



A SELECTION OF PAINTINGS
1790-1925

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Laura Bennett
Mark Brady

CATALOGUE

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SIMON-JOSEPH-ALEXANDRE-CLÉMENT DENIS

Antwerp 1755-1813 Naples

1. *The Great Cascade at Tivoli*

Signed and inscribed, lower center, *verso*, *Partie de la Cascade de Tivoly/l'eau étoit trouble, apres un tems de pluie./S.ⁿ Denis* and numbered, lower right, *verso*, 25

Oil on paper
12½ x 16 inches
32 x 40.6 cm

Provenance
By descent through the artist's family (sale: Paris, Christie's, 17 March 2005, lot 405, illustrated)
W. M. Brady & Co., New York
Private collection, New York, since 2005

Exhibitions
New York, W. M. Brady & Co., *Pictures & Oil Sketches*, 1775–1920, November 30–December 20, 2005, cat. no. 2, illustrated

Painted *circa* 1790

Unlike his famous predecessors in the earlier eighteenth century, Hubert Robert (1733–1808) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), who preferred to depict the Great Cascade seen from below, often framed by the picturesque Ponte della Cascata, Denis chose an unusual and much closer viewpoint for this rendering of Tivoli's most famous site. To better capture the powerful forces of the tumbling water, he limits his scope to the upper part of the cascade—set against



Fig. 1

the swollen bed of the Aniene River slowly making its way round the bend towards the abyss. An etching by Piranesi, published in 1776, shows a view of the falls taken from a greater distance (fig. 1).¹ It allows one to understand better where the painter placed himself, in a location slightly above the river level, opposite and as close to the waterfall as possible. Rather than the site itself, it is the breathtaking gushes of the cascade, the “murky water, after a period of rain”—as Denis noted on the back of the painting—that are the true subject of this work.

Only thirty kilometers from Rome, Tivoli, with its picturesque location, numerous smaller waterfalls, the so-called *cascatelle*, and its Roman temples and grottoes, proved of considerable appeal to the artist. Having arrived in Rome in 1786, aged thirty-one, with the help of his mentor, Jean Baptiste Lebrun, Denis quickly found his place among the French artistic community there. Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun, wife of his Parisian supporter, relates in her *Souvenirs* how she spent some time in Denis's excessively noisy lodgings on the Piazza di Spagna, and it was with her and her daughter, Julie, that he seems to have first visited Tivoli in 1789. This was a sketching trip organized by Denis' friend, François-Guillaume Ménageot, director of the French academy in Rome, then still installed in the Villa Mancini. Vigée Lebrun recorded this visit in her *Souvenirs*: “M. Ménageot, me mena à Tivoli avec ma fille de Denis, le peintre . . . Nous allâmes s'abord voir les cascates. . . Menagéot nous fit monter par un mauvais petit sentier à pic jusque'au temple de la Sybille . . . Nous couchâmes à l'auberge, et de grand matin nous retournâmes aux cascates, où je finis mon esquisse.”²

Two further visits to Tivoli are recorded for 1793³ and 1801,⁴ but Denis is likely to have been there also at other times given the town's vicinity to Rome where the artist spent over fifteen years of his life, before finally settling in Naples some time between 1801 and 1803. On 31 December 1791, for instance, Lord Bristol, Denis' early patron in Rome, commissioned a view of the *cascatelle*—but that was likely a finished painting.⁵ Several sketches of the waterfalls at Tivoli, often of details rather than of the whole *cascata*, were on the art market in 1992.⁶ An oil on paper with the full view of the Great Cascade, from the collection of John Gere,



1 A. Nibby, *Raccolta delle Vedute Pittoresche Di Roma e de' Suoi Contorni, incise da Filippo Maria Giuntotardi ed Antonio Testa, vol. I, parte I* (“Le Vedute di Tivoli e delle sue vicinanze”), Tivoli, 1825, pl. VI, no. 1.
2 M. L.-E. Vigée Lebrun, *Souvenirs de Mme Vigée Lebrun*, 1835–7 (ed. 1984), vol. I, pp. 186–9.
3 The year he signed and dated an oil on paper of the *cascatelle* now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, bearing his inscription, noting the low water level, “Cascatelle à Tivoli il y avoit peu d’eau;” see V. Branchini, *Simon Denis (1755–1813) in Italia: dipinti e disegni di paesaggio*, unpublished thesis, Università di Bologna, 2002, no. 25.
4 A. Ottani Cavina (ed.), *Paysages d’Italie. Les peintres du plein air (1780–1830)*, exhib. cat., Grand Palais, Paris, and Palazzo Te, Mantua, 2001, p. 132. An oil on paper by Denis of the grotto of Neptune at Tivoli, dated 1801, is in a private collection.
5 Branchini, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
6 Sale: Monaco, Sotheby's, 19 June 1992, lots 205 and 208, the latter now in the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe (Branchini, *op. cit.*, nos. 9–10).

is now in the National Gallery, London.⁷ Denis also turned his sketches into finished paintings which he exhibited at the Salon. In 1795 he sent one to the Salon in Paris, possibly identifiable as that now in the Musée de Grenoble.⁸ The collection at Schloss Emkendorf preserves another large painting of the *cascatelle*, undated but commissioned by Count Fritz Reventlow before his departure from Rome in 1797.⁹ Another view of the cascades of Tivoli, dated 1797, also painted for Count Reventlow, is in Schloss Ahrensburg.¹⁰

Although Denis's formal production is comparable to that of other landscape painters working in Italy at the end of the eighteenth century (Bidault, Boguet, Gauffier, and Bertin), it is his oil sketches that accord him a special position, standing out as perhaps the purest expression of eighteenth-century French *plein-air* painting. In these, he studied with the greatest painterly freedom subjects that would otherwise not have been considered worth a painter's attention. It was unusual details of water rapidly gushing round rocks, the nuanced play of light on trees and shrubs in woodland, and the dramatic effects and changing appearance of clouds during sunset that captured his imagination. Yet despite the apparent insignificance, even arbitrary choice, of his subject matter, Denis almost always signed and often inscribed his oil sketches, identifying the location and occasionally pointing to the circumstances that had spurred his pictorial curiosity—as this painting clearly shows.¹¹

The *verso* of the paper is inscribed with the number “25” Such numbers, which can be found on almost all of Denis's sketches (the highest known being 160) were probably not inscribed by the artist but almost certainly added later by one of his heirs. Should 160 indeed indicate Denis's total output of such oil sketches, the size of his oeuvre would be similar to that of his contemporary, Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750–1819), the painter of the *campagna romana*. It has been suggested that these numbers reflect, at least to some extent, a chronological sequence; a view of the *Interieur of the Neptune's Grotto at Tivoli*,¹² bearing the number 149, is dated 1801. If that is the case, then we would propose a date of about 1790 for our sketch.

7 C. Riopelle and X. Bray (with an essay by C. Gere), *A Brush with Nature: the Gere Collection of Landscape Oil Sketches*, London, 1999.

8 Branchini, *op. cit.*, no. 36.

9 This painting was delivered in 1803 (Branchini, *op. cit.*, no. 37).

10 *Ibid.*, no. 34

11 The numbers which can be found on almost all of Denis's sketches, the

highest known being 160, are not his but were almost certainly added later by one of his heirs.

12 Oil on paper, 43.3 x 31.1 cm; inscribed on the *verso*: *S.n Denis/ L'Interieur de la Grotte/ de Neptune,/ Peint apres nature a Tivoly 1801/ 149.*



JOSEPH-BENOÎT SUVÉE
Bruges 1743-1807 Rome

2. *Le Dévouement des citoyennes de Paris*, 1794

Oil on canvas
19⅞ x 24⅞ inches
49.9 x 61.3 cm

Provenance
Private collection, Paris (sale: Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Beaussant Lefèvre, 3 December 2004, lot 59, as Joseph-Marie Vien)
W. M. Brady & Co., New York, 2004
Private collection, New York, until 2021

Exhibitions
Paris, April–May 1794, presented before *le jury des Arts au concours de l’an II pour les travaux d’encouragement* (as “*Dévouement des citoyennes de Paris*. Tableau avec explication. 22 pouces de large sur 18 de haut”)¹
New York, W. M. Brady & Co., *Pictures and Oil Sketches, 1775–1920*, 30 November–20 December 2005, cat. no. 3, illustrated

Literature
W. Olander, *Pour transmettre à la postérité. French Painting and Revolution, 1774–1795*, Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1983 (UMI, 1985), p. 469
B. Gallini, *La Révolution française et l’Europe, 1789–1799*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Grand Palais, 16 March–26 June 1989, vol. III, Chapter XXX (“La Création artistique sous la Révolution”), p. 838 (“Le Concours de l’An II,” Suvée, no. 81, *Dévouement des citoyennes de Paris*. Tableau avec explication 22 pouces de large sur 18 de haut)
S. Join-Lambert and A. Leclair, *Joseph-Benoît Suvée (1743–1807): Un artiste entre Bruges, Rome et Paris*, Paris, 2017, pp. 151–53, pp. 257–58, cat. no. P. 177, illustrated p. 151



Fig. 2

1 S. Join-Lambert and A. Leclair, *Joseph-Benoît Suvée (1743–1807): Un artiste entre Bruges, Rome et Paris*, Paris, 2017, p. 257, cat. no. P. 177.
2 Join-Lambert and Leclair, *op. cit.*, p. 151, n. 636 (*Moniteur universel*, 29 nivôse an II (18 January 1794)).
3 *Ibid.*
4 Inv. 26713; pen and brown ink and wash, heightened with white; 26⅞ x

Nearly five years into the French Revolution, during the Reign of Terror, on the 17th of January 1794, the *Société républicaine des arts* sent a delegation to the National Convention asking that the government “d’ouvrir un concours aux artistes qui voudront célébrer les traits d’héroïsme et de vertu.”² This was followed, on the 24th of April 1794, by a decree from the Committee on Public Safety: “appelle tous les artistes de la République à représenter, à leur choix, sur la toile les époques les plus glorieuses de la Révolution française [. . .]. Le concours sera ouvert pendant un mois [. . .] après lequel délai les esquisses seront exposées pendant une demi-décade dans la salle de la Liberté. Elles seront tranportées ensuite au salon de Laocoon, pour être exposées et jugées dans la décade suivante par le jury des arts.”³ One hundred artists participated in the Revolutionary competition; their submissions were on view in April and May of 1794. The death of Maximilien Robespierre in July 1794 and the ensuing Thermidor period of the Revolution delayed the awarding of prizes by the *jury des arts* until August 1795. Baron Gérard won the premier Grand Prix, and 20,000 livres, for his drawing, *Journée du 10 août 1792* (fig. 2; Musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques).⁴ Exceedingly large, measuring 26⅞ x 36¼ inches, Gérard’s drawing depicted one of the most important and well-known days in the French Revolution, August 10th, 1792, when the Assemblée nationale voted to dissolve the monarchy, leading soon thereafter to the proclamation of the French Republic on September 21st, 1792. Despite the importance of the subject and his winning the premier Grand Prix, Gérard never, in contradiction to the intent of the competition’s awards, completed a painting of the subject on a large scale.⁵ François-André Vincent won second prize in the Revolutionary competition, and 10,000 livres, for his *Heroïne de Saint-Mithier* (location unknown).⁶ Joseph-Benoît Suvée was awarded a prix d’encouragement, and 9,000 livres, for the present painting, *Le Dévouement des citoyennes de Paris*.

Suvée’s subject, like Gérard’s, was drawn from an actual event during the French Revolution, one of particular and personal importance to the artist. On 7 September 1789, a group of eleven women, the wives and daughters of various artists, led by Marie-Adélaïde Castellas Moitte, wife of the sculptor, Jean-Guillaume Moitte, marched to the newly



36¼ inches, 670 x 920 mm.
5 A small oil sketch of the subject is in the Musée de la Révolution française, Vizille (Inv. 1999.23; oil on paper, 8¼ x 13¾ inches, 21 x 35 cm); and a cabinet-sized, unfinished painting of it is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.2000.179.36; oil with graphite on canvas, 42 x 56¼ inches, 106.68 x 144.15 cm).

formed Assemblée nationale and made a gift of their jewelry to the revolutionary cause and the fledgling French republic.⁷ Mmes. Vien, Fragonard, Peyron, and David were part of the group, as were Suvée's own wife and Gérard's daughter.⁸ It was this act of patriotic generosity and civic duty which Suvée chose to represent, elevating the nobility of this contemporaneous act by placing it in an antique setting with Doric columns and with women dressed in classical, Roman attire. A pearl necklace has been placed on an altar in front of a statue of La République, an altar bearing allegorical depictions of Liberty and Equality. One woman has just deposited a gold pocket watch on the altar, while another is removing an earring as her contribution. A kneeling figure goes as far as to place her own baby on the altar, while a male figure to the left swears an oath of allegiance to another female figure holding a sword. The statue of the Republic, set on a pedestal inscribed with the Rights of Man and the Citizen, crowns the women at the altar for their patriotism and generosity. The noble purpose and glory of the French Revolution, with allusions to Republican Rome, could not be more clear.

