

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



18th Century FRENCH SCHOOL

The Interior of a Theatre

Black chalk, with framing lines in black chalk.

Inscribed Tu es né pour estre / heureux. on the verso.

Further inscribed G de St. Aubin at the lower left of the old mount, and G. de SAINT-AUBIN / 1724-1780 on a cartouche pasted onto the old mount.

93 x 100 mm. (3 5/8 x 3 7/8 in.)

This charming little drawing of the interior of a circular theatre has long borne an attribution to the 18th century French draughtsman Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (1724-1780). The drawing may depict the interior of one of the dancing halls known as 'Vauxhalls', after Vauxhall Gardens in London, which were popular in Paris in the second half of the 18th century. Several of these theatres in Paris were designed by the architects Nicolas Lenoir, known as Lenoir le Romain (1733-1810), or Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789).

A similar small drawing by Saint-Aubin of the interior of a circular 'Vauxhall' theatre is in the Musée Carnavalet in Paris.

The present sheet, which is inscribed 'Tu es né pour estre heureux' ('You were born to be happy') in an old hand on the verso, once belonged to the Parisian auctioneer and collector Maurice Delestre (1848-1931), and was later acquired by his grandson, the expert Gaston Delestre (1913-1969).