied in his artistic practice.

Beyond the military world, Gobaut turned his attention to portraying romantic Paris through lively depictions of its major monuments and bustling squares. His works attracted a civilian audience appreciative of his precise and elegant draftsmanship. His cityscapes feature pedestrians, horse riders, and carriages, animating the daily life of bourgeois Paris.

Gobaut paid tribute to the history of Paris through views of landmarks such as the Arc de Triomphe (*ill.* 1), the Church of La Madeleine (*ill.* 2), the Pont Royal, the Palais and Gardens of the Tuileries, Notre-Dame (*ill.* 3), Les Invalides (*ill.* 4), and Place Vendôme. The latter, in particular, holds military significance. Commissioned by Napoleon and erected between 1806 and 1810, the Vendôme Column commemorated the Battle of Austerlitz. Destroyed during the Commune and reconstructed in 1873, it was successively named the Column of Austerlitz, the Column of Victory, and later, the Column of the Grande Armée—commonly referred to as the Vendôme Column.





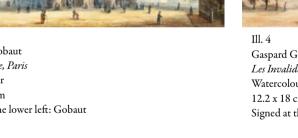
Ill. 1 Gaspard Gobaut L'Arc de Triomphe, Paris Watercolour 12 x 17.5 cm Signed at the lower left: Gobaut



Ill. 2 Gaspard Gobaut L'Église de la Madeleine, Paris Watercolour 12.2 x 18 cm Signed at the lower right: Gobaut



Ill. 3 Gaspard Gobaut Notre-Dame, Paris Watercolour 12.2 x 18 cm Signed at the lower left: Gobaut



Having perfected the technique of watercolor throughout his career, Gobaut consistently favored the delicacy of paper over the heaviness of canvas. Positioned between painting and drawing, watercolor allowed him to swiftly and precisely render the smallest details, even on a modestly sized sheet. He enhanced the figures' clothing with gouache highlights to bring out their details.

His process began with a black chalk sketch drawn from life, followed by the careful application of washes to capture shifting light effects. In his cityscapes, like the one presented here, the sky-sometimes cloudy and dramatic, sometimes illuminated by a burst of sunlight is rendered through extreme dilution of pigment, achieving a balance between transparency and opacity.



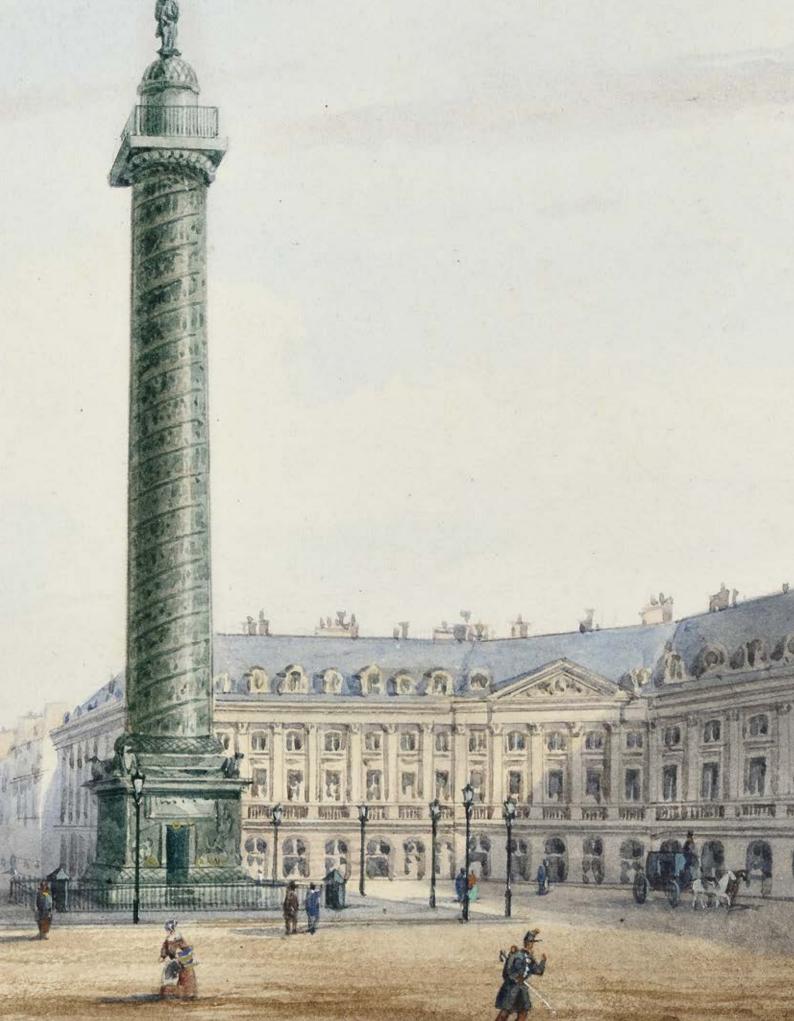
Gaspard Gobaut Les Invalides, Paris Watercolour 12.2 x 18 cm Signed at the lower right: Gobaut

Gobaut exhibited at the Salon from 1840 to 1878. Reaching the pinnacle of his specialty, he was awarded the Legion of Honor in 1871. Upon his retirement, one of his superiors remarked: «This type of drawing [...] is created only at the Dépôt de la Guerre, and with him, this collection of watercolors comes to an end [...] a true page of our military history."

Admired by both Parisian enthusiasts and collectors of military scenes, Gaspard Gobaut's refined body of work stands as a remarkable historical record of mid-19thcentury France.







Frédéric DUBOIS

(*circa* 1770 – after 1815)

14 | Young Woman Holding a Fan and Her Dog in an Interior

1794

Watercolour with gouache highlights on paper mounted on panel Signed and dated lower right on the secretary: *Dubois 1794* 45.7 x 32.5 cm

Provenance:

- Collection of the late M. Dubois Chefdebien, Etienne Ader, Paris, Drouot, 18 December 1940, listed as no. 9 under the title *La dame à l'éventail* (850 FRF)
- France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Nathalie Lemoine Bouchard, Les peintres en miniature, Les Éditions de l'Amateur, Paris, 2008

The life and work of Frédéric Dubois remain largely unstudied. Most of his known works confirm that he was recognised during his lifetime as a portrait painter and miniaturist. Some sources indicate that he was a pupil of the renowned German pastellist Johann Heinrich Schröder (1757-1812), which helps to explain the creation of two pastels in 1780, marking his first public exhibition. These were portraits of Charles Juste de Beauvau, Prince of Craon, and Count Mimerel at the Salon de la Correspondance. Established in 1779 after the closure of the Académie de Saint-Luc, this Salon welcomed non-academic artists as well as scholars and creators from across Europe. Dubois' delicate brushwork allowed him to build an excellent reputation and secure a prominent place in the artistic circles of the capital.

During the Directory period and until the dawn of the Empire (1795–1804), Dubois exhibited miniatures at the *Salon du Louvre*, a speciality that brought him further recognition. From 1804 to 1818, his name appeared in Saint Petersburg as a member of the Imperial Academy of Arts. Between commissions for nobles and bourgeois patrons, Dubois found a new clientele in this foreign setting. Constantly seeking new opportunities and fleeing political instability in France¹, he later moved to London, where he exhibited at the *Royal Academy* between 1819 and 1820.



Frédéric Dubois A young woman in a low-necked white gown, a red cashmere shawl draped around her shoulders, with curled hair Watercolour and gouache on ivory Diameter: 7.1 cm Private collection

Our drawing is a rare example of the artist's work, dated 1794, before he dedicated himself exclusively to the art of miniature painting. Dubois imbues each of his drawings with a precious quality that already foreshadows his fascination with miniatures.