Suvée and the other winners of the Revolutionary artistic competition of 1794 were meant, with their monetary awards, to complete a painting of their chosen subject on a grand scale. Three years after the competition, on the 2nd of April 1797, the Minister of the Interior sent a letter to the *Conseil d'administration du Museum central des arts* instructing that Suvée be furnished with a large canvas in order to realize his painting: "Objet: En raison d'un prix d'encouragement, Ordre de délivrer à Suvée une toile et un chassis pour son tableau 'Les femmes artistes déposant leurs bijoux sur l'autel de la patrie.'" The dimensions of the canvas were 10 by 13 pieds, or nearly 3 by 4 meters.¹⁰ As was the case with Gérard and his *Journée du 10 août 1792*, it appears that Suvée never painted *Le Dévouement des citoyennes de Paris* on a large scale. The present painting is the only known example of the subject by the artist. The civic generosity portrayed, inspired by his wife and others, however, was of literal importance to him. Several weeks after the competition of 1794, on July 24th, Suvée, imprisoned at Saint-Lazare, wrote a letter to the *administration révolutionnaire* imploring his release, making specific reference to the gift of jewelry given by his wife, at the direction of Mme. Moitte, to the Revolutionary cause.¹¹

At the age of 8, the precocious Suvée entered the studio of Mathieu De Visch (1702–1765) at the Académie de Bruges. He won first prize for drawing after the live model in 1761 and 1763, and a prize for architectural drawing for a *Project for a Chapel* in 1763. These awards encouraged the young artist in the autumn of 1763 to leave for Paris where he shared lodgings with the animal painter Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724–1806). Supported by Bachelier, Suvée was named

professor of drawing at the Ecole Gratuite de Dessin. He was received by the Académie Royale de Peinture in 1764, won the Second Prix de Rome in 1768 and, on his sixth attempt, the Grand Prix in 1771 for *La dispute de Minerve et de Mars* (Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

Given a royal dispensation, Suvée (of Flemish origin and hence ineligible to study at the Académie de France in Rome) left for the Villa Mancini in October 1772. There he met the first generation of Neo-classical painters including Vincent, Lemonnier, Taillasson, David, Peyron and Regnault. The most important painting he sent back to France was *Hermione and the Shepherds* (1776; Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten), exhibited at the Salon of 1779. During this time Suvée traveled throughout the Roman countryside in the company of Lemonnier and Berthelemy drawing antique monuments and such classical motifs as the falls in Tivoli. He returned to Paris in August 1778 and was made a permanent member of the Académie Royale de Peinture on May 29, 1779.

In the summer of 1792, Suvée was named Director of the Académie de France, Rome. However, Jacques-Louis David, the Jacobin head of the Commune des Arts during the Terror, had never forgiven Suvée for his defeat in the 1771 Grand Prix de Rome and took his revenge by eliminating the position of Director at the Académie in Rome. More gravely, Suvée was denounced anonymously, arrested and imprisoned at Saint-Lazare. To this day it is unknown whether David, consumed with jealousy, caused the painter's incarceration. Suvée, nonetheless, remained stoic and spent his time in the prison painting his *Portrait of André Chenier* (Paris, private collection), author of *La Marseillaise*, who was beheaded two weeks after the completion of his portrait. At the end of July 1794, the artist was finally liberated when Saint-Lazare was emptied following the death of Robespierre. By 1796, Suvée had been appointed to the board of directors of the Musée Central des Arts at the Louvre and assumed his directorship of the Académie de France in Rome at the end of 1801. He was instrumental in moving the school to its current location in the Villa Medici on the Pincio where he died in 1807.¹²

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 152–53, n. 638.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

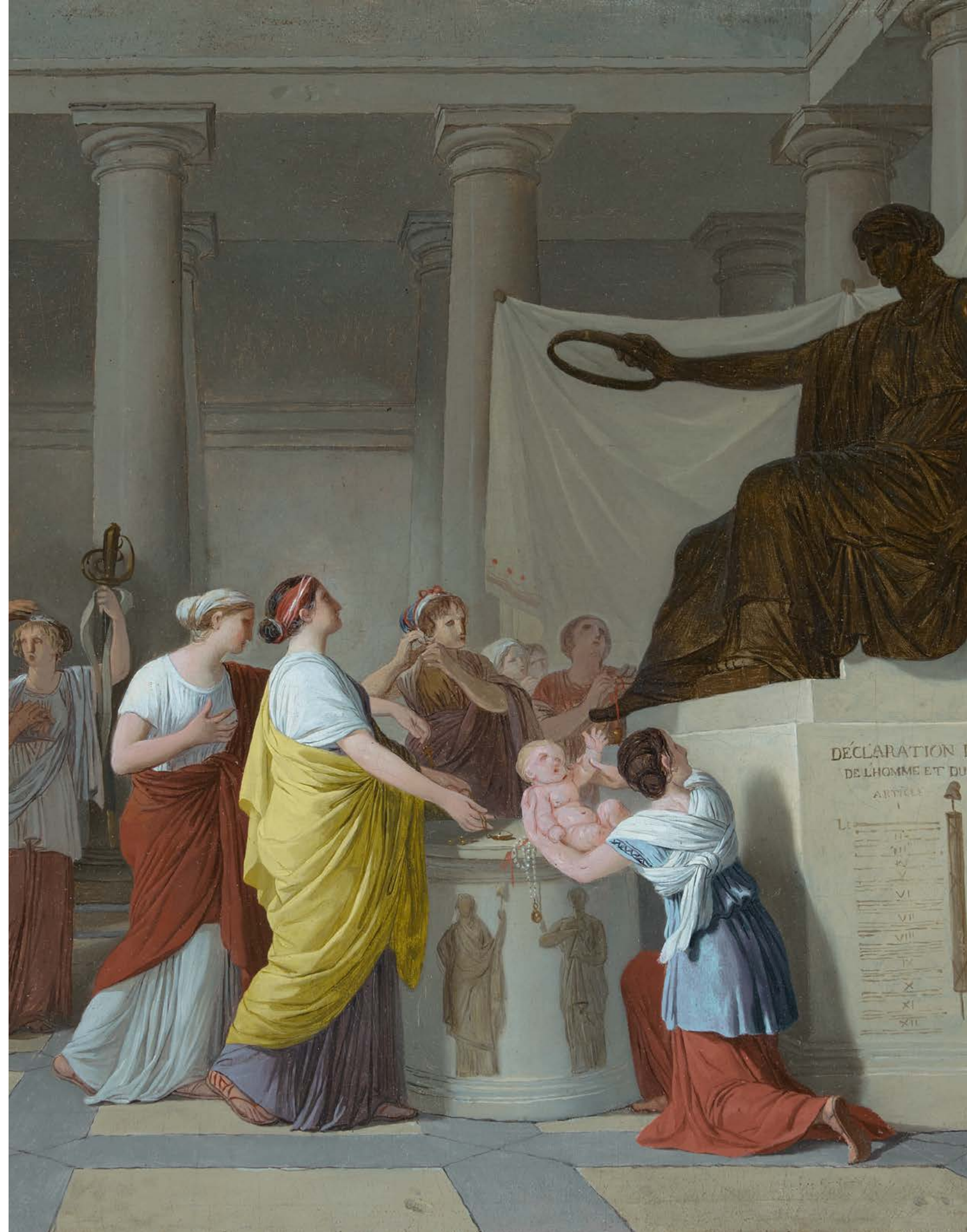
8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 For a more detailed biography, see J.-F. Méjanès, 1770–1830, *Autour du Néoclassicisme en Belgique*, exhibition catalogue, Ixelles, Musée communal des Beaux-Arts d'Ixelles, November 14, 1985–February 8, 1986, pp. 96–97.



JULIEN-LÉOPOLD, called JULES, BOILLY
Paris 1796–1874 Paris

3. *Portrait de chasseur et de son chien*, 1819

Signed and dated on the dog's collar, *Jul. Boilly/1819*; inscribed on the etiquette on the old frame, *Jules BOILLY/Portrait de L. BOILLY Peintre* (fig. 3)

Pastel and black chalk
29¾ x 18⅞ inches
755 x 466 mm

Provenance

Sale: Paris, Hôtel Drouot, *Vente de dessins anciens des écoles française & hollandaise*, [André Couturier, commissaire-priseur; Paul Roblin, expert], 17 May 1907, lot 4 (as *Portrait de Louis Boilly, peintre*)
Private collection, France

Literature

P. Marmottan, *Le peintre Louis Boilly (1761–1845)*, Paris, 1913, p. 216 (as *Portrait de Louis Boilly, peintre*)

In this large and beautiful pastel, an elegant and distinguished-looking hunter is shown walking through a wood, holding in his left hand his rifle while his right hand rests on a powder flask. He wears a large “chapeau de paille de forme tromblon,” as the 1907 sale catalogue records. His chocolate-brown hunting jacket contrasts smartly with his chamois-colored moleskin trousers and leather leggings, and is set off with a colorful blue, red, and white silk scarf tied loosely around his neck. The sartorial details of his dress, stylish and swagger, suggest that this is very much a ‘fancy’ picture. The hunter appears as though he has just spotted prey. His gun dog turns and stares at his master in readiness.

The sitter traditionally has been identified as the artist's father, Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), painter of manners and morals at the turn of the nineteenth century. Paul Marmottan (1856–1932), art historian and collector of Boilly, first published the drawing as *Portrait de Louis Boilly, peintre* in his 1913 monograph on the artist.¹ The pastel has not been seen for over a hundred years since it last appeared at the Hôtel Drouot in 1907.

Despite the physiognomy of the subject being

similar to recorded portraits of him, Louis Boilly was not a sportsman. He was famously near-sighted and generally portrayed wearing spectacles. It is more likely that his son, Jules, has simply made a stylish picture of a hunter (“en costume de chasseur”, as the 1907 sale catalogue describes it), with his English springer spaniel, reflecting the Anglophile taste of the time, rather than an imaginary portrait of his father on a shoot. Brilliantly rendered in pastel and of great scale, this elegant portrait of a sportsman with his dog is the masterpiece of the young Julien-Léopold Boilly.

Jules Boilly studied drawing with his father before entering the studio of Baron Gros (1771–1835) at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he assiduously copied the Old Masters. He quickly became a master draughtsman and lithographer and was responsible for portraying all the members of the academy between 1822 and 1825 in his *Iconographie des membres de L'Institut de France*. Boilly left for Rome in 1826 and travelled through southern Italy with his friend, poet, and dramatist, Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843), and his brother, Germain Delavigne (1790–1868), dramatist and librettist. As a result of this journey, Boilly returned to Paris with nearly 50 oil sketches and 100 drawings and watercolors.² He exhibited for the first time in the Salon of 1827 with his debut submission, *Des paysans des Etats du Pape, allant Rome faire leurs dévotions dans l'année du jubilé de 1825, aperçoivent de loin le dôme de Saint-Pierre*, for which he was awarded a gold medal. He continued to exhibit regularly at the Salon until 1865.

Jules Boilly had a passion for two painters, Murillo and Prud'hon; and replicated their work in drawings, prints, and paintings, precise copies that were difficult to distinguish from the original. He also made several portraits of Prud'hon as an old man. Boilly was exceptionally sophisticated and well-educated, spoke seven languages, translated Persian poetry, and was an avid billiards player, travelling across Europe with his cue stick. Like his father, he excelled at portraiture, generally small scale, which he made in black chalk, occasionally heightened with pastel. He sitters included such social, literary, and cultural figures of the Romantic period as the comte de Forbin, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Humboldt, Cuvier, Rossini, George Sand, Talma, Méhul, and, of course, his father, whose portrait he gave to the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, in 1862.³



Fig. 3

¹ Marmottan, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

² See his sale: *Succession Jules Boilly, Catalogue des Tableaux, dessins, estampes par Louis et Jules Boilly*, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, December 14–16, 1874.

³ Inv. P406; signed and dated 1823, oil on canvas, 130 x 98 cm; see A. Scottez-De Wambrechies and F. Raymond, *Boilly (1761–1845)*, exhibition catalogue, Palais des Beaux Arts de Lille, 2011, p. 96, fig. 1.

GABRIELE SMARGIASSI

Chieti 1798–1882 Naples

4. *Sunrise over the Bay of Naples Looking East from Capri*

Signed lower left, *Smargiassi*; inscribed, lower right, ... (*casa ?*) *di S. Vito...* / ... 8 183 (?) ...

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

10¼ x 14⅞ inches

26 x 37.8 cm

Provenance

Private collection, France

Painted *circa* 1835

This fine *plein-air* sketch was painted from Capri in the early morning, looking east across the Bay of Naples towards the rising sun and the Italian mainland, with the outline of Mount Vesuvius appearing on the horizon on the left, its central crater discernible, and the hills surrounding Sorrento visible on the right.¹ Strikingly, a ceramic vessel, perhaps intended to hold olive oil, sits towards the top of what appears to be the trunk of an olive tree, with just a few leaves poking out beyond the vessel. It seems the tree rooted through the drainage hole in the vessel, carrying the container upwards over time.

The difficult to decipher inscription at the bottom right of the sketch clearly reads in part “di S. Vito.” A child martyr, San Vito (c. 290–303), or Saint Vitus, was from Lucania, an ancient region of southern Italy below Naples stretching across the mainland from the Bay of Salerno on the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Gulf of Taranto on the Ionian Sea. The namesake of St. Vitus Dance, or Sydenham’s chorea, he is the patron saint of dancers and actors. Saint Vitus was martyred in Rome during the Persecution of Diocletian in 303. He is much venerated in Sicily and southern Italy, particularly along the Sorrentine peninsula and the Amalfi coast, as well as in Germany, Austria, and the Slavic countries.

Gabriele Smargiassi was born in the town of Chieti in the eastern Abruzzo region. His artistic talent was recognized at an early age and his parents sent him at the age of nineteen to Naples to study with Giuseppe Cammarano (1766–1850), the court painter to the King of Naples, Ferdinand IV of the cadet house of Bourbon-Two Sicilies. He soon entered the studio of Anton Sminck van Pitloo (1790–1837) on the Vicolletto del Vasto, where he remained for nearly seven years.

Pitloo is credited with creating the fluid association of artists called the School of Posillipo which included Smargiassi, Giacinto Gigante, Achille Vianelli, and Consalvo Corelli. These artists aspired to break with the formulaic

tradition of Neo-classical landscape painting imposed during the nearly ten years of French occupation in favor of a *plein-air* approach in which the artist’s palette is liberated and the brushstrokes are more spontaneous. They were influenced by the broader Romantic movement sweeping through Europe at the time. Their subjects were generally views in and around the Bay of Naples and its surrounding countryside. The school existed between 1820 and 1850.

Upon Pitloo’s death in 1837, Smargiassi replaced him as Professor of Landscape Painting at the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples. His paintings are included in the collections of the Museo e Real Bosco Capodimonte and Galleria dell’Accademia di Belle Arti, Naples; the Musée Condé, Chantilly; the Musée du Trianon, Château de Versailles; and the Musée National des châteaux de Malmaison et de Bois-Préau, Rueil-Malmaison.



