Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Augustin de SAINT-AUBIN (Paris 1736 - Paris 1807)

Portrait of a Young Girl in Profile

Black chalk, brush and brown ink and brown wash, with touches of red chalk.
Laid down on an 18th century French mount, with the anonymous mountmaker's drystamp ARD (Lugt 172) at the lower right of the mount.
174 x 150 mm. (6 7/8 x 5 7/8 in.)

Although unsigned, the present sheet is likely to have been drawn as a finished work of art, and intended for sale to a collector. This is further suggested by the fact that the drawing retains its original 18th century mount - stamped by the French mountmaker known only by his initials ARD - and was probably displayed as a work of art within the artist's lifetime.

This drawing bears the shop label of the Parisian firm Boin-Taburet on the old backing board. Established in 1873 through a partnership between the antique dealer Georges Boin and the jeweler Emile Taburet, Maison Boin-Taburet was based at 3, rue Pasquier in Paris. The firm produced exceptional pieces of silver and metalwork, furniture and decorative objects, and won a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889. The following year, Boin went into partnership with the silversmith Henry and the name of the firm was changed to Boin et Henry Orfèvres. The drawing later belonged to the French art historian André Blum (1881-1963).

Provenance:

Maison Boin-Taburet collection, Paris (with their printed label, inscribed XVIIIe / St. Aubin in red ink on the old backing board)
André Blum
William H. Schab Gallery, New York
Christian Humann, New York
His posthumous sale, New York, Sotheby's, 30 April 1982, lot 91 (as Danloux)
Pauline and Martin Alexander.

Artist description:

One of the foremost portrait engravers in France in the latter half of the 18th century, Augustin de Saint-Aubin was the most successful and prolific member of a prominent family of artists. Like his elder brother Gabriel, who was his first teacher, Augustin was not only a skilled engraver but a gifted draughtsman as well. He completed his training in the studios of the reproductive printmakers Etienne Fessard and Nicolas-Henri Tardieu, and soon won the first prize in a drawing competition at the Académie Royale. In 1757, together with François Boucher and Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger, Saint-Aubin designed illustrations for an edition of Boccaccio's Decameron. His early reputation, however, rests on a series of some forty portrait medallions engraved after designs by Cochin fils. Cochin was a great admirer of the artist, whom he claimed 'could put life even into the drawing of a wig', and nominated Saint-Aubin for the Académie Royale, where he was agrée in 1771. (He never submitted a reception piece, however, and as a result was denied full membership in the Academy.)

In 1776, Saint-Aubin succeeded Fessard as dessinateur et graveur de la bibliothèque du Roi, and not long afterward began to also work for the Duc d'Orléans, although the outbreak of the Revolution curtailed any extensive Royal patronage. Nevertheless, his graphic oeuvre includes more than 1,300 prints after his own designs. He continued to exhibit drawings and prints at the Salons until 1793, and spent the later years of his career designing book illustrations, frontispieces and printed ephemera, as well as engraving a large number of portrait medallions for a succession of bourgeois patrons; works strongly influenced by Charles-Nicolas Cochin.