Ill. 2

Frédéric Dubois Young woman in a spotted dress with red ribbons, holding pansies in her right hand, circa 1795 Watercolour and gouache on ivory Diameter: 6.4 cm Celle (Germany), The Tansey Miniatures Foundation (inv. 10228)

In a tranquil interior, a full-length young woman is depicted holding a closed fan in her right hand, while resting her left arm on the back of a medallion-backed chair upholstered in blue silk with rosette patterns and cabriole legs, a fashionable design in the late 18th century. Dressed in the latest fashion, she wears a low-necked white muslin gown, cinched under the bust and tied at the back with a wide pink ribbon, whose silk texture is enhanced by Dubois' skilful use of gouache.

Indeed, in his pursuit of refinement and elegance, Dubois systematically enriched his watercolours with gouache. This additional medium brings depth to the fabrics and reveals meticulous facial details such as pupils, cheekbones, and the bridge of the nose. It also accentuates the density of the hair and the pink headband encircling it, an element later recurring in his miniatures (*ill.* 1).

To the left of the figure, a basket of wild roses rests on a mahogany secretary—an exotic wood highly prized from the late 18th century. Infused with poetry, the artist's female portraits often feature flowers with evident symbolic meanings: pansies convey intimacy (*ill.* 2), while roses signify love. In our piece, love is further personified by the presence of a small dog sitting on the chair, gazing up at its mistress as a symbol of eternal fidelity. The full-length depiction of a young woman in an interior gained great popularity from the late 18th century onwards. It highlights not only the model's social standing but also her role as mistress of her own household. Furthermore, the subject's pose cleverly reveals her foot, adorned with a delicate pink slipper, intentionally rendered small and refined—an allusion to the ideals of delicacy under the Ancien Régime.

The work of Frédéric Dubois can be found in the collections of international institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tansey Miniature Foundation in Celle (Germany), and in Russia. His oeuvre remains rare, having been unjustly overlooked by history. Yet, the dexterity of his hand, praised in his own time, embodies the elegance and refinement of the late 18th century—an era navigating political and social turmoil in search of stability.

М.О

¹ A painter as well as an engraver, Dubois also produced a number of royalist caricatures, now in the British Museum in London.



Théodore GUDIN

(Paris, 1802 – Boulogne-Billancourt, 1880)

15 | Study for the Doge's Palace in Venice

Oil on paper mounted on canvas 37.6 x 54.3 cm Old inventory label affixed to the upper left side of the painting Annotated «5 Venise (?)» in pencil at the top right On the back, on the canvas, stencil inscription: T GUDIN / 270 On the back, on the crossbar of the stretcher, pencil inscription: n° 23. Gudin. Italie. / Alcove

Provenance:

• France, private collection.

Bibliography:

• John Steegmann, «Théodore Gudin: A Marine-Painter of the Second Empire» in *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 1942-01, Vol. 80 (466), p. 226

• Théodore Gudin, Souvenirs du baron Gudin, peintre de la Marine (1820-1870), Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie, 1921

« Théodore Gudin, moreover, was not only the most illustrious of our marine painters. This sea, which he passionately loved and admirably

This sea, which he passionately loved and admirably painted, had become for him like a second homeland, to which he devoted himself, a second family, whose faults he wished to mitigate ».

Having entered the Naval School to become a navy officer, the young apprentice Gudin soon abandoned his studies in favour of a journey to the United States, where he sought to reunite with Bonapartists in exile. There, he found his true calling and joined the American navy, where he remained until 1822, the year of his return to Paris. This experience allowed him to redirect his career towards the arts. Though he did not leave the navy behind, he now aspired to become a painter, following in the footsteps of his brother, who had been a pupil of Horace Vernet (1789–1863). At the age of 20, Gudin began his apprenticeship under Anne-Louis Girodet (1767–1824). In Girodet's studio, he honed his skills with the brush and became increasingly fascinated by the effects of light on the sea. He participated in the Salon for the first time in 1822, exhibiting five canvases. His keen eye for maritime scenery caught the attention of the Duke of Orléans, the future King of the French, who became his patron the following year. In 1830, when Louis-Philippe ascended the throne, Gudin was appointed official painter of the Royal Navy, a title he retained through the reign of Napoleon III.



Ill. 1 Théodore Gudin *The Doge's Palace in Venice* Oil on canvas 41,5 x 64 cm Agutte Sale, April 2nd, 2010, n°177



Théodore Gudin The Doges Palace in Venice, départure for the Lido Party Oil on canvas 104 x 153 cm ArtCurial Sale, August 20th, 2010, n°41



Well-established within the bourgeois society of Romantic Paris, Gudin set out to explore new lands, travelling to Italy, Switzerland, and Russia. Upon his return, Louis-Philippe bestowed upon him the title of Baron. Determined to make use of the military painter's talent, the king commissioned him to create 90 paintings for the Palace of Versailles, aimed at commemorating and glorifying French naval history.

Gudin's work in Italy was prolific. Fascinated by Venice and its sunsets, he sketched from life, producing numerous studies and painted sketches. The artwork presented here is an excellent example of the artist's dexterity in capturing spontaneous impressions. With swift strokes, he outlines and traces the distinctive contours of La Serenissima. The warmth of the setting sun illuminates the Doge's Palace, with the Campanile of Saint Mark visible in the background. Boats and gondolas float upon the sea, so still that time itself seems to pause. The sharp acidity of yellows and oranges blends masterfully with a harmony of purples and blues in the sky, revealing the artistic grandeur of this capital of the arts.

This sketch served as a preparatory study for two larger oil paintings (ill. 1), the most spectacular of which (ill. 2) was exhibited in Paris at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1834 under number 918. In this final version, the artist retains the same perspective as in the sketch but enriches the composition with numerous details, multiplying the figures and refining even the smallest window. The title of the work is also clarified: it depicts the departure of boats for the Festa del Lido, a celebration of Ascension Day marked by a procession of vessels sailing towards the island of Lido.

« His popularity in the arts was rivalled only by that of Horace Vernet.»

Recognised by his peers and praised by the royal authorities, Théodore Gudin was awarded the Legion of Honour in 1841. His frequent travels to England, which began in 1821, allowed him to seek refuge there during the 1848 Revolution, as well as when he chose exile following the fall of the Empire in 1870.

М.О





François BONVIN

(Paris, 1817 – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1887)

16 | Still Life with a Bouquet of Peonies and Roses on a Tablecloth

Oil on canvas set in an oval frame Signed and dated *F. Bonvin 1876* in the centre to the right 57 x 46.5 cm

Provenance:

France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Étienne Moreau-Nélaton, Bonvin raconté par lui-même, Paris: Henri Laurens Publisher, 1927

• Gabriel P. Weisberg, François Bonvin and the Critics of His Art, London: Apollo Press Limited, 1974

• Anisabelle Berès and Michel Arveiller, *François Bonvin, the Master of the «Realist School»: 1817-1887*, [exh. cat.] Paris, Galerie Berès, November 19, 1998 – January 9, 1999, Pittsburg, Frick Art & Historical Center, 1999.

Born to a gamekeeper and a seamstress, young François-Saint Bonvin was not initially destined for an artistic career. Orphaned of his mother at the age of four and abandoned by his father, a former soldier, François grew up in the village of Vaugirard between what is now Rue Cambronne and Rue Lecourbe, raised by a woman who barely fed him.