¹ We are grateful to Sylvain Bellenger and Carmine Romano at the Museo e Reale Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples, for their help in identifying the site of our sketch.

PIERRE-ÉTIENNE-THÉODORE ROUSSEAU
Paris 1812–1867 Barbizon

5. *Portrait de la grand-mère de l'artiste*

Oil on panel
13 x 10 inches
33 x 25.5 cm

Provenance
By descent through the family of the artist

Exhibitions
Paris, Musée du Louvre, *Théodore Rousseau*, 29 November 1967–12 February 1968, cat. no. 13, illustrated

Literature
P. Burty, “Théodore Rousseau,” in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 24, April 1868, p. 311, n. 1
A. Sensier, *Souvenirs sur Théodore Rousseau*, Paris, 1872, p. 73
M. Schulman, *Théodore Rousseau 1812–1867, catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre graphique*, Paris, 1997, p. 134, under cat. no. 157
M. Schulman, *Théodore Rousseau 1812–1867, catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, Paris, 1999, p. 136, cat. no. 151, illustrated

Painted in November 1834

In the winter of 1833, through the intervention of the painter Ary Scheffer (1795–1858), Rousseau sold his first major landscape painting to the duc d'Orléans, the son of King Louis-Philippe. With the proceeds of the sale of *Lisière du bois coupé, Forêt de Compiègne*, Rousseau planned to travel the following summer to the Auvergne region in the company of his colleague, the landscape painter Jules Dupré (1811–1889).¹ At the last minute, however, in a letter dated 10 July 1834, Dupré cancelled the trip. As a result, Rousseau invited a childhood friend, Alcide-Joseph Lorentz (1813–1889) to accompany him to the Jura region and the Swiss Alps.² Rousseau arrived in late July 1834 at the Col de la Faucille on the French side of the Jura mountains where he intended to paint. The Col de la Faucille offered a magnificent view of Geneva and Mont Blanc. The artist was received in the home of an old and endearing monarchist and general during the Restoration, the comte de la Fortelle, “who treated Rousseau like his own son.” Lorentz joined Rousseau on August 16th. The two artists remained in the region for over two months which

enabled Rousseau to complete many sketches which would be worked up for his Salon entry of 1867, *Vue de la chaîne du mont blanc pendant une tempête*. Rousseau and Lorentz eventually received a passport in October to enter Switzerland and decided to visit Mont Saint Bernard and its famous hospice. After surviving several pre-winter storms, the artists decided to return to Paris via the Franche-Comté.

Rousseau had originally intended to break his journey to Switzerland with a visit his 80-year-old paternal grandmother, perhaps for the last time; he had most likely lived with her when he was sent from Paris at the age of thirteen to work as a bookkeeper for a short time in an office of the sawmills of the Jura, his father's native province. She lived in the town of Salins in the Franche-Comté, near the city of Dôle. Anxious to paint in the good weather of the summer, however, Rousseau delayed his visit to his grandmother. Instead, he and Lorentz arrived at his grandmother's house after their Swiss visit at the beginning of November 1834, remaining with her several weeks before returning to Paris at the beginning of December. It was at this time that he painted this remarkable *ad vivum* portrait of her.

The art critic Philippe Burty was the first person to acknowledge Rousseau's portrait of his grandmother. In an article published in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1868, a year after the artist's death, Burty described our small oil painting as a “masterpiece of refinement and observation of nature.”³ Alfred Sensier (1815–1877), a close friend and biographer of the painter, described it in 1872:

Rousseau wanted to bring back a living memory of this moment; although hesitant to paint a portrait, he made an image which would never leave his side, a curious and moving picture of his ancestor wearing a peasant's lace bonnet, seated in a large armchair covered by a tattered tapestry, her lively black eyes encouraging her offspring.⁴

Not unlike other landscape painters such as John Constable and J. M. W. Turner, Rousseau generally resisted painting portraits. Indeed, in addition to the present portrait,⁵ the artist painted only two other known portraits, including a small



¹ See Sensier, *op.cit.*, pp. 55–73, for an extensive account of Rousseau's movements throughout the summer and fall of 1834.
² Alcide-Joseph Lorentz was the type of bohemian artist that seems to have only existed in nineteenth-century Paris. Intimate friend of George Sand, for whom he illustrated her first work in 1831, Lorentz was also close to a group of writers and artists which included Théophile Gautier, Gérard de Nerval and Célestin Nanteuil. He started out as a military painter of Empire subjects but would eventually excel as an illustrator whose work appeared in popular magazines and reviews such as *Le Monde Dramatique*, *La Caricature* et *Le Charivari* where he worked alongside Honoré Daumier, Henry Monnier, Alexandre Decamps, Paul Gavarni, and the writer Honoré de Balzac.

³ Burty, *op.cit.*, p. 311, n. 1, “...un chef d'œuvre de finesse et d'observation de nature.”
⁴ Sensier, *op.cit.*, p. 73, “Rousseau voulut en rapporter un souvenir vivant et, si peu habitué et si rétif qu'il fût aux portraits, il en peignit une effigie, qu'il ne quitta jamais-, curieuse et émouvante figure d'aïeule, coiffée du bonnet rond des paysannes, assise dans son grand fauteuil couvert de tapisserie usée par le temps, elle fixe des yeux noirs pétillants de vie sur le peintre, son rejeton, qu'elle semble animer de son regard.”
⁵ A small study for the portrait is in a private collection, New York (fig. 4); pencil heightened with black chalk, 240 x 215 mm; see Schulman, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 134, cat. no. 157, illustrated.

self-portrait before an easel (c. 1835) and a sketch of the duc d'Aumale, the son of King Louis-Philippe (c. 1845–1848).⁶ Nonetheless, in this intimate, small portrait, ever so lightly painted, where the oil is applied like washes of watercolor, the artist's profound attachment to his subject overcomes his resistance to the genre, and he creates a living portrait with all the immediacy of any of his celebrated *plein-air* sketches of the ancient landscapes of France. The contrast of the dark tones of the armchair, mantelpiece, and the subject's face with the bright light reserves of the subject's bonnet, fichu, and clasped hands lends an exceptionally strong dynamism to the composition and an empathy that recalls the great compassion and precision of Rembrandt's own portraits of his mother and other aged sitters.

Rousseau kept this portrait with him all his life. Exhibited only once in the 1968 Louvre exhibition cited above, *Portrait de la grand-mère de l'artiste* has remained in the artist's family until now.



Fig. 4

⁶ Schulman, 1999, *op.cit.*, pp. 134 and 220, cat. nos. 146 and 365, illustrated.



JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT
Paris 1796–1875 Ville d’Avray

6. *Un ami de Corot dans son lit (Abel Osmond [1794–1840])*

Inscribed on paper on back of the stretcher, *portrait de mon frère
abel étant malade,/peint par son ami Corot*
Oil on paper laid down on canvas
5⁵/₁₆ x 8¹/₄ inches
15 x 21 cm

Provenance
Kept by the artist until his death on 22 February 1875; presumably a
bequest to Abel Osmond’s brother,
Pierre Osmond (1804–1874),¹ Paris, by descent to his son,
Floris Osmond (1849–1912), Paris
Thence by descent in the family (sale: Paris, Hôtel Drouot [SVV
Aguttes, commissaires-priseurs], 26 March 2018, lot 31, illustrated)

Literature
A. Robaut, *L’oeuvre de Corot, catalogue raisonné et illustré*, Paris,
1905, II, p. 142, no. 396, illustrated
R. Walter, *Corot à Mantes*, Paris, 1997, pp. 98–99, illustrated (calque
drawing by Alfred Robaut)
G. Wallens, “Une petite étude de Corot atteint dix fois son estimation
basse ! : identification et datation: *Un ami de Corot dans son lit*,”
<https://gerarddewallens.blogspot.com/2018/>, 30 mars 2018

Painted *circa* 1829

In addition to a small number of self-portraits, Corot painted
only portraits of persons with whom he had a strong emo-
tional attachment or family connection, such as his mother,
his nieces, and a handful of close personal friends and their
children. Generally rather small in scale, these total about
fifty altogether, and were never intended for sale or public
display but were gifts to the sitters signalling the artist’s af-
fection for them.

The present painting from life is one of the most intimate
and compelling portraits in Corot’s oeuvre. It shows Abel
Osmond (1794–1840), the artist’s closest friend, in bed endur-
ing an attack of rheumatism which he suffered chronically all
his adult life. Two years older than Corot, Osmond studied
at the Ecole polytechnique, established in 1794 by the state
to train boys in the sciences for the civil service and military.²
Osmond left the school in January 1814 to join the National
Guard, eventually serving as secretary of the Minister of the
Interior, the *abbé* François Montesquiou-Fezensac (1758–

1832); his career in the civil service continued until his death
in 1840. Although it is not known how or when Corot met
Osmond, they developed a very close friendship. Seventeen
frank and intimate letters written by Corot to Osmond from
1821 onwards survive, providing an unusual and invaluable
insight into the artist’s life.

Ten of the letters date from Corot’s first trip to Italy from
December 1825 through the spring of 1828, providing not
only a record of the artist’s travel within Italy as Corot noted
both the date and place on each of the letters, but an account
of Corot’s views on painting, music, and, most unusually for
him, a record of his relationship with women and views
on his own unmarried state. Shortly after arriving in Rome,
Corot writes sentimentally to Abel, “The barbarian who left
you in Paris is in Rome thinking all the time of Abel, and of
the time that will bring him back to his good family and his
good friends.”³ In a later letter from 1827, the artist, describ-
ing being regularly awakened by the glare of the sun on the
wall of his room (‘l’éclat du soleil qui frappe’), writes “This
sun, gives off a light that makes me despair. It makes me feel
the utter powerlessness of my palette. Offer some consol-
ation to your poor friend, who is absolutely tormented to see
his painting so wretched, so dreary, next to the brilliant na-
ture he has before his eyes.”⁴ In a frank letter of March 10,
1827, Corot writes without reservation to his friend, “You
ask for news of the Romans. They still have the most beauti-
ful women in the world that I have met.”⁵ Relating further his
‘exploits amoureux,’ he goes on in detail to describe the phys-
ical beauty of the Italian women—“In that, they surpass our
women, but, on the other hand, they are not their equals in
grace and kindness.”⁶ This letter reveals a side of his character
that remained hidden from all other persons due to his natu-
ral reserve. In Abel Osmond, Corot not only found a friend
but a true confidant.

After his return from Rome, Corot first painted his friend
in 1829, the earliest formal portrait in his career. Now in the
Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, the painting shows
Osmond in profile, seated in a chair with his arms crossed,
turning to look at the viewer with a slight raised eyebrow
and pursed lips (fig. 5).⁷ In his letters from Rome, Corot was
often solicitous about Osmond’s rheumatism, worried that he



¹ Pierre Osmond was one of six siblings and brother to Abel, the sitter in
our sketch. His son, Floris (1849–1912), was a distinguished scientist and
one of the originators of metallography; he was awarded the Lavoisier
Medal in 1897. In addition to the present painting, Pierre Osmond in-
herited the formal portrait of his brother Abel painted by Corot in 1829,
formerly in the S. A. Lewisohn collection, New York, and now in the
Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University (fig. 5).
² See F. E. Wissman, “‘Mon cher ami,’ Corot’s Portrait of Abel Osmond,” in

Cantor Arts Center Journal, 2004–2005, vol. 4, pp. 7– 13, for a biography
of Abel Osmond.
³ E. Meynell, *Corot and his Friends*, London, 1909, p. 40.
⁴ Letter of March 10, 1827; quoted by Wissman, *op. cit.*, p. 8, n. 7.
⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9, n. 9.
⁶ *Idem*.
⁷ Inv. 2003.93; oil on canvas, 55 x 45 cm; Walter, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–98, cat. no.
1, pl. 1.

could not be of any immediate assistance and even praying to Saint Peter, asking him to intercede and end Abel's suffering.⁸

Our painting and a related painting of Abel Osmond in bed (fig. 6; ex-collections Henry Lerolle and David David-Weill)⁹ attest to the concern and interest of Corot for his friend's debilitating health. The dating of both paintings has been the subject of scholarly debate. Alfred Robaut, unaware of the precise identity of the sitter, surmised accurately in his *catalogue raisonné* of Corot's paintings that the paintings depicted one of the Osmond brothers.¹⁰ The inscription on the *verso* of our painting, "portrait de mon frère abel étant malade,/peint par son ami Corot," penned by one of Abel's younger brothers, was written on the stretcher after Corot's decease when the painting was with the Osmond family. Robaut, presuming the sitter to be one of the younger Osmond brothers, dated the paintings to 1845–50,¹¹ which must be excluded as the actual sitter, Abel, died on July 23, 1840. Rodolphe Walter, carefully examining both pictures, has observed that each painting, while of a similar subject, differs substantially in detail from each other. He notes that the space depicted in the paintings is different: in our picture the bed is in a painted interior, framed with a curtain; in the other, the walls are covered with wallpaper or fabric, and the bed has no curtain. Further, the sitter's expression and attitude are dissimilar: Osmond's expression in the present picture is calm, and he is aware of the painter at work; in the other, Osmond is much more drawn and agitated, gripping the bed clothes, while his eyes are unfocussed suggesting a kind of delirium.¹²

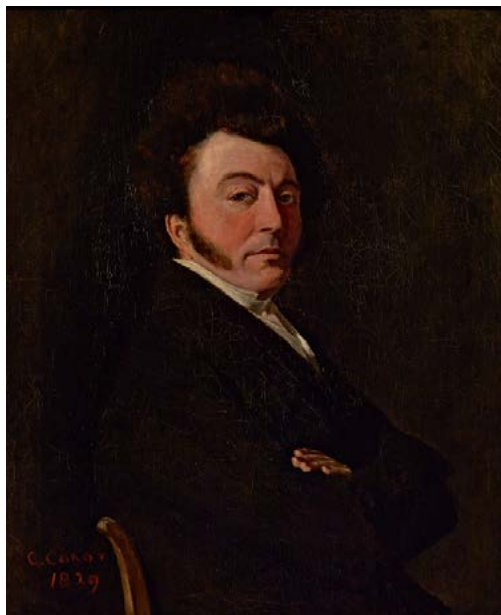


Fig. 5

⁸ Letter of August 8, 1826; see Wissman, *op. cit.*, p. 10, n. 14.

