

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Pierre-Nicolas Brisset (Paris 1810 - 1890)

The Head of a Choirboy

Red, black and white chalk on blue paper.

Signed and dedicated à l'ami manguin / Pre Brisset at the lower left.

Further inscribed and dated Rome / 1844 at the upper left.

272 x 204 mm. (10 3/4 x 8 in.)

The present sheet is dedicated by the artist to a M. Manguin, possibly the architect Pierre Manguin (1815-1869), who was responsible for the design of the Hôtel de la Païva in Paris, where Brisset also worked. The drawing later belonged to the art historian Marie-Madeleine Aubrun (1924-1998), a noted scholar of 19th century French painting, who published articles and catalogues on the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage, Achille and Léon Benouville, Gustave Boulanger, Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny, Pierre-Athanase Chauvin, Alexandre Desgoffe, Jules Dupré, Henri Lehmann and others.

Provenance:

Given by the artist to a M. Manguin [Pierre Manguin, Paris?]

Marie-Madeleine Aubrun, Paris

Her posthumous sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 8-9 February 1999, lot 129.

Artist description:

A painter of historical, religious and mythological scenes, as well as portraits and landscapes, Pierre-Nicolas Brisset was a pupil of Louis-Charles-Auguste Couder and François-Édouard Picot, and visited Italy in 1835. He achieved second place in the Prix de Rome competition for painting in 1837,

alongside Thomas Couture and Jean-Baptiste Guignet, and three years later won the Prix de Rome with a painting of Caius Gracchus, Summoned by the Senate, Leaves for Rome. He was a pensionnaire at the French Academy in Rome between 1841 and 1845, and it was during this period that Brisset painted a canvas of Saint Lawrence Displaying the Treasures of the Church that was much admired when it was exhibited at the Salon in Paris. On his return to France, Brisset assisted his teacher Picot on the frescoes in the Parisian church of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, while later working independently as a mural painter in the churches of Sainte-Clotilde, La Sainte-Trinité, Saint-Roch and Saint-Augustin. Among his non-ecclesiastical commissions were murals for the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, executed in 1879 but destroyed by fire in 1951, as well as the Hôtel Matignon and the Hôtel de la Païva in Paris, while in 1883 he helped to restore the frescoes at Fontainebleau. In 1862 Brisset designed the 100 franc banknote for the Banque de France, a design which remained in use until 1923.

Also active as an art teacher, among his most famous pupils was Henri Gervex.

Easel paintings by Brisset are today in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the Chateau of Versailles, the Musée de Art et d'Histoire in Narbonne, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and elsewhere, while some drawings by the artist are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Angers.