

louis-Gabriel MOREAU (Paris 1740 - Paris 1806)

A River Landscape with a Seated Woman

Gouache on paper.

Numbered E1360 on a label pasted onto the reverse of the frame.

67 mm. (2 5/8 in.) diameter.

As Francis Watson has noted, with particular reference to the present work, 'Genre miniatures were almost as much in favour in France as portraits in little throughout the XVIII century, but landscape miniatures like those of Louis Moreau l'Ainé…are very rare. Working in gouache and water-colour on paper both in great and in little, Moreau specialised in delicately sensitive views of the scenery around Paris painted in a style which anticipates XIX century developments in landscape painting.'

Louis-Gabriel Moreau painted only a handful of miniatures of landscapes in this circular format, some of which have appeared on the art market in recent years. These include a pair of comparable miniatures on ivory depicting Diana and Actaeon and The Declaration, formerly in the Levaigneur, Féral and Bemberg collections, which was sold at auction in Paris in 2016, and a Riverside Landscape with a Fishing Boat and Sailing Vessels, sold from the Dreesmann collection in London in 2002. A circular oil on copper miniature by Moreau, depicting young women before an altar in a landscape, was sold at auction in Paris in 2011.

The provenance of this splendid landscape miniature by Moreau includes three notable collectors of the 20th century. The banker David David-Weill (1871-1952), chairman of Lazard Frères in Paris, was a prominent collector of paintings, drawings, miniatures, sculpture and furniture. He owned some twenty drawings and paintings by Moreau, including two other circular landscape miniatures. David-Weill's collection of portrait miniatures was acquired en bloc by Sir Charles Clore (1905-1979), who also assembled an important collection of Impressionist paintings. This landscape then passed into the collection of Dr. Erika Pohl-Ströher (1919-2016). Over a period of nearly forty years, between 1978 and

her death, Pohl-Ströher assembled a superlative collection of European portrait miniatures dating from the 16th to the 19th century.

Exhibitions

London, Garrard, An Exhibition of Important 18th Century & Early 19th Century Miniatures and Enamels, 1961, no.147 (as 'At the Water's Edge').

Literature:

Louis Gillet et al, Miniatures and Enamels from the D. David Weill Collection, Paris, 1957, pp.242-243, no.147 (as 'At the Water's Edge'); Margareta Friesen, Französische Miniaturen 1770-1880, Aus der Sammlung E. P. S., Darmstadt, 2001, p.424, pl.314 (as circle of Henri Sallembier, c.1815).

Artist description:

Known as 'Moreau l'Aîné' to distinguish him from his younger and more successful brother Jean-Michel Moreau, Louis-Gabriel Moreau was a landscape painter and draughtsman of considerable talent. A pupil of the view painter Pierre-Antoine Demachy, his first exhibited works, shown at the Exposition de la Jeunesse in 1760, were watercolour views of ruins, and this type of subject matter remained a common feature of his work throughout his career. Although he entered the Académie de Saint-Luc in 1774, he was never admitted into the Académie Royale. Nevertheless, Moreau served as painter to the Comte d'Artois, the future Charles X, and was given lodgings in the Louvre. He exhibited at the 'open' Salons held between 1797 and 1804, where he showed landscapes of Paris and its environs. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Moreau never seems to have visited Italy, and indeed his landscapes are rather less Italianate than they are typical scenes of the French countryside. Nature, in all its variety, was the artist's main concern, and in his painted and drawn compositions any figures are always quite small and subordinate to their surroundings. As a draughtsman, Moreau worked primarily in watercolour and gouache, both techniques in which he was able to achieve a remarkable spontaneity and freedom of handling, allowing him to capture effects of light and atmosphere. He also produced a number of landscape etchings.