⁹ Private collection, France; oil on canvas, 15 x 35 cm; Robaut, *op. cit.*, II, p. 142, cat. no. 395, p. 132, illustrated.

¹⁰ *Idem.*

Walter notes as well that the calque drawing made by Robaut from the original painting was inscribed with the date 1829.¹³ Indeed, when comparing the sitter in the present painting with the 1829 formal portrait of Abel Osmond, the roundness of the face in both suggests a person of about 35 years old; both models appear to be the same age, one in the fullness of health, the other with a full beard and red stocking cap enduring an illness. Walter further observes that the related second portrait of Osmond in bed, representing a much more ill and older person, may be more safely assigned the date of *circa* 1840, when Osmond was 46 and nearing his demise. This analysis is the most thoughtful guide to dating the two paintings.

Corot kept both of these small and intimate paintings of his best friend in his bedroom until he died on February 22, 1875. Robaut made a sketch of the 'chamber mortuaire de Corot' the following day, February 23, indicating both pictures in particular.¹⁴



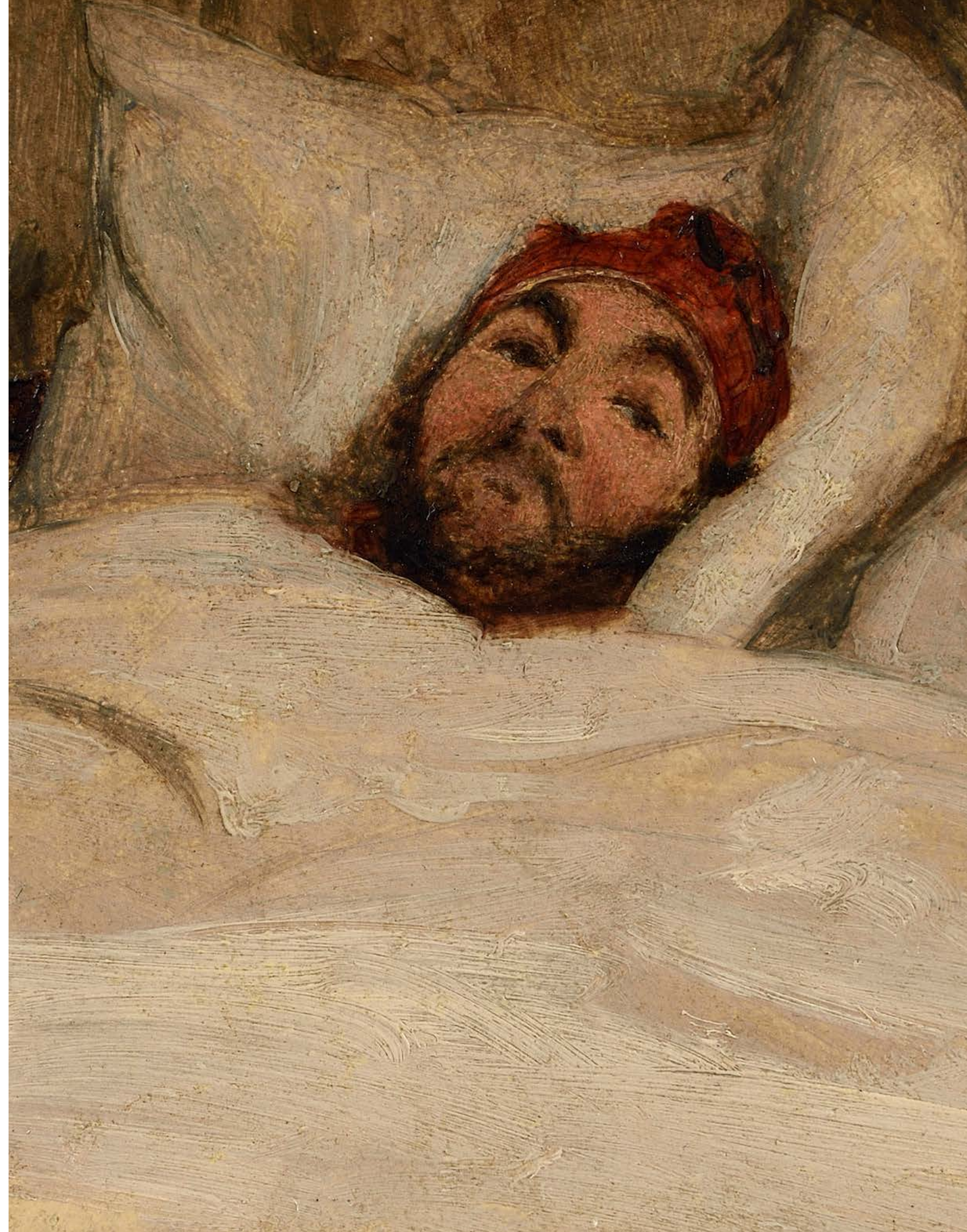
Fig. 6

¹¹ *Idem.*

¹² Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 99, under cat. no. 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 98, under cat. no. 3.

¹⁴ Robaut, *op. cit.*, II, p. 327, illustrated.



PAUL DELAROCHE

Paris 1797–1856 Paris

7. *Portrait of Louis Charles Alfred de Musset* (1810–1857)

Frame bears an old label, *verso*, inscribed, *Paul Delaroche*; another label, *verso*, inscribed, *Alfred de Musset/Peinture de Paul Delaroche/Collection Francis Gruppel* (?)

Oil on paper

Oval, 3½ x 2⅞ inches
8.9 x 7.3 cm

Provenance

Francis Gruppel (?) collection

A portrait of the Romantic poet and playwright Alfred de Musset, who published his first collection of verse, *Contes d’Espagne et d’Italie* in 1829 at the age of nineteen. Romantically involved with George Sand, he travelled to Italy with her in 1833, returning alone to France in 1834 when their affair ended. His autobiographical novel *La confession d’un enfant du siècle* of 1836 touches on the difficulties and vagaries of love stemming from this affair. His plays include *Les caprices de Marianne*, 1833 and *On ne badine pas avec l’amour*, 1834, both of which also deal with the capriciousness of love and human relationships. Among his most important poetic works are his *Nuits* (“La nuit de mai,” “La nuit de décembre,” “La nuit d’août,” and “La nuit d’octobre”), first published from 1835 through 1837 in the periodical *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He is buried in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

Another portrait of Alfred de Musset, also oval in format, painted in oil on canvas and larger in size (77 x 64 cm), was recently on the French art market, and was pre-empted by the government from leaving the country. Traditionally attributed to Delacroix or Maurice Sand, it descended through the collection of George and Maurice Sand, and was acquired in 1890 by the Charles Daudon family of La Châtre.



THOMAS COUTURE
Senlis 1815–1879 Villiers-le-Bel

8. *A Canon of Notre-Dame de Paris: A Study for “Le Baptême du prince impérial”*

Signed with the initials, lower left, T. C.
Oil on canvas
32 x 21 inches
81 x 53 cm

Provenance
Wildenstein collection, Paris
Seized and stored in the Jeu de Paume, October 1940 (ref. W. 143);
transferred to
Neuschwantein in 1941
Repatriated in 1945 and restituted to the family
Private collection, Paris, until 2018 (sale: Paris, Artcurial, 21 March
2018, lot 166, illustrated)

Painted in 1856

The baptismal ceremony of the Prince Imperial at Nôtre-Dame on 14 June 1856 was the single most important social event of the Second Empire.¹ No expense or effort was spared

for the ceremony and the accompanying festivities. Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) and Jean-Baptiste Lassus (1807–1857), both famous for the restoration of major Gothic edifices throughout France, supervised the program and transformed the church with color and ornaments into a simulacrum of a thirteenth-century royal christening. As an index of the meticulous and archeological precision of the design, over four hundred thousand francs were spent on the cathedral decorations alone.

Couture, who had by this time in his career become the court painter to Napoleon III, received the commission to paint the ceremony from the comte Nieuwerkerke, the director-general of museums, in early 1856. The commission was unique in Couture’s oeuvre inasmuch as this was a contemporary event in which the artist was in attendance and actively took part making a series of quick sketches of the main protagonists during the actual ceremony. He sought further veracity in sketching the central players after the



Fig. 7

¹ For a thorough account of the preparations of the cathedral and an analysis of the commission, its sources, and its historic and iconographic significance, see A. Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*, New Haven, 1980, pp. 263–84. For a more recent and equally illuminating ar-

ticle, see L. Chabanne, “Le Baptême du Prince impérial,” in *Catalogue des peintures du château de Compiègne*, placed online 15 June 2020: <http://www.compiègne-peintures.fr/notice/notice.php?id=363>.

event, imposing regularly on the Imperial family, members of the court, and the clergy to assume poses taken during the event, recording from life their likenesses and costume details. Couture made individual sketches of a number of these figures including the Emperor Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie;² Cardinal Constantino Patrizi Naro, Cardinal Leg-



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

- 2 Château de Compiègne, inv. C.50.064 and C.64.030; oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm and 54 x 65 cm.
- 3 Paris, private collection.
- 4 Paris, Musée Carnavalet, inv. 2450; oil on canvas, 100 x 81.5 cm.
- 5 Châlon de Saône, Musée Denon; oil on canvas, 72 x 59 cm.
- 6 Château de Compiègne, inv. C.38.3394; oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm.

ate of Pope Pius IX;³ Monseigneur Sibour, the Archbishop of Paris;⁴ Abbé Eglée, the Master of Ceremonies;⁵ the Princess Mathilde;⁶ the Grand Duchess Stephanie of Baden;⁷ Don Pietro Nardi, papal delegate;⁸ and several of the canons of the cathedral of Nôtre-Dame including the present, long-lost, superb sketch.

Couture kept re-organizing the composition of this vast picture (fig. 7),⁹ moving several of the protagonists to suit his design while at the same time sacrificing an exact record of the actual disposition of figures during the ceremony. The cathedral canon of our picture, who inclines reverently with his hands clasped in prayer and wears the pectoral cross bestowed on the canons in 1853 by the Emperor, was eliminated from the final composition (and replaced by a member of the papal entourage, Don Pietro Nardi, wearing a white surplice) but appears in a preliminary drawing made on the spot by Couture now in the collections of the Château de Compiègne (fig. 8).¹⁰ In this quickly sketched drawing, he is the middle figure of the three clerics standing directly behind Cardinal Patrizi wearing his golden cope with his head slightly inclined as in our painted study from life. The canon to his left remains in the final composition as the bearer of the sacramentals, the holy chrism oils. The figure to his right appears to be the cathedral canon serving as the Master of Ceremonies studied from life in a brilliant oil sketch now in the Musée de Denon (fig. 9),¹¹ and a figure also eliminated from the final composition and replaced by Monseigneur Sibour, the Archbishop of Paris.

The brilliant coloring of the gold cope that the canon is wearing, and the detailed, equally brilliantly colored numerous costume studies made from life of the other central figures in the ceremony stand in contrast to the rather muted color values of the final composition, a large picture that remained unfinished by the artist both in conception and technique, a grand *ébauche*.

- 7 Château de Compiègne, inv. A.00.6.73; oil on canvas, 73 x 85 cm.
- 8 Formerly, Switzerland, private collection; oil on canvas, 66 x 76 cm.
- 9 Château de Compiègne, inv. C.71.001; oil on canvas, 4.8 x 7.9 m.
- 10 Inv. C.2016.009; black chalk, measurements unknown.
- 11 Châlon de Saône, Musée Denon; oil on canvas, 72 x 59 cm.



HIPPOLYTE-JEAN FLANDRIN
Lyon 1809–1864 Rome

9. *Balaam Prophesizing that a Star Will Arise out of Israel*, 1858

Signed and dated, lower right, *Hte Flandrin 1858*
Oil with pencil underdrawing on board
18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
46 x 55.2 cm

Provenance
Studio of the artist (Paris: his sale, Hôtel Drouot, 15–17 May 1865, lot 3, bought by Pillet-Will [according to annotations in Marthe Flandrin's catalogue])

Exhibitions
Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, *Exposition des oeuvres d'Hippolyte Flandrin*, 1865, no. 3 within cat. no. 86, a group of eighteen studies for the nave's murals



Fig. 10

¹ For a history and detailed description of Flandrin's painted decoration at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, see B. Horaist, "Hippolyte Flandrin à Saint-Germain-des-Prés," in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français année 1979*, Paris, 1981, pp. 211–32, and B. Horaist, "Peintures Murales: Saint-Germain-

Literature
B. Horaist, "Hippolyte Flandrin à Saint-Germain-des-Prés," in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français année 1979*, Paris, 1981, p. 226, no. 58 (as lost)

Comprising 85 paintings, Hippolyte Flandrin's frescoes in the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés form the largest and most ambitious religious decorative cycle painted in France in the nineteenth century. Due in great part to the success of his painted decoration in the chapel of Saint-Jean in the church of Saint-Séverin in Paris (1839–41), Flandrin was initially commissioned in 1842 by the comte de Rambuteau, the Prefect of the Seine, to decorate the sanctuary of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. He was further commissioned in 1843 to paint the choir, or chapel of the Apostles, and the nave, thanks largely to the recommendation of two of his friends, the sculptor Edouard Gatteaux (1788–1881), a fellow disciple of Ingres (1780–1860) and a member of the Conseil Municipal, and the architect Victor Baltard (1805–1874), a *pensionnaire* with Flandrin at the Villa Medici in the 1830s and Inspecteur des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, who arrived on site at Saint-Germain-des-Prés in 1843 to oversee the restoration of the Benedictine abbey. Baltard and the Préfecture charged Flandrin with the entire decorative program of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, a project carried out in four campaigns which continued until the artist's death in 1864: the sanctuary from 1842 until 1846; the choir from 1846 until 1848; the nave from 1856 until 1863; and the transepts in 1864.¹ It was his largest and most important public commission.

