

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Albert MARQUET (Bordeaux 1875 - Paris 1947)

The Petit Bras of the Seine (Le petit bras de la Seine)

Pastel on paper, laid down on board.

Signed marquet in pencil at the lower left.

125 x 163 mm. (4 7/8 x 6 3/8 in.)

As the journalist and Socialist politician Marcel Sembat wrote of the artist, 'The banks of the Seine and its bridges were Marquet's first territory. To have them always under his eyes, he moved to the Quai St-Michel, in Matisse's old studio. There he could see the long parallels intersected by the lines of the bridges which form the symmetrical structures, the powerful geometric framework on which he relies... No artist has the same relationship with light as Marquet. It is as if he owned it. He possesses the secret of a pure and intense light which fills all the sky with its uniform and colourless glow. Above the mud, the stagnant waters, the glistening stones, the smoke of railroad stations, an immense sky stretches with no blue, no azure, but how luminous! Luminous as daylight itself and so transparent that a painting by Marquet gives the impression of a large window being opened into the outside.'

Pastels are relatively rare in Marquet's oeuvre. This small but vibrant pastel, which may be dated to c.1898-1900, was formerly in the collection of the critic and art historian Comte Arnauld Doria (1890-1977), who lent the work to the exhibition 'Paris vu par les maitres de Corot à Utrillo' at the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, in 1961. Stylistically comparable small pastel landscapes by Marquet of about the same date include one of The Banks of the Seine at Billancourt in a private collection.

The writer and artist André Rouveyre, once a fellow pupil in the studio of Gustave Moreau, recalled of Marquet's Parisian landscapes, 'A new form of beauty [was] revealed to our eye: the sun. Our winter sun that we could delight in on the banks of the Seine with its divine and friendly light, we could see it face to face in these Marquet paintings. We had Paris to thank for it and Marquet, who had absorbed so completely the atmosphere of the city.'

Exhibitions

Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Paris vu par les maitres de Corot à Utrillo, 1961, no.75 (lent by Arnould Doria).