To entertain his two younger brothers, François created a painted theatre backdrop. His talent as a young prodigy, at only 10 years old, was noticed, and he was admitted to the Free School of Drawing founded in 1765 by Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724-1806). However, he was forced to leave three years later during the Revolution of 1830. He would only return to his artistic pursuits many years later, in 1842. Upon his return to school, he met the new director, Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1802-1897), who would later teach Whistler and Fantin-Latour, and completed his education.

A painter of intimacy and with an introverted character, Bonvin naturally turned to two genres that matched this sentiment: born of the people, he chose to depict scenes from everyday French life and subtle still lifes in the second half of his career. His work shows a clear influence from Northern European Golden Age artists such as Pieter de Hooch, Vermeer, and Rembrandt — an enthusiasm he defended until the end of his career.



Ill. 1 François BONVIN (1817-1887) Eggs, Quarter of Pumpkin, and Copper Basin on a Ledge, 1854 Oil on canvas 46 x 38 cm Signed and dated «F. Bonvin 1854» on the left side of the table Montpellier, Musée Fabre





Ill. 2 François BONVIN (1817-1887) *Still life with stingray and red mullets, 1870* Oil on canvas 46 x 56 cm Signed and dated «F. Bonvin 1870» on the left side of the table Private Collection

His particular attraction to still life was greatly influenced by Jean Siméon Chardin (1699-1779), a master of still lifes whom Bonvin greatly admired. Bonvin paid homage to Chardin by incorporating elements from his repertoire, such as the mortar, the copper basin (*ill.* 1), and the ray that dominates one of his sumptuous 1854 works (*ill.* 2).

Bonvin sought to faithfully reproduce the reality of life as he saw it, without artifice or complex composition. From this, a form of poetry emerges that the artist finds in the most ordinary of tasks. He enjoyed painting the spectacle of home interiors, corridors, the objects, and figures that animate them. His still lifes invite both travel and introspection. In this delicate depiction, identifiable as an allegory of life's fleeting nature, a bouquet of freshly cut flowers takes centre stage. Placed at the centre of this oval canvas, the glass vase is bathed in a soft light from the left, demonstrating the artist's dexterity in rendering the illusion of reality. A few fallen petals, a broken stem, these roses and peonies will only live a few more hours. Through this canvas, Bonvin captures the fragile beauty of life, likely reflecting his own existence. With fragile health, the artist's later years were marked by suffering: the kidney disease he contracted in the 1870s greatly weakened him. In harmonious, almost sacred silence, oysters or flowers appear in his works, imbuing them with spiritual gravity.

This composition found some success as, in 1876, Bonvin produced a version of this work on panel. With the same dimensions as the current work, it is signed in the same location, in the middle to the right, *F. Bonvin* 1876. In both cases, the oval format suggests that the





Ill. 3 François BONVIN (1817-1887) *A vase of roses on a red table cloth, 1884* Oil on panel 18.5 x 14 cm Signed and dated at the bottom right «F. Bonvin 1884» Private Collection



Ill.4 François BONVIN (1817-1887) *Roses in a Vase, 1878* Oil on canvas 54.6 x 33.7 cm Signed and dated in the middle right «F. Bonvin 1878» Private Collection

artist primarily used this shape for still lifes, likely at the request of his clients. The format also reflects a connection to the work of his younger colleague Henri Fantin-Latour, whom he greatly admired. Bonvin had also exhibited some of his friend's paintings in his studio on Rue Saint-Jacques during their shared rejection from the Salon of 1859. The friendship between the two artists lasted until the end of their careers.

Known during his lifetime as the «new Chardin», François Bonvin lived off his art until his death in 1887. Praised by critics for his work on realism, the elegance of his forms, and the accuracy of his colours, his works were often placed in the tradition of the 18th-century master. The sovereign simplicity of his work made him an authentic artist close to the people with whom he identified. Despite never seeking fame, Bonvin did occasionally find himself in the company of it at a few Salons. He did not hesitate to depict the most impoverished, elevating them to the status of history painting, a subject of interest for many of his contemporaries and friends, including Courbet, whom he met upon his arrival in Paris in 1839. His enthusiasm and passion for his art brought him closer to his peers, including Daumier, Corot, and Fromentin, with whom he forged friendships, and Nadar, one of his first buyers.



Jean-Baptiste Camille COROT

(Paris, 1796 - 1875)

17 | The Mandolin Player

Watercolour over graphite lines, set in an oval (watercolour trial at the top right under the mount) 19.2 x 15.3 cm Stamped in red ink «VENTE COROT» on the lower right of the drawing (Lugt, no. 460a) Old labels on the verso mentioning the Doria sale (1899), another bearing the number 621 inscribed in pen, and another describing the work under no. 8 «La Joueuse de Luthe»

Provenance:

- Posthumous sale of Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, Paris, Drouot, 26 May 1875
- Sale of the collection of Count Armand Doria, Volume II, 8 May 1899, under no. 255

Bibliography:

• E. Moreau-Nélaton, Corot raconté par lui-même, 2 vols., Paris, 1924

- E. Moreau-Nélaton and A. Robaut, *L'Œuvre de Corot par Alfred Robaut. Catalogue raisonné et illustré précédé de l'histoire de Corot et de ses œuvres par Étienne Moreau-Nélaton, ornée de dessins et croquis originaux du maître,* 5 vols., Paris, 1905.
- France, private collection

A prominent figure of the 19th century, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot bridged the gap between English landscape tradition and French Impressionism. Yet, nothing initially destined him for an artistic career. Born into a well-to-do Parisian bourgeois family, his parents envisioned a future for him as a merchant. Driven by his passion, young Corot convinced them to grant him an allowance that enabled him to pursue his vocation.

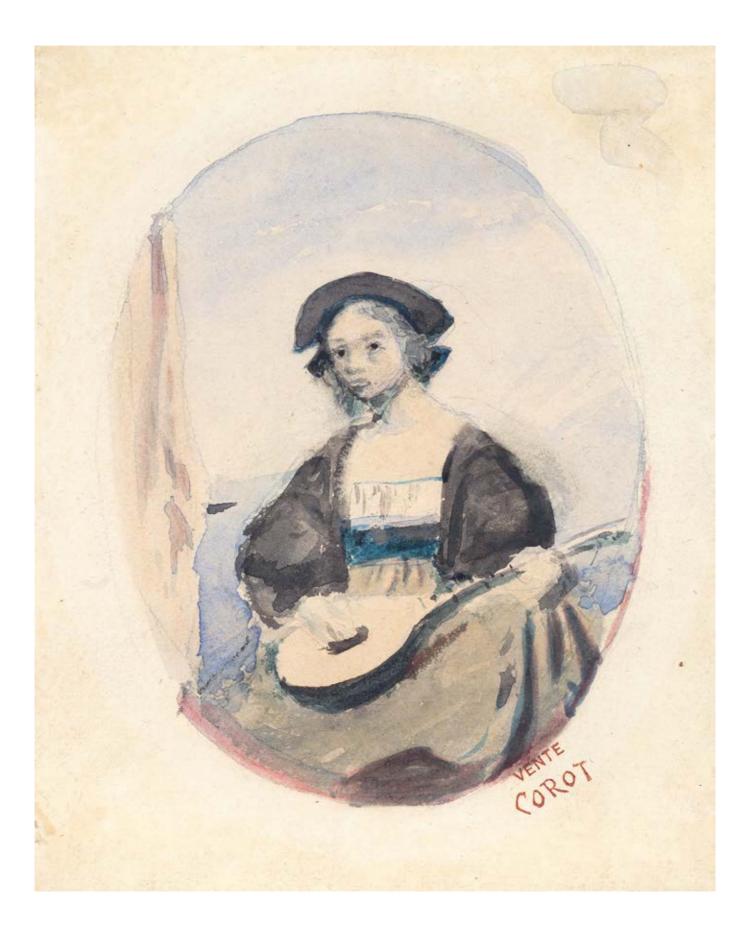
Fascinated by the work of his contemporary Achille Etna Michallon (1796-1822), Corot began his training by accompanying him to paint en plein air. Following Michallon's untimely death, Corot studied under Jean-Victor Bertin (1775-1842) and continued his outdoor practice.