In consultation with Baltard and others, Flandrin chose the subjects and arrangement of his frescoes in Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Following Flandrin's scheme, the nave, was designed to illustrate the history of Revelation, from the Creation to the Gospels of the Evangelists. The nave, consisting of five arched bays on either side, each with a window, was divided into upper and lower registers. Paintings in the upper register depict prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament, such as Ezekiel and Abraham. Pairs of pendant frescoes appear below in the bays of the lower register, twenty paintings in total. Those on the left of each bay are taken from the New Testament and those on the right from the Old Testament. Not only do the Old Testament figures in the upper register relate to the New and Old Testament subjects below, but the subjects of these paired New and Old Testament paintings correspond to one another thematically, such as the *Betrayal of Judas*, for

des-Prés (1839–1863)," in *Hippolyte, Auguste et Paul Flandrin: Une fraternité picturale au XIX^e siècle*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Musée du Luxembourg, and Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1984–85, pp. 124–53.



example, appearing next to *Joseph Sold into Slavery by his Brothers*, and the *Crucifixion* next to the *Sacrifice of Isaac*.

Our sketch is preparatory for the mural of *Balaam Prophesizing that a Star Will Arise out of Israel* (*Balaam prophétise qu'un aster s'élèvera du milieu d'Israël*) in the lower register of the third bay on the left, or North, side of the nave viewed from the entrance (fig. 10). Nearly identical in composition to the final painting, our *modello* shows the prophet Balaam on the high place of Peor, offering sacrifice and pointing to a star rising over the tents of the Israelites, camped on the plains of Moab; Balak, king of Moab, with his elders stand at the right, confounded by the prophet's words



Fig. 11

- 2 Numbers 22:21–34.
- 3 Numbers 22:12.
- 4 Numbers 23:8.
- 5 Numbers 24:5–9.

of blessing over the Israelites. The donkey at the very left of the composition is an allusion to the famous story of Balaam's Ass, who is given the power of speech during the journey to Moab.²

Balaam, a non-Israelite prophet, and one of the most intriguing figures in the Old Testament, was summoned by King Balak of Moab to curse the Israelites who had massed near the eastern boarder of Canaan and had defeated two neighboring kings, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. Balaam initially refused to go, as Yahweh had instructed him in a dream that "thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed."³ Undeterred, Balak offers riches delivered by high ranking messengers, whom Balaam resists again. Eventually, in another dream the following night, Yahweh tells Balaam to go with them. Balak and Balaam then proceed to make three sacrifices, each on a yet higher place overlooking the encampment of the Israelites on the plains of Moab. At the first sacrifice, Balaam, inspired by Yahweh, cries "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord has not defied?"⁴ Balak remonstrates, but Balaam pleads that he can only speak the words put in his mouth by God. At the second sacrifice, Balaam utters another prophecy blessing Israel, further frustrating the king. At the final sacrifice, on the heights of Peor, the prophet again blesses Israel, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! . . . Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."⁵

Balak's anger reaches its peak, and he threatens Balaam, refusing to pay him for his services. Balaam, nonetheless, continues fearlessly, prophesizing doom for Moab: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and shall destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."⁶

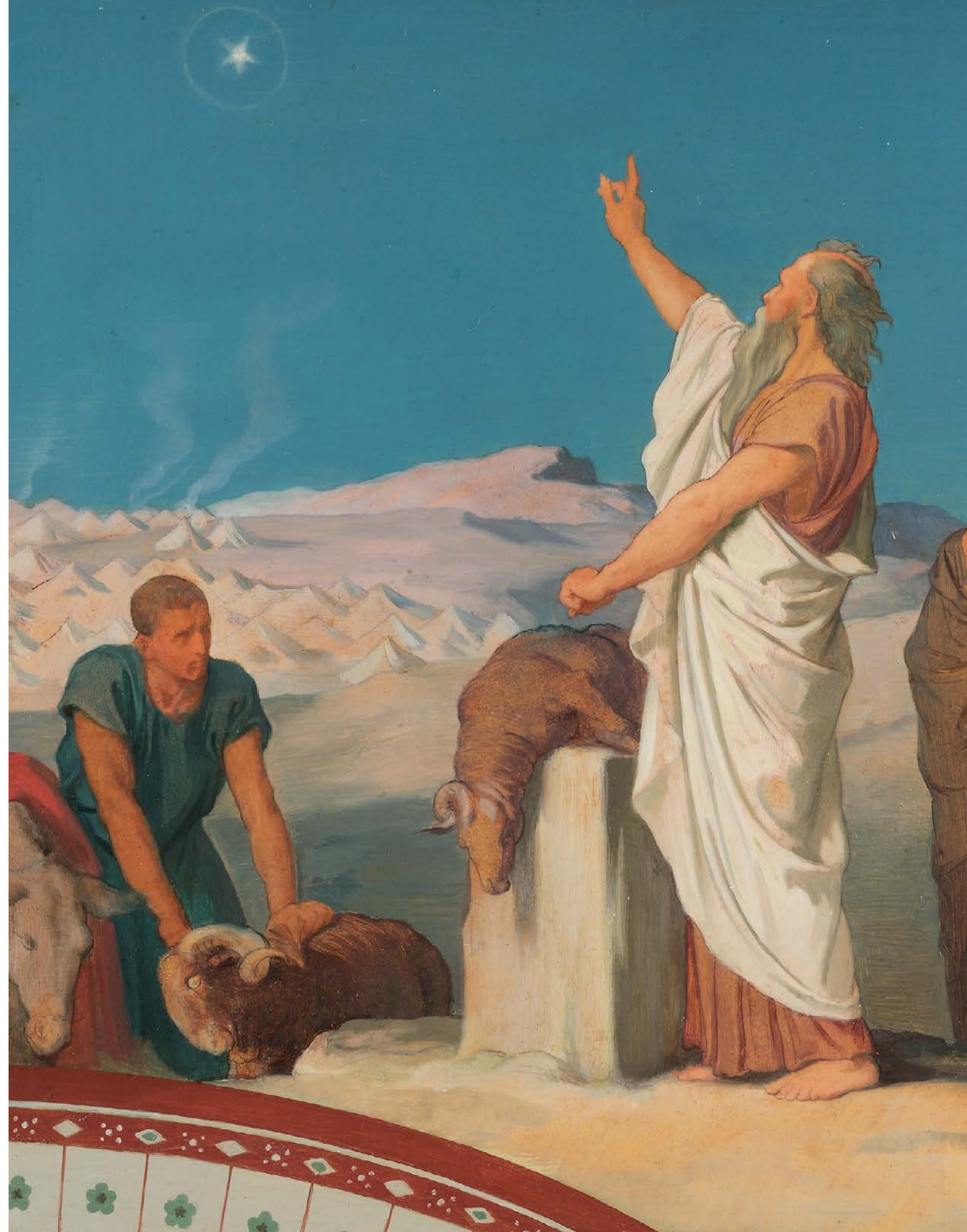
The scene of Balaam's prophecy of the Rising Star is paired with the New Testament scene of the *Adoration of the Magi*, on the left-hand side of the same bay. Above the bay, divided by a window, are the Old Testament figures of Jacob and Joseph, and Moses and Job. The complementary pairing of these subjects is appropriate to the didactic program of the nave decoration; the rising star of Balaam's prophecy, the symbol of the splendor of power, traditionally regarded by New Testament scholars and the church to prophesy the coming of the Messiah, foretells the star which guided the Magi from the East to the stable to worship the newborn Christ.

Several preparatory drawings are recorded for this painting,⁷ including a fine study for the central figure of the prophet (fig. 11; Musée du Louvre).⁸

6 Numbers 24:17–19.

7 Horaist, *op. cit.*, p. 227, nos. 98–101.

8 Inv. MI 985; pencil on paper, 310 x 150 mm.



FRANÇOIS BONVIN

Paris 1817–1887 Saint-Germain-en-Laye

10. *Nature morte à la bougie*, 1878

Signed and dated, lower left, *F. Bonvin 1878*

Oil on panel

7 x 9¾ inches

19 x 25 cm

Provenance

Stoppenbach & Delestre, London

Sig. Pino Gavazzeni, Milan

Literature

J.-J. Fernier and P. Gavazzeni, *Gustave Courbet e il suo tempo*,

Verona, 2008, p.146–47, p. 227, cat. no. 71, illustrated

Bonvin, born into a family of modest means, was a talented draughtsman from an early age. His first formal instruction was at the Ecole du Dessin in Paris where he attended classes for two years. Beyond a return to the same school for a brief period under the supervision of Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1802–1897), he often went to the Académie Suisse where he drew after the model. He was most directly formed, however, from sketching at the Louvre, especially by copying the works of the Flemish and Dutch genre painters, as well of those of Chardin (1699–1779) and the Le Nain

brothers. Although he sometimes submitted his work to François-Marie Granet (1775–1849) for criticism, he can be said to have been otherwise largely self-taught outside the usual Beaux-arts studio system.

He first exhibited in the Salon in 1847, while earning his living, like his father, as a policeman. His first major success, however, was with the exhibition of three paint-

ings at the Salon of 1849. It was at this time that he made the acquaintance of Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) and the great critic Jules-François Fleury-Husson (1820–1889), who wrote under the pseudonym, Champfleury. These three friends, Courbet, Champfleury, and Bonvin, would become, in the words of Jay Clarke, the “cornerstones of the French Realist movement.”¹ This movement rejected the idealism of Romanticism and concerned itself with the objective portrayal of daily life, its simple and quotidian aspects, especially in the lives of the poor and marginalized.

Towards the end of 1878 Bonvin, suffering great physical pain and confined to his house in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, embarked on a remarkable series of small-scale still-life paintings and drawings of kitchen utensils and other small household objects that were at hand. These pictures were painted at home, using objects found throughout the house, such as kettles, candlesticks, pipes, books, compote jars and stove grills. Most of his pictures from this time until his death in 1887 were of this type and scale.

The present painting, one of three small-scale still-lives devoted to the subject of letter writing, shows a brass candlestick, fitted with a handle, with the stub of a candle that has just been snuffed, its ember still glowing and with residual smoke wafting upwards. The candlestick rests on a small pile of correspondence, with a red stick of sealing wax and a seal to the left. Richly painted, this small picture demonstrates fully Bonvin’s marvelous mastery of color. Two other paintings of similar subjects, though vertical in composition, illustrate Bonvin’s interest in the subject. One, dated 1878, shows an inkwell with a quill pen, and a letter addressed to the collector and critic Philippe Burty.² The second, dated 1879, is a variant of the picture dedicated to Burty, and shows the same inkwell and quill pen, but includes a greater number of white and blue sheets of correspondence, and the same stick of red sealing wax and seal as in our painting (fig. 12).³ The present painting suggests a nocturnal attention to correspondence, while the absence of the candlestick in the vertical variants suggests that the letters have been written during the day.



Fig. 12

¹ J. A. Clarke, in S. F. McCullagh (ed.), *Dreams and Echoes: Drawings and Sculpture in the David and Celia Hilliard Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 2013, p. 107.

² Location unknown; G. Weisberg, *Bonvin*, Paris, 1979, p. 231, cat. no. 162 bis, illustrated.

³ Private collection, New York; formerly, W. M. Brady & Co., New York.

HILAIRE-GERMAIN-EDGAR DEGAS

Paris 1834–1917 Paris

11. *Chevaux et jockeys dans un paysage*

Stamped with the Degas estate sale mark, *degas*, lower right (Lugt 658); and stamped with the Degas atelier mark, *ATELIER–ED. DEGAS*, on the reverse of the panel (Lugt 657); inscribed on the reverse of the panel in blue crayon with the Degas atelier inventory photograph number, *Ph 1694* (photograph taken by Durand-Ruel)
Oil, essence, charcoal, and brush with India ink on panel
12⅝ x 16⅞ inches
32 x 41 cm

Provenance
Estate of the artist (*Atelier Degas, Vente II*: Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, 11–13 December 1918, lot 8, illustrated), where purchased by Galerie Nunès et Fiquet, Paris, as agents for M. et Mme. Adolphe Friedmann, Paris, by descent to M. et Mme. Georges Friedmann, Paris, Thence by descent

Exhibitions
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, *Degas*, 1955, cat. no. 130 (dated 1890)
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Edgar Degas*, 9 June–1 October 1960, cat. no. 46
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Degas at the Races*, 12 April–12 July 1998, pp. 138–39, 256, cat. no. 83, illustrated in color, p. 139 (catalogue by J. S. Boggs) (dated 1886–1890)
Paris, Musée Marmatton, *Les Impressionistes en privé, cent chefs-d’oeuvre de collections particulières*, 13 February–6 July 2014, p. 90, cat. no. 30, illustrated in color, p. 91 (dated c. 1890–1895)

Literature
P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1946, vol. III, p. 628, cat. no. 1088, illustrated, p. 629
F. Russoli and F. Minervino, *L’opera completa di Degas*, Milan, 1970, p. 138, cat. no. 1161, illustrated

With the founding of the Jockey Club in Paris in 1833, the popular enthusiasm for horse racing in France began in earnest. Degas, who was born a year later, in 1834, the year that the racetrack at Chantilly opened, was to become the finest painter of the sport in history. That his birth coincides with the beginnings of the racing phenomenon in France is a quietly satisfying art historical footnote.

Degas’s interest in horses did not emerge from a childhood spent riding, as one might expect, but instead was first cultivated by his early artistic training, specifically in sketches of horses from plaster casts of the Parthenon frieze while studying with Ingres’ pupil, Louis Lamothe (1822–1869), at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in 1855. This focus on the horse developed further with copies he made after such

masterpieces of Italian quattrocento painting as the *Battle of San Romano* by Paolo Uccello (1397–1475) and the frescoes of the *Journey of the Magi* in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence, by Benozzo Gozzoli (1420–1497).¹ Unsurprisingly, Degas’s history paintings of the 1850s and 1860s generally included a horse as a major protagonist in the compositions revealing his emerging passion for the horse as a subject: *Alexander and Bucephalus* (Washington, National Gallery of Art); *The Daughter of Jephtha* (Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art); *Sémiramis Building a City* and *Scene of War in the Middle Ages* (both Paris, Musée d’Orsay); and *Mlle Fiocre in the Ballet “La Source”* (Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Museum of Art).

