

An abstract painting with a complex composition. On the left, dark, elongated, leaf-like shapes in shades of blue and black emerge from a white base. The upper right is dominated by large, billowing clouds in warm tones of ochre, pink, and white, with patches of deep blue and red. Below the clouds, dark, undulating mountain ranges are visible. The bottom of the painting features a bright red, textured band, possibly representing a body of water or a path, with small figures and a boat visible in the distance.

GILLIS •  
GOLDMAN

fine art

1805  
1935

Painting, Drawing  
& Sculpture

Catalogue 29



catalogue 29

1805  
1935

Painting, Drawing  
& Sculpture

GILLIS GOLDMAN FINE ART

T +32 2 503 14 64 | W [www.gillisgoldman.com](http://www.gillisgoldman.com) | M [noemie@gillisgoldman.com](mailto:noemie@gillisgoldman.com)  
1, rue aux laines | 1000 Brussels | Belgium

June 2022



*The mind of an artist, in order to achieve the prodigious effort of  
freeing whole and entire the work that is in him, must be incandescent [...].  
There must be no obstacle in it, no foreign matter unconsumed.*  
Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

The European Fine Art Fair in Maastricht is back on stage! So many months spent secretly waiting for this moment so that we can once again offer the heart and soul of our selection. Many of these gems were “love at first sight,” but numerous steps were taken to actually hold them in our hands – let alone offer them at TEFAF. A complex dance of quality, relationship, shipping, expertise, and framing. Not to mention extensive experience patiently amassed over many years. Indeed, we are not the same as we were ten or even five years ago. Events, discoveries, fairs (and yes, regrets, too) have shaped us. These past two years have been challenging for many TEFAF exhibitors and members. We are an extended family of friends and colleagues, all sharing the same love of art. And yet, we each hold our own individual definition of what art and love can be. Diversity is definitely in our DNA.

As for us, one of our most cherished moments at TEFAF are the two days devoted to hanging – when the selection takes concrete shape on the wall. After twelve long months of existing solely on an instinctive or unconscious level, the display undergoes a physical birth. A revelation of works and frames that intertwine in a spellbinding dialogue. What emerges is sometimes a surprise. The ideal layout might stubbornly escape our eye until the very last minute. Which piece will be most successful? It may happen that an unexpected starlet suddenly emerges and claims centre stage, elbowing a long-beloved celebrity to a less prominent position. Other works may be set aside completely.

But the most magical moment – the one we live for – is when we witness a work catching your eye, seducing you completely. Some succumb to the sensation and openly revel in it. Others, more restrained, may be unsettled by this reaction and try to hide it. But in that moment, the bliss on your face is unmistakable. When the beauty, expression and originality of a work penetrates your soul, making you want it all for your own. It makes us indescribably happy to see this. It is the reason why we are here. Like art smugglers. Or those messengers from the Middle Ages who transported small treasures for the scholars and enthusiasts of this world.

This year, we wanted to create this catalogue so that everyone could be part of the TEFAF adventure. As you explore the works within, we invite you to open your soul to seduction. Perhaps, it will be a moment to add to your collection – to infuse it with fresh beauty, originality, and pride. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or requests you may have. We will be happy to put your choice aside for you.

As we are fond of saying, the diversity of our selection is at the soul of our adventure. We hope you will celebrate and cherish this particular collection as much as we have enjoyed compiling it for you. Enjoy art and life.

Eric Gillis & Noémie Goldman

1 **Jean-Antoine Théodore Gudin** 1802 Paris – Boulogne-sur-Seine 1880

*Fishing Boat at Sunset*

Oil on paper laid down on panel, ca. 1830-35

Signed lower right *T Gudin*

Sheet 232 × 310 mm

Provenance Private collection, Germany

A delightful example of famous Gudin's seascapes, combining an elegant and delicate palette with the contrast and drama of a stormy atmosphere. Gudin was one of the most talented marine's painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He studied with Ann-Louis Girodet and Antoine-Jean Gros, but very soon he grew fond of the romantic masters Delacroix and Gericault<sup>1</sup>. His sea subjects – shipwreck, view of harbors, etc. – were immediately noted, starting at the 1822 Salon with five works. In 1824 he won the golden medal in the same Salon, and from then he gained notoriety. He was quickly the *protégé* of the Duc d'Orleans, the future King Louis Philippe, for whom he made later a marine's series for the *Galerie Historique* of Versailles (1844). He was also close to Horace Vernet, the teacher of his brother, met in Rome in 1832.

His œuvre is large, and mainly in the classic genre of the sea painting. However, beside this group, he made a few works much more related to the practice of plein-

air sketches, as the present work. They gather a certain maturation of his art in other vein where there is almost no human presence but a more stressed attention to emotions and atmosphere of sunset, rain, fog, etc. The influence of Delacroix is particularly evident in the present work. This delicate oil is reminiscent of Delacroix's pastels dedicated to the atmospheric effects of the sunset. There are also influences of Cozens and Constable. However, Gudin differs from these models by using more controlled strokes, as to search harmony even in an upcoming tempest.

1. See : Jean-Antoine Théodore Gudin & Edmond Béraud, *Souvenirs du Baron Gudin, Peintre de la marine (1820-1870)*, Edition, Plon, Paris, 1921



## 2 Pierre-Luc-Charles Cicéri 1782 Saint-Cloud – Saint-Chéron 1868

### *A Portrait of a Well-Dressed Man*

Watercolor on cream wove paper, ca. 1805-15

Signed in the lower right corner in ink *Cicéri*

Sheet 205 × 122 mm

Provenance Private collection, New York

This lovely caricature is signed by the Pierre-Luc-Charles Cicéri, the renowned stage-designer with his sceneries for over three hundred ballets and operas, during a career of forty-four years and under several political regimes: the Napoleonic Empire, the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy. It is well known that Cicéri, besides his official works also enjoyed making caricatures, although they are now quite hard to find, and we still lack information about his activity as a caricaturist. Most probably Jean-Baptiste Isabey may have contributed to his appropriation of the genre when Cicéri worked under Isabey's direction in 1810. The trace of Vernet's artistic heritage is here perceptible.

The discovery of the present drawing is a rare occasion to see this part of the artist' work. This elegant portrait depicts a well-dressed man, wearing gloves and holding a top hat, walking in what seems to be a gallery with columns on high bases. On the lapel of his costume, the man bears a purple and still unidentified medal.

In “*portraits-charge*”, the features of the portrayed are almost always emphasized and exaggerated. Because of his atypical jaw and his baldness, one could think of Pierre Fontaine, an acclaimed neoclassical architect, and the background columns might be those of the Grande Galerie in the Louvre. Together with Charles Percier, Fontaine is considered to have invented the Empire style. Before he was appointed architect to the Invalides, the Tuileries and the Louvre, he worked as *directeur des décorations* at the Opera and Cicéri must have been an acquaintance of him. Be as it may, this identification should be taken with caution.

Whatever, this brilliant caricature eloquently illustrates the mastery of Cicéri. Furthermore, it also enlightens the caricature genre in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which it was at its height. Artists such as Daumier, Granville, Philipon, or Doré have later distinguished themselves and confirmed caricature in its legitimacy.



3

Léon François Bénouville

1821 Paris – Paris 1859

Head of Man, Turned to Left

Black stone and white gouache on grey paper, ca. 1851-55

Sheet315 × 240 mm

LiteratureMarie-Madeleine Aubrun, *Léon Bénouville*, Nantes, 1981, p. 161, (ill.)

ProvenanceLéon Bénouville Atelier's sale, Paris, 3 May 1859, possibly in no. 87 (Lugt 228c); Marie-Madeleine Aubrun; Hotel Drouot, 8-9 February 1999, Me Rieuner, no. 100 (ill.); Private collection, France

The present sheet is a stunning preliminary study related to Léon Bénouville's master painting, *Les Martyrs conduits au supplice*; now at the Louvre (inv. 20042). The artist started this project when he was still at the Villa Medici, in Rome, between 1846 and 1851. This portrait of a man is precisely one of the preparatory studies for the figure of an executioner, who can be recognized in the final painting as mingled with the Christians, wearing a animal skin on his head and pushing brutally forward a woman on her head. Back in Paris, Bénouville exhibited a watercolour sketch in 1852 at the *Salon* the following year under number 82 and that won him a second medal. The critics were unanimous in recognising both the mastery of execution and the scale of the project, including Alphonse Grun, who commended it: “[...] the beautiful sketch of the Christian Martyrs led to the torture in a Roman circus, it is to be hoped that M. Bénouville will make a painting of it in all the conditions of great history painting”.<sup>1</sup> This painting was officially commissioned by the State in 1854 and presented at the Salon in 1855, a work for which Bénouville also won another medal.

This portrait is a testimony of the creative process, which finally led to the painting. Originally close to a Nicolas Poussin for instance, Bénouville's realism here undoubtedly brings him closer to the artistic preoccupations of Gustave Courbet and situates his art between Classicism and modernity, renewing the

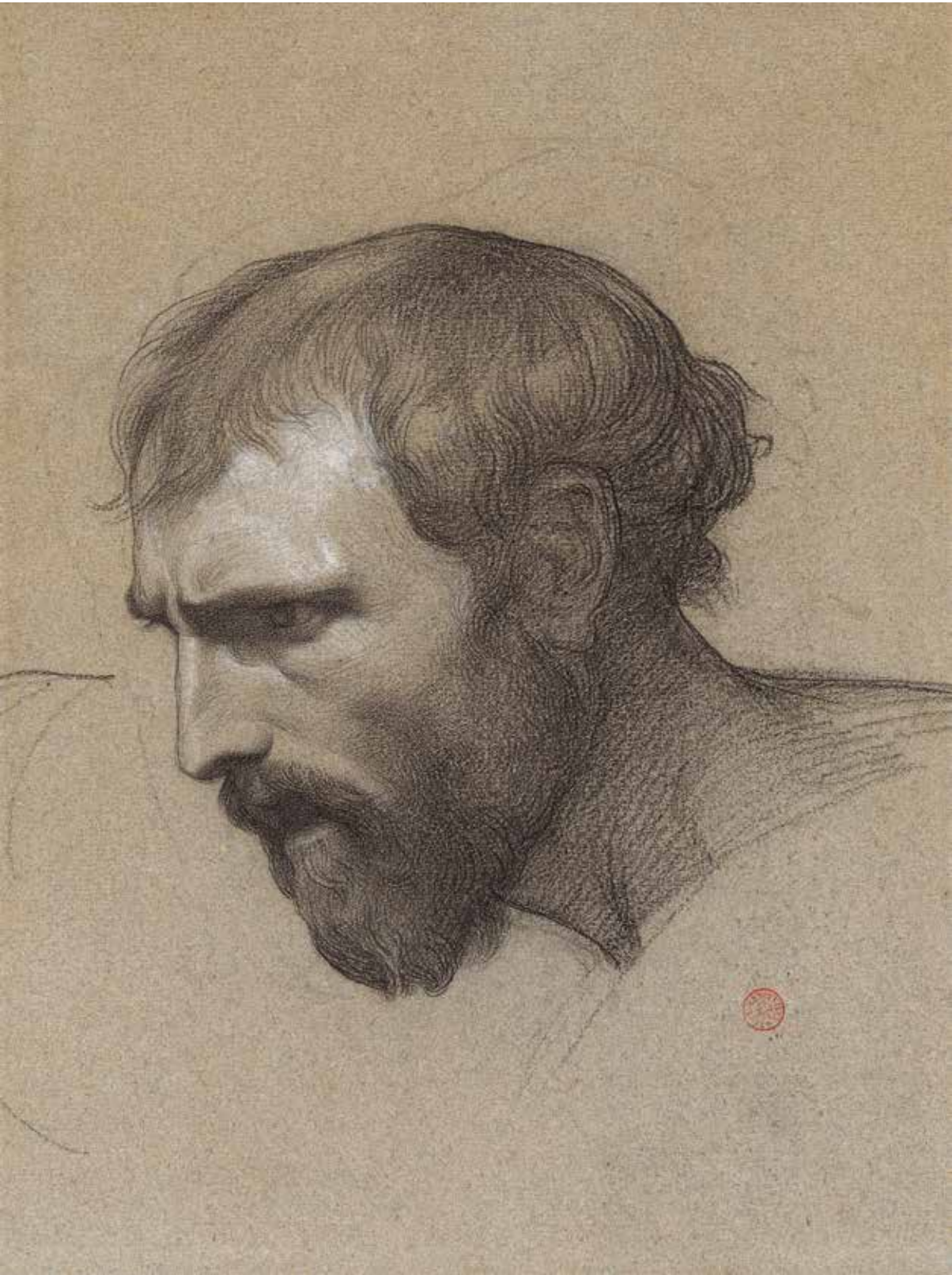
academic movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with his own style. At the sale of the artist's studio on May 3, 1859, at the Hôtel Drouot, the catalogue mentioned under no. 87 “Studies for his painting of the Martyrs”, of which this portrait could be part. The importance of this artist's talent, and more particularly the quality of his drawings, have been underlined by Philippe Burty in 1859: “The drawings were relatively much more expensive than the paintings; indeed, they were for the most part superior to them, both in terms of inspiration and effect”.<sup>2</sup>

Through the precision and sharpness of the drawing, this portrait of a profile man perfectly translates all of Léon Bénouville's talent for transcribing the emotion of a subject, in the particular care given to the details and the mastery of the light and shade that give this face all its strength, underlined by the intensity of the gaze. This right mixture of energy, tension and dignity in the pose, translates the conscientious and meticulous work of the artist that the art critic Philippe Burty again analysed in 1859: “He searched for a long time [...] he made and redid until he was perfectly satisfied with sketches in small proportions of the composition he was looking for”<sup>3</sup>.

1. Quoted in: Marie-Madeleine Aubrun, *Léon Bénouville*, Nantes, 1981, p. 154

2. *Idem*, p. 14

3. *Ibidem*, p. 21



*Woman Pouring Water into Milk Cans* (also known as *Woman at the Well*)

Charcoal and white highlights on grey paper, ca. 1854-57

Signed lower-left J.F.Millet

Sheet 288 × 219 mm

Provenance Georges Bernheim, Paris; Private Collection, Switzerland (until 1953); thence by descent; Christie's New York, October 13, 1994, lot. 95 (the authenticity of the drawing is confirmed by Alexandra R. Murphy in the sale catalogue); Private collection, France

This is an exceptional work by Jean-François Millet, magnifically preserved, and of one of his most iconic compositions. Rediscovered in the early 1990's and studied by the art historian and expert on Millet, Alexandra R. Murphy, on that occasion, the present drawing is now considered to be the earliest known version of the famous model, that Millet later translated into two oil paintings, a *diché-verre* print, and three pastels. The first life-time description of this paradigm was about a painting that unfortunately disappeared, but which had been exhibited in 1860 at the Galerie Martinet, Boulevard des Italiens, and of which remains today a precise description in the work of Zacharie Astruc *Le Salon Intime*: "This well is in the course of a farm separated from the road by a fence wall where a door opens. A young girl in a short petticoat has just taken her bucket from the well. She lifts it up with a delicate gesture – flirtatious even with inanimate nature and pours its contents into copper pots. The weather is mild. The sun shines on this peaceful life. Against the door, over there, three geese flee, nodding, like departing ships. This painting is complete. The Flemish have not done anything more lovingly petted!"

In 1975, the large exhibition dedicated to Millet at the Grand Palais exhibited a pastel of 1866 and kept at the Musée d'Orsay<sup>2</sup>, and considered as a copy by Millet himself of another pastel from the collection Vever, now also lost, but known from photographs.

The theme of a woman rinsing her milk cans with water from an old stone well, appears for the first time, after a new stay of the artist in Gruchy in Normandy and in the summer of 1854, during which Millet produced several sketches (Musée du Louvre), in particular of the

family house and its surroundings, as if to translate his childhood memories together with his artistic evolution towards naturalism. This combination made him one of the greatest representatives of the Barbizon school. A landmark of particular significance to Millet, and that we see in those sketches and in our drawing, are the well and the conical stone wall abutting the family's barn. The Norman coif of the woman and the brass milk cans, typical of the Cotentin region of Normandy, are also an important dating element for this drawing; as were the stylistic details of the woman in later versions reflecting the dress codes of the time when he was in the Barbizon region, in the 1860's. Stylistic elements also confirm the drawing's early date, notably the use of significant amounts of white chalk and Millet's effort to vary his stumping and hatching tomes to stimulate a strong coloristic range.

Millet had left his village of Gruchy in 1838 to live in Paris, then moved again with his family to Barbizon in 1849 to escape the cholera epidemic that was raging in the capital. As early as the 1850's, contrasting with the massive industrialization of Paris, Millet's style turned to picturesque genre scenes reflecting the life of the peasants. Without ever falling into sordid realism of their condition or into the sentimentalism of representation, the faces of the figures are not very detailed, as if to translate the universal character of each peasant and to promote rural work, in what is simpler, more worthy, and more beautiful.

1. Zacharie Astruc, *Le Salon Intime*, Paris, 1860, pp. 66-67

2. Michel Laclotte, *Millet*, Paris, Musées nationaux, 1975, no. 175



5 **Giuseppe De Nittis** 1846 Barletta – Saint-Germain-en-Laye 1884

*Bay of Naples at Dawn*

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oil on panel, ca. 1870             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Signed lower left <i>De Nittis</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Panel                              | 9 × 18 cm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Literature                         | Enrico Piceni, <i>De Nittis</i> , Milan, 1955, p. 172; Enrico Piceni, Mary Pittalunga, <i>De Nittis</i> , Milan, 1963, no. 231 (ill.); Enrico Piceni, <i>De Nittis</i> , catalogo generale dell’opera, vol. 2, Milan, 1990, no. 179 (ill.); Piero Dini & Giuseppe Luigi Marini, <i>De Nittis. La vita, i documenti, le opere dipinte</i> , Turin, 1990, p. 383, no. 212 (ill.) |
| Provenance                         | Atelier de Nittis (Lugt 3683); Angelo Sommaruga, Paris (his stamp on the back); M. Innocenti, Milan (see Dini & Marini)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

A splendid landscape by Giuseppe De Nittis illustrating his talent to capture the Italian luminous and golden atmosphere. Alongside Giovanni Boldini, De Nittis is today recognized as one of the most famous Italian painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After having been expelled from the *Accademia di Belli Arti di Napoli* for indiscipline in 1864, he became one of the founder of the *Scuola di Resina*, a group of young artists interested in a new representation of Nature. In 1867, De Nittis settled in Paris where he studied under Jean-Léon Gérôme at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. He exhibited at the Salons from 1869 to the 1880’s and contributed to the Parisian art scene, next to Degas, Manet, Caillebotte, and many others. Though based in Paris, the artist never ceased to visit Southern Italy, where this elegant landscape was painted.

