

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Paul ALLIER (Paris 1883 - Paris 1953)

Le Billet Doux (Incroyable and Merveilleuse)

Pen and black ink and gouache.

Signed and dated PAUL ALLIER / 1920 at the lower left.

300 x 220 mm. (11 3/4 x 8 5/8 in.) [image]

331 x 250 mm. (13 x 9 7/8 in.) {sheet}

Dated 1920, the present sheet is a design for a pochoir entitled *Le Billet Doux*. The subject depicts an 'Incroyable' receiving a surreptitiously passed note from a female counterpart, a 'Merveilleuse', during the period of the Directoire in France, at the very end of the 18th century. 'Incroyables' and 'Merveilleuses' were members of a fashionable aristocratic subculture in Paris in the years just after the Reign of Terror, who - perhaps in a reaction to having survived the bloody events of 1793-1794 - dressed in an affected or exaggerated style and acted in a decadent, devil-may-care manner.

Artist description:

A pupil of Fernand Cormon at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he met Georges Lepape and André Marty, Paul Allier was active mainly as a fashion illustrator. He worked for such magazines as *L'Assiette au Beurre*, *Femina*, *Flirt*, *Le Jardin des Modes* and *Vogue*, and also produced book illustrations and theatre designs. Allier was also known for his design of a number of highly refined, hand-coloured stencil prints known as pochoirs, often published in collaboration with the Galerie Lutetia in Paris. These

pochoirs were often issued in thematic series, such as The Harem series, published in 1926, or The Seasons, which appeared in 1928. Each image signed by the artist and individually numbered, Allier's pochoirs were issued in limited editions and came to be much prized by collectors.