Degas’s initiation into the world of racing did not begin until he visited his friend Paul Valpinçon at the château of Ménil-Hubert in a remote part of Normandy in the autumn of 1861.² While the Valpinçons were not horse people, the château was near the French national horse-breeding estate, Haras-le-Pin, and a provincial racetrack at Argentan. The artist records in one of his notebooks used during this visit, “promenade to Haras-le-Pin . . . left the road at Argentan and took with Paul the straight route for Exmes. Exactly like England with small and large pastures enclosed with hedges, wet paths, some ponds, green and umber.”³ Ménil-Hubert was a house to which Degas would regularly return for almost fifty years until he became too frail to travel anymore. The countryside and the equestrian establishments surrounding it provided the artist with a deep store of memories and imagery that he would draw upon all his career.

In his racing and steeplechase pictures from the 1860s through the 1870s, the artist conveyed the great dramas and dangers of the racecourses, the fashions, the various levels of society attracted to the sport and, importantly, the main protagonists, the horse and rider. By the 1880s, however, Degas began to simplify his equestrian pictures and pastels, concentrating only on the horses and riders. The present painting, freely sketched on a chamfered pine panel, is one of the most radically abstracted and poetic of all these late pictures. Reduced to essentials, the composition shows three horses and riders tightly grouped in a knot at the very edge of the right of the picture, nervous with energy before a race; a fourth horse and rider, just discernable in the middle-left distance, rides over to join them, balancing the bold, asymmetrical composition. The landscape and sky are gently laid in with broad brushstrokes, lightly applied to give prominence to the horses and riders in the foreground. Degas has strikingly left the



¹ R. Thompson, *The Private Degas*, London, 1987, pp. 93–95.
² J. S. Boggs, *Degas at the Races*, exhibition catalogue, Washington, 1998,

pp. 38–43.
³ Quoted by Boggs, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

charcoal under-drawing of the horizon lines and the vertical bare trees of late autumn visible against the grain of the panel.

The exceptionally modern cropping of the group of horses at the right, with the far-right horse cut off at the neck, imparts a remarkable energy in the small panel. The jockeys' pale pink and blue silks are smudged blurs, reinforcing the nervous movement of the horses jostling together. The damp, wet greens of the meadow with a rising mist in the middle ground and the bare trees at the horizon convey a cold, gray autumnal morning, ideal for the exercise of horses. Far removed from the glamour of Longchamp and Chantilly, the ancient rural landscape painted here is very probably near the Valpinçon château Ménil-Hubert beloved so much by the artist.⁴

A variant of the picture, of identical size and support, is today in the collection the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (fig. 13).⁵ The Barnes version, with the same landscape with the bare trees drawn with charcoal in the background, shows the three horses and riders more centrally placed in the picture plane, and more loosely grouped. The middle jockey, who is almost completely obscured in our painting, is revealed though his head remains hidden by the horse in the foreground. The fourth horse and jockey, riding to join the group of three in the foreground, is placed in the same position in both compositions.

Cheveux et jockeys dans un paysage boasts an unbroken provenance since its acquisition at the 1918 Degas sale by the distinguished collectors Adolphe Friedmann (1857–1922) and his wife Elizabeth (1871–1940). Their son, Georges Friedmann (1902–1977), who inherited the painting from his mother after her decease, was the brilliant French sociologist and philosopher.



Fig. 13

⁴ Boggs, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁵ Accession Number BF572; signed lower left, *Degas*; oil on panel, 32 x 41 cm.



EDOUARD VUILLARD

Cuiseaux 1868–1940 La Baule

12. *Madame Roussel en peignoir brun-rouge (sa fille Annette à son côté)*

Stamped with signature *E. Vuillard* (Lugt 2497a), lower right
Oil on cardboard, laid down on panel
18 x 13 inches
44.5 x 32 cm

Provenance
Studio of the artist
By descent through the artist's family
Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1966
Private collection, France

Exhibitions
Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Bonnard, Vuillard et les Nabis (1888–1903)*, 8 June–2 October 1955, cat. no. 201 (as *Portrait de Mme Roussel en rouge*)
Milan, Palazzo Reale, *Edouard Vuillard*, October–November 1959, cat. no. 53, illustrated
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel & Co., *E. Vuillard*, May–September 1961, cat. no. 33 (titled *Madame Roussel et Jacques Roussel* and dated 1903)
Paris, L'OEil, Galerie d'art, *Vuillard et son kodak*, 25 April–26 May 1963, p. 15, p. 5, cat. no. 11, illustrated (as *Madame Roussel et Jacques Roussel* [1903]) (cat. by J. Salomon and A. Vaillant)
London, The Lefevre Gallery [Alex. Reid & Lefevre, Ltd.], *Vuillard et son kodak*, 5–26 March 1964, p. 6, cat. no. 8, p. 26, illustrated (as *Madame Roussel et Jacques Roussel* [1903]).
Tokyo, Seibu Museum of Art; Kumamoto, Prefectural Museum of Art; Hita, Municipal Museum; Shimonoseki, Daimaru Gallery; Sendai, Sendai City Museum; Takasaki, Gunma Prefectural Museum of History; and Kochi, Prefectural Folk Museum, *Vuillard*, 1977–78, no. 26, pl. 26 (as *Madame K.-X. Roussel et son fils Jacques* [1903])
London, Wildenstein, *French Portraits, XVII–XX Centuries*, 16 June–30 July 1982, exhibition list, as “Vuillard, *Portrait of Madame Roussel and Jacques Roussel*”
Paris, Galerie Bellier; New York, Berry-Hill Galleries, *Edouard Vuillard, “Le silence me garde,”* 2002–03, pp. 30, 108–09, no. 17, illustrated pp. 30, 55 (as *Madame Roussel en peignoir brun-rouge (sa fille Annette à ses côtés)* [c. 1901]) (essay by E. W. Easton)

Literature
A. Martini, “Edouard Vuillard,” in *Arte figurative antica e moderna*, no. 5, September–October 1959, p. 57, illustrated
J. Salomon and A. Vaillant, “Vuillard et son kodak,” in *L'OEil*, no. 100, April 1963, p. 17, illustrated
C. Roger-Marx, *Vuillard-intérieurs*, Lausanne, 1968, p. 21, pl. 9
S. Preston, *Edouard Vuillard*, New York, 1971, p. 35, fig. 47
E. Daniel, *Vuillard, l'espace de l'intimité*, Ph.D. dissertation, Institute d'Art et d'Archéologie, Paris, 1984, p. 119, fig. 39bis

A. Salomon and G. Cogeval, *Vuillard, The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, vol. II, Paris, 2003, p. 609, cat. no. VII-128, illustrated

Painted *circa* 1900

Edouard Vuillard's intimate and unflinching portraits of his family and their complex lives are among the most distinctive and satisfying achievements of the Nabi movement. The artist's particular concentration, for a period of about a dozen years or so, from 1888 to 1903, on the domestic arrangements of his mother, sister, brother-in-law, and niece, and the supporting characters in their lives, creates an insular and fascinating documentation of family life unprecedented in the history of art. Family life confined within four walls engaged Vuillard's gifts like no other subject.

Painted *circa* 1900, the present picture shows the artist's sister, Marie, at a moment of peaceful happiness in her often difficult marriage to the Nabi artist Ker-Xavier Roussel (1867–1944), Vuillard's intimate friend. Having endured recurring infidelity from her husband, a still-born first child, and the death of a second child shortly after birth, Madame Roussel found great comfort and joy in the birth of her third child, Annette, who here pops her head above the table, almost invisibly, at the left of the composition. Jacques Salomon, Vuillard's nephew by marriage, conveyed the scene in the original descriptive inventory of the artist's studio,

Madame Roussel with her hands clasped and her arms resting on the edge of a table covered with a white tablecloth. Her face, shown in three-quarters profile, is delicately shaded with cold tones, and her brownish-red housecoat lends harmoniously with a curtain of similar hue in the background. The blue of the ribbon around her neck echoes that of the small medallion at upper left. The wallpaper on the left is decorated with small red and green floral motifs. At bottom left, a child's face looms up bizarrely above the edge of the table.¹

The birth of Annette, born on November 30, 1898, proved a major turning point in the life of Vuillard and his family, and banished the pall of unhappiness and tragedy that hovered over the Roussel family. For his beloved sister, Marie, the baby provided consolation in her uneasy marriage. In our painting, Madame Roussel is enveloped in a rich sym-



1 Quoted by Salomon and Cogeval, *op. cit.*, p. 609, under cat. no. VII-128.

phony of reds, from the brownish-red color of her housecoat, accented with bright spots of several higher-keyed reds, to the pinkish-orange curtain behind her to the more delicate, watery pinks of the floral wallpaper, and the cooler hue of the broad peppermint-red stripe in the tablecloth. Within this warm embrace of color, her wistful gaze looks neither directly at the viewer nor the artist; Marie appears slightly distracted in thought, as though turned within, reflecting a spirit of calm and contentment. Vuillard's use of the cardboard reserve of the painting's support is key to Madame Roussel's presentation; the reserve almost creates a halo, or aura, around her head suggesting an inner peace of happiness at this moment in her life.

For Vuillard, the arrival of Annette also provided him the role of indulgent uncle which he had so long sought, and more importantly, gave him a new subject, maternity, with which he would produce some of his most memorable and moving pictures.² The baby Annette features in more than two dozen paintings. In so many of these pictures she appears as little more than a tiny creature, as in this picture, often initially unrecognized, as though she were part of the decorative pattern of either the wallpaper, or a piece of fabric, or the dress of her mother or grandmother. As Vuillard observed, "I don't paint portraits, I paint people in their homes."

What distinguishes this picture above all is that it is one of the only true, proper, and rare portraits of his sister Marie. While Vuillard painted any number of portraits of his mother, Madame Vuillard, and several independent portraits of his friends, he rather tended to include Marie in numberless conversation pieces of his family, but in these paintings she almost appears as staffage. In the present painting, on the contrary, Marie is the main focus of the composition, and properly portrayed by the artist without any of the imposed artifice of the psychological roles she played in the family dramas of



Fig. 14

² *Ibid.*, p. 539.

³ The room is the same setting for a *Child with a Goblet* (fig. 14), in which Annette is depicted drinking from a cup while seated in a Thonet chair

the previous decade. Here she is herself, posing calmly for her brother, in the comfort of her own dining room,³ while her child, ever curious, puts her head above the table to watch her uncle paint her mother. As one century turns into another, our picture heralds a new exploration of portraiture for an artist who will become one of the most dedicated portraitists of the twentieth century.



in front of the same cupboard dressed with a red curtain behind her; see Salomon and Cogeval, *op. cit.* p. 608, cat. no. VII-127, illustrated; oil on cardboard, 49.8 x 62.2 cm.

HENRI LUDOVIC MARIUS PINTA

Marseille 1856-1944 Paris

13. *Interior of the Pavillon Denon, Musée du Louvre*

Signed and inscribed, lower left, à Monsieur Defrasse ?/H. Pinta

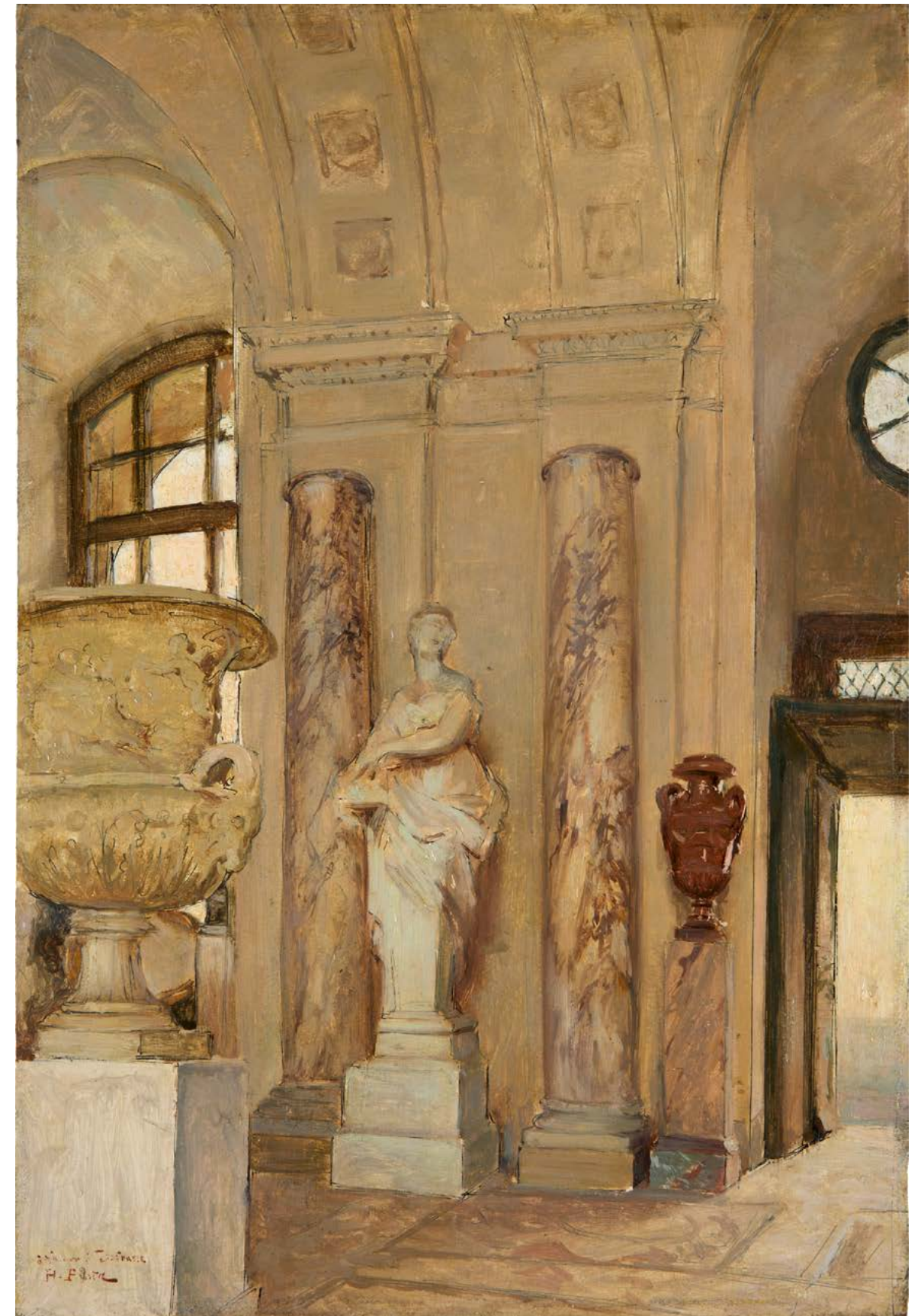
Oil on millboard

15 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches

40.3 x 27 cm

After having studied under Alexandre Cabanel (1823–1889) and Jules Lefebvre (1836–1911), Pinta was awarded the Prix de Rome in painting in 1884 for his *Brutus Swearing Allegiance to Rome upon the Death of Lucretia*. He spent 1885 through 1888 as a resident at the Villa Medici in Rome under the directorship of Ernest Hébert (1817–1908). He exhibited *Christ Weeping on the Futility of his Sacrifice* in 1885, and in Paris continued exhibiting religious subjects throughout his long career. He painted a famous *Portrait of Debussy* who was also a resident at the Villa Medici. *Naissance du Jour* of 1903 and a *Sacred Heart*, inspired by the loss of his two sons in World War I, are two of his most notable pictures of his later career. Toward the end of his life, Pinta designed the mosaics for a decorative scheme in the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur, Montmartre, Paris, and for the cupola of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur in Marseille, his birthplace.