Very typical of the artist’s technique, the construction of the present composition consists of four horizontal stripes in a grey-pink palette: the sky, the other bank of the Bay, the water, and the vegetal foreground. To reflect the warmth of the Italian environment, the artist used the brown color of the wood visible under the coat of paint. Interested in the luminous effects on Nature, De Nittis liked to paint the same views at different hours of the

day, e.g. as here at dawn, similarly to Hokusai’s Mount Fuji Views or Claude Monet’s Rouen Cathedral series. His focus to capture the lights bring the artist close to a certain abstraction and simplicity, characteristic of his works. The elongated format that allows to appreciate nature in a dilated and airy vision recalls the *Macchiaoli* movement’s, which influenced De Nittis in his youth. If he excelled in rendering the misty Paris at the *Belle Epoque* or the foggy London, De Nittis’s talent undoubtedly has reached its peak when he painted the captivating light of his native country. The provenance of this landscape is prestigious: it belonged to Angelo Sommaruga (1857-1941), famous Italian editor and art dealer. In his private collection, he owned several works by De Nittis depicting the Bay of Naples.

De Nittis who died unexpectedly at 38 years old, is regarded today as a leading figure of the Italian Impressionism, although his career is much more complex as he also carved his way into naturalism and realism. The Petit Palais in Paris dedicated an exhibition to the artist in 2010, named *La Modernité élégante*, the first retrospective in France since 1886.



6 **Peder Balke** 1804 Hedemarken – Christiania 1887

*Tempest by Moonlight*

Oil on cardboard laid on cardboard, ca. 1870  
Signed lower right *Balke*  
Size 130 × 171 mm  
Exhibition Oslo, Kunstnernes Hus, *Peder Balke*, November 1954, cat. no. 81 (inscr. on the back)  
Provenance Peder Balke’s grand-daughter, Olga Lange, Christiania; Private collection, Norway

Peder Balke is one of the most enigmatic characters of the Romantic movement in Northern Europe. His work has been significantly re-evaluated in recent years and his artistic achievement is now widely recognized, as an internationally acclaimed artist. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of the traveling artist, and few Norwegian artists travelled as widely as Balke, to the rest of Europe and to the Arctic circle. These journeys came to define Balke’s development as an artist. For Norwegian artists, it was urgent to travel. Because the young nation did not yet have an academy of its own, but artists also travelled in search of unknown territory, new landscapes to depict. Balke ventured in 1832 to the northernmost regions of Norway, and the impressions from his journey came to haunt the artist’s mind throughout his life. Painting then northern Norwegian landscapes tirelessly, Balke came to play a central part when the young nation, independent only from 1814, built itself and its image. The Romantic movement sparked a new interest in nature all over Europe, but for Norway, landscape painting played an important part in expressing national pride.

Balke’s paintings are not topographic rendering of different views. Yet, his works are based on first-hand-observations, but they represent attempts to recreate the impressions that the views or the natural phenomena had once made upon the artist. His interest lay in eloquent single subjects – starkly exaggerated images of the uncontrollable forces of nature as they affect the lives of the population. They are landscapes of the mind, trying to capture a certain mood. Some are wild and dramatic in character, others solemn and majestic, others again mysterious. In this, Balke reconnects with the ideas of

the visionary or transcendental Romanticism that he had encountered in the works of Friedrich decades earlier. But Balke takes this to a more extreme degree than the German artist ever did. Like Turner or later on the Impressionists, he experiments with his painterly style and more and more sets himself free from conventions. His works – which posterity has compared to abstract art – sometimes balance on the edge of representative painting. To be able to express himself and formulate his visions, Balke developed a picture language unique to him.

Many of the Balke’s works painted in the 1860s and 70s are small scale paintings. The size indicates that they were painted for his own pleasure or for the benefit of his intimate circle. They are often monochromes in black and white. Here Balke takes his technique to the extreme. By removing parts of the black paint, the white ground shines through and highlights the sublime character of the motif, including the North Cape, a ship, or northern lights. This is a technique known from paintings made at the Presterød Manor and other works from the 1860s, and which Balke developed further. It recreates a moment when the dramatic situation is at its peak, but extremely effective. The drama is underscored by the fact that the moon is about to hide behind the dark clouds.

Balke’s unprecedented, highly unconventional handling of these subjects – using a technique that rejected academic tradition – produced powerfully dramatic images epitomizing the *northern* landscape. To the modern viewer, these remarkable works clearly establish him as a pioneer of modernism.



7 **Emile Louis Truffot** 1843 Valenciennes – Paris 1895

*Yoki, the Japanese Woman*

Bronze with a brownish patina, 1879

Signed and dated *E. Truffot* / 1879, stamped *Tiffany & Co*

Height 81.2 cm

Provenance Private collection, USA

This is an exceptional bronze and representation of a typical Japanese woman by Emile-Louis Truffot, when he arrived at the peak of his career. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was scientific and marked by a growing interest in distant peoples and civilizations, no longer in a fanciful and imaginary relationship, but in the light of scientific journeys in which artists sometimes took part. Charles Cordier produced a series of so-called “ethnographic” portraits for the Museum of Natural History in Paris. Carpeaux was interested in these faces whose beauty overturned the traditional canons: Chinese, African, occupied him while he was working on the *Fontaine des Quatre-Parties-du-Monde*. The 1878 Universal Exhibition in Paris highlighted Japanese civilization, the traditional, intellectual, and industrial productions of which were presented in a pavilion on the Champs de Mars, combining simplicity and refinement, and in a farm in the Trocadero gardens. The following year, Truffot took part in this craze with *Yoki, the Japanese woman*, showing first a plaster at the Salon (no. 5391). The year later, the model reappeared but in a bronze cast and belonging to Raingo Frères (no. 6709).

Her face is slightly turned to the right, her gaze avoids ours, and she seems to focus on something we are missing. Dressed in a simple kimono, she wears the geisha hairstyle, a flat chignon called *Tsubushi*. Guardians of Japanese traditions, these women practice all kinds of arts with excellence. In this sculpture, everything is done to evoke delicacy and sophistication: the details of the hair wrapped around a comb with floral motifs

from which a ribbon escapes, the garment with its heavy drapery skilfully knotted whose folds contrast with the smooth skin. The base on which is placed this bust with its geometric Japanese decoration, the green colour of which itself refers to the precious jade of ritual objects. This young woman is not a stereotype: she has a first name, Yoki, which distinguishes her and gives her own identity. Her face bears witness to her character. Her captivating charm comes from the truth that emanates from her.

Apart from those in the Salon, there are only a very few known examples of the bust of *Yoki, the Japanese*. A terracotta example was donated in 1890 by Alphonse de Rothschild to the Musée Anne de Beaujeu (Moulins), but it seems to have been lost. The present copy bears a *Tiffany & Co* stamp, and it was most probably casted by Raingo Frères in Paris, to honour a special order from Tiffany in New York. The luxury shop on the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue indeed offered “Artistic Bronzes” on the second floor, “all the best production of art-workers in bronze. [...] This floor has more the appearance of an art museum than a salesroom”. We know of models by Carrier-Belleuse and also by Georges van der Straeten and Emmanuel Villanis, representatives of the Art Nouveau style. Some of these sculptures were, as here, much large, breaking with the purely decorative character<sup>1</sup>.

1. See for instance, after Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), *Bust of George Washington*, bronze, now at The Metropolitan Museum, New York



8 **Jan Toorop** 1858 Poerworedjo – 1928 Den Haag  
*For the Sick Child*

Pen and ink on wove paper, 1883  
Titled lower right *Pour l'enfant malade*, signed and dated *Jan Toorop 83*  
Sheet 244 × 300 mm  
Exhibition Utrecht, Centraal Museum Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *Tentoonstelling van werken van Jan Toorop*, July–Nov. 1941, p. 7, no. 9 (with labels and titled *Pour l'enfant malade*)  
Provenance F.L.M. Dony, 's-Gravenhage; Private collection, The Netherlands

This is a stunning early work by Jan Toorop, dated 1893, at the time he was influenced by the Belgian impressionism and realism from 1879. A style that also influenced Van Gogh, first when rekindling his long walking tour through Belgium in 1879; secondly when he was living in Nuenen.

In 1882 Toorop went with Antoon Derkinderen to Brussels in order to take the courses at the *Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts*. He soon joined the association *L'Essor*, where he exhibited his works together with other young emerging artists including van Rysselberghe, Lemmen, Schlobach, Vogels, Léon Frédéric, van Strydonck, Khnopff, etc. He traveled to England in 1884 and 1885, met Whistler, discovered the Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris' views on art and socialism.

Toorop was closer to the painter Guillaume van Strydonck, and the symbolists Henri De Groux and

William Degouve de Nuncques. They all lived together in Machelen from 1883 to 1886. The village was not far away from Brussels, but in those days the surroundings were still rural and peaceful. Strydonck, as an early impressionist, had a great effect on him, and he was also a good friend of Pericles Pantazis, whose impressionist style of painting had a great influence in Belgium. Toorop became also acquainted with the Belgian socialist Jules Destrée, who took the artist to the Borinage, the coal-mining district of Belgium. He seemed to have been impressed by the destitute ambiance of the province and the lamentable conditions in which the workers lived and by the beginning of people demonstrations in the country; although Toorop's socialism was more a deep compassion than a rebelliousness that could lead to action.

The subject is here very strong, intense, and obvious. It recalls the works made ca. twenty years later by Edvard Munch or Kathe Kollwitz of the same subject



*Mette Sleeping on the Couch*

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oil on canvas, ca. 1875              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Signed lower right <i>p. Gauguin</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Size                                 | 24.4 × 33 cm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Reference                            | Guy Wildenstein, <i>Gauguin</i> , Paris, 1964, vol. I, p. 39, no. 96; Daniel Wildenstein, <i>Gauguin: Premier itinéraire d'un sauvage, Catalogue de l'œuvre peint</i> (1873-1888), Paris, 2001, vol. I, pp. 24-26, no. 22 (illustrated in color, p. 24).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Literature                           | René Trintzius, “Les Trésors de la ville musée ou ‘Prenez garde à la peinture !,’” <i>Journal de Rouen</i> , 28 June 1932, p. 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Exhibition                           | Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, <i>Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream</i> , Oct. 2007-Feb. 2008, p. 152, no. 1 (illustrated in color, p. 153).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Provenance                           | Private collection, Rouen (most probably Mr. Haslauer, gift from the artist, November 1884); Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Rouen, 3-6 May 1932; Mr. Paté, Rouen (acquired at the above sale); Mr. Roussel, Rouen (acquired from the above, 1932); Mme Roussel, Rouen (by descent from the above, ca. 1946); Private collection, Paris (by 1960); Sale, Sotheby’s, London, 1 July 1992, lot 106; Noortman Gallery, Maastricht (1996); Dr. Anton C.R. Dreesmann, Amsterdam (acquired from the above); Private collection, USA |

The present work, a portrait of the artist’s wife, was painted shortly after their marriage in November 1874. It is the first painting that is recognised to be faithful to Mette’s silhouette and light hair, and is amongst the few made of her, as it seems that the young woman was not keen to pose for her husband very often. Indeed, for that reason and perhaps because she had just given birth, most of the portraits Gauguin made of her during that period usually depicted her in her sleep (see Daniel Wildenstein, vol. I, Paris, 2001, p. 24).

Mette came from a bourgeois Danish family and was known to have a very strong personality. The originality of her character, as well as the fact that she was responsible, independent and had a strong willpower clearly attracted Gauguin from the very beginning. She reminded the artist of the qualities he admired in both his grandmother and mother, and which corresponded closely to his feminine ideal. When Gauguin painted this work the couple’s first child, Emil, had just been born and, as a result, they had moved from their apartment in the Place St. Georges, in Paris, to 54 rue de Chaillot near the Etoile, which is where the present scene was executed. The quality of the light,

the nudity of the walls and the canvas left on the ground would suggest that the artist had perhaps established his studio there.

Gauguin gave this painting, as well as five other works, to a jeweller in Rouen (who like him had a Danish wife) before he left for Denmark in November 1884. Indeed, after visiting Camille Pissarro in Rouen in 1884, Gauguin decided to settle there. He hoped that this city, far from Paris, would allow him not only to assume his family with more modest means, but also to escape the quarrels that paralyzed the Impressionist movement. Unfortunately, the bourgeoisie of Rouen took very little interest in his paintings and Gauguin saw his dreams of success destroyed. Mette, his Danish-born wife, returned with their five children to Copenhagen where Gauguin joined them the following month. A year later, he abandoned his family to return to Paris. It passed almost ten years before he made another painting of his wife. This portrait of Mette – with her skirt looking like petals of flowers – shows with a rare delicacy for Gauguin, the poetry and melancholy of a woman, resting alone.



10 **Paul Gauguin** 1848 Paris – Tahiti 1903

*Baignade (II) or Bather Fan*

|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pastel and watercolor over pencil on paper laid down on paper, 1887 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Signed and dated lower right <i>P. Gauguin 87</i>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sheet                                                               | 114 × 406 mm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Literature                                                          | Merete Bodelsen, “Gauguin’s Bathing Girl”, in <i>Burlington Magazine</i> , vol. 101, no. 674, May 1959, p. 187 (ill., p. 92, fig. 41; titled <i>Drawing in the Shape of a Fan</i> ); Raymond Cogniat and John Rewald, <i>Paul Gauguin: Carnet de croquis</i> , New York, 1962, p. 29; Merete Bodelsen, <i>Gauguin’s Ceramics: A Study in the Development of His Art</i> , London, 1964, pp. 87 and 96 (illustrated, p. 96, fig. 67); Guy Wildenstein, <i>Gauguin</i> , Paris, 1964, p. 80, no. 216 (ill.); Gabriele Mandel Sugana, <i>L’opera completa di Gauguin</i> , Milan, 1972, p. 89, no. 55; Marc Gerstein, <i>Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Fans</i> , Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978, pp. 303-306, no. 11; Marc Gerstein, “Paul Gauguin’s Arearea”, in <i>Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts</i> , Houston, vol. VIII, no. 4, 1981, p. 6 (ill., p. 10, fig. 8; titled <i>Baignade, Bretagne (Bathing, Brittany)</i> ); Richard Brettel, Françoise Cachin, Claire Frèches-Thory and Charles F. Stuckey, <i>The Art of Paul Gauguin</i> , exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 83; Jean-Pierre Zingg, <i>Les éventails de Paul Gauguin</i> , Paris, 1996, p. 87 (ill., p. 37, pl. X) |
| Exhibition                                                          | Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, 1939-1953 (on extended loan); Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, <i>Paul Gauguin</i> , Nov. 1949-Jan. 1950, p. 56, no. 108 (titled <i>Entwurf zu einem Fächer. Badende Mädchen auf La Martinique</i> ); Denver, Denver Art Museum, <i>Collectors’ Choice</i> , 1960, no. 48; Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, <i>Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream</i> , Oct. 2007-Feb. 2008, p. 212, no. 31 (illustrated in color, p. 213; dated 1888); Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, and Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, <i>Paul Gauguin: The Breakthrough into Modernity</i> , Oct. 2009-June 2010, p. 127, no. 70 (ill. in color, p. 129); San Diego, Maritime Museum of San Diego, Cook, Melville and Gauguin, June 2011-July 2012, cat. no. 100 (ill. p. 110)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Provenance                                                          | (possibly) Claude-Emile Schuffenecker, Paris; Julius Meier-Graefe, Berlin; Galerie Bernheim-Jeune et Cie., Paris (acquired from the above, Oct. 1907); Julius Schmits, Elberfeld, Germany (acquired from the above, April 1908); Mrs. Julius Schmits, Elberfeld (by descent from the above); Wildenstein & Co. Inc., New York (acquired from the above, Jan. 1954); Robert Cummings, Montreal (acquired from the above, 1962); sale, Sotheby’s, London, 20 June 2006, lot 116; Private collection, USA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

This exceptional and early pastel and watercolor by Paul Gauguin is dated 1887 and closely related to another works of the same subject and at the same time, ie. the celebrated oil called *Baignade (I)* and now kept at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires. We can add to this pair a preparatory drawing, *Breton Bather*, now at the Art Institute of Chicago. A sketchbook drawing suggests that Gauguin discovered this motif in Brittany in the summer of 1886 (see Raymond Cogniat and John Rewald, p. 90) and that these three works were made late 1886 and early 1887, at least before the artist left for Martinique in April.

Théo van Gogh saw the works at Gauguin’s studio in December 1887, and he decided to exhibit the *Baignade (I)* at Boussod & Valadon in Paris in February 1888. The same

month, Félix Fénéon wrote a detailed and enthusiastic commentary about it<sup>1</sup>. He contrasted the two figures, speaking of “an *opulente bourgeoise* in build” for the figure on the left and describing the bather on the right as “a frisky little servant girl, with short, wiry hair, with a dazed face”. The painted landscape has been identified as a spa at the foot of Mount Saint-Guérolé facing the port of Pont-Aven. The vertical trunk of the tree separates a narrower portion containing the figure on the left from a larger portion centered around the figure on the right. The two bathers could not be more different: while the fleshy woman touches her long red hair with her right hand and seems to be entering the water, the girl, with short black hair, a large head, a long torso, seems hesitant to go in the water, resting his right hand on a large rock. This contrast is highlighted by two different



points of view: the red-haired woman is seen from above and the back and the other from the side.