By 1825, at the age of 29, Corot embarked on his first journey to Italy, where he encountered the new artistic spirit of the 19th century, a time when painters sought to break away from academic traditions. A perpetual traveler, Corot returned to Italy twice more. The extraordinary light he discovered there profoundly influenced his palette and sparked his enduring fascination with the creative power of light as a source of life.

Beyond his deep affinity with nature, Corot gradually developed an interest in portraiture, which became an essential part of his artistic practice. Whether



III. 1 Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot Young Woman with a Mandolin, circa 1850 Oil on canvas Private collection





nymphs, Italian women in traditional attire, dreamlike Oriental figures, or portraits of his close acquaintances, Corot was particularly drawn to the female form. The watercolour presented here is a rare preparatory study for an oil painting titled *The Mandolin Player (ill.* 1). This work belongs to the select group of Corot's drawings considered as fully realised pieces. The lyrical theme of the mandolin, discovered in Italy, appears to have held a special place in Corot's oeuvre, as he produced additional sketches and paintings on the subject (*ill.* 2).

Around 1850, the probable date of this watercolour, Corot abandoned precise draughtsmanship in favour of exploring the interplay of light and shadow.

Always in search of new exercises from nature, Corot turned to watercolour, a technique of great modernity. Despite its apparent simplicity, watercolour requires considerable skill to harness its remarkable richness of effects. «Seated, seen almost frontally and down to the thighs, a young woman plays the lute; she wears a garnet-coloured skirt, a black jacket, and a low-cut bodice. Her reddishblonde hair is styled under a black hat trimmed with black velvet. Behind her, a blue sky. To the left, a pink curtain.»

On a small sheet measuring no more than 15 centimetres in height, Corot demonstrates both boldness and energy. He sketches the contours of his figure in graphite before defining, with a few brushstrokes, the silhouette of a seated young woman holding a mandolin, set against a luminous sky treated with atmospheric perspective. Created by mixing pigments with a vegetable gum known as gum arabic, watercolour can be diluted and applied in multiple translucent layers. Corot skilfully manipulates the paper's natural reserve and varying shades of blue to evoke the vibrancy of light illuminating the background, while a harmonious blend of browns conveys the various fabrics of the model's clothing and her instrument.



Although Corot never considered himself a draughtsman, he left behind more than 600 sketches and drawings at his death. In his pursuit of harmony and an ideal representation of nature, elevating landscape painting to the same status as portraiture, Corot paved the way for French Impressionism.

Among the many critics who recognised his creative genius, Baudelaire described Corot's work as a «miracle of heart and mind.»

М.О

Mrs. Claire LEBEAU, Ms. Jill NEWHOUSE, and Mr. Martin DIETERLE confirmed the authenticity of our watercolor in a certificate dated March 6th, 2012.

¹ As described in the Count Doria's Sale, March 1899, n°255.



Ill. 2 Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot *Seated Woman, Facing Forward, Holding a Mandolin,* circa 1845 Graphite 36.8 x 21.1 cm Paris, Louvre Museum, Department of Graphic Arts (inv. RF 8772, Recto)

Gustave DORÉ

(Strasbourg, 1832 – Paris, 1883)

18 View of the Aiguilles d'Ansabère in the Pyrenees, animated by a herd

Circa 1855 36 x 26 cm

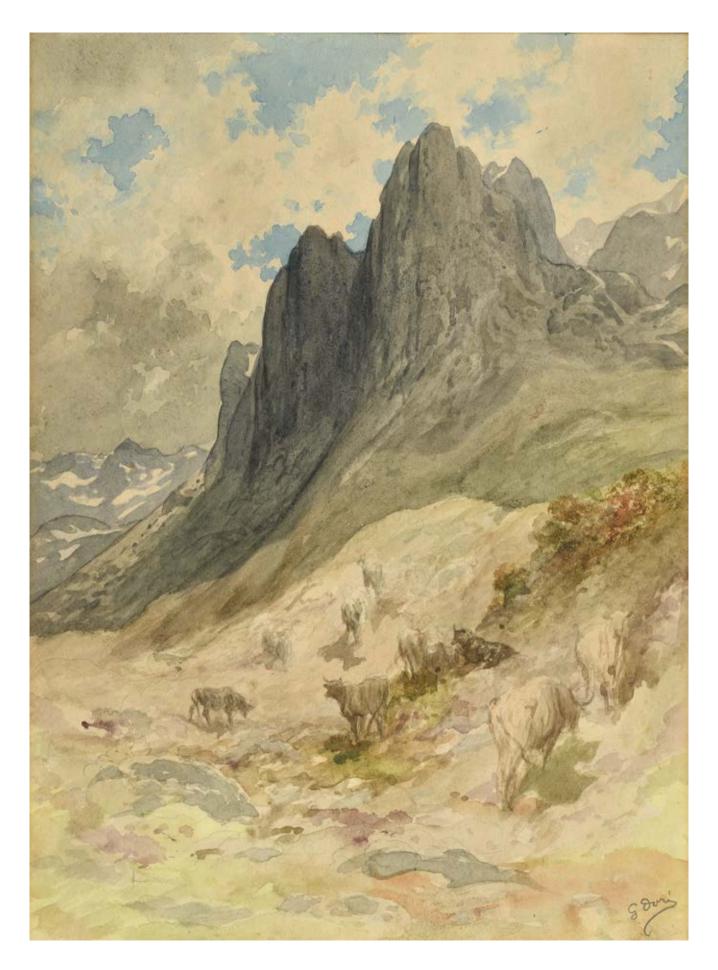
Watercolour and ink wash over pencil strokes Signed «G. Doré» at the bottom right

Provenance:

France, private collection



Gustave Doré's name is inextricably linked to his illustrations, such as those for *Rabelais* (1854) and *Contes drolatiques* by Balzac (1855), which marked his early successes. His fame was solidified by his illustrations for the *Bible* (1866) and *Fables de la Fontaine* (1867), which left an indelible mark on generations of artists. However, paradoxically, Doré desired to be known as a painter, and this was the focus of his lifelong efforts. «I am my own rival, I must erase and kill the illustrator so that I am only spoken of as a painter,» the artist wrote with a hint of bitterness. «I illustrate to pay for my colors and brushes. My heart has always been in painting. I feel I was born a painter,» he continued in 1873. Ill. 1 Gustave Doré (1832-1883) *Le Cirque de Gavarnie* 50 x 65 cm Signed «G. Doré» at the bottom right, undated Musée des Beaux-Arts de Pau



Despite this, fame did not elude the precocious genius, who explored every technique and subject, supported by an imagination as prolific as his assured hand. In 1851, the painter made a discreet entry at the Salon with his painting *Pins sauvages*. In 1857, he tried in vain to attract attention with eight landscapes. Perhaps his art was too far removed from the tastes of his time, still tinged with romanticism, and an imagination that Zola criticized: «Mr. Gustave Doré is the only one who dares to risk the ridicule of making imaginative landscapes.»