In this appealing view of the interior of the Louvre, light streams through a heavy metal door to the ground floor entrance of the Pavillon Denon.



WALTER GAY

Boston 1856–1937 Le Bréau, Fontainebleau

14. *La Statnette*

Signed, upper left, *Walter Gay*

Oil on canvas

21½ x 18 inches

54.6 x 45.7 cm

Provenance

Private collection, Paris

Exhibitions

Paris, Galerie Jean Charpentier, *Exposition de Peintures, Aquarelles et Gouaches de Walter Gay*, February 8–22, 1923, cat. no. 53 (*La Statnette, nature morte*)

Painted circa 1922

Walter Gay, scion of an old New England family, and his wife Matilda were central figures in the celebrated Anglo-American expatriate community in Paris at the turn of the

nineteenth century. Having studied in Boston, Gay traveled to Paris in 1876 where, in 1877, he entered the studio of Léon Bonnat (1834–1922). After exhibiting genre subjects at the Paris salon from 1879, winning a third-class medal for *La Bénédicte* in 1888, and marrying Matilda Travers, a wealthy fellow expatriate from New York and Newport, in 1889, Gay began, around 1895, to explore the painting of interiors of houses, a pursuit that became the focus of his work. Usually devoid of people, his pictures are remarkable for the intimate sense of life they convey. They have been called portraits of rooms; indeed, his wife Matilda referred to them as “poèmes d’intérieurs.”¹

Gay’s interest in interiors and painting them coincided nicely with his interest in fine and decorative arts, and his being an avid collector in his own right—first and foremost, of Old Master paintings and drawings, but of French, 18th-century furniture, sculpture, and Asian decorative arts such as ceramics and lacquered furniture as well. He owned two paintings by Francesco Guardi, a landscape by Gainsborough, drawings by Rembrandt, a watercolor drawing by Fragonard, *La Fête de Saint-Cloud*,² purchased in the sale of the distinguished collection of Alfred Beurdeley in 1905, and a drawing by Delacroix, to name but a few. After Walter’s death in 1937, Matilda formally presented over 200 works from his collection to the Louvre.³ Walter Gay was always attracted to beautiful works of art, and his paintings of interiors are as much about his fondness for the art and objets in them as they are about the architectural features of the rooms themselves.

In addition to painting commissioned interiors and rooms belonging to friends, Gay also produced a number of paintings and drawings of the rooms he and Matilda inhabited, both in their apartment in Paris and their house in the country. Matilda shared her husband’s love of buying art and antiques, and in May of 1909 the couple moved into a charming apartment at 11, rue de l’Université, the former Hôtel de Chaulnes, in the heart of the Faubourg Saint-Germain in the 7th Arrondissement. They would remain there for the rest of their lives. Located on the second floor, between the courtyard and a garden, the apartment was quiet, spacious, and high-ceilinged—perfect for hanging art. Given their acquisitive natures, the walls were double and triple-hung, Salon-style, with drawings sometimes simply propped up on tables. The Gays also purchased, in 1907, a magnificent house near Fontainebleau, the Château du Bréau, which they owned until Matilda’s death in 1943.

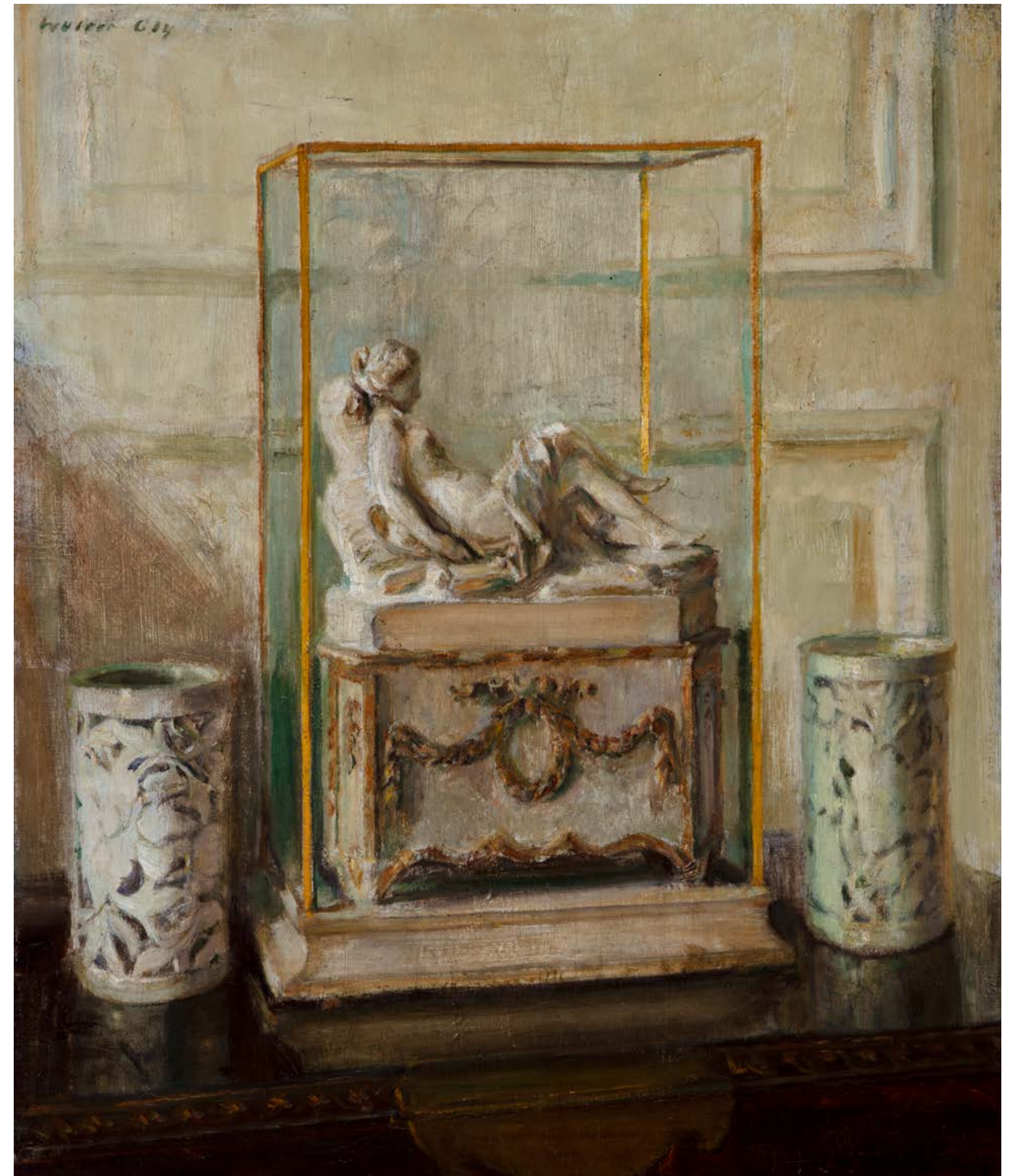


Fig. 15

¹ W. Rieder, *A Charmed Couple: The Art and Life of Walter and Matilda Gay*, New York, 2000, p. 25.

² Rieder, *op. cit.*, p. 91, fig. 58 (13¼ x 16¼ inches; now, The Metropolitan

Museum of Art, New York, The Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.628).

³ Rieder, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

The present painting, rather more rare in being a close-up view of several objects on a table top, was painted in the library of the Gay's apartment at 11, rue de l'Université. It shows a plaster statuette of a reclining female nude, raised on a decorative, Rococo base and covered with a glass bonnet, flanked by a pair of floral and perforated Korean, 19th-century brush pots, all of which sit on a piece of furniture with a large and elaborate brass lock plate. The plaster statuette, by an anonymous, late 19th-century sculptor, is derived from an anonymous, 19th-century terracotta, *La Gimblette*, signed, *CLODION*, in the collection of the Musée des arts décoratifs in Paris (inv. no. 26.807).⁴ The terracotta, in turn, is derived from an engraving after a painting by Fragonard.⁵ Gay's still-life is set against the backdrop of a wall with typical French molded panelling.

The exact group—statuette with bonnet, flanked by a pair of Korean brush pots—sits on a Chinese lacquer chest-on-stand, with the same elaborate brass lock plate and set against a panelled wall, just to the left of a Louis XV sofa with striped material in a painting by Walter Gay of one of the rooms at 11, rue de l'Université: *The Red Sofa* (fig. 15).⁶ The sofa was notable for retaining its original red and cream-colored striped velvet. The same Chinese lacquered chest-on-stand, in this instance devoid of the plaster statuette and Korean brush pots, appears again, also just to the left of the “red sofa,” in another painting by Gay of the same room, more recently identified as: *Library, 11, rue de l'Université* (fig. 16).⁷ That Gay painted the library of his and Matilda's apartment in Paris on different occasions, with and without objects on the left-hand chest-on-stand, and with different paintings and drawings on the wall, attests to his serious habit of collect-



Fig. 16

⁴ We are grateful to Anne Poulet for her help in identifying and dating *La Statuette*, and its derivation; e-mail correspondence, May 11, 2021.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Collection of Ernest Victor, New York, 1938, when exhibited in the memorial exhibition of paintings by Walter Gay at The Metropolitan Mu-

seum of Art that year.

ing, and his enjoyment in moving things around as a result of more recent acquisitions.

The same plaster statuette, without its decorative, Rococo base, and with a lower glass bonnet, appears in another painting by Gay of one of the rooms at 11, rue de l'Université: *The Yellow Room*.⁸ The artist's continued fondness for the sculpture is evidenced, finally, by a large watercolor and gouache drawing of it, with the same glass bonnet and elaborate socle (fig. 17), currently on the art market, New York.⁹

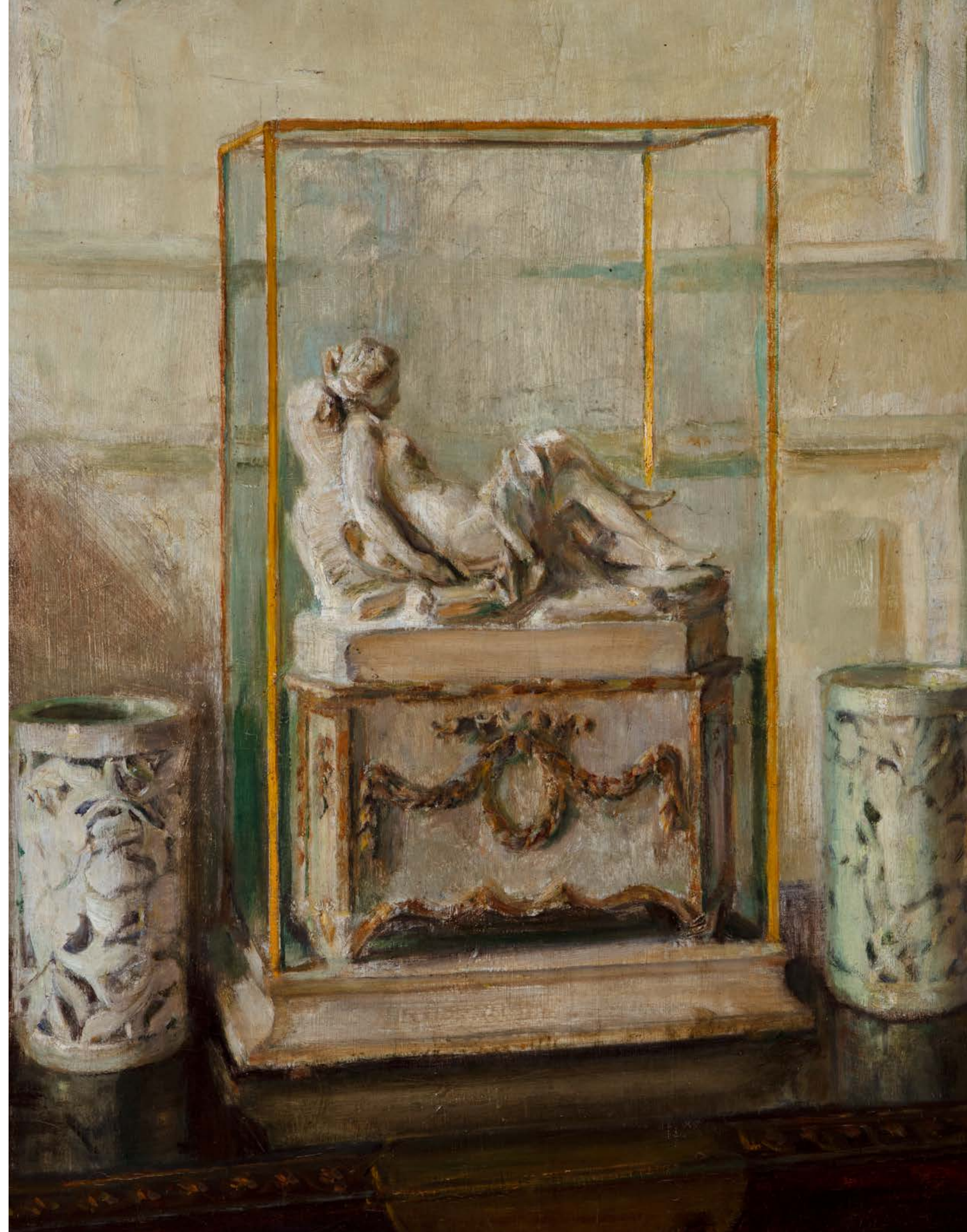


Fig. 17

⁷ Rieder, *op. cit.*, p. 44, fig. 20 (oil on board, 21 x 25½ inches; The Art Institute of Chicago, Anonymous loan, 301.1996).