These two bathers would become one of the artist's key themes. The same figure of a young bather, accompanied by another bather playing in the waves, reappears in a seacoast setting in the zincography *Bathers in Brittany* from the Volpini Suite of 1889. Also, other ceramic versions can be found, notably in the *Vase with Bather*, ca. 1888 (Private collection, USA). As for the red-haired woman, she refers to the *Ondine* who throws herself into the water (*In the Waves*, 1889, Cleveland Museum of Art), a figure to which Gauguin drew on several occasions. These variations are typical of the artist's working method and indicate that the two *Baignade* I and II introduced meaningful prototypes for him beyond this specific combination in this painting.

Fénéon explained the difference in figures according to social class and age, while Charles F. Stuckey has suggested that the women of the print *Bathers in Brittany* could also represent two sisters<sup>2</sup>. Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutynski compared this opposition to Gauguin's pair of programmatic nudes in *Life and Death*, 1889 (Mahmoud Khalil Bey Museum, Cairo), where Life has red hair and Death black<sup>3</sup>. For Sylvie Crussard, Gauguin here initiated a reflection that would culminate in more explicit scenes such as *The Loss of Virginity*, 1890-91 (Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia). Emphasizing the sexual connotations of the bathing scenes and the "metaphorical implication of a spirited plunge into the waves," Stuckey relates the younger figure's "physical clumsiness, emotional trepidation, and adolescent shyness" to Gauguin's ideal of the Androgyne. Henri Dorra has gone even further in formulating these metaphors, defining two bathers as a "psychosocial essay" on the themes of temptation and the fall<sup>4</sup>.

It would not be unwise to admit an implicit level of meaning. In 1888, Gauguin used the device of a tree dividing the plane to horizontally distinguish between the natural and supernatural (or mental) planes of *The Vision of the Sermon* (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh). Here, the tree separates – and makes the transition between – a before and an after, following a vertical or oblique axis. The topographical movement of the landscape, to which the bent attitude of the youngest bather conforms, is downward from right to left. We must not forget, however, that this level of meaning is only implicit and that the image can be seen as a scene painted from life.

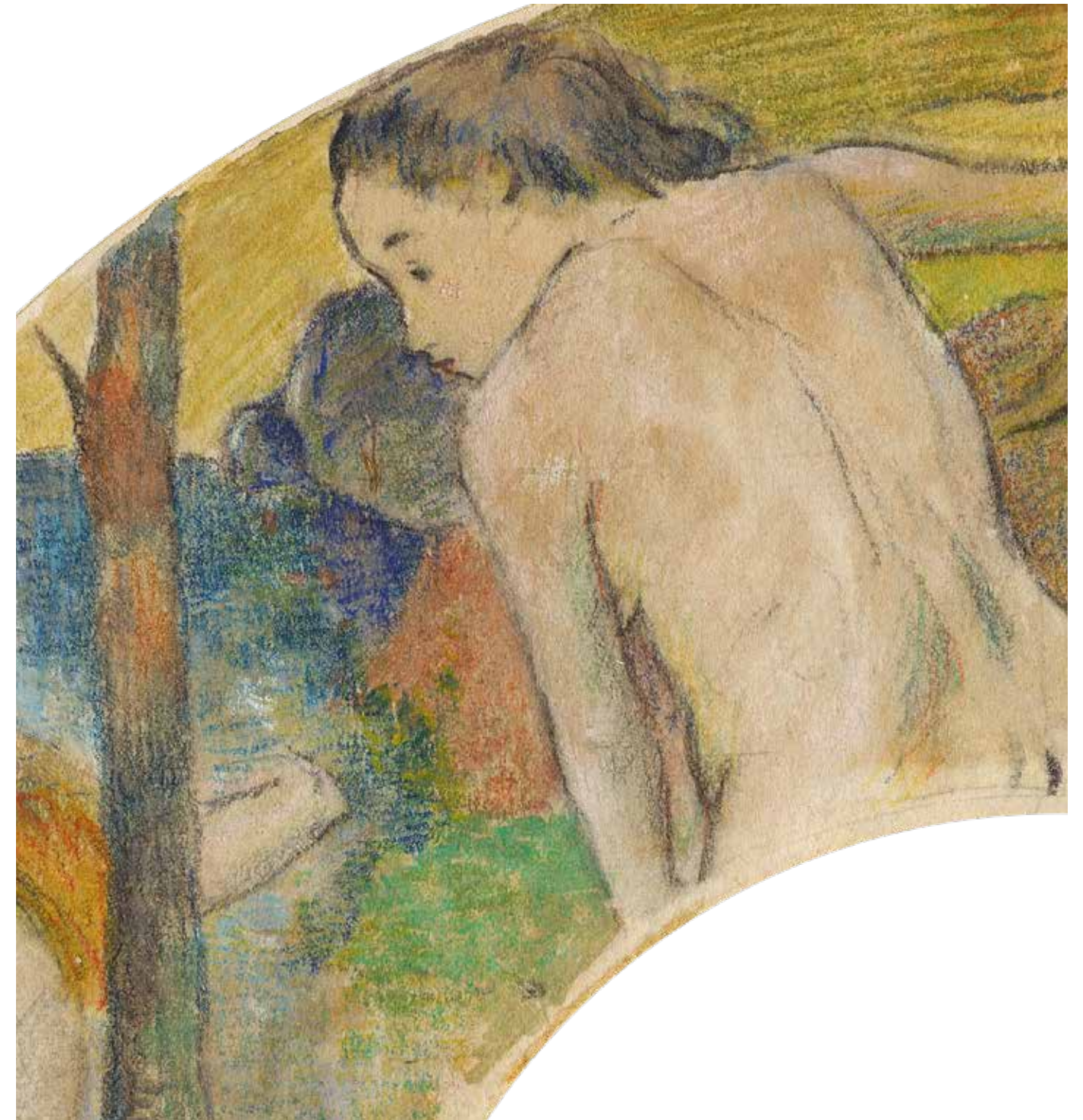
The vivid palette of the present work, together with its exquisite handling and radically truncated composition, likewise invoke the Caribbean voyage. Indeed, in comparison with the oil version, *Baignade (II)* clearly demonstrates Gauguin's evolution from naturalism towards the synthetism of his later years. On the other side, the fan shape is clearly an influence from the Japonism. Also, Gauguin's use of a fan has meant another thing, held by women with whom he has had sexual relations, or of easy virtue, as for instance the *Portraits of Mette, Tahamana (Many Ancestors)*, and his red-haired Marquesan vahine in various works.

1. Felix Fénéon, "Calendrier de février", in *La Revue Indépendante*, 1888, quoted in *The Art of Paul Gauguin*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1988, p. 83

2. Charles F. Stuckey in: Stephen F. Eisenman (ed.), *Paul Gauguin Artist of Myth and Dream*, Rome/Milan, Skira, 2007, p. 240

3. Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutynski, *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism*, Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University [1975], New York/London, Garland, p. 162

4. Henri Dorra, *The Symbolism of Paul Gauguin: Erotica, Exotica, and the Great Dilemmas of Humanity*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 2007, pp. 62-3



(detail)

11

Paul Gauguin

1848 Paris – Tahiti 1903

The Geese

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oil on canvas, 1889                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Signed and dated lower centre <i>Gauguin 89</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Size                                            | 59.7 × 73 cm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Reference                                       | This work will be included in the forthcoming Paul Gauguin Digital Catalogue Raisonné, currently being prepared under the sponsorship of the Wildenstein Plattner Institute                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Literature                                      | Merete Bodelsen, “The Wildenstein-Cogniat Gauguin Catalogue” in <i>The Burlington Magazine</i> , January 1966, vol. 108, no. 754, p. 30, no. 13 (ill., fig. 47); Eric M. Zafran, ed., <i>Gauguin’s Nirvana: Painters at Le Pouldu 1889-90</i> , exh. cat., Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, 2001, p. 160 and note 124; Daniel Wildenstein, <i>Gauguin: A Savage in the Making, Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings</i> , Milan, 2002, vol. II, p. 384 and note 4.                                                  |
| Provenance                                      | Mette Gauguin, Copenhagen; Halfdan Nobel Roede, Oslo (possibly acquired from the above); Anon. sale, Sotheby’s Parke Bernet, New York, 15 May 1984, lot 37; Private collection, USA; Christie’s, New York, 7 May 2003, lot 17; Private collection, USA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Exhibition                                      | Copenhagen, Radhusplads, <i>Fortegnelse over Kunstvoerkerne pad den frie Udstilling</i> , 1893, no. 154 (titled; <i>Gaes</i> ); Oslo, Statens Kunstmuseum, Nationalgalleriet, <i>Fransk kunst</i> , 1914, no. 33 (titled; <i>Andedammen, Bretagne</i> ); Copenhagen, Ordrupgaard, <i>Gauguin and van Gogh in Copenhagen in 1893</i> , Dec. 1984-Feb. 1985, p. 78, no. 32 (ill.); Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, <i>Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream</i> , Oct. 2007-Feb. 2008, p. 254, no. 55 (ill. in color, p. 255). |

Executed in Brittany in 1889, the present painting is one of the most haunting and abstract of Gauguin’s entire career. In it he pushes forward the frontiers of abstraction and coloration, and the influence of Japanese style.

The painting depicts three geese, two of which are splashing in the rippling water, the third – like Gauguin – is the observer. At the top of the painting is a water reflected image of a woman dressed in traditional Breton costume. She is separated from the observer by the moat like water. This figure may well represent Madeleine, Emile Bernard’s sister of whom Gauguin was very fond and was unreachable to him, while the other women – the geese – were available. Madeleine often wore Breton clothes, and appeared in other paintings in this costume, including ones painted by both her brother Emil and by Gauguin. Thus, it would have been appropriate for

Gauguin to have represented her in native garb, and at that time he still had an unshared but strong love for Madeleine<sup>1</sup>.

In this painting, he evidences his distance from earlier traditions including impressionism, and his emergence as an intensely original modern master. The painting has an unconventional viewpoint, lacking any horizon line, and contains brilliant swirls of anti-naturalistic color. The painting exemplifies the advice he had given in an August 14, 1888, letter from Brittany to his Paris friend Emile Schuffenecker dated August 14, 1888: “... don’t copy too much from nature. Art is abstraction; draw art from nature as you dream in nature’s presence and think more about the act of creation than about the final result...” (Victor Merlhes, *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, 1984, Paris, no. 159). This was the same type of advice he gave to



Paul Serusier in encouraging the creation of the painting *The Talisman*, and which led to the establishment of the Nabis and Fauve schools of painting.

His radical leadership in pushing the frontiers of artistic expression, as exemplified by this painting, caused him much distress. As he wrote to Emile Bernard from Le Pouldu in November 1889: “Attacks on originality are to be expected from those who lack the power to create and shrug their shoulders As for me, of all of my efforts this year, nothing remains but howls from Paris which penetrate here and discourage me to such a degree that I dare not paint any more, and can only drag my old body about on the sea shore of Le Pouldu in the bleak North wind. [...] I have been groping within myself for a more elevated sensibility, and I seem almost to have grasped it this year. Then, good God! I mutter, I may be wrong, and they may be right, and that’s why I have written to Schuff to ascertain your views, to guide me a little in the midst of my trouble. I see that you have read between the lines, that you see I seem to have hit upon something: and I am strengthened in my opinions, and I shall not renounce them but forge ahead steadily all the time. [...] I am passing through such a phase of disillusionment that I cannot help a cry escaping me. [...] Courage, dear friend. Once more into the breach. The Templars may one day be expelled from the Temple.” (*Paul Gauguin, Letters to his Wife and Friends*, Ed. by Maurice Malinque, Translated by Henry J. Stenning, Cleveland, 1949, pp 129-130).

Gauguin was in Brittany four times between 1886 and his 1891 departure to Tahiti, his first trip there. His Breton periods were July-Oct. 1886; January-October 1888; the summer of 1889 to January 1890; and May 1890 to October 1890. During these stays, his painting style underwent major development. By the fall of 1888 his freedom from the use of natural color and the choice of brilliant hues was evidenced by the painting *Breton Woman and Goose by the Water*. (W.278, 2<sup>nd</sup> W. 307). There the water is mottled rather than in swirls, but the brilliant coloration departs radically from realism. Similarly, the 1888 painting *Goose Games* (W. 277, 2<sup>nd</sup> W. 274) anticipates the subject painting *Les Oies*. There is a preening goose on shore also

views the swimming geese in the water which has active ripples and strong coloration. The colors in the water could arguably derive from reflections, but their intensity exaggerates reality. In the background, a Breton woman leans over the water doing her washing. The combination of anti-naturalistic color and the Japanese swirling style of rendering water developed further in the later 1888 painting *The Wave* (W. 286, 2<sup>nd</sup> W. 303). There both the breaking crest of the wave and its wash on the beach are painted in a style reminiscent of Japanese prints, while the red, green, white, and black coloured water and red beach exist only in the artist’s creative mind.

Like most of the impressionists of his time Gauguin was strongly influenced by Japanese art. Wildenstein points out that his interest in Japanese culture was evidenced as early as 1882 in his painting *Flowers and a Japanese Book* (2<sup>nd</sup> W. 95). As Wildenstein points out: “it is the first oriental item from Gauguin’s domestic environment to appear in a painting” (at. p. 106). However, it was not until the winter of 1887-88 that a Japanese print appears in a Gauguin painting – *Still Life with Japanese Print* (2<sup>nd</sup> W. 260) – completed about the same time as his painting *Still Life with a Fan* (2<sup>n</sup> W. 259). Gauguin expressed this growing Japanese influence on his art in a letter to Emil Bernard from Arles, in Nov., 1888. Comparing his approach to that of Van Gogh’s he wrote: “I, on the contrary, see the Puvis [de Chavannes] subjects in their Japanese colourings” (Malingue, p. 113).

It was during the time that he made *Les Oies* that he wrote to Emil Bernard from Le Pouldu in Oct., 1889: “I have decorated our enormous studio with lithographic subjects, P.G.O. and Bernard, Japanese, etc. It is splendid and we are working at this moment with storms raging in front of us – for we are immediately above the sea” (Malingue, pp. 125-126). In his letter no. 87 to Bernard from Pont-Aven in Sept. 1889, Gauguin had described the studio: “This winter we may have a large house which Haan wants to rent. It has a studio 12 by 15 meters overlooking the sea. In this case Laval and Moret would join us, and we could live very cheaply. You might be able to complete this group” (Malingue p. 125). In Oct. 1889, he also wrote to

Emile Schuffenecker (Malingue, p. 127): “Another thing, I am on the coast in a large house immediately overlooking the sea. When storms rage it is magnificent. I am working here with a Dutchman (de Haan) who is my pupil and a very good fellow.” Apparently, the plans did not materialize for other painters to join them. In this letter Gauguin reports that he has not done much painting recently since he was working on the wood carving *Be in Love and You will be Happy*.

Thus, *Les Oies* was probably painted earlier in the year. Probably around August 1889 when he wrote to Bernard that he had moved from Pont-Aven with a studio at a little farm at Avains, near Point-Aven and was living, probably at the Inn, at Le Pouldu with de Haan. Gauguin reported in language that seems appropriate for the painting of *Les Oies* (Malingue, p. 122), “I find pleasure, not in going farther along the lines I prepared formerly, but in trying something fresh. I feel it if I cannot explain it. I am certain to get there eventually, but slowly in spite of my impatience. [...] Anyhow, I hope that this winter you will find in me an almost new Gauguin—I say almost, because I disclaim the pretension of inventing something new. What I am trying to get at is a corner of myself which I do not yet understand.”

When Gauguin was in Britany during the summer 1889, the use of this Japanese style of portraying water was fully integrated into his technique. It found expression in such other of his 1889 Brittany paintings as *The Black Rocks* (Ronald Pickvance, *Gauguin and the Pont-Aven School*, no. 12, p. 38) and *The Beach at Le Pouldu* (W. 362), and his 1890 wood relief carving *Be Mysterious* (Gray 87, no 110, p.190).

Geese make their appearance in Gauguin’s works in a casual, realistic form in his 1884 painting *Henhouse* (2<sup>nd</sup> W. 134) and again in the 1855 painting *Geese In the Meadow* (2<sup>nd</sup> W. 184). They also appear in Gauguin’s Brittany paintings as an incidental background detail in the 1886 painting *Breton Woman chatting* (W201, 2<sup>nd</sup> W237) and in both his sketch books and ceramics from this period through 1889 (see Gray 18, 38, 44, 45, and 64, of early 1889. Geese also appear in the fan shaped painting *Petit*

*Berger Breton (II)* (W. 257). Gauguin’s interest in geese may have been stimulated by fan shaped paintings made by Gauguin’s impressionist mentor Pissarro. In the mid-1880s, these gouaches by Pissarro depicted geese being tended by the farm women of Pointoise. One of these paintings caused Gauguin to note in his memoirs: “There is a charming fan... a simple, half-opened gate separating two very green [Pissarro green] meadows, and passing through it a gaggle of geese nervously looking about as they ask themselves, “Are we heading toward Seurat’s or Millet’s? They all end up waddling off to Pissarro’s” (quoted in Colta Ives and Susan Stein, *The Lure of the Exotic: Gauguin in New York Collections*, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2002, p. 33). However, in none of Gauguin’s prior paintings do the geese have the central dramatic importance as in *Les Oies*, and here it is clear that they are no one else’s geese but Gauguin’s.