Known primarily for his engravings, Gustave Doré also made a significant mark as a painter, especially with his spectacular landscapes. One of his most notable subjects was the mountains of the Pyrénées, inspired by a trip to the region in 1855 with the writer and poet Théophile Gautier.

This journey deeply fed the artist's imagination, bringing him face to face with imposing nature, majestic mountains, enclosed valleys, and dramatic plays of light. This effect can be seen in another of Doré's watercolours, *Le Cirque de Gavarnie*.

Influenced by romanticism, Gustave Doré depicts nature as a crushing and beautifully wild force. His Pyrénéan landscapes exult the sublime — a mixture of admiration and terror when facing nature's immensity.

The mountains are often portrayed as titanic walls, emphasizing the smallness of man in contrast to the grandeur of nature. In contrast to traditional painting, where animals or human figures animate the landscape, here the cows do not dominate the composition. Instead, they are integrated harmoniously, reinforcing a holistic vision of nature.

In this Pyrénéan landscape, Doré adopts a technique where the cows, although recognizable, are not singled out as distinct subjects. They seem to merge with the very essence of the landscape. This approach evokes a near-prescient vision of abstraction, where shapes dissolve into the environment, suggesting unity between living beings and their surroundings.

The artist employs rich texture, where the brushstrokes evoke rocks, grass, and the coats of the cows. This gives the work a tactile and organic quality. This handling of the material creates an effect where the viewer must look closely to distinguish the elements, enhancing an immersive and almost impressionistic approach.



Ill. 2 Gustave Doré (1832-1883) Waterfall (Trou de l'Enfer) à Luchon 55 x 36,5 cm Signed G. Doré at the bottom right, dated 1882 Musée des Beaux-Arts de Pau

At the time, such a painting might have been seen as an anomaly, even an eccentricity, within Gustave Doré's oeuvre, which was dominated by his engravings. However, from a modern perspective, this painting resonates with later artistic movements, particularly symbolists and post-impressionism, with its emphasis on light, atmosphere, and the dissolution of forms by major artists.

This *Paysage montagneux des Pyrénées animé d'un troupeau* demonstrates how Gustave Doré, though often associated with romanticism, possessed a sensitivity and vision that anticipated later trends in modern art.



Albert ADAM

(1833 – circa 1900)

19 | Regattas at Asnières

1859

Gouache and watercolour 45.5 x 60.5 cm Signed, dated, and dedicated at the bottom left: «Adam to his friend Emile Duquesne, 26 October 1859»

Provenance:

• France, private collection.

Bibliography:

• Christian Vivier, *L'aventure canotière: Du canotage à l'aviron. Histoire de la nautique bisontine (1865-1930)*, [Thesis], Claude-Bernard University of Lyon, Paris: Association Francophone for Research in Physical Activities and Sports, 1994.

In Paris, the activity known as «canotage» emerged in the 1840s. This term circulated in the press as a leisurely navigation or racing activity in «canots», undecked rowing boats. The success of this new activity led to the development of events organised around it. Gradually, the communes along the banks of the Seine began organising their own events through rowing societies, attracting large crowds of spectators.

The oldest and most famous regattas near Paris are those of the town of Asnières, an example of which is presented here from the late 1850s. The artist, Albert Adam, devoted himself to the precise and meticulous representation of this popular event. On the banks of the Seine, a crowd of spectators flutters near the boats, dressed for the occasion: women wear their finest outfits with hats and crinolines, while the men are either in formal wear with top hats or in crew attire. Some cheer the slender rowers with raised arms, others engage in conversation, while some, gathered around a picnic, smoke their pipes. Beyond the sporting admiration, regattas became, by the mid-19th century, a key event in the social life around the capital. The event took on an essential social character, referred to as «river balls». Attracted by this wild charm, far from the noise of the city, Parisians flocked to the Seine. The famous *Grenouillère* at Croissy, depicted by many Impressionists and nicknamed the «Trouville on the banks of the Seine», would host Emperor Napoleon III and his wife Eugénie in 1869.

These social and leisure spots were heavily criticised by the Romantics, who saw in them a new kind of hypocrisy. In *La Maison Tellier*, Guy de Maupassant expresses this phenomenon: *«Some locals pass by out of curiosity every Sunday; some very young men appear there each year, learning to live. Strollers show up; some naïve people get lost there.»*¹

The familiar term «rowing», as we know it today, was imported from England, where racing these narrow boats on rivers and streams became internationally





Albert Adam (painter) Claude Régnier, Joseph Bettanier, and Morlon (Lithographers) *The Regattas (Asnières)* Lithograph in shaded tones Printed by Lemercier & Co., Paris 34.5 x 51.8 cm Bibliothèque nationale de France, Prints and Photographs Department, RESERVE FT 4-QB-370 (159)

renowned as early as the 1830s. The most famous competition remains the one held on the River Thames between the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge in 1829. In France, boating took on an international dimension from the mid-19th century.

In 1853, the Société des Régates Parisiennes (S.R.P.) organised the first Seine Championship. In 1859, the year Albert Adam painted our gouache, the Rowing Club of Paris (R.C.P.) introduced the British model: newly trained teams were now organised into «clubs», and the rowers, now professionals, were called «rowing men». The town of Argenteuil hosted races in 1867 for the occasion of the Universal Exhibition. Passionate about this new sporting development, Albert Adam studied the start of the rowing men at Asnières in 1859 and also created a lithograph of it (*ill.* 1). Dedicated to his friend Émile Duquesne, our drawing reveals, through a composition divided horizontally into two parts, the two main aspects of these events: a crowd in emulation before the boats, now organised into teams, all just launched onto the Seine.

М.О

¹ Guy de Maupassant, « La femme de Paul », *La Maison Tellier*, 1881.







Albert BESNARD

(Paris, 1849 - 1934)

20 Conversation in the Salon

Watercolour over pencil lines 33.5 x 25 cm Dedicated to Madame Mossler / Respectful memories, signed and dated 188... at the bottom right.

Provenance:

• France, private collection.

Bibliography:

- Albert Besnard (1849-1934): *Modernities of the Belle Époque*, [exhibition cat.], Palais-Lumière Évian (2016), Paris, Petit Palais (2016-2017), Paris: Somogy éditions d'art: Petit Palais-Museum of Fine Arts of the City of Paris; Évian: Palais Lumière, 2016
- Chantal Beauvalot et al.: *Albert Besnard 1849-1934*, exhibition catalogue of the Eugène-Boudin Museum, Honfleur, 2008
- Jean Adhémar (1908-1987), exhibition catalogue organized at the National Library in 1949, on the occasion of the centenary of the artist's birth: *Albert Besnard: The Engraved Work, Paintings, Drawings, Pastels*
- Georges Lecomte, Albert Besnard, preface by Gustave Geffroy, Paris, Nilsson, 1925
- Camille Mauclair, Albert Besnard The Man and the Work, Paris, Delagrave, 1914
- Frantz Jourdain, The Painter Albert Besnard, Paris, Boussod-Valadon, 1888

Honoured by the Republic for his career, Albert Besnard was the first painter to receive national funerals: he was awarded numerous honours, including the Prix de Rome, election to the Academy of Fine Arts, the French Academy, directorship of the Villa Medici, and later of the École des Beaux-Arts.

A genius of «intimism» (a term coined by critic Camille Mauclair around 1900), his genre scenes in diluted watercolour seem washed by sentiment. Besnard is a late romantic, translating emotions through colour. Occasionally misunderstood by his peers but always admired by his faithful public, he responded to official commissions, including the ceiling of the Comédie-Française, among many others.

