

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Claudio BRAVO (Valparaiso 1936 - Taroudant 2011)**

## **A Vase of Flowers**

Pencil, with framing lines in pencil

Signed and dated CLAUDIO BRAVO / MCMLXII in a cartouche at the lower right.

275 x 223 mm. (10 7/8 x 8 3/4 in.) [image]

343 x 285 mm. (13 1/2 x 11 1/4 in.) [sheet]

Drawn in 1962, when the young Claudio Bravo was living and working in Madrid, the present sheet was formerly in the collection of the artist, socialite, writer, diplomat and fashion editor Fleur Cowles (1908-2009), who acquired the drawing from Bravo and later sat for him. As Cowles recalled in later years, 'The three portraits of me I am proud of were painted by Rene Bouche, Rene Gruau and Claudio Bravo, the aristocratic Chilean painter. Bravo came into my life twenty years ago when I discovered him after seeing a Botticelli-like portrait of friends in Madrid: today he is an immensely sought-after painter. My portrait is a masterpiece of draughtsmanship, which he took a year to finish (though he had only taken an hour to sketch my head and hands before going back to Madrid to work).'

## **Provenance:**

Acquired from the artist by Fleur Cowles, New York, London and Sussex  
Thence by descent until 2014.

## **Artist description:**

Born in Valparaiso in Chile, Claudio Bravo received a Jesuit education in Santiago and there took art classes in the studio of the painter Miguel Venegas Cienfuentes, eventually deciding to become an artist himself. He had his first exhibition at the age of seventeen, and was soon much in demand as a portrait painter. In 1961, after several years living and working in Santiago and Concepción, Bravo left

Chile for Europe. Settling in Madrid, he established a very successful career as a painter and society portraitist. In 1968 he spent six months working in the Philippines, and in 1970 had his first solo exhibition in New York. In 1972 he abandoned his busy life in Madrid for a large house and studio in Tangier in Morocco, where he began to focus on still life and landscape painting. Dividing his year between his studio in Tangier and another in Marrakech, as well as one in the far south of Chile, Bravo enjoyed a successful career until the end of his life. As one scholar noted, at the time of an exhibition of his work which toured four American museums in 1987 and 1988, 'Claudio Bravo is one of the most significant artists working in a realist mode today. A painter and draftsman with a singularly fertile imagination, Bravo draws upon a myriad of sources in the art of the past and present, combining them in a uniquely personal manner.'

In 1994 a large exhibition of Bravo's paintings was mounted at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago, Chile. Works by Claudio Bravo are in the collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Princeton University Art Museum, the Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago and elsewhere.

Long recognized as a superb draughtsman, Bravo was a master of pencil, coloured chalks and pastel, which he applied with precision and delicacy.