Closely related to geese are Gauguin’s rendering of swans. They appear in other ceramics, prints and paintings. At about the same time, Gauguin also carved an oak wood panel with reddish coloured swans swimming in and flying over blue-green coloured water (Gray A-20). Thus, the goose, which first appeared as a part of the normal farm life of Brittany, developed into a more sexually charged symbol. Geese and swans are associated with lovemaking. There is the romantic aspect of the fact that swans generally mate for life, and there is the association of the birds with sexual activity. Swan signs, for example, were used for brothels and bars, and a goose as a metaphor for a plump and sensual woman, as in the well-known French fable by Jean de la Fontaine. Eric M. Zafran wrote: “The goose is both woman and love. More exactly, the desirable and desiring woman...A whole semantic and specifically French cultural background maintains and justifies Gauguin’s goose. She symbolizes, or rather suggests, simultaneously the restlessness, the desire and the agitation of love.” (see *Gauguin’s ‘Nirvana’; Painters at Le Pouldu 1889-1890*, exh. cat., Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art, Hartford, 2001, at p. 94-96).

1. See letters nos. 91, 96, 106 and 111.

12 **Paul Gauguin** 1848 Paris – Tahiti 1903

*The Swans*

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Polychrome (lime) wood relief, ca. 1889-90 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Size                                       | 19.6 × 32.8 × 3 cm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Literature                                 | Christopher Gray, <i>Sculpture and Ceramics of Paul Gauguin</i> , Baltimore, 1963, no. A20 (ill. p. 318)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Exhibited                                  | Vienna, Institut Français, <i>Gauguin et ses amis</i> , Nov. 1948; St. Germain-en-Laye, Musée du Prieuré, <i>Le chemin de Gauguin</i> , Oct. 1985-March 1986, no. 106; Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art, <i>Paul Gauguin: In Search of Paradise</i> , March-May 1987, no. 54; Bunkamura, The Bunkamura Museum of Art, <i>Gauguin et l'Ecole de Pont-Aven</i> , April-May 1993, no. 20; Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, <i>Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven</i> , May-July 1994, no. 15; Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art, <i>Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven</i> , Sept.-Oct. 1994, no. 15 - this exhibition travelled to Baltimore, Montreal, Boston, Jerusalem, and Pont-Aven; Graz, Landesmuseum Joanneum, <i>Gauguin und die Bretagne</i> , June-Oct. 2000; Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, <i>Gauguin's Nirvana: painters at Le Pouldu 1889-90</i> , Jan.-April 2001, no. 20 (ill. fig. 78); Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, <i>Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream</i> , Oct. 2007-Feb. 2008, no. 32 (ill.) |
| Provenance                                 | Ernest Ponthier de Chamaillard, Paris, to whom given by the artist; Marcel Heskia, Paris; Anon. sale, Paris, Hôtel des Ventes de Brest, 13 December 1981, lot 36; Samuel Josefowitz, Pully; Christie's London, 5 Feb. 2002, lot 129; Private collection, USA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Already when he was still a stockbroker, Gauguin was interested in collecting all forms of art objects, among them particularly, carvings of all kinds. The process of crafts fascinated him, and he was attracted to the medium's directness and improvisational flexibility. Following his return in December 1888 from his ill-fated stay with Van Gogh in Arles, Gauguin then started and created a few wooden reliefs in Paris and in Brittany, considered as among his most successful reliefs. *Les Cygnes*, the present work, belongs to this group and relates most closely to *Les Ondines* (Gray 75) in terms of its handling, as Christopher Gray has observed (*op. cit.*, p. 318). Among this group are also the masterpieces *Soyez amoureuses* (Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Gray 76) and *Soyez mystérieuses* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Gray 87), which both stand at either end of the series. Before the influence of Tahitian models, Gauguin's early carvings were clearly influenced by Gothic and Egyptian art, and overall, by motifs from the Pont-Aven imagery. At the time of *Les Cygnes*, during the fall and winter 1889-90, the group that indeed assembled around Gauguin at Le Pouldu in 1889-90 was strongly committed to the decorative possibilities of their new creed of art. The richly adorned dining room at the inn of Marie Henry

in the village was but the most famous example of this experimentation.

Swans in the œuvre of Gauguin symbolizes, or rather suggests, simultaneously the restlessness, the desire, and the agitation of love, and developed into a more sexually charged symbol. There is the romantic aspect of the fact that swans generally mate for life, and there is the association of the birds with sexual activity. Swan signs, for example, were used for brothels and bars, and as a metaphor for a plump and sensual woman, as a whole semantic and specifically French cultural background<sup>1</sup>.

The present work was originally owned by Ernest de Chamaillard, a self-trained artist who had first met Gauguin in Pont-Aven in 1888, and to whom *Les Cygnes* was given by Gauguin himself. “Vous avez l'amour de l'art, ça suffit” was Gauguin's encouraging advice to de Chamaillard on their first encounter.

1. See Eric M. Zafran, *Gauguin's 'Nirvana'; Painters at Le Pouldu 1889-1890*, exh. cat., Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art, Hartford, 2001, at p. 94-96



13 **Paul Gauguin** 1848 Paris – Tahiti 1903

*Portraits of Meyer de Haan and Mimi*

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Black crayon, brush, and black wash on wove paper, ca. 1889 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sheet                                                       | 162 × 191 mm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Literature                                                  | M. Sharp Young, “Letters from New York: Artists and Writers” in <i>Apollo</i> , vol. XCIII, no. 112, June 1971, p. 517; <i>Gauguin’s Nirvana, Painters at Le Pouldu 1889-90</i> , exh. cat., New Haven and London, 2001, p. 29 (illustrated, fig. 34b)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Exhibition                                                  | London, Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., <i>XIX and XX Century European Masters: Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture</i> , summer 1959, p. 10, no. 24 (illustrated, p. 23); New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, <i>Artists and Writers: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Portrait Drawings from the Collection of Benjamin Sonnenberg</i> , May-July 1971, p. 29, no. 26 (illustrated, pl. 26); Rome, Complesso del Vittoriano, <i>Paul Gauguin: Artist of Myth and Dream</i> , Oct. 2007-Feb. 2008, pp. 58-59 and 262-263, no. 59 (illustrated in color, pp. 58 and 263). |
| Provenance                                                  | Marie Henry (later Mme Mothère), Le Pouldu; Léa “Mimi” Mothère (by descent from the above); her sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 March 1959, lot 111; Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., London (1959); Benjamin Sonnenberg, New York; his sale, Sotheby’s, New-York, 9 June 1979, lot 1424; Private collection, New York (ca. 1980); Christie’s, London, 8 February 2007, lot 525; Private collection, USA                                                                                                                                                                   |

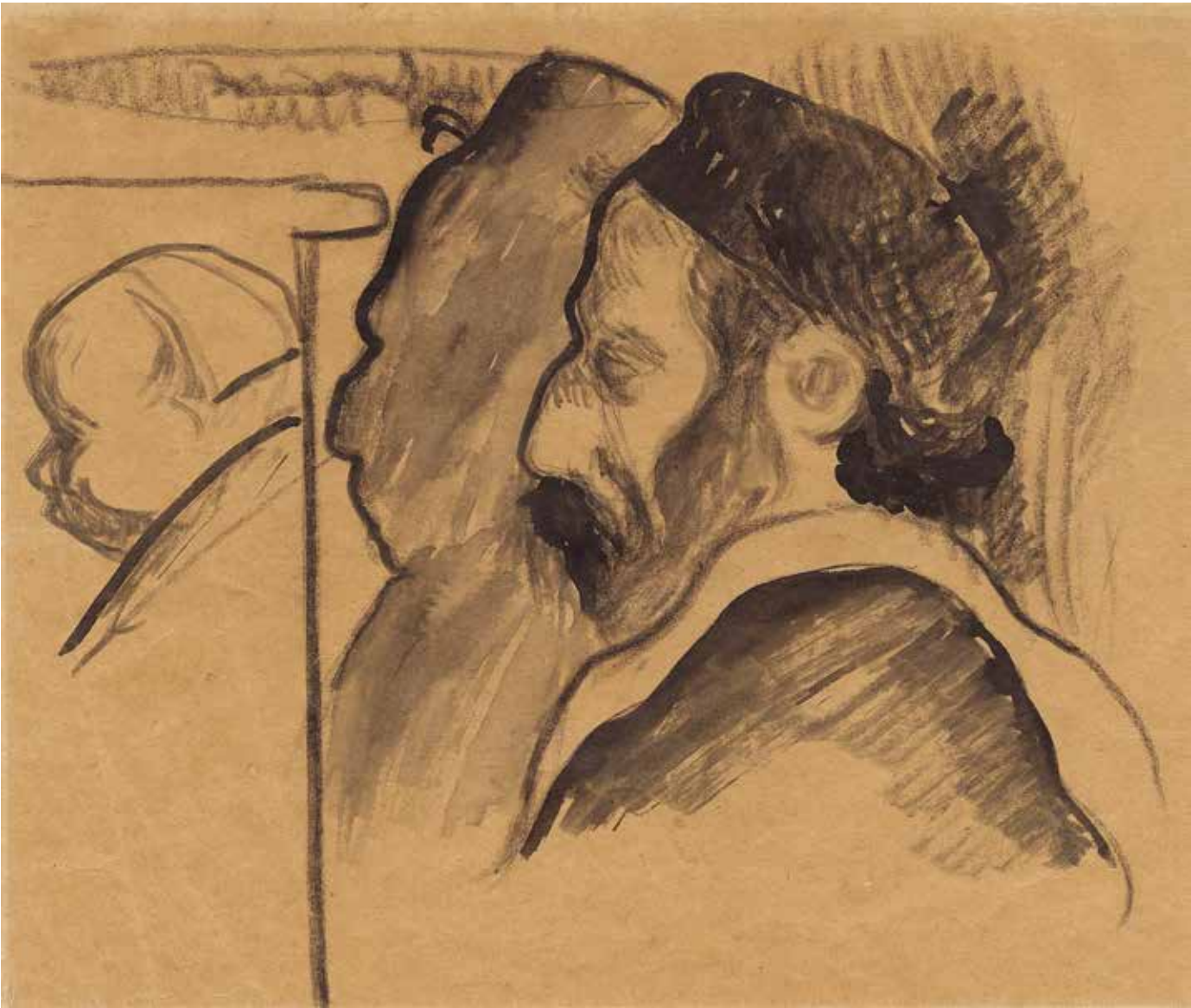
Gauguin made three trips to Brittany between 1886 and 1890. During his third trip, the longest and the most prolific - from April 1889 to November 1890 - Gauguin stayed at Le Pouldu, a few miles away from the touristic Pont-Aven, with his friend Jacob Meyer de Haan, depicted here at the right and easily recognisable with his skullcap. Arriving in Paris from Holland in 1888, Meyer de Haan had moved in with Theo van Gogh who introduced him to Paul Gauguin. The two friends, Gauguin and de Haan, then settled at Melle Marie Henry’s Inn, who let the artists decorate the main room with painting and sculpting the walls and doors. Gauguin’s influence helped Meyer de Haan free himself from academic processes and he increasingly explored his synthetic tendency, leading to the development of the *cloisonnist* style.

Meyer de Haan is here depicted by Gauguin from profile, with a very interesting play of double portraits, using a shadow of him. The child on the left is the first daughter of Marie, Léa (nicknamed *Mimi*), and whom Gauguin

sketched in her Breton cap (“beguine” in French), at the left of the composition. The profile of Gauguin’s Mimi could be related to de Haan’s painting of her, ca. 1889 and now at the Van Gogh Museum, and which was actually, as the present drawing, in the sale of Mimi collection, in 1959.

Marie Henry later had a child with Meyer de Haan, called Ida, in June 1891. But already by the end of 1890, de Haan’s brother, who did not approve of his relationship with an unmarried mother, ordered his brother to return to Holland. De Haan returned to Paris in 1891, and organized a banquet for Gauguin, who was planning his first trip to Tahiti. In June, Marie Henry gave birth to Ida, but de Haan only saw her a few times, his family threatened to disown him, and so he returned definitively to Holland.

This work will be included in the forthcoming addition to the Paul Gauguin catalogue raisonné, currently being prepared by the Wildenstein Plattner Institute.



14 **Paul Gauguin** 1848 Paris – Tahiti 1903

*Tahitian Woman and Idol*

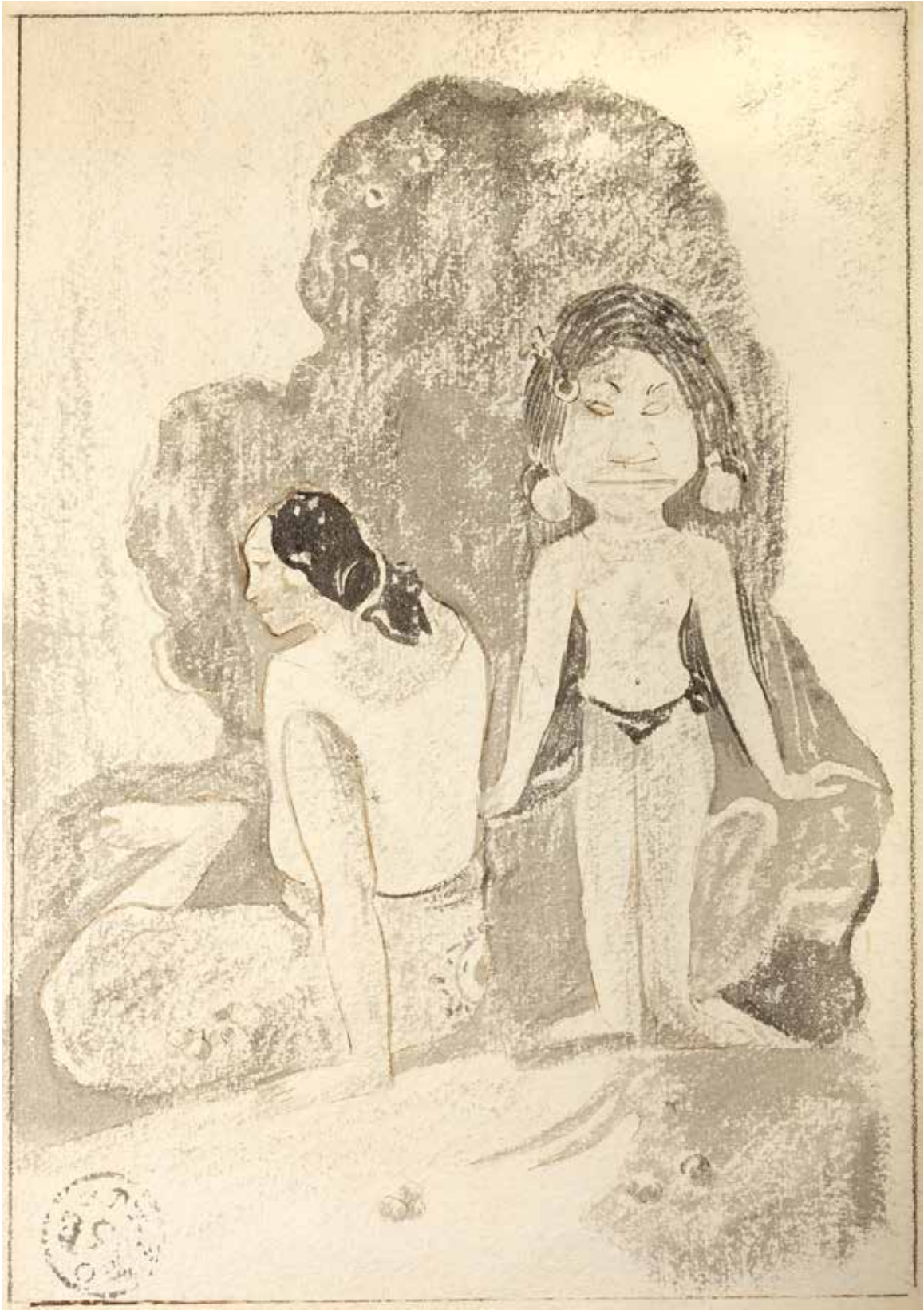
|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pen and brown ink with grey wash on paper, ca. 1893-94 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Stamped signature lower left <i>P GO</i>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Sheet                                                  | 349 × 248 mm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Literature                                             | John Rewald, <i>Gauguin</i> , Paris, 1938, p. 20 (ill.); John Rewald, <i>Gauguin Drawings</i> , New York, 1958, no. 87 (ill.)                                                                                                                                                     |
| Exhibition                                             | Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, <i>Gauguin</i> , 1998, no. 106, p. 164 (ill.); London, Tate Modern, <i>Gauguin: maker of Myth</i> , 2011, no. 78, p. 142 (ill.); Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, <i>Gauguin and the voyage to the exotic</i> , 2012, no. 61, p. 188 (ill.) |
| Note                                                   | Will be published in the revised edition of Gauguin' <i>Catalogue raisonné</i> . The work is with a certificate from the Wildenstein Institute                                                                                                                                    |
| Provenance                                             | (Probably) Galerie Druet, Paris; Private collection, New York (ca. 1930); Private collection, France                                                                                                                                                                              |

It is naturally obvious, and recognized by each, that Gauguin was strongly inspired by his time in the Pacific and by its culture; but the least we can say is that the present work does impress us a lot and is particular and powerful. Two feminine figures seem divided and are back to back in this composition: a young woman and an idol. The first one is seated in a relaxed position. The second, a heraldic goddess, is standing straight as a sculpture, her face evoking an oceanic mask. The idol is Hina, an ancient divinity of the moon and the Mother of the Maori people, a matriarchal figure that fascinated Gauguin. She dominated his work in all media. Three sculptures by the artist represent Hina (Gray 95, 96, 97) which is also depicted in various paintings, drawings and woodcuts. Most noticeably, Gauguin placed the idol at the centre of his masterwork *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* (The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Various interpretations could be done. However, to us, these figures are like two sides of the Femininity. One is sweet, sensual, and offer a generous love; the other one is hieratic, rigid and imposes her strong law. Are they

alienated or are they dialoguing? But then another sense might come out from the representation: the difficulty of these women - in this Maori culture - to become emancipated from the divinities.