Between the public and private spheres, the work we present here belongs to the latter category. Recognised as a portraitist, he places the female figure at the heart of his work (*ill.* 1).

In this piece, the viewer is invited into the intimacy of a salon conversation. Three women, comfortably seated and leaning, engage in discussion, turned toward each



Ill. 1 Albert Besnard (1849-1934) Portrait of Madame Thouret, 1873 38 x 27.5 cm Signed and dated at the bottom left Private collection



other. A soft light emanates from what seems to be a window in the background of the conversation, hinting at a peaceful afternoon hour.

The limited information we have about Madame Mossler, to whom the artist dedicates the work, does not detract from the powerful bond of friendship that seems to have existed between the artist and his model. One can easily suspect that Madame Mossler is among the three women depicted.

A reminder of an unbreakable bond, this sketch-turnedmasterpiece illustrates the artist's sensitivity. The small format contributes to its preciousness and suggests that the work was quickly sketched. It is by no means a commission; the idea of intimacy prevails over the minutiae of detail: with minimal means, the figures are reduced to coloured patches in broad washes, diluted to the extreme. The use of pastel colours conveys the gentle way of life and the delicate, almost ethereal atmosphere that pervades the salon. The silent work, however, conveys what seems to be an afternoon conversation, inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in an exchange of glances between the three figures.

Outside any official framework, French watercolourists like Besnard were able to express the best of their art through intimate works, revealing their deep sensitivity. Like many of his peers in the second half of the 19th century, Besnard was captivated by the effects of transparency and fluidity that watercolour allows and plays with great mastery in the reserve of his sheets. Thanks to an independent personality that did not follow any group, navigating between Impressionism and Symbolism, Albert Besnard found his own speciality between the private and public spheres, distinguishing himself from his contemporaries.

M.O





Firmin BAES

(Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode, 1874 – Uccle, 1945)

21 | Young Mother Watching Over the Cradle

1916

Pastel on paper 53 x 63.5 cm Signed and dated *Firmin Baes 1916* at the bottom right

Provenance

Belgium, private collection

Bibliography:

· Georgette Naegels-Delfosse, Firmin Baes, Brussels, Éditions d'Art Associés, 1987

«There is something both firm and masculine in his art, yet also enveloping. His use of colour is both sober and radiant. [...] He sees and characterises with penetrating simplicity [...] Nothing here is meant for sentimental romanticism.»¹

The artistic training of the young Firmin began under his father, the painter and decorator Henri Baes, who was also a professor at the Brussels Academy. He continued his apprenticeship under the guidance of Léon Frédéric, a family friend, before attending the School of Fine Arts and later enrolling in a private academy, *La Patte de Dindon*, situated above a tavern of the same name in Brussels' Grand Place.

At the age of 24, Baes joined *Cercle Pour l'Art*, founded six years earlier by members of the *L'Essor* group. Thanks to this, he exhibited for the first time at the circle in 1900 and later at the Paris Universal Exhibition, where his work *Les Tireurs à l'Arc* earned him unprecedented success. Having become a specialist in portraiture, he soon received numerous commissions. His clientele included members of his family circle, the aristocracy, and the Belgian bourgeoisie, notably the famous Countess of Aerschot, who commissioned a portrait from him in 1915.

Praised for his mastery of colour and his exceptional drawing skills, most of his early works were created in oil and charcoal. From 1910 onwards, he discovered the pastel technique. Enthralled by this new, complex, and delicate medium, he dedicated himself almost exclusively



Ill. 1 Firmin Baes *The Lace-Maker* Pastel on paper mounted on cardboard 42 x 32 cm Private Collection





Ill. 2 Firmin Baes *Lace-Maker at Her Work in an Interior* Pastel on paper mounted on canvas 63 x 68.5 cm Private Collection

to it. His process began with charcoal outlines— a technique he had perfected— before applying colour, layering shades ranging from fiery orange to subtly blended charcoal grey, softened by hand.

A significant part of Baes' oeuvre focuses on depicting another class of Belgian society: labourers engaged in their daily work, captured in the simple beauty of their routines. These include a lace-maker, a knitter sometimes asleep, sometimes at her craft (*ill*. 1)— a young woman at her toilette, or, as in this case, a young mother watching over a cradle. Although the identities of these women remain unknown, they appear to have been acquaintances or encounters from Baes' summer stays in the countryside, particularly in Faulx-les-Tombes near Namur. There, he rented the Château de Ville before later purchasing land and building a villa named Le Chenois. It was likely in Faulx-les-Tombes that his repertoire expanded with these new models, drawn from life as timeless souvenirs of his homeland and the rustic atmosphere in which he had grown up, portrayed without artifice.

The painter had a habit of dedicating his mornings to portraiture and his afternoons to still lifes. Exceptionally, this scene appears to take place under electric light a novelty in the early 20th century— probably in the evening. Everything in this work evokes silence and serenity. Whether a nursemaid or a young mother, the female figure remains undisturbed by the artist's presence. Like a subject from a Dutch Golden Age masterpiece, she wears a modest headscarf and simple attire, her gaze gently resting on the cradle where a sleeping child can be faintly discerned. The setting is likely a home the artist visited regularly, as the same interior appears in several of his other works, including *Lace-Maker at Her Work in an Interior (ill.* 2).

Firmin Baes became renowned for the exquisite delicacy of his pastels. A fragile and velvety material, pastel required a particular technique, which Baes developed himself— applying it on canvas prepared through a process he kept secret until his death in 1945.

М.О.

¹ La Belgique artistique et littéraire, vol. XVIII, 1910, p. 367.



Léon LHERMITTE

(Mont-Saint-Père, 1844 – Paris, 1925)

22 The Entrance to a Village enlivened with Peasants

1905

Pastel on paper laid down on canvas Signed lower left: « *L. Lhermitte* » $44 \times 57 \text{ cm.} (17^{5/16} \times 22^{7/16} \text{ in.})$

Bibliography:

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

Provenance:

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

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

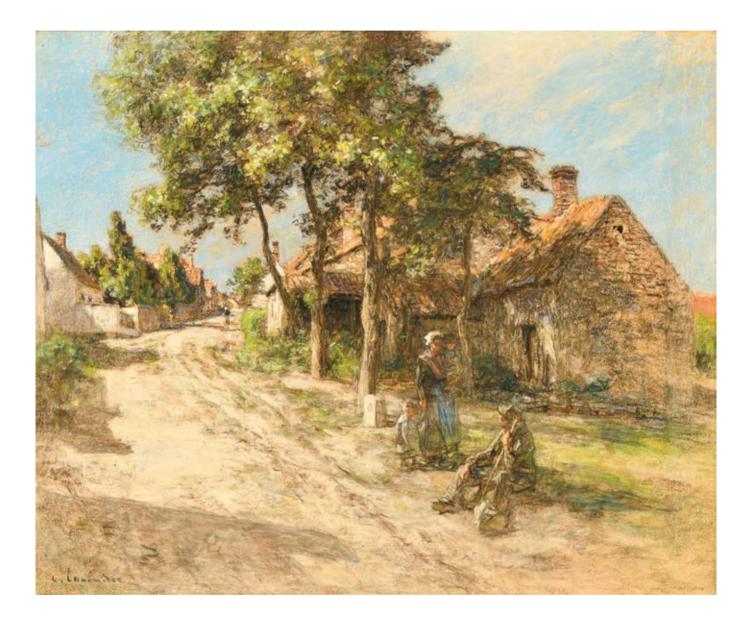
In 1882, the French State acquired the monumental work, The Reapers' Wages for the Luxembourg Museum. Praised by the critics, the artist Leon Lhermitte thus became a key figure in contemporary painting. On this occasion, his friend Auguste Rodin sent him his congratulations in a letter to which the artist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

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



Ill. 1

Two Peasants Resting in a Wheat Field Signed and dated: *L. Lhermitte / 1913* Pastel on paper, laid down on canvas, mounted on a stretcher 45 x 55.3 cm. (17 ¹¹/16 x 21 ¾ in.) Private Collection.