⁸ Collection of Anne Jennings, New York, n.d.

⁹ 16 x 12¼ inches (406 x 310 mm); Mark Murray Fine Paintings, New York.



LOUIS MARCOUSSIS

Warsaw 1878–1941 Cusset

15. *La Guitare et l'as de trèfle*

Inscribed with blue crayon on the *verso*, upper center, *Marcoussis*;
also inscribed, *verso*, right center, *je certifié que cette/ peinture est*
de Marcoussis / Alice Marcoussis

Oil on board
18⅞ x 13⅜ inches
46 x 33.5 cm

Provenance
M. et Mme. Joseph-Berthold ('Bertie') Urvater, Brussels
M. Piaggi, Paris
M. Philippe Leclercq, Roubaix, France
Galerie Beyeler, Basel
E. V. Thaw & Co., New York, from whom acquired in 1964 by a
Private collection, USA (sale: New York, Sotheby's, 15 November
2016, lot 170, illustrated)
Private collection, New York

Exhibitions
Paris, Musée d'art moderne, *Le Cubisme de 1907 à 1914*, 1953, cat.
no. 196
Otterloo, Museum Kröller-Muller, and Liège, Musée des beaux-arts,
La Collection Urvater, 1957, cat. no. 82, illustrated
Baltimore, Baltimore Museum of Art, *1914: An Exhibition of Paint-
ings, Drawings, and Sculpture Created in 1914 in Celebration of*
the Baltimore Museum of Art, 1964, cat. no. 145

Literature
____ "L'Art d'aujourd'hui," Paris, June 5, 1953, p. 22, illustrated
J. Lafranchis, *Marcoussis, son vie, son oeuvre, catalogue complet des*
peintures, fixés sur verre, aquarelles, dessins, gravures, Paris, 1961,
p. 243, cat. no. 33, illustrated

Painted in 1914

La Guitare et l'as de trèfle is one of only about a dozen rare
Cubist pictures painted by Marcoussis in the critical years of
1912 to 1914. Last exhibited in public in 1964, the picture re-
mained in a private American collection for over fifty years
before it emerged on the market in New York in 2016. The
twelve Cubist pictures the artist painted include his master-
piece, *L'Homme au violoncelle* (1914), now in the National
Gallery of Art, Washington, and the only picture from this
period which included a figure; two landscapes of Banyuls;
and nine remarkable still-life pictures, usually composed in
a vertical format.¹ The present painting is arguably the most
painterly, subtle, and accomplished of the still-lives.

Painted in tones of black, various browns and ochres,
pinkish beige, white, and cobalt blues, the palette is simul-

taneously rich and somber. Marcoussis has laid in his paints
with speed and a variety of techniques; note, especially, the
paint surface of the upper rectangle painted with brown pig-
ment and combed in variety of shapes and arabesques. The
still-life consists of four central elements, most prominently
the guitar, painted in pink flesh tones with black and white
flecked strings, and a grey neck and fretboard; scored sheet
music painted both black on white and in the negative, white
on black; a wine glass outlined with cobalt blue; and the tre-
foil ace of clubs card of the title, traditionally a symbol of
love and marriage, in the lower center, perhaps as a nod to his
marriage in 1913 to Alice Halicka Marcoussis (1894–1975).

This beautiful musical composition, evoking the simple
café musical life of pre-war France, was one of the last pic-
tures the artist painted before the war in which he served as
a volunteer in the Polish company of the French Foreign Le-
gion from 1914 until 1919. In fact, Marcoussis did not return
to painting until 1919.

Born in Poland in 1878 as Ludwig Casimir Ladislav
Markus, Louis Marcoussis lived and worked most of his life

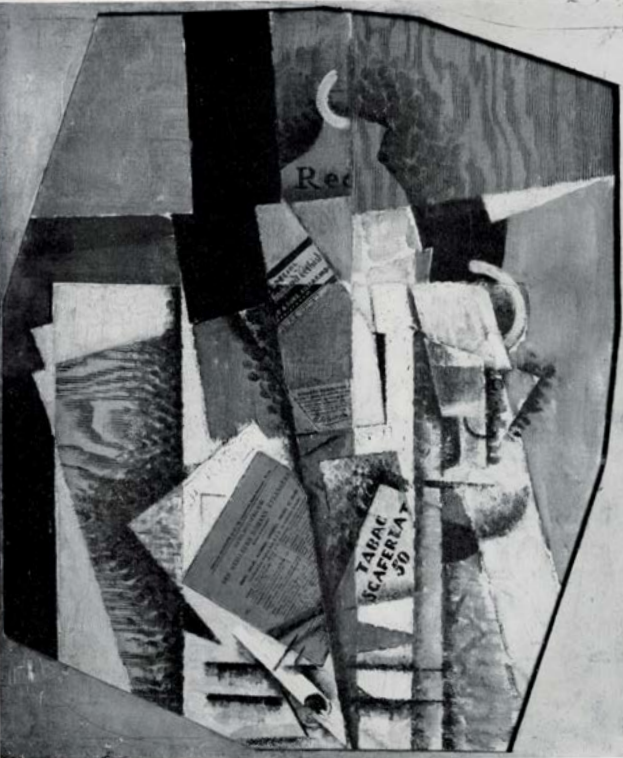


Fig. 18



¹ For example, *La Bouteille de whisky et le paquet de scaferlati*, 1914 (fig. 18); oil on paper irregularly cut and laid down on a gilded board, 44 x 46 cm; location unknown; see Lanfranchis, *op. cit.*, 1961, p. 76, illustrated, cat. no. P. 31, illustrated.

in Paris. After studying law briefly in Warsaw, he attended the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts before moving to Paris in 1903 where he enrolled at the Académie Julian to study under Jules Lefebvre (1836–1911). The bohemian life of Paris in the pre-war years was his milieu; an habitué of the cafés of Montmartre and Montparnasse, he made friends in these happy years with many writers and artists, most notably Degas, Apollinaire, Braque, Juan Gris, and Picasso. It was Apollinaire who suggested Markus's gallicized name, Marcoussis, after a village not far from Paris where Corot famously painted a series of landscapes.

While he was influenced in part by Impressionism, from 1910 he became an integral member of the Cubist movement alongside other avant-garde painters such as Picasso, Gris, and Braque. Indeed, Marcoussis was one of the few contemporaries whom Picasso and Braque, the pioneers of Cubism, befriended and respected. Possessed of a deep understanding of the tenets of Cubism, he was able to express these ideas brilliantly in a small body of pre-war paintings that was more accomplished than that of many of his more prolific colleagues.

La Guitare et l'as de trèfle is one of the best of this group produced in these years which proved to be the crucible of Cubism.



BALTHAZAR KLOSSOWSKI DE ROLA, called BALTHUS

Paris 1908–2001 Rossinière (Switzerland)

16. *Study for “Nu à la veste rose”* (1927)

Oil on millboard
10 x 7½ inches
25.4 x 19 cm

Provenance

Baladine Klossowski, Paris, the artist’s mother
Paul Bourdin, Berlin
Elfriede Bourdin (d. 1982), Berlin
Sabine Rewald, New York, 1982–1990
Sale: New York, Sotheby’s, 3 October 1990, lot 129, illustrated
Barclay Simpson (1921–2014), Berkeley
Julie Marie Simpson, Berkeley
Sale: New York, Sotheby’s, 23 February 2006
Private collection, New York

Literature

V. Monnier and J. Clair, *Balthus: Catalogue Raisonné of the Complete Works*, New York, 1999, p. 108, cat. no. P 30, illustrated

Painted in 1927

An artist of mystery and provocation, Balthus rejected the usual conventions of the twentieth-century art world. He resisted all attempts to devise a biographical profile and insisted on having his paintings seen rather than read about. The subjects of his paintings, often devoted to the sexual

awakening of children, created controversy throughout his career. His palette, doubtlessly modern and yet derived from the careful study of Old Masters, is remarkably distinctive, and gives his paintings a sophistication and harmonious appearance that is singular amongst his contemporaries. His masters included Piero della Francesca, Nicolas Poussin, and, closer to his time, Pierre Bonnard.

The present painting is a preparatory sketch for one of the artist’s first paintings of the female nude, *Nu à la veste rose*, of 1927 (fig. 19).¹ In this sketch Balthus has concentrated on the form and color of the satin pink jacket trimmed in blue in which the model is half-clothed in the final painting. A square pillow rests against the bolster for contrast. The elegant juxtaposition of these elements of color against the grey-green headboard heralds the artist’s future as a master of color.

According to a note on the back of the sketch, Sabine Rewald has observed that the ‘empire’ frame was chosen by the artist.

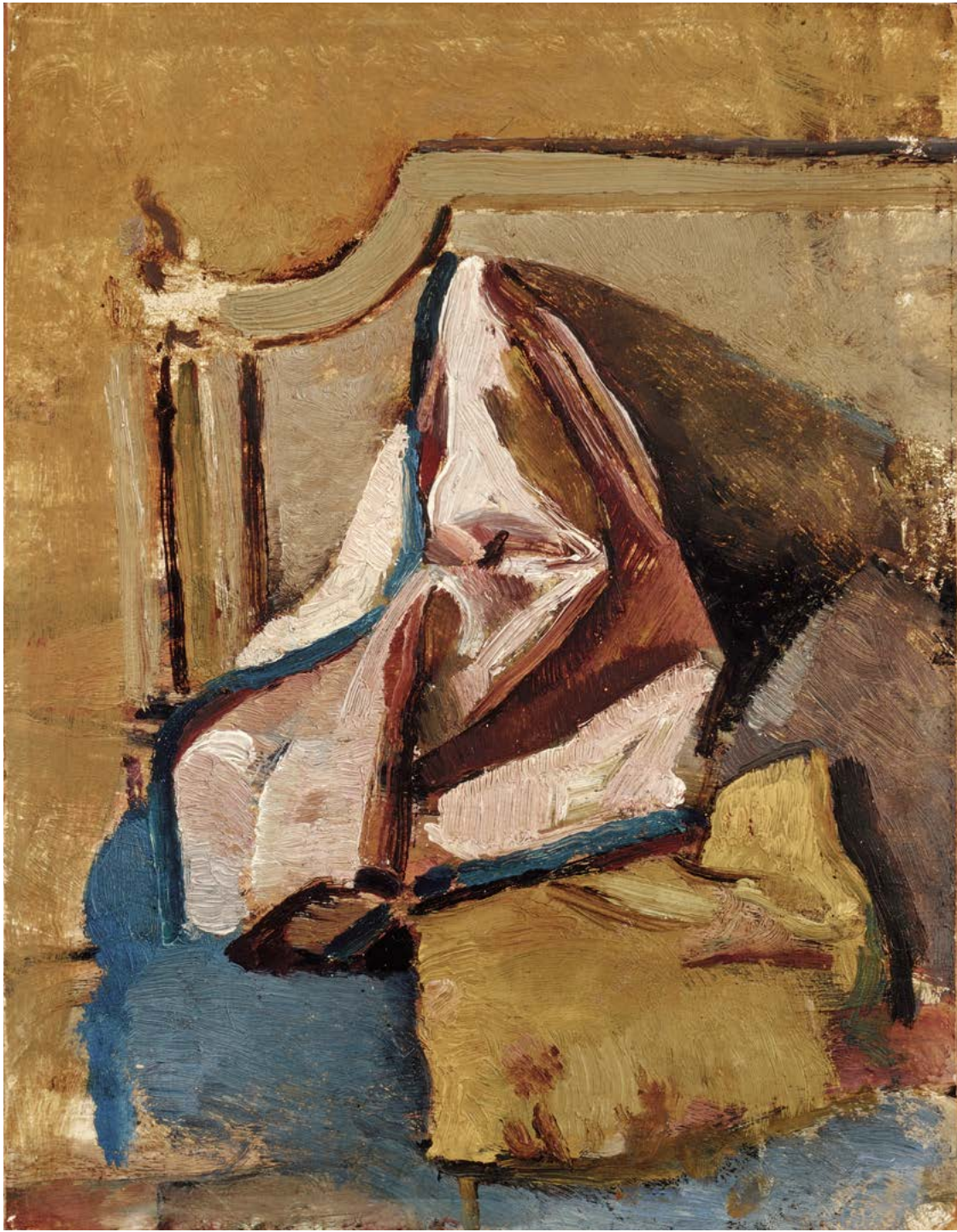


Fig. 19

¹ Private collection; see Monnier and Clair, *op cit*, p. 108, cat. no. P 31, illustrated; oil on canvas, 98.5 x 77.5 cm.

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