These two figures are also represented in other works by Gauguin. According to John Rewald (1958), this watercolor is associated with the painting *Arearea no varua ino* (Wildenstein 514, Ny Carlsberg Glyptek, Copenhagen) in which the similar figures are represented in mirror compared to the drawing. Here, the grisaille used by Gauguin for the vegetation in the background puts the figures in evidence and creates an additional aura of mystery. The figure of the seated woman can be found in numerous works by Gauguin, dated from 1891 (W 434, W 435, W 437) and 1892 (W 466, W 472, W 477). Always in a pensive attitude, she is also illustrated in monotypes, such as in *Arearea no varua ino* (Field 8, National Gallery of Art, Washington) and in *Parau no varua* (Field 9). An interesting note is that these two works were in Degas's collection.



15 **Armand Guillaumin** 1841 Paris – Orly 1927

*Self-portrait*

Crayon Conté on wove paper, ca. 1888  
Sheet 192 × 250 mm  
Provenance Private collection, France

This is a superb portrait of one of the greatest impressionist painters, and yet still erroneously undervalued today. Armand Guillaumin participated to the exhibitions of the movement from its origin and was its last representative. Born in Paris, from a modest family, Guillaumin grew up at Moulins in the Allier department before going to work in the shop of his uncle in Paris. His salary allowed him to pay for lessons on drawing where he went after his daily work. At the beginning of the 1860's, he joined the *Compagnie des Chemins de Fer d'Orléans*, a job that left him more free time. The young man registered at the *Académie Suisse*, met Pissaro and Cézanne, and took part in 1863 to the *Salon des refusés*. With his friends, Guillaumin travelled the length and breadth of the Parisian region in search of motives and went regularly to Pontoise where Pissaro had just settled. There he set himself and painted tirelessly the Seine River and its banks. Water became his favourite subject. In 1874, from April 15 to May 15, he presented his works in the studios of Nadar, located 35 Boulevard des Capucines in Paris, with twenty-nine other artists and among them Renoir, Monet, Sisley, Degas, Pissaro and Cézanne. An exhibition that would later enter Art History as *La première exposition impressionniste*.

If Guillaumin mainly painted landscapes, he also made portraits and self-portraits by various means: oil, pastel

or pencil. The present drawing is clearly the left-right inverse copy of a self-portrait painted ca 1888 and now in private hands. Squared around the shoulders, the painter looks at us, his face turned three-quarters towards the left of the sheet. He presents himself without self-concession: his puffy nose, strong arch of the eyebrow and large ears. His beard is trimmed in two thick locks descending under the chin. His hairs are cut short and high on his forehead. He is coated with a fur jacket with a heavy collar, his bust slightly turned to the right, so the man is reminiscent of a portrait of the Flemish Renaissance. Guillaumin chose to make his portrait with the tip of his charcoal crayon. Made with juxtaposition of hatched strokes and undulating ones, this drawing possesses a dynamism as seen in some sheets of Van Gogh. Indeed, the two men met each other, at that period, about the end of the 1880's and became friends. Théo Van Gogh, the brother of the artist, sold for Guillaumin some of his paintings.

The drawing will be included in the second volume of the *catalogue raisonné* in preparation by the Comité Guillaumin (Stéphanie Chardeau-Botteri, Dominique Fabiani, Jacques de la Béraudière). The work will be sold with a certificate from the Comité Guillaumin.



16 **Zacharie Astruc** 1833 Angers – Paris 1907

*Iris in a Blue Vase, a Branch of Pipefish*

Watercolour on wove paper, ca. 1885-90

Signed lower right *Zacharie Astruc*

Sheet 445 × 295 mm

Exhibition Bremen, Kunsthalle, *Manet and Astruc. Friendship and Inspiration*, Oct. 2021-March 2022, exh. cat., no. 54 (ill.)

Provenance Galerie Elstir, Paris; Private collection, Belgium

Zacharie Astruc is certainly one of the most fascinating characters in the circle of Manet and in the history of Japonism. He enjoyed a considerable position in the Parisian art milieu, as an art critic, poet, painter, sculptor, and friend of Manet. Like an aesthetic manifesto, Manet did his portrait in 1866 (Kunsthalle Bremen), and Fantin-Latour's *A Studio at Les Batignolles* even shows Manet painting the portrait of Astruc, while Astruc sits in front of him, with friends, Renoir, Zola, Edmond Maître, Bazille and Monet. The letters also reveal the exceptional dialogue between Manet and the multi-faced artist Astruc<sup>1</sup>.

The two artists influenced each other a lot, notably around the influence of Spanish art and topics, and also still-lives. After 1880, Astruc devoted more and more of his watercolour to floral still lifes, and the interesting counterpoint are, of course, the floral compositions Manet did in the same years between 1882 and 1885, in crystal vases. Astruc showed floral watercolours at the Salon from 1885 to 1891. In the year 1886, he showed sixteen floral paintings at an exhibition in Warsaw, and in 1888 he sent twenty-seven watercolours of flowers to the *Exposition bretonne-angevine* at the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris. However, nowadays, Astruc's works are overall very rare and much sought-after.

In the large bouquets, the individual flowers are usually subordinate to the overall impression, but Astruc

occasionally focuses on individual plants in greater details, as is the case with this magnificent blue iris. This bizarre plant fascinated already Albrecht Dürer as early as 1503, and Astruc admired him very much. In the watercolour *Blue Flag Iris* (Bremen, Kunsthalle), Dürer captured the entire plant on the light of the white paper. Astruc, by contrast, simply presents an iris stem with two blossoms, the vessel stands against a dark background on a lighter surface, as in classical 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch still-life paintings. The flowers match the color of the Japanese porcelain vase adored with flowers and grasses.

Only a few of Astruc's known floral images can be identified with the titles on his list of works<sup>2</sup>. Seven compositions depicting irises are listed as being shown with a Chinese, an Oriental or Japanese vase. One of them is named *Iris dans un vase bleu. Branche de seringat* [pipefish or pipebush]. *Tapis rose*, this is presumably the present watercolour<sup>3</sup>.

1. See Samuel Rodari, "Manet and Astruc, Astruc and Manet – The Correspondence", in *Manet and Astruc. Friendship and Inspiration*, exh. cat., Bremen, Kunsthalle, 2021, pp. 114-149

2. Only one is dated, 1885 (*Chrysanthemums in a large Faience vase from Rouen*, Private collection)

3. Zacharie Astruc, *Mon catalogue d'œuvres*, album with manuscripts and sketches, n.d., Documentation, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Fonds Astruc M420 (8)4, no. 231



17 **Camille Pissarro** 1830 Ile Saint Thomas – Paris 1903

*Peasant Women at the Market*

Monotype printed in black on laid paper, ca. 1894-95

Signed lower right in black ink with the initials C.P.

Plate 178 × 128 mm

Literature See Barbara Shapiro and Michel Melot, "Catalogue sommaire des monotypes de Camille Pissarro", in *Nouvelles de l'estampe*, no. 19, Jan.-Feb. 1975, pp. 16-23

Provenance Private collection, Los Angeles

This very charming and interesting monotype must be added to the very rare corpus of monotypes made by Pissarro between ca. 1879 and 1895. The artist most likely learned the technique in ca. 1879 from Edgar Degas – who had exhibited *drawings made with greasy ink and printed* at the third Impressionist exhibition of 1877 – when the two artists were working together on the project for a journal of prints entitled *Le Jour et la Nuit*. However, unlike Degas, who used the technique extensively for fifteen years, Pissarro only made about 25-30 monotypes, the *romantic printed drawings* as he wrote to his son in April 1894<sup>1</sup>. In 1975, Melot and Shapiro listed twenty compositions to which we can add seven monotypes that came up on the market since then, including the present one and a second printing of Melot&Shapiro no. 4. Of all Pissarro's monotypes only one is dated 1894 (M&S no. 1).

The present composition can be related to another monotype listed by Melot and Shapiro (no. 15), *Marché*,

of the same subject and dimensions but horizontal, and of the same style, i.e., with figures clearly outlined. It most probably belongs to a group of works made at the markets in Gisors, in Normandy, and in Pontoise, in 1894 and 1895, and notably the two farmers of *Le Marché de Gisors* (Pissarro/Venturi no. 932). Pissarro captured the essence of one of his favourite subjects: he isolated a fragment of the activity, yet he forces the viewer to look around the back of the peasant woman at the left. Only a few touches, such as the dots on the kerchief, the lines on the dress and the hats, distinguish the various figures.

Anyway, these works are proofs of Pissarro's profound interest in experimenting with a multiplicity of media to depict the same motif. Clearly, Pissarro fully invested the technique of monotype, with the same mastery as Degas.

1. John Rewald (ed.), *Camille Pissarro : lettres à son fils Lucien*, Paris, 1950, pp. 339-340



18 **Félix Buhot** 1847 Valognes – Paris 1898

*Seascape at Dinard*

Ink and wash on wove paper, ca. 1889  
Signed lower left with the monogram *FB*  
Sheet 113 × 222 mm  
Provenance Private collection, France

A particularly exceptional and rare landscape drawing by Félix Buhot, full of lighting effects, strong contrasts and deliberately left in the manner of a sketch. The choice of ink and heavy wash undeniably recalls the artist’s use of etching, his favourite technique and which he helped to renew considerably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a painter-engraver, Buhot’s talent is here at its peak in rendering the changing atmospheric effects. In a few brushstrokes, the artist manages to capture a fleeting impression and a key moment of the day, giving free rein to his imagination to suggest the fantastic, while remaining faithful to his sense of observation.

Félix Buhot discovered Dinard and its seafront in 1882. His fascination for this place is seen in several works, such as *La Marie-Thérèse, Dinard* (1886, Private collection), *Soirée d’été à Dinard* (ca. 1887, Private collection), *Marée basse à Dinard* (1888, Private collection), or *Lever de Lune à Dinard*

(1889, City of Valognes). In 1889, the artist finally settled there and kept studying the spots, notably around the bay of the Priory. It is worth noting the resemblance between the present work and the western view of the bay of the Priory, which could set both the exact location of this sea landscape, and its dating as it can be linked to the *Baie du Prieuré, Dinard*, done in October 1889 (Private collection).

Félix Buhot’s aesthetic and the present work could be associated to what the artist described as early as 1885 in a letter to his friend Roger Leigh<sup>1</sup>: “Long live the idea that springs up all at once without effort, a wild and brutal sketch done in the fever of a single session, a sketch thrown on an album leaf.”

1. Jean-Luc Dufresne, Valérie Sueur and Alison Mc Queen, *Buhot Peintre Graveur entre Romantisme et Impressionisme*, Cherbourg, 1998, p. 18



19 **Lucien Levy-Dhurmer** 1865 Alger – Vesinet 1953

*Le Matin*

Pastels on wove paper, 1889

Signed and dated lower right *Lucien Lévy 89*

Sheet 1010 × 660 mm

Exhibition Paris, *Salon des Artistes Français*, 1889, no. 3517 (stamp on the back of the frame, and with letter *L* for Levy)

Provenance Clément Massier, Golfe-Juan; thence his heirs until 1996; Private collection, France (acquired from Massier's heirs)

It is unquestionably one of the largest, most important and beautiful early pastels by Lucien Levy-Dhurmer, still kept in private hands for more than a century. It was exhibited in 1889 at the *Salon des Artistes Français* and then it belonged to Clément Massier (1844-1917), the ceramist manufacturer in Vallauris and Golfe-Juan. Lucien Levy – who added Dhurmer to his name only in 1896 – was at the time the art director of the Massier manufacture between 1887 and 1895. He brought in an extraordinary development through the subjects he offered and the technical nature of processes.

Those early works are extremely rare to find. From a realistic and intimate subject, with a technique where academic precision and treatment of light drawn from Impressionism are mixed, the artist has created an already symbolist work. To the symphony of whites that proclaims the purity and candour of this fragile young girl, responds the disturbing pair of black shoes that reflects the harshness of her laborious life as a “little maid”. From a daily subject, we could speak of a shift towards

a kind of intimacy, which preludes to more interiority. The iconographic topic remains however uncommon.

After finishing with honours at the *École communale supérieure de Dessin et Sculpture* in the 11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement in 1885, Levy regularly exhibited at the Paris Salon until 1889, year of the present work. But then he remained on the Côte d'Azur for the next six years, wholly abandoning a still promising artistic career in Paris, meanwhile he excelled as an ornamentist at Massier. It is only in 1895, at almost thirty, that he travelled again to Italy, where Venice and Florence particularly captivated him, and he relocated in Paris and now painting full-time. The show at the Galerie Georges Petit, of around twenty-five pastel and five paintings, finally established Lévy-Dhurmer's reputation in Paris.

It is worth mentioning that the present work is still in its original frame for the 1889 Salon; and it comes with a certificate from Jean-Pierre Camard, dated 6 May 1996.



20 **Maurice Denis** 1870 Granville – Paris 1943

*Seaside in Loctudy*

Pencil, black chalk, watercolour heightened with white gouache on the back of a piece of wallpaper, 1894  
Stamped *MAUD* lower right  
Sheet 490 × 980 mm  
Literature Denise Delouche, *Maurice Denis et la Bretagne*, Quimper, 2010; Jérémie Cerman, *Le papier peint Art Nouveau. Création, production, diffusion*, Paris, Editions mare & martin, 2012  
Provenance Private collection, France

A stunning example of synthetic landscapes by Maurice Denis, during his Nabis and Symbolist period from 1889 to 1898. This composition of the Brittany shore does display the quality of simplification that the precocious artist was able to reach, and that he partially inherited from Paul Gauguin. Denis had followed Gauguin’s path in Brittany since 1892, mostly in Perros-Guirec and Le Pouldu, an even more secluded village than Pont-Aven. The painter fell in love with this area, and even later bought a villa on the beach of Le Pouldu, in 1908. The present drawing is dated of 1894, when Denis and his wife stayed a few weeks in a house overlooking the harbour of Loctudy. The painter wrote to his parents: “Since we have been left alone, I have been working seriously and we have been able to manage our time more reasonably: we go out in the morning, we have lunch at half past eleven, I work after our walk, we have supper at seven and I do a drawing every evening after the meal. So that I am ahead with these darned drawings and have eight good paintings to finish when I get home and will not regret the time, I spent in Loctudy”.

The present landscape emphasizes a rejection of naturalism. The stylised arabesques of the clouds

in the sky echo the wavy lines of the sand dunes. The decorative value is conveyed by the use of plastic means to transcend the apparent banality of the motif and create correspondences between the Idea and a sensible form: the harmony of the Nature, and its inhabitant. The colour range of blue and ochre melted with the mat effect of tempera creates a fullness of seascape. It is to be noted that the decorative approach is reinforced by the fact that Maurice Denis used the verso of a wallpaper of a large rectangular format, the abstract patterns of which can be felt through the paper. A technique and an inspiration from which we have very rare examples left, probably four or five works, all recorded by Claire Denis.

This piece is an example of Denis’s most famous aphorism: “A painting is essentially a plane surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order”. It is audacious in its application of the Synthetism’s aesthetic: flat surfaces of plain colour, a radical simplification of shapes, absence of perspective, influence of Japonism.

This work will be included by Claire Denis in the *catalogue raisonné* in preparation.



21 **Paul Sérusier** 1864 Paris – Morlaix 1927

*Trees and Rocks*

Pastel and coloured pencils on wove paper, ca. 1899  
With the stamp of the artist’s studio, the monogram *PS* lower right  
Sheet 320 × 240 mm  
Reference Marcel Guicheteau, *Paul Sérusier. Catalogue de l’œuvre*, Pontoise, 1989, t. 2, no. 80 and p. 99 (ill.)

A magnificent sheet by Paul Sérusier, with a strong visual impact, almost geometric and in an architectural order. It is dated ca. 1899 by Marcel Guicheteau, the author of the œuvre catalogue. The composition and style of this landscape can be linked to two other works, *Sous bois à Huelgoat* (ca. 1892) and *Rivière d’argent au Huelgoat* (ca. 1895), and could suggest that it is a view of a forest in the vicinity of Huelgoat in Brittany, where the artist often stayed in the 1890’s. Although born in Paris, Sérusier became soon a son of Brittany, as he expressed it in 1893 to his friend Jan Verkade: “I feel more and more attracted to Brittany, my true homeland, since I was born there of the spirit”<sup>1</sup>.

We cannot resist thinking about Sérusier painting in 1888 the *Paysage au bois d’amour*, also called as the *Talisman*,

on the advice of his friend Paul Gauguin: “How do you see these trees? They are yellow. Well, use yellow, the most beautiful colour in your palette. This shadow, which is rather blue, should be painted with pure ultramarine; these red leaves should be painted with vermillion...”<sup>2</sup>. This totem-like painting marks the beginning of Sérusier’s characteristic pictorial synthetism, which can be seen in this vision of trees and rocks, and which, with its bright colours, seems to announce the French Fauvism to come.