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

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

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

Exhibited by Durand-Ruel in London in 1875, celebrated by public opinion and by the State which acquired some of his most beautiful works, as well as commissioning decoration for the *Hôtel de Ville* and the Sorbonne, Leon Lhermitte was a much appreciated artist in his lifetime and turns out to be an emblematic figure in 19th century peasant painting.



Léon Lhermitte in académician's garb in his studio, posing in front of his work "Une Route en Artois."

- ¹ *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, II, (2nd ed.), Greenwich, CT, The New York Graphic Society, 1959, p. 412.
- ² Letter fromLéon Lhermitte to Rodin, June 17, 1882, Paris, Rodin Museum.
- ³ Oeuvres Complètes, vol. 12, pp. 1022-1023, Paris, Cercle du livre précieux, 1969.
- М.О.



Jean-Baptiste Arthur CALAME

(Genève, 1843 - 1919)

23 | Twilight by the sea

12 x 26,5 cm Oil on canvas painting mounted on cardboard Signed at the bottom left «Ar. C»

Dawn, effect on the sea

11 x 19,5 cm Oil on canvas painting mounted on cardboard Signed at the bottom right «Ar. C»

Provenance:

- Galleria Antonia Francesca, Rome, label on the back bearing the number 448
- France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Daniel Buscarlet, *Une lignée d'artistes suisses : Müntz-Berger, Alexandre et Arthur Calame*, Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Diffusion, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1969

24

• Florian Rodari, La peinture suisse : entre réalisme et idéal (1848-1906), Geneva: Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1998

Son of the famous Swiss painter and engraver Alexandre Calame (1810-1864), Arthur Calame naturally chose the artistic path and became his father's pupil. His training continued as he accompanied his father on his travels from the 1860s onward. Like most of his Swiss contemporaries, Calame completed his education in Germany in 1864 by joining the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts.

There, he studied under the guidance of Oswald Achenbach (1827-1905), a Prussian painter, also a specialist in landscape. Achenbach's stays in Italy fascinated the young Calame. The light, in particular, that bathes views of Rome or Naples, prompted him to travel there himself.

Italy had a significant influence on his work. He made numerous sketches, drawing from life, attempting to capture the atmospheric effects before him.

Calame worked directly from nature. With swift strokes, he sketched the lines that constructed his skies in order to capture their precious light. Following the times of day, his works present clear, stormy moments (*ill.* 1), where the lighting oscillates between browns, reds, oranges, and hues of blues and whites.

Our two works form delicate examples of a highly free execution. On small-format canvases, enhancing the precious nature of these studies, the visible brushstrokes illustrate his working method: he applies different colours at once and retouches the drawing in several



Ill. 1 Arthur Calame (1843-1919) *Study of a Stormy Sky* Oil on cardboard, monogrammed 18 x 26 cm Private Collection

layers to achieve a result as close to reality as possible. These oils are essential to the artist's production, forming a repertoire of shapes for the construction of his final works.

Just like his father, Arthur Calame chose as subjects the grand mountains and lakes of his homeland, but it was truly beyond the borders that he forged his style. In each of his poetic sketches, the carefully selected colour creates a dreamlike atmosphere, a reflection of the free spirit of this painter caught between two centuries.









Edgar MAXENCE

(Nantes, 1871 – La-Bernerie-en-Retz, 1954)

25 | Woman in Prayer

Oil, tempera and gold highlights on cardboard Signed lower left: Edgar Maxence 65 x 43.5 cm

Provenance:

• France, private collection

Bibliography:

• Edgard Maxence 1871-1954: Les Dernières Fleurs du Symbolisme [exh. cat.], Musée des Beaux-Arts (Nantes), Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse, Oct. 2010 - Jan. 2011, Montrouge: Burozoïque, 2010

• Insolite et Symbolisme: Tissot, Merson, Maxence - Nantes: s. n., 1976

«Among works of great poetic sentiment, here are once again the submissions of Mr Maxence, imbued with a restrained lyricism that is anything but conventional.» Guillaume Apollinaire

Although nothing initially predestined him for an artistic career, the young heir Edgar¹ Maxence quickly expressed his vocation. In his hometown of Nantes, he excelled in learning the fundamentals of painting before joining the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris under the portraitist Jules-Elie Delaunay (1828–1891), who passed away just a few months later. Around this time, in his early twenties, Maxence met Gustave Moreau (1826–1898), a close friend of Delaunay, who would leave a lasting impact on his career.

Moreau became his mentor, colleague, and friend, maintaining a close correspondence with him and considering Maxence one of his finest pupils. Through this connection, Maxence gained recognition among fellow artists and captivated the public with the mystical landscapes he depicted in his works. At the age of 27, he achieved national acclaim when the French state acquired *L'Âme de la Forêt* for the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes in 1898, following its acclaimed presentation at the Salon.



III. 1 Edgar Maxence *Portrait of Paul-Marie Duval* 1930 Oil on canvas 87.2 x 69.6 cm Signed lower left: *Edgard Maxence 1930* Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts (inv. 2000.3.1.P)





Ill. 2 Edgar Maxence *Serenity* 1912 Oil on wood 92 x 73 cm Poitiers, Musées de Poitiers (inv. Lux 959)

His early works have often been interpreted as a tribute to Gustave Moreau's persona and artistic legacy. However, in his quest to develop a unique style, Maxence merged esotericism and religious themes, presenting a world where medieval models coexisted with contemporary settings.

"[...] In the middle of his studio, without wasting a minute, all while conversing before his easel, Maxence works. Always in a hurry, always busy, he greets you with a palette in hand—and it is not an affectation. He possesses that great quality that ultimately overcomes all obstacles: never losing sight of one's goal. Everything in his life is aimed at shaping the future. He truly paints from morning till night."

Roger Grand, La Revue Nantaise, April 1st, 1898

Despite the recognition he earned from his peers and critics, and notwithstanding his academic achievements, Maxence never won the Prix de Rome, despite multiple attempts. His admiration for the Italian Renaissance masters was therefore limited to studying their masterpieces in the Louvre. In response to these setbacks, he joined the circle of artists around Sâr Péladan and exhibited at the Salon de la Rose-Croix between 1895 and 1897, where his portraits and depictions of praying saints drew considerable attention. From then on, he balanced a Parisian clientele, eager for his religious scenes, with the bourgeoisie of Nantes, who readily commissioned his portraits (*ill.* 1).

The present work is an excellent example of the *praying women* portraits that Maxence continued to paint throughout his career (*ill.* 2). The composition features a young woman, shown from the waist up, seated on a wooden bench with armrests carved in the shape of female busts. The setting is an interior of a church, with a background featuring an openwork wrought-iron lattice adorned with gilded polylobed shapes, allowing a glimpse of stained glass windows—an element also seen in other works such as *Les Oraisons (ill.* 3). The artist is believed to have drawn inspiration from the choir of the Church of Saint-Nicolas in Nantes.



