

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Franz von Stuck (1863 - 1928)**

## **Two Studies of a Male Nude**

Red chalk, heightened with white, on blue paper faded to brown.

Signed STUCK at the lower right centre.

337 x 273 mm. (13 1/4 x 10 3/4 in.) [sheet]

Stuck was recognized by many of his contemporaries as a gifted draughtsman, and his drawings of male and female nudes were particularly admired. As one scholar has recently noted, 'There are many drawings in existence today to bear witness to Stuck's continued fascination with the human body, not only as a symbol of sensual beauty but also as a medium for expressing human emotions...The naked male and female bodies are essential components of Stuck's pictures and the subject of his sculptures.

Stuck sketched ideas, figures and the main lines and proportions of the framework within which the individual figures would be set. They are small, lively and confidently drawn, mostly in preparation for paintings, reliefs or sculptures, but also on occasion spontaneously on the back of letters, envelopes or bills.'

While the present sheet cannot be definitively related to any work by the artist, the pose of the figure is quite close to that of one of the souls seen in shadow in the left foreground of Stuck's painting *The Angel of Judgement* of c.1922, today on permanent loan from a private collection to the Münchner Künstlerhaus am Lenbachplatz in Munich.

## **Artist description:**

Born in lower Bavaria, Franz Stuck came from a peasant stock, and his talent as an artist was evident from an early age. He received his artistic training at the Academy of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. While still a student he began supporting himself with work as an illustrator, producing drawings and caricatures for the picture magazine *Fliegende Blätter*, as well as designs for

bookplates, menus, and so forth. Active as a painter, sculptor, printmaker and architect, Stuck was one of the founders of the Munich Secession in 1892, and soon became among the most successful and renowned artists in the city. His large and boldly coloured mythological paintings, characterized by Symbolist overtones, won medals and prizes at exhibitions in Germany, Europe and America over the next three decades, and he was also much in demand as a portrait painter.

In 1895 Stuck was appointed a Professor at the Akademie in Munich, where his pupils were to include Paul Klee, Josef Albers, and Wassily Kandinsky. In 1897 he began work on the construction and elaborate decoration of a new home and studio in Munich, known as the Villa Stuck, for which he also designed the furniture. The house was completed in 1898, and is today a museum devoted to the artist's life and work. In 1905 he was awarded a Knight's Cross of the Order of the Bavarian Throne, which raised him to the nobility, and from this point onwards he signed his works as 'Franz von Stuck'. At the International Exhibition in Venice in 1909 Stuck was given a room to himself, and in the later years of his career began to focus on sculpture over paintings. By this time, however, his work was beginning to fall out of favour with art critics outside Munich. Although his reputation in Munich itself remained undimmed throughout most of his career, his work and his reputation had fallen into a gradual neglect elsewhere in Germany and the rest of Europe by the second decade of the 20th century.