1. Catherine Puget, Caroline Boyle-Turner, *Paul Sérusier 1864-1927*, Pont-Aven, 1991, p. 5  
2. Marcel Guicheteau, *Paul Sérusier*, Paris, 1976, p. 19



22 **Paul Sérusier** 1864 Paris – Morlaix 1927  
*Self-Portrait*

Pastel on wove paper, ca. 1900-05  
Signed lower right with monogram *PS*  
Sheet 540 × 470 mm  
Provenance Most probably Marguerite Sérusier, Châteauneuf-du-Faou; Henriette Boutaric, Châteauneuf-du-Faou; sale Robert & Baille Auction, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 23 Nov. 2007, lot 106; Private collection, USA (acquired at the sale)

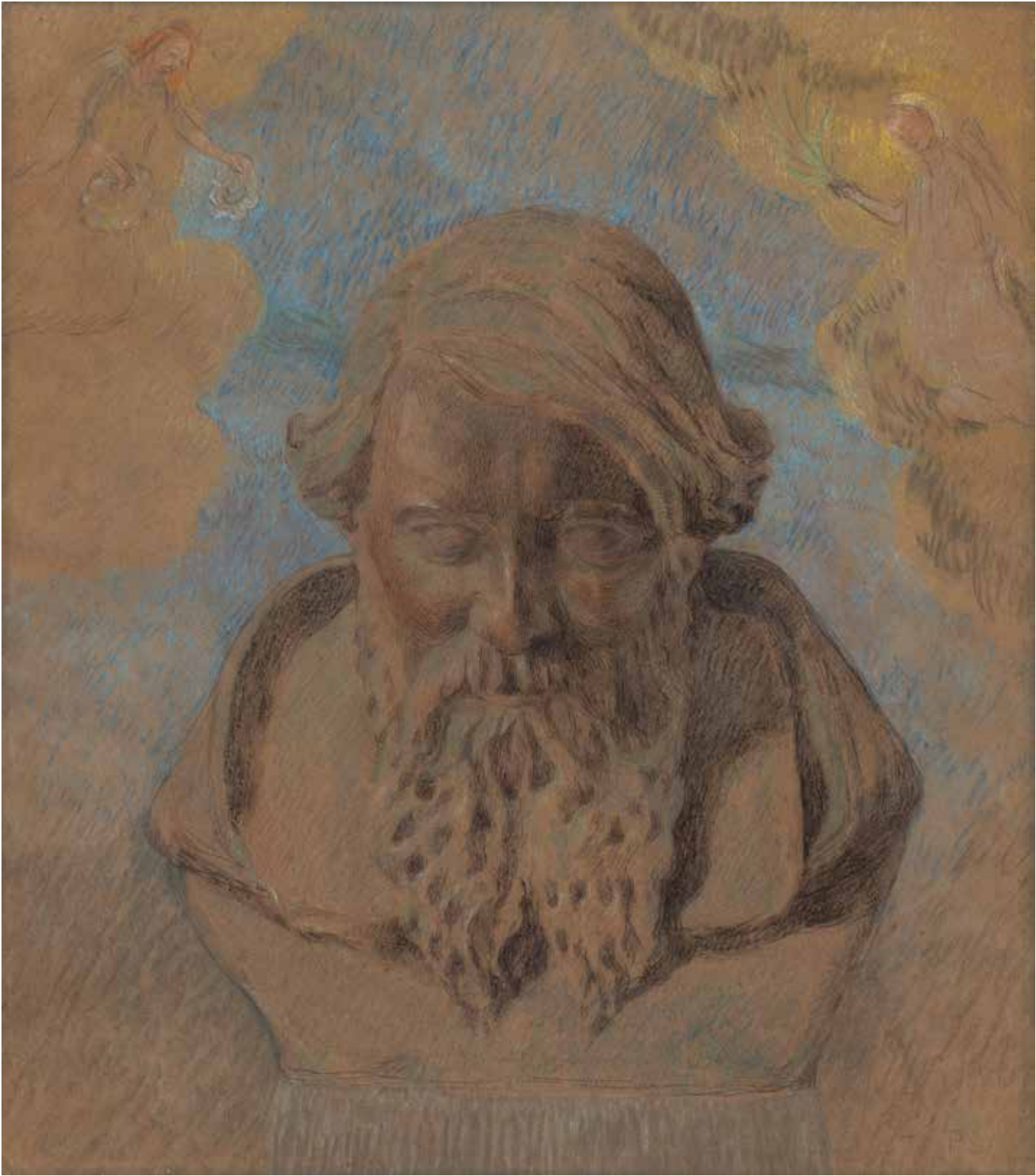
An intriguing, even mystical, self-portrait that takes up the well-known Paul Sérusier’s physical characteristics, with the haircut and the bifid beard, for which the other Nabis group members nicknamed the artist “The Nabi with the shiny beard”. Depicted as a holy man, in reference to the image of a prophet attributed to him by his friends, as if to take up the etymology of the word “Nabi”, the artist’s head is also flanked by two angelic figures on either side of the bust, which seem to offer the painter their protection. By comparison with photographs of the artist at the time<sup>1</sup>, the work can be dated ca. 1900-05.

This pastel had an interesting destination. Sérusier’s friend, Georges Lacombe, created a sculpture after it

in 1906, which was then chosen by Sérusier during his lifetime to adorn his tomb, itself created by another artist, Maurice Denis. The sculpture and the tomb can be seen today in the cemetery of Morlaix, in Brittany, where the artist is buried<sup>2</sup>. This self-portrait therefore resonates in its hieratic nature, as an evocation of his own death through this subject’s choice.

The present work is sold with a certificate of authenticity from Marcel Guicheteau, dated of March 18, 1991.

1. Françoise Daniel, *Paul Sérusier*, Musée de Morlaix, Morlaix, 1987, p. 7 (ill.)  
2. Marcel Guicheteau, *Paul Sérusier tome II*, Pontoise, 1989, p. 16 (ill.)



23 **Ernest Biéler** 1863 Rolle – Lausanne 1948

*Landscape at Savièse*

Pastel on wove paper, ca. 1899-1901

Sheet 480 × 635 mm

Provenance Private collection, Switzerland

This is a very beautiful and interesting pastel by Ernest Biéler. It belongs to a group of around a dozen or so of works that can be situated at Savièse, in Valais, and dated around 1899 and 1901, such as the *Coucher de soleil sur la bas-valais*, *Paysage de Savièse en automne*, *Paysage automnal valaisan*, and the *Maison du peintre Savièse* of 1901, all in private collections. Biéler was settled in Savièse already from 1889, but those works show a particular moment when the artist – after having been a solid representative of the Swiss naturalism – tried to mixt his attraction to the principles of impressionism as well as for those of symbolism, and even to the synthetism from the Pont-Aven School. He then later returned to a more realistic style in 1901 under the influence of Gustave Courbet, and then moving towards Art Nouveau from 1906.

With its dynamic composition, its lines and shapes, vibrations, and its juxtaposed colors, the present work is especially wonderful, typical, and in perfect condition of pastels.

Born in Rolle, close to Geneva, Ernest Biéler moved early to Paris, in 1880 and on the advice of the Swiss artist François Bocion, he attended the Academie Julian as well as the Academie Colarossi to perfect his training. In 1884, he surrounded himself with other Swiss painters living in Paris and spent the summer discovering Switzerland and then Savièse, on the advice of another Swiss painter Raphaël Ritz he had met in Sion, in Valais. Soon joined by other artists such as Henri Van Muyden; Otto Vautier; Alfred Rehous and many others, he settled what the art critic Paul Seippel called in 1891 the Savièse School, in relation to their artistic tributes to Swiss rural traditions and this return to nature, reviving the spirit of the Barbizon painters.

The present work will be included to the Catalogue Raisonné, currently in preparation by Ethel Mathier.



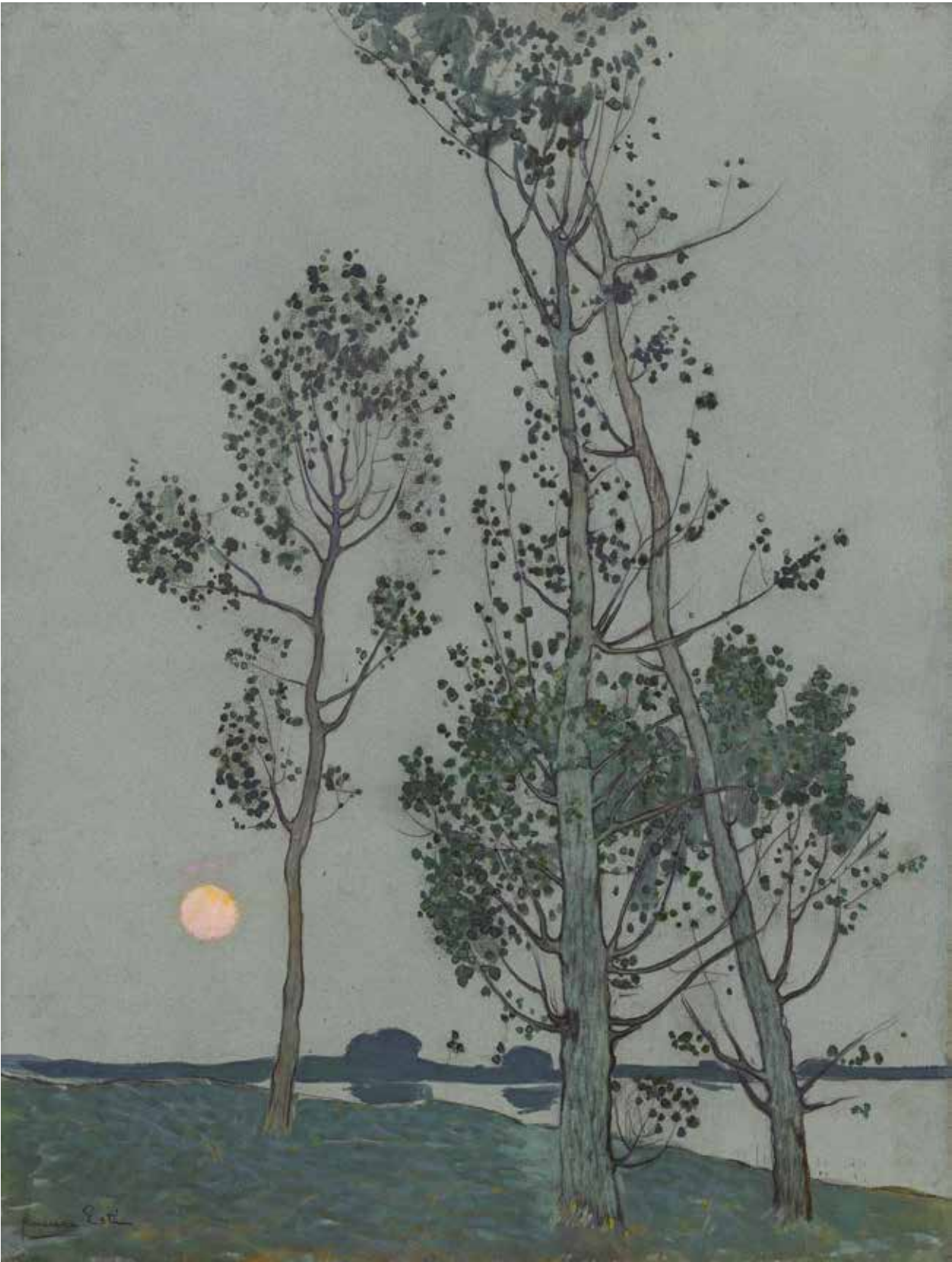
24 **Florence Esté** 1860 Cincinnati – Paris 1926

*Trees in the Moonlight, Brittany*

Pastel, watercolour and bodycolor on blue wove paper on paper, ca. 1900-05  
Signed lower left *florence Esté*  
Sheet 607 × 457 mm  
Literature Gabriel Mourey, “Les Paysages bretons de Florence Esté”, in *Art et Décoration. Revue mensuelle d’Art Moderne*, August 1913, pp. 33-38; “Florence Este”, in *The American Magazine of Art*, vol. 17, no. 6, June 1926, pp. 306-307; Thornton Oakley, “Florence Esté: An Introduction by Thornton Oakley, and Quotations from Her Letters”, in *The American Magazine of Art*, vol. 17, no. 11, November 1926, pp. 582-586; Anne Droguet, *Catalogue Florence Esté. Paysages de la côte bretonne*, œuvres sur papier, Galerie Chantal Kiener, Paris, 2003.  
Provenance Bequeathed by the artist to Octavie-Charles Paul-Séailles, pseudonym of Jeanne Octavie Séailles (1855-1964); thence by the heirs; Private collection, France

A superb pastel and watercolour on tinted paper by the American and female artist Florence Esté, made in Brittany around 1900-05. In his survey about the artist in 1913, Gabriel Mourey started in that way: “It would be curious and interesting, it seems to me, both from a psychological point of view and from an artistic point of view, to look for the reasons for the predilection that English and American artists have for certain regions of France, particularly Brittany [...] Could it be the picturesque character of the old Armorican land that attracts them? On the contrary, is it the collected and serious atmosphere, mystical that reigns there, by what they are conquered and subjugated? Brittany is one of the regions of France that has best preserved their traditions and customs and where the union appears the narrowest, the most intimate, the deepest between landscapes and men, which has been the least modified in its essential aspects, either animated or not, by the invading progress. I do not think I am wrong, in arguing that one of the dominant concerns of English art and American art, in general, without taking into account the variants of temperament, heredity, education, is precisely the search for character and the love of the picturesque”.

The life of Florence Esté is a nice story of women. Born in Cincinnati in 1860, in an old Philadelphia family, Esté travelled in France for a first time in 1874, with the female artist Emily Sartain, twenty-one years older than the young apprentice. Sartain was already a key figure in the cultural life in United States, and notably in Philadelphia, where she was the director of the Philadelphia School of Design for Women, from 1866 to 1920. During those two years in France, Esté was the pupil of Tony Robert-Fleury, and worked alongside Jeanne Rongier, who was later part of the French female artists presented at the 1893 Columbian World’s Fair in Chicago. Back in Philadelphia between 1876 and 1882, Esté studied with Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA). Around 1886–1887, she, her friend Cecilia Beaux and other young women artists such as Dora Brown and Julia Foote studied with William Sartain in art classes at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. She was also an accomplish etcher, learned with Stephen Parrish at the PAFA. Several women at the Academy became significant in the American etching revival, including indeed Esté, and Gabrielle Clements, Blanche Dillaye, Margaret Lesley, Margaret Levin, and Mary Franklin.



Florence Esté then moved permanently to France in 1888. In Paris she enrolled at the Academie Colarossi and studied with Alexander Nozal and Raphael Collin. She lived with Cecilia Beaux in a little appartement, across the street from Luxembourg Gardens, near the heart of the art community on Rue Notre Dame des Champs. Esté introduced Beaux to the prominent Philadelphia artists Alexander Harrison and Charles Lasar, who graduated in Paris at that time. She spent a lot of time and her summers in Brittany, in the village of Saint-Briac, and her work is largely inspired by those landscapes and large pines.

She became member of the Société nationale des Beaux-Arts from 1895, and she exhibited at the Salon many years from 1900. She also exhibited at the Salon des Artistes français, at the Société internationale de la Peinture à l'eau, and in the United States at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, the American Watercolor Society, and at the Philadelphia Water Color Club, of which she was an honorary member. She showed two works at the revolutionary exhibition of the 1913 Armory Show. Fifty women participated as artists and donors, and these women are now considered significant leaders, forging the beginnings of the feminist art movement.

Esté was actually very praised in her lifetime. In his introduction to her life published in 1926, Thornton Oakley wrote: “Her death leaves a void in the world of art impossible to fill”, She was particularly well known for her landscapes, which were said to have been influenced by Japanese artworks and were noted for their “harmony of color”. Mourey also made the link to the work of the Breton artist Henri Rivière. Her obituary in the New York Times referred to her as “one of the best-known women landscape painters.” But amazingly, her works are now rare to find in public collections in the United States. The PAFA has a very large canvas titled *Brittany Pines*, and the Art Institute as well, a large drawing given by the artist. She gave most of her œuvre to her friend Octavie Charles Paul Séailles, also a female artist and landscape painter in Barbizon in 1890s and 1900s. The present work by Esté was then kept in the Séailles family until now.



(detail)

25 **William de Degouve de Nuncques** 1867 Monthermé – Stavelot 1935  
*Old Canal (Venice)*

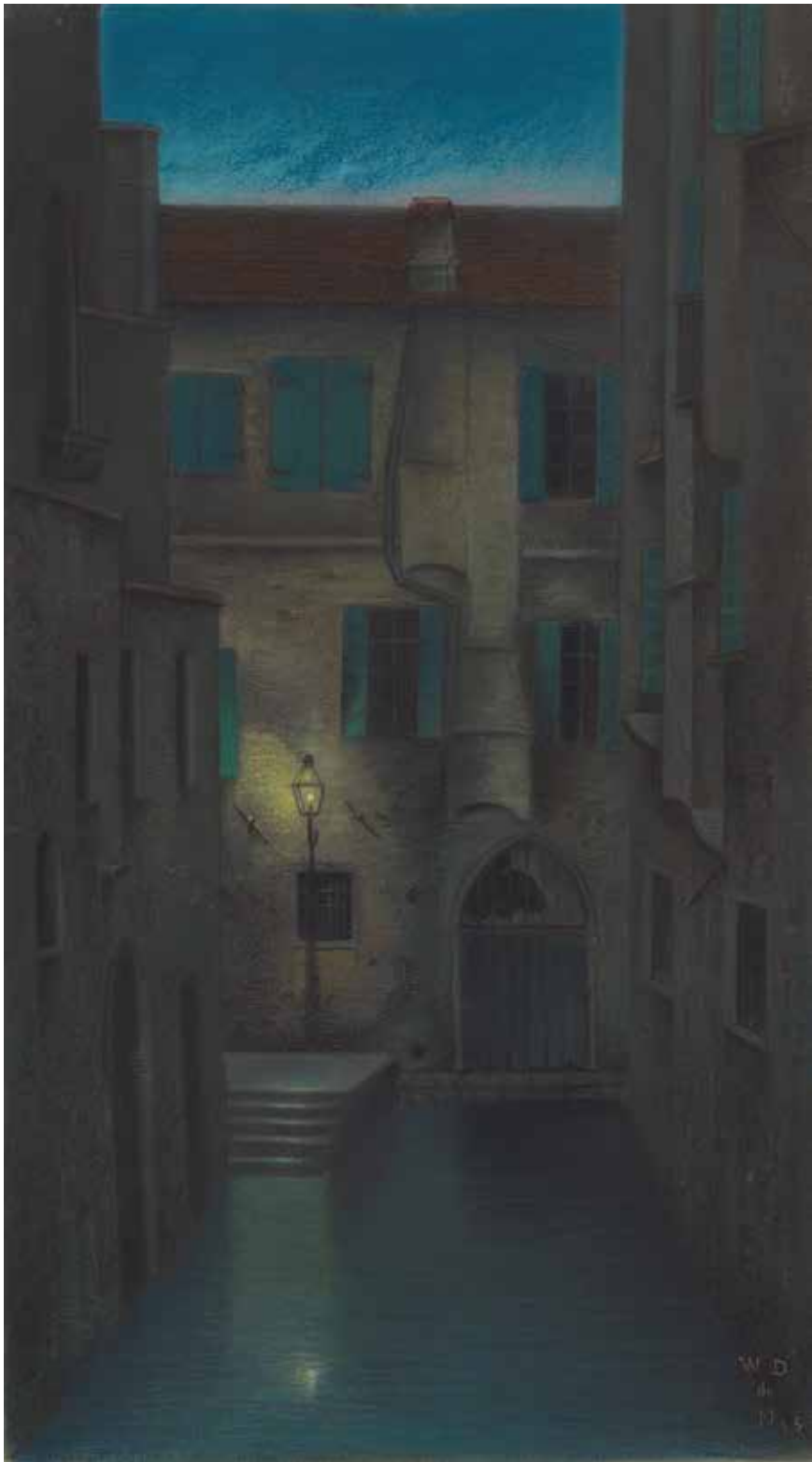
Pastel on laid paper, 1895  
Artist monogram and dated lower right *W D de N 95*  
Labeled on the back by the artist *Vieux canal – W. Degouve de Nuncques*  
Sheet 580 × 320 mm  
Exhibition Brussels, *La Libre Esthétique*, 1896, cat. 113  
Provenance Private collection, Belgium

This is one of the most fascinating pastels of William Degouve de Nuncques still in private hands today. The nocturnal effects emanating from our sheet make a masterful example of the Belgian Symbolist movement. Technically, Degouve successfully illustrated a night scene, and composed an atmosphere in a harmony of dark blue and green, very representative of his work between 1895 and 1898.

