

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Fernand CORMON (Paris 1845 - Paris 1924)

The Head of a Young Girl in Profile

Oil on canvas.

18 x 16.6 cm. (7 1/8 x 6 1/2 in.)

This oil sketch shares the same provenance and technique as two studies of male heads by Cormon in an English private collection, while a similar portrait sketch of the head of a woman was on the art market in New York in 1979. Cormon used the same technique of thinly painted oil over a pencil underdrawing on canvas in preparatory studies for his larger compositions, such as an oil sketch of The Head of Cain in the Snite Museum of Art at Notre Dame, which is a study for the artist's most famous work; the monumental canvas of Cain Fleeing with his Family, painted in 1880 and today in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Provenance:

The artist's studio

By descent to the artist's daughter, Madeleine Couderc

Her sale, ('Succession Cormon'), Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 7 March 1984, part of lot 16

Anonymous sale, New York, Sotheby's, 19 January 1995, part of lot 366

P. & D. Colnaghi, London

Private collection, London, in 1996

Private collection, London.

Artist description:

A pupil of Jan-Frans Portaels in Brussels, and later Alexandre Cabanel and Eugène Fromentin in Paris, Fernand Anne-Piestre Cormon made his Salon debut in 1868, exhibiting a painting of the Death of Mohammed. He gained his first fame with his painting of the Death of Ravana, King of Lanka at the Salon of 1875, and continued to exhibit there regularly, with much success. In 1880 his painting of Cain

Fleeing with his Family was awarded the medal of honour at the Salon, and was purchased by the State for the Musée du Luxembourg. He received several important public commissions, notably a series of ten large mural paintings of scenes from the Paleolithic era to the Iron Age for the amphitheatre of the Museum nationale d'histoire naturelle in the 1890's, and the decoration of the Petit Palais in 1911. Cormon was also an accomplished painter of portraits and flowerpieces. A Professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he was a popular teacher, and in the 1880's established an art school. Among his students at the Atelier Cormon were Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Emile Bernard, Louis Anquetin, Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Matisse and François Picabia.