Ill. 3 Edgar Maxence *The Prayers* c. 1914 Pastel, watercolour, and graphite on cardboard 53.7 x 57.6 cm Signed upper right: *Maxence* Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts (inv. 2373)

Through these female figures, Maxence conveys a profound sense of inner contemplation. His inspiration blends Celtic culture and medieval costumes drawn from Breton legends with the enigmatic psychological depth characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelites. The troubadour spirit of the early 19th century is enriched by contradictions—between invention and traditional atmospheres—placing Maxence as one of the most expressive artists of his generation.

To achieve these dreamlike and enigmatic atmospheres, Maxence distinguished himself by developing a sophisticated technique involving a preparatory layer of wax blended with oil, to which he almost systematically added gold highlights, enhancing the precious quality of his works. In addition to his experiments with wax, he varied his techniques, playing with transparency effects through tempera, gouache, and watercolour. Critics recognised in him the chromatic strength of a brilliant colourist. Edgar Maxence received numerous honours, including two gold medals at the Expositions Universelles of 1900 and 1927. Throughout his career, he remained devoted to a medieval fervour that some considered outdated, particularly in contrast with the revolutionary modernist movements led by Braque, Picasso, and Matisse. Yet, his works retain their timeless quality: in the face of economic and social upheavals, Maxence remained unfazed. Confronted with these meditative female figures, the viewer is inevitably led to the same existential reflections.

M.O

¹ Born *Edgar*, Maxence will chose to sign *Edgard* on all his works

Claude-Émile SCHUFFENECKER

(Fresne-Saint-Mamès, 1851 – Paris, 1934)

26 *View of the cliffs of Fécamp*

Oil on original canvas 50 x 61 cm Signed in red «E. Schuffenecker 87» at the bottom right

Provenance:

• France, Private collection

Bibliography:

• *Claude-Emile Schuffenecker, 1851-1934* [cat. exp.], University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1980 and Hammer Galleries, 1981

• *Émile Schuffenecker (1851-1934): Un méconnu*, retrospective exhibition, paintings and pastels, Paris, Galerie Berri-Raspail, March 24 - April 15, 1944

«...painters from Paris came to seek inspiration from the beautiful cliffs of Etretat, to capture viewpoints which, reproduced on canvas, exhibited in our Museums, and purchased by those rare patrons who gladly exchange their gold for artistic works, have carried the fame of these natural and splendid illustrations far and wide.» (Joseph Morlent, 1853)

Claude-Émile Schuffenecker, an Alsatian who moved to Meudon at the age of two, displayed early artistic talent. He went to Paris to live with his aunt and worked at Bertin, a banker. In 1872, he met Paul Gauguin, who would shape the rest of his career. The two men became friends and studied master paintings together at the Louvre. At the same time, Schuffenecker attended evening classes at the City of Paris and took lessons from Carolus-Duran and Paul Baudry. His talent was quickly recognized by his peers, and he hosted many artists, including Guillaumin and Pissarro, at his home. He exhibited at the Salon, and his works already showed his deep connection to the depiction of nature.

«To create art, one must have a soul, a soul that feels, believes, hopes, and stirs, its eyes fixed on an ideal.» ¹

During the summers, Schuffenecker focused on capturing the effects of light on the cliffs along the Normandy coast (*ill.* 1). At the end of the century, the natural beauty of Normandy attracted a community of



Claude-Émile Schuffenecker View of the cliffs of Etretat, 1888 Oil on canvas 53.8 x 65.2 cm Signed and dated at the bottom right «Schuffenecker 1888»



artists eager to bring a renewal to painting in response to the hostile attitude of the academic jury, caught between progress and conformity. In this pursuit of radical realism, the artist rendered nature in all its truth, and the absence of human figures allowed only for the silent dialogue between the painter and the environment. Our work reflects this special connection.

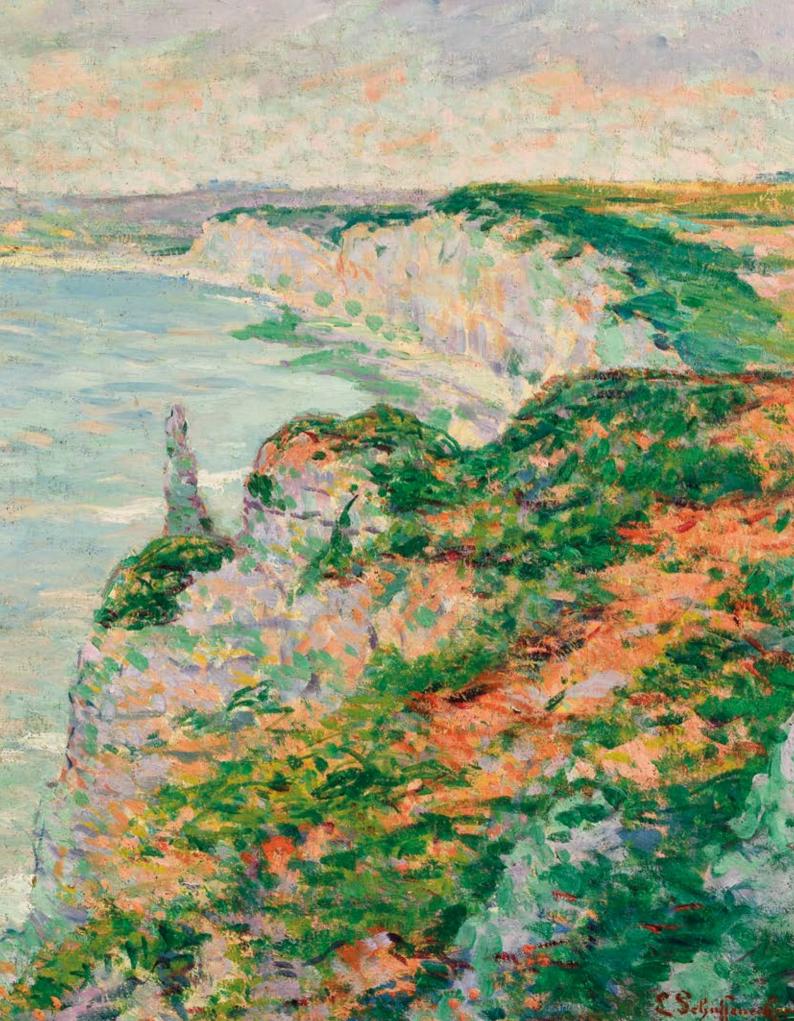
At Fécamp, time seems to stand still. Schuffenecker captures the moment of cold natural light reflected between the blues and pinks of the cliffs, with intensified tones hinting at an approaching storm. The motif is reduced to immediacy, rendering the simplicity of forms as nature presents itself to the eye. The artist emphasizes the powerful contrast between the verticality of the cliffs and the horizontality of the sea, which clash and meet endlessly. Just as the painter traverses the cliffs, the viewer's eye is invited to wander across the canvas until it reaches the sky. Using a divisionist technique and a swift, almost frantic brushstroke, Schuffenecker transposes onto the flat surface of the canvas the effect of the wind sweeping over the greenery, striking the rocks, and crashing onto the sea.

This experience of spontaneity challenges the laws of academic painting. Painting en plein air opens up a new spectrum of fascinating color mixing. In his quest for intensity, greens and blues collide and harmonize in a clever arrangement that instantly gives the work a flamboyant character. The overall composition enhances the dreamlike atmosphere, foreshadowing the second phase of the artist's career.

M.O

¹ Claude-Émile Schuffenecker, « Lettre à Gustave Geoffroy » in *Le Cœur*, June 1993, 2nd year, n°10, p.2





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