In 1895, Degouve and his wife travelled to Italy, and discovered Venice. When the artist returned to Brussels, he presented at the salon of *La Libre Esthétique*, five drawings depicting the Italian city, and showing his new aesthetic production, influenced by the Venetian beauty: silent and immobile views of the city, in nocturnal mist, creating a bridge between reality and a dreamlike vision of the city. Close to Khnopff's representation of Bruges, we feel in these pastels the influence of the symbolism circle.

Being born into a wealthy, aristocratic family, Degouve de Nuncques was able to indulge his interests in painting and music without material constraints. Although self-taught, he was advised by Jan Toorop, with whom he shared a studio, and later lived with the off-screen artist, Henry de Groux. Verhaeren's poetry and Degouve's art shared many concerns, and both essentially sought to transfigure reality in the sense that it affords a view of the invisible. Degouve wanted to create works that transfigure the everyday and metamorphose the real into something magic and surreal. Exhibited at Belgian avant-garde salons *Les XX* and *La Libre Esthétique*, he was also a regular exhibitor in Paris where he was championed by Puvis de Chavannes and Maurice Denis. His paintings are considered to have been a significant influence on Surrealism and the paintings of René Magritte.

This work will be included in the catalogue raisonné in preparation by Ronald Feltkamp.



26 **Firmin Baes** 1874 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode – Ixelles 1943  
*Peasant*

Pastel on wove paper, ca. 1909  
Signed lower left *Firmin Baes*; signed and entitled by the artist on the cardboard, back of the frame *Paysan – Firmin Baes*. Two labels with numbers from the Galerie Georges Giroux in Brussels (either exhibition’s numbers, or inventory’s numbers)

|            |                              |
|------------|------------------------------|
| Sheet      | 870 × 694 mm                 |
| Provenance | Private collection, Brussels |

Few artists at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have mastered pastel like Firmin Baes. It is one of the most stunning examples of Baes’ drawings of rural workers. The present work shares similarities with two other sheets dated of 1909 and with the same face<sup>1</sup>: *Head of an old Peasant*, and a *Woodcutter*.

Baes started his career in the 1890s, mostly as an oil painter, under the influence of his teacher Léon Frédéric. Baes shared with Frédéric a deep interest in the rural world, the subject of many of his works throughout his career. In 1898, he joined the Belgian avant-garde circle *Pour l’Art*, and get some success exhibiting at the annual salon of the group, along with Eugène Laermans, Jean Delville and Victor Rousseau, among others. At the same period, he abandoned oil painting and decided to focus almost exclusively on pastel. He developed a technique of pastel on canvas that became his trademark brought

him significant success. Baes achieved with pastels a result similar to oil painting, with a large colour palette and bright contrast. They show the extreme precision of the artist’s technique; his ability to render glimmering fabrics and the softness of skin.

On the other side of Baes’ œuvre, this drawing demonstrates the technique of the artist on paper, in a more impressionist manner: the pastel is very visible, more raw, matte, and thick. The colours, especially the palette of blues, used by Baes, create a transcending play of contrasts. This style perfectly renders the harshness of the rural world, and the rough features of an old man’s face and his clothes.

1. See Georgette Naegels-Delfosse, *Firmin Baes*, Brussels, Editeurs d’Art Associés, 1987, p. 14 and p. 34.



27 **Sacha Guitry** 1885 Saint-Pétersbourg – Paris 1957

*Self-Portrait with a Cigarette*

Pencil on wove paper, ca. 1908  
Signed lower centre *Sacha Guitry*  
Sheet 160 × 120 mm  
Literature *Comœdia Illustré*, 15 November 1911, p. 98, no. 4  
Provenance André Bernard; his sale, Ader, Paris, 2 October 2014, no. 277; Private collection, France

In a few pencil strokes, Sacha Guitry succeeds in giving a precise image of himself at the age of 23, as well as a proof of his talent for transcribing the nature of a subject on the spot. Not only an actor, director, screenwriter, and playwright of the boulevard theatre, Guitry was also a great caricaturist and portraitist of key personalities he met in many fields, i.e. theatre, literature, music, journalism and art, such as for instance his portraits of Sarah Bernhardt (1900), Anatole France (1908), Claude Debussy (1905), Alfred Capus (1903), or Claude Monet (1915). This practice also included himself, and he made several self-portraits, such as: *Esquisse d'autoportrait avec chapeau* (1910), *Autoportrait* (1911, published in *Le Matin* on March 22), *Autoportrait en buste, de profil, avec barbe et moustache, cigarette aux lèvres* (ca. 1920), or later a series of self-portraits with black glasses made in 1936. When Guitry exhibited thirty paintings in October-November 1911 at the Galerie Bernheim Jeune, it was also a self-portrait that illustrated the invitation card, *Autoportrait*

*au grand chapeau*. As other self-portraits, the present work was also later reproduced in the press, this one in the *Comœdia Illustré*, 15 November 1911.

His portraits in the form of sketches echo a quote by Sacha Guitry who once write in his play *Jean de La Fontaine* (1916, p. 471): “One gets tired of a perfect painting. One can no longer expect anything from it. A sketch never tires – it promises so much! You admire a painting... you adore a sketch. It seems that you can modify it again and finish it in your own way”. Through his self-portraits and portraits of his contemporaries and friends, Sacha Guitry’s works are highly indicative of the rich cultural and intellectual atmosphere of his time, as much as of his love for art in general, of which he wrote<sup>1</sup>: “There is in Art a category of superior joys, so profound and so high that one is forever obliged to the one who gave them to you.”

1. Sacha Guitry, *Si j’ai bonne mémoire*, Paris, 1935, p. 163



28 **Franz von Stuck** 1863 Tettenweiss – Munich 1940

*Beethoven Sitting Enthroned*

Lifetime bronze, ca. 1909  
Inscribed on the base *C. Leyrer Munchen*” and “*Beethoven / Franz / Von / Stuck*  
Size 26.6 cm  
Provenance Bettina Ann Brumbaugh, Plano (Texas)

This is remarkable cast of the von Stuck’s *Thronender Beethoven*. The late Romanticism saw a proliferation of representations of Beethoven, celebrating his music and making a myth of the man: “*Les plus grands poètes de l’Allemagne sont ses musiciens, merveilleuse famille dont Beethoven est le chef [...] Ce sourd entendait l’infini*” wrote Victor Hugo<sup>1</sup>. In 1902, during the Vienna Secession exhibition, the colossal monument dedicated to him by Max Klinger<sup>2</sup> and the monumental frieze by Gustav Klimt<sup>3</sup> depicting the Ninth Symphony were shown. Von Stuck also presents an impressive mask of the musician with a fierce and hypnotic look<sup>4</sup>. Since 1896, the figure of Beethoven has occupied his work. In 1909, he created the present *bozzetto* for a monument that was never built. Beethoven is seated on a massive, cubic throne, his naked body wrapped in a toga-like cloth, referring to ancient heroes and gods. His hands hold the armrests firmly. He looks intensely at the spectators from the top of his pedestal. This striking composition is also linked to a painting of *Pluto*, the king of hell, painted in the same year<sup>5</sup>. He elevated the musician to the rank of a deity who embodies his creation, whose harmony is based on the permanent interaction of the life and death impulses.

A protean artist, Franz von Stuck refused the boundaries between fine and applied arts. A representative of the *Jugendstill*, he was a founding member of the Munich Secession in 1892. This association of artists paved the way for Art Nouveau. Having attended the Academy of Fine Arts as well as the School of Arts and Crafts, he practised several means of expression with great creative force: illustration, painting under the primary influence of Böklin, and sculpture after a trip to Rome

with Klinger. Initially imbued with a classicising dynamism, his works feature figures whose physical reality expresses a form of ideal, not through symbols, but through a vigorous and powerful form that fascinates<sup>6</sup>. In 1895, he was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts where he trained new generations of avant-garde artists: Kandinsky, Munte, Klee, Albers, among others. From 1897, he put his vision of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – total art – into practice through the Villa Stuck in Munich, twenty years before the Bauhaus of Gropius.

Very few examples of this sculpture are known today. The Villa Stuck, now a museum dedicated to the artist, has one in bronze. This is an astonishing twist of history, as this sculpture is probably the only one in Stuck’s œuvre that was not linked to his villa but was intended as a public monument.

The authenticity of this work has been confirmed by Albert Ritthaler, Archive Franz von Stuck, on the basis of photographs.

1. Victor Hugo, *William Shakespeare*, Lacroix, Verboeckhoven and Cie Ed., Brussels, 1864, and *La Revue musicale*, no. 378, “Victor Hugo et la musique”, 1923  
2. Max Klinger, *Monument to Beethoven* (Museum des Bildenden Künste, Leipzig)  
3. Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*, fresco of 7 panels, 215 × 3414 cm (Secession Palace, Vienna)  
4. Franz von Stuck, *Beethoven’s Mask*, polychrome plaster, 48 × 48 cm (Musée d’Orsay, Paris)  
5. Franz von Stuck, *Pluto*, oil on panel, 52.5 × 80.5 cm (Private collection)  
6. See Guido Battelli, *8<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition of Fine Arts, Venice Biennale*, 1909, p. 55



29 **Franz von Stuck** 1863 Tettenweiss – Munich 1940  
*Beethoven*

Lifetime bronze (patinated), ca. 1909  
Titled on the front *BEETHOVEN*, and signed lower right *FRANZ STUCK*  
Stamped with founder mark *C. Leyer München*  
Size 47 × 47 cm  
Provenance Private collection, Denmark

The face emerges from the flat area. High up, he dominates us. Determined and concentrated, his eyebrows are furrowed, his lips pursed, his hair carried away by an inner movement. His hypnotic gaze stares at us and passes through us. This figure compels admiration to the point of veneration for the icon he has become.

When Franz von Stuck conceived his villa in Munich as a total work of art, he decided to place masks of the great composers in the Music Room. Among them, the most celebrated and adored in this period of late Romanticism: Ludwig van Beethoven. He made his own version of the great man’s face based on the imprint taken by Franz Klein in 1812 during the musician’s lifetime. It is not a death mask that inspires him but a testimony of the genius in action. The choice of a strictly frontal view gives his sculpture an archaic austerity and allows it to become the incarnation of an archetype, that of the creative human spirit. His representation is not anecdotal: nothing interferes with the power of the facial expression, neither the attitude, nor the hands, nor the “decorum”. Masks, like that of *Medusa* by Arnold Böcklin, are the search for a deeper truth than mere resemblance. They are part of the quest for the essence of being. They are also

the manifestation of a new look at antique aesthetics. The Symbolist movement of the Munich Secession, of which von Stuck was a founding member, focused on this beauty made of strangeness, on the fantastic aspect of a modern archaism. Is this not the case in this face of Beethoven, which overflows the flatness, in an effect that is both iconic and nightmarish?

Von Stuck first made a portrait of Beethoven in polychrome plaster, of which exists several copies, playing with the traditional limit between painting and sculpture. In 1902 he presented one of the several copies at the Vienna Secession, seventy-five years after the composer’s death, alongside with works by Max Klinger and Gustav Klimt. In 1909, for the Venice Biennale, he exhibited again his mask of Beethoven, this time in bronze, surrounding it with mythological objects populated by centaurs and fauns. There are around twenty copies recorded, not more, and casted at Guss C. Leyer, in Munich, where von Stuck made most of his bronzes. The composer rules the pantheon of the artist, who also creates painted portraits based on his mask and a monumental *Thronender Beethoven* sit at the Villa Stuck, all imbued with energy and timelessness.



30 **Adolfo Wildt** 1868 – Milan – 1931

*Figure Lying Down*

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ink on wove paper laid down on canvas, ca. 1913 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sheet                                           | 495 × 1685 mm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Literature                                      | Giuliana Olcese and Vanni Scheiwiller, <i>Disegni di Adolfo Wildt</i> , exh. cat., Milan, Galleria dei Bibliofili, 1972, no. 35 (ill.); Paola Mola, <i>Adolfo Wildt. Ein italienischer Bildhauer des Symbolismus</i> , exh. cat., Darmstadt, Mathildenhöhe, 1990, p. 205 (ill.) |
| Exhibition                                      | Milan, Galleria Bambaja di Busto Arsizio, <i>Adolfo Wildt</i> , April-May 1978                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Provenance                                      | Artist studio, Milan; his grandson, Vanni Scheiwiller, Milan; Private collection, Rome                                                                                                                                                                                          |

This large and impressive Adolfo Wildt’s drawing was a preliminary drawing for a sarcophagus, which ultimately was not executed. The profile of the figure is dotted in order to “dust” it on the marble. The design is typical of the style of Wildt in the early years of 1910’s, and clearly related to the central figure of a drawing titled *L’Ombra* and dated 1913<sup>1</sup>. Showing the purity of his line as well as being a powerful trace of his artistic process, this design also prefigures the style of some funerary monuments he made after the First World War, such as the Bistoletti and the Körner monuments, both in Milan Monumental Cemetery, although made later in the 1920’s.

The year of 1913 was indeed a key moment for Wildt. His patron Franz Rose died the year before and Wildt had to find a place by himself on the Italian scene, which had cared little about him so far. At the time, he had not

made many funerary monuments or gravestones, or any major sculpture praised by the critics. Although, the present work reveals the essence of the artist’s effort, which would make him the key representative of the modern Italian sculpture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: i.e.. the simplification of forms revealing the intensity of the human figure. While having a resolutely distinctive style, he appears then among the sculptors who were standing at the contact point between late Symbolism and radical modernity.

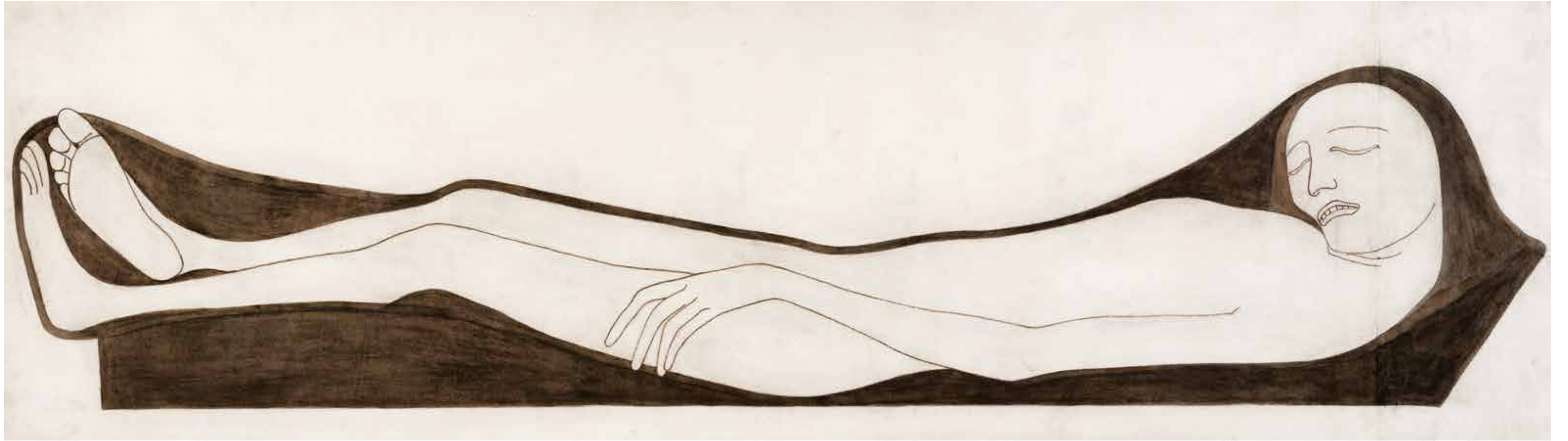
From 1906, Wildt began a work of reduction, removing from his creations any element that was not meaningful but avoiding deconstruction – the trademark of the Futurists. Driven by his religious faith, he perceived the necessity to reconcile the materiality of the sculpture with spirituality. He stated his intentions in this way:

“see the nature, acts and mortal aspects of humans with austere serenity, reduce them to an essential nudity, remove all that is cloudy and obsolete in them, meditate on them in my soul, give an artistic translation to the expression of my thought, achieve a matured and ordered harmony of lines and their forms.”<sup>2</sup>

Born in a modest Milanese family, Wildt was first trained as an artisan. He refined unique skills for marble sculpting, in contrast to most sculptors who usually delegated part of the work to specialized artisans. He then completed his artistic training at the Brera Academy. From 1894, the support of a Prussian patron, Franz Rose, relieved him from having to find buyers for his sculptures and provided economical comfort. His patron allowed him to travel and show his work throughout the German Empire and encouraged him to develop an art detached

from the vogues of the Milanese scene but rather to follow the masters of previous centuries. From antique Greek theatre masks to gothic and baroque sculpture, Wildt merged a variety of styles in a work primarily devoted to the human body, as in the present drawing, interpreting the shapes to obtain the purest expression of emotions.

1. Ex-coll. Vanni Scheiwiller. See: Giuliana Olcese and Vanni Scheiwiller, *Disegni di Adolfo Wildt (1898-1931)*, Milan, All’Insegna del Pesce d’oro, 1972, no. 6; Fernando Mazzocca and Paola Mola, *Wildt L’Anima e le forme*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2012, no. 59; Béatrice Avanzi, *Adolfo Wildt Le Dernier Symboliste*, Paris, Musée d’Orsay, 2015, no. 47  
2. Adolfo Wildt, “Presentazione”, in exh. cat., *Quadriennale d’Arte Nazionale*, Rome, 1931, pp. 37-39.



31 **Alfred Kubin** 1877 Leitmeritz – Wernstein am Inn 1959  
*Old Man with Pike*

Ink on wove paper, ca. 1920-25

Signed lower right *AKubin*

Sheet 348 × 259 mm

Provenance Private collection, Vienna; Private collection, New York

In his graphic work, Kubin always managed to convey the sense of a twilight zone, an atmosphere of lurking menace and mystery, full of narrative, foreboding, and conflicting emotion. Kubin constantly sweeps us away to the *other side* – as in the title of his famous novel in 1909. In other words, we never know exactly on which side of life we are. It is the strength of his art.

In the 1920s and 30s, Alfred Kubin frequently concentrated on capturing a striking human head. Although essentially in the real proportions of a head, with the main forms succinctly delineated, these compositions focus on expressive, exaggerated facial features and anatomical peculiarities. In this case, these are the conspicuous broad

and coarse nose, slanting, glazed over eyes, as well as irregular teeth that give the mouth an unnerving, ironic expression.

By introducing a pike in the foreground and a flower, hanging nonchalantly from the man's mouth, the viewer immediately looks for a possible narrative, an aspect Alfred Kubin identified as a crucial aim in his art. His compositions should inspire viewers to delve into their own memories and combine these into exciting new sequences of imagery. Kubin's art thus always alludes to narrative subjects and situations that conjure up an all-pervasive special atmosphere and not a precisely mapped out linear sequence of events.



32

Georges Rouault

1871 – Paris – 1958

Danse Macabre I

Oil over a printed base on wove paper and laid down on canvas, ca. 1926-30

Size398 × 297 mm

ReferenceBernard and Isabelle Rouault Dorival, *Georges Rouault: L'Oeuvre Peint (Catalogue Raisonné)*, Monte Carlo, 1988, vol. II, no. 1935, p. 162 (ill.)

Provenance(Ernest) Buffaut, Lyon; Galerie Henri Creuzevault, Paris; Dr. Georg & Josi Guggenheim, Zürich (acquired from the above in 1959); Private collection, United Kingdom

*Aucuns t'appelleront une caricature,  
Qui ne comprennent pas, amants ivres de chair,  
L'élégance sans nom de l'humaine armature.  
Tu réponds, grand squelette, à mon goût le plus cher!*  
Charles Baudelaire, “Danse Macabre” in *Fleurs du Mal*

This is a wonderful piece of Georges Rouault’s series dedicated to the illustration of the *Fleurs du Mal* by Charles Baudelaire. The *Squelette* was originally one of the fourteen black and white aquatints printed in 1927 to be published by Ambroise Vollard. But the project was never finished, and it is only in 1966, after the artist’s death, that the book came out. Rouault obviously received a few copies of the prints in 1926, and he must have painted a few copies by hand with oil, such like *Danse Macabre I*. It is now considered as a painting, in the catalogue raisonné of Bernard and Isabelle Rouault Dorival. The palette here is restricted but powerful: strong black and white, pink, green and ochre. In the 1930’s, the artist published books with prints with a similar brunch of colors. However, the gorgeous pink, which contrasts here with the green and grey of the composition, has been rarely used elsewhere by the artist.

Rouault had a long-time fascination for Baudelaire and thought about illustrating his poetry collection very early in his career. Certainly, the acquaintance between

his teacher Gustave Moreau and Baudelaire played a key role in this. His interpretation of the poem *Danse Macabre* shows how he created a dialogue between Baudelaire’s imagery and his own expressive vision. The artist, by his own words explained his position towards the poet’s work<sup>1</sup>: “Je m’estimerais heureux, écrit Rouault, si l’on peut dire de ces gravures que je suis un peu dans l’atmosphère du poème, non comme serviteur trop scrupuleux, désireux de commenter le texte mais comme un frère modeste et compréhensif.”

Close to the Fauves – Rouault studied at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, pupil of Gustave Moreau, with Matisse and exhibited with the group at the *Salon d’Automne* in 1905 – the artist emphasized his subjects with expressionist colors and features. Furthermore, Rouault had been an apprentice in a glazier’s studio, from 1885 to 1890. This experience made him familiar with the medieval art of stained-glass windows, which had a significant impact on his aesthetic style. In the present *Danse Macabre*, this influence of gothic art is visible, with the large and expressive black outlines, and the transparent colors, adding some expressivity and dynamism to the skeleton movement.

1. Quoted in: François Chapon, *Le livre des livres de Rouault*, Editions André Sauret et Michèle Trinckvel, 1992, p. 10



33 **Marguerite Burnat-Provins** 1872 Arras – Grasse 1952

*The Brooded Death*

Watercolor, gouache, ink and pencil on wove paper, 1928  
Inscribed on the back *Série des figures avec des oiseaux / Ma Ville / La Mort couvée* [...], dated 8 juillet 1928, and signed *marguerite burnat-provins*  
Sheet 420 × 330 mm  
Literature Anne Murray-Robertson, *Marguerite Burnat-Provins Cœur Sauvage*, Lausanne, Gollion, 2019, p. 38-39 (ill.)  
Provenance Private collection, Switzerland

These two spectacular surrealist drawings, *La Mort couvée* and *Mikli affectueux*, belong to the most famous series by the French-Swiss artist Marguerite Burnat-Provins, called *Ma Ville*. “[...] It was then that I felt hordes invade my soul; names, names, names by the hundred, squeezed together like people from who knows where. Overwhelmed by this flood, I wrote, in columns and the regiments advanced. And then I painted, a world was born that bears the names I heard. What this world is, I don’t know”<sup>1</sup>. With these words, Marguerite Burnat-Provins described the event that changed her life as much as her career, on the evening of August 2, 1914, when the tocsin of mobilization resounded where she was living, in Saint-Savin in the Pyrenees. October 14, 1914, marked the first *physical* appearance of a figure distinctly pronouncing her name, and these visions were to come for years and years, they triggered in her an artistic impulse that would constitute *Ma Ville*, a large multifarious group of drawings as singular as it was original.

Trained at the Académie Julian with the painter Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant in 1891, Marguerite continued her training at the Académie Colarossi before perfecting her painting skills at the Ecole des Beaux Art of Paris when its teaching was opened to women in 1896. As a rebellious, modern and resolutely avant-garde artist and equally writer, her temperament and her multiple talents were marked by a succession of tragedies: the loss of several members of her family in her youth having caused her both physical and psychological disorders, she was also tormented from childhood by premonitory dreams of

violent deaths. Married to the Swiss Adolphe Burnat in 1895, she then moved to Vevey, working with the group of artists led by Ernest Bieler in Savièse until 1905. Then, divorced and also traumatised by the death of her father, she spent her life travelling with her new husband, Paul de Kalbermatten, in Egypt, and living between Bayonne and Vevey (Switzerland) until 1913. But when the World War I broke out, her past troubles resurfaced to mingle with those of the present. The war separated the couple and she gradually settled in Neuilly; she remained until the end of her life in France, especially in the South. She was then very prolific, both by her works and her writings. She was especially appreciated in Paris, mainly because of the direct conjunction between her mental illness and her artistic production, which fascinated many French intellectuals. She was then in contact with the philosopher Edouard Monod-Herzen who was passionate about parapsychic phenomena, with Dr. Gustave Geley, one of the first scholars to have studied her hallucinatory creation; with Fernand Vanderem, an influential literary critic at Le Figaro, with the collector Felix Fénéon, with the writers Henry Bataille, Pierre Louÿs, Anatole France, with the artist Jean-Paul Laurens, the journalist Louis Barthou, the actress Marguerite Moreno, etc.

With her visions that drove her to create, another world opened up to her and she was aware that she was the princess of a royalty composed of ethereal, ghostly and mysterious beings. A dreamlike universe that echoes the tumult of the War that took away several of the artist’s loved ones and that she expressed by a poetry [text continued on the next page]



34 **Marguerite Burnat-Provins** 1872 Arras – Grasse 1952

*Mikli Affectionate*

Pen and ink on grayish Indian paper, 1929  
Inscribed on the back *Série des figures avec des oiseaux / Ma Ville / Mikli affectueux [...]*, dated 7 Décembre 1929, and signed *Burnat-provins*  
Sheet 335 × 335 mm  
Literature Anne Murray-Robertson, *Marguerite Burnat-Provins Cœur Sauvage*, Lausanne, Gollion, 2019, p. 241 (ill.)  
Provenance Private collection, Switzerland

[continuation of the previous page] of the strange and the disturbing in aesthetic beauty. This fantastically real and timeless tale is a direct emanation of Marguerite’s troubles and psyche, like a part of her soul put down on paper.

The particularity of Marguerite’s work to which she devoted the rest of her life, as a medium was associated with her solitary side, living recluse, marginalized by the world she created for herself, and the use of poor recovered materials due to the lack of financial means resulting of her will of independence. This pushed Jean Dubuffet, then setting the concept of *Art brut*, to be interested in *Ma Ville*, after having heard about it by Doctor Gaston Ferdière in 1945. However, as the Burnat-Provins’ training and career ran counter the definition of *Art Brut* in that it brought together artists who had no artistic or cultural training, and who created mainly by instinct, Dubuffet changed his mind and did not include Marguerite’s work in his collection. The Musée de l’Art Brut in Lausanne was based on Dubuffet’s collection and theory, but notwithstanding in 1979, it was decided to place the Burnat-Provins series in a section entitled *Neuve Invention*, as if to better underline the originality of this elusive and unclasifiable artist. Indeed, Marguerite Burnat-Provins knew how to mix the different artistic currents that marked her career, such as the Symbolism that was undeniably inherent to the spirit of her work, her total freedom of expression, as she herself described it: “I loved art and life passionately, I listened to what was singing within me, I followed my path”<sup>2</sup>.

*La Mort couvée* reflects not only Marguerite’s fascination with the animal, but also her academic training in the

use of the symbolic skull as a vanity. The two birds brooding over the skull in their Japanese touch, in vogue at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, can evoke both the artist’s terrifying pre-war premonitions and her inability to give birth, a personal tragedy she learned of at the age of only seventeen. This work therefore resonates with the distress and suffering of a woman who was never able to experience the joys of motherhood and who devoted her entire life to defining her own style and generating her art.

Among the beings of this substitute family created by the emotional void, the birds dear to the artist hold an important place and their recurrence has given rise to a sub-series called *Série des figurines avec des oiseaux*, to which belong these two sheets we offer. *Mikli affectueux* is a typical example of hybrid figures that are both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, precisely mixing the human and the bird. It also shows the complexity of the artist’s work in its codification, since Marguerite through her visions, transcribed not only the physical aspect but also the personality and temperament of the figures, in the systematic association of texts with the images. The use of graphite and watercolour specific to this work, allowed her to play on the variations in intensity and to enhance the unreal aspect of this universe.

1. Marguerite Burnat-Provins, *Vous (extraits)*, 27 avril (1918), Paris, Sansot, 1920; quoted in: Marie Magescas, *Le Jardin des Yeux*, Montreuil, 2020, p. 10  
2. Anne Murray-Robertson, *Marguerite Burnat-Provins Cœur Sauvage*, Gollion, 2019, p. 12 (Marguerite Burnat-Provins, lettre à Madeleine Gay-Mercanton, 17 avril 1912



35 **Jean Lurçat** 1892 Bruyères – Saint-Paul-de-Vence 1966

*Sand Flowers*

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gouache on wove paper, 1935      |                                                                                                                                                         |
| Signed lower right <i>Lurçat</i> |                                                                                                                                                         |
| Sheet                            | 420 × 720 mm                                                                                                                                            |
| Reference                        | Gérard Denizeau and Simone Lurçat, <i>L'œuvre peint de Jean Lurçat</i> , Lausanne, 1998, no. 31, p. 409                                                 |
| Literature                       | Claude Roy, <i>Lurçat</i> , Genève, 1956, plate 36 (ill.)                                                                                               |
| Exhibition                       | New York, Galerie Bignou, <i>Recent Gouaches by Jean Lurçat</i> , 1939, no. 1; New York, Galerie Bignou, <i>Paintings by Jean Lurçat</i> , 1944, no. 15 |
| Provenance                       | Galerie Bignou, Paris, inv. no. 5130; Private collection, France                                                                                        |

Jean Lurçat’s works are not that rare to find in public and private hands, but the present one is an exceptional gouache, and such a quality has not been seen on the market for many years. It is, moreover, in perfect freshness.

This landscape reveals the form and message of the Lurçat’s surrealism in the 1930’s. The angular, strong and assertive lines, in contrast to the chromatic palette of cobalt blue and red that the artist was particularly fond of, and which define the shadows of the composition, help to convey this mysterious atmosphere through its unrealistic light. Onwards 1928, Lurçat’s landscapes became more desert-like, and their fantastic character was intensified in 1935 by this subtle mix of realistic and dreamlike nature, of which only vegetation petrified by these straight lines, evokes a feeling of solitude in a desert crushed by a sky torn between hot and cold shades. This nature, reflected in its desolate staging, is also found in *Paysage au coucher du soleil* (1935), *Fleurs* (1935), and *Fleurs et mer grise* (1935), all in private collections<sup>1</sup>. In each of these compositions, the human figure is present but deliberately reduced in size, as if to express his spiritual quest in the crossing of the desert.

Settled in Vevey, Switzerland in 1931, Jean Lurçat was certainly inspired by the surrounding mountains and identified them as a link between earth and sky in the background of his compositions. This artistic impulse, centred on the human being who evolves in this devastated mirage coloured by flowers, perfectly translates the complex and intellectual universe of Jean Lurçat. As a prolific artist, his talent was expressed in several fields, from painting to ceramics and tapestry to which he gave a new life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by revolutionizing techniques and aesthetics. Each of these fields of experimentation is marked by the message of hope that Jean Lurçat kept as his primary inspiration throughout his career, and which finds its apogee in his last great woven work, illustrating this evolutionary pattern of destruction to return to life, *Le chant du Monde* begun in 1957 and preserved in the Musée Jean-Lurçat et de la *Tapisserie contemporaine* in Angers.

1. Gérard Denizeau, Simone Lurçat, *L'œuvre peint de Jean Lurçat*, Lausanne, 1998, no. 8, p. 405, no. 30, 31, 32, p. 409



|                                 |                           |                              |        |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| ASTRUC, Zacharie                | 38                        | GUDIN, Jean-Antoine Théodore | 4      |
| BAES, Firmin                    | 60                        | GUILLAUMIN, Armand           | 36     |
| BALKE, Peder                    | 14                        | GUITRY, Sacha                | 62     |
| BÉNOUVILLE, Léon François       | 8                         | KUBIN, Alfred                | 72     |
| BIÉLER, Ernest                  | 52                        | LEVY-DHURMER, Lucien         | 44     |
| BUHOT, Félix                    | 42                        | LURÇAT, Jean                 | 80     |
| BURNAT-PROVINS, Marguerite      | 76, 78                    | MILLET, Jean-François        | 10     |
| CICÉRI, Pierre-Luc-Charles      | 6                         | PISSARRO, Camille            | 40     |
| DE DEGOUVE DE NUNCQUES, William | 58                        | ROUAULT, Georges             | 74     |
| DENIS, Maurice                  | 46                        | SÉRUSIER, Paul               | 48, 50 |
| DE NITTIS, Giuseppe             | 12                        | TOOROP, Jan                  | 18     |
| ESTÉ, Florence                  | 54                        | TRUFFOT, Emile Louis         | 16     |
| GAUGUIN, Paul                   | 20, 22, 26,<br>30, 32, 34 | VON STUCK, Franz             | 64, 66 |
|                                 |                           | WILDT, Adolfo                | 68     |

Catalogue entries

Nicola Cataldo  
Eric Gillis  
Caroline Girard  
Noémie Goldman  
Lucien Midavaine  
Thomas Unger

Design

Tia Džamonja

Translation/Editing

Eric Gillis, Jean-Marie Gillis & Rhonda Sherwood

Photographs & Scans

Jérôme Allard – Numérisart; Frédéric Dehaen – Studio Asselberghs & Frédéric Uyttenhove

**Special thanks to** (by alphabetical order) Allan Chinn, Simon Egan, Melissa Hughes and her team, Rodolphe Lambert, Dominique Lejeune, Valérie Quelen, Romana Pospisilova, Etienne Van Vyve, Barbara Wawrzosek, and to all of those who have contributed to the publication of this catalogue.



GILLIS •  
GOLDMAN

*fine art*

**GILLIS GOLDMAN FINE ART**

T +32 2 503 14 64

W [www.gillisgoldman.com](http://www.gillisgoldman.com)

M [info@gillisgoldman.com](mailto:info@gillisgoldman.com)

1, rue aux laines

1000 Brussels | Belgium