Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Alfred DEHODENCQ (Paris 1822 - Paris 1882)

Portrait of the Artist's Sons

Pen and brown ink and brown wash. Laid down.

197 x 298 mm. (7 3/4 x 11 3/4 in.)

Alfred Dehodencq married Maria Amelia Calderon in Cadiz in 1857, and they had five children, three of whom died young. The artist, who delighted in depicting children in his genre paintings, produced a number of charming paintings and drawings of his own children. As his close friend and biographer Gabriel Séailles recalled, 'He loved his children passionately, with a jealous, almost tyrannical affection; he couldn't let them out of his sight; he always wanted them close to him; he drew and painted them incessantly; there wasn't a child whose portrait he didn't paint more than ten times.' Among other studies of his children by Dehodencq are a depiction of his son Edmond in the act of drawing, a study of three of the Dehodencq children also engaged in drawing, and a pastel portrait of his daughter Marie - all of which were in the collection of the painter's son Alfred in 1910 – as well as a sketch of The Family of the Artist which once belonged to Gabriel Séailles. A watercolour portrait sketch of Edmond Dehodencq was with Stephen Ongpin Fine Art in 2019 and is now in a private American collection, while a small pastel portrait of Edmond reading appeared at auction in 2019. The culmination of Dehodencq's depictions of his family is found in the finished painting Interior (The Children of the Artist) of 1872.

The elder of the two boys depicted here is probably Edmond Dehodencq (1860-1887), who was also a painter and trained with his father, but died young, at the age of twenty-seven. Edmond made his debut at the Salon in 1873 with a still life of oranges and pomegranates, and apart from still life subjects also painted genre scenes and pastoral views. The younger boy shown here at the right is likely to be the artist's second son, Alfred Dehodencq fils.

Exhibitions

Cambridge, MA, Fogg Art Museum, in 1934 (on loan); Coral Gables, Lowe Art Museum, and elsewhere, *Contemplating Character: Portrait Drawings and Oil Sketches from Jacques-Louis David to Lucian Freud*, 2015-2023, no.71.

Literature:

Robert Flynn Johnson, *Contemplating Character: Portrait Drawings and Oil Sketches from Jacques-Louis David to Lucian Freud*, exhibition catalogue, Oakland, 2018, p.75, no.71.

Artist description:

The French Orientalist painter Edme Alexis Alfred Dehodencq was a pupil of Léon Cogniet, entering the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1839. He made his Salon debut five years later. In 1849 he travelled to Spain, where he spent five years, producing paintings and drawings of scenes from Spanish life. In 1854 Dehodencq visited Morocco for the first time. He became the first Western artist to work extensively in the country, and divided his time between Cadiz and Tangiers until his return to France in 1863. A number of his genre scenes, depicting life in the Arab and Jewish communities of Morocco, were sent to Paris for exhibition at the Salons. After his early successes, however, Dehodencq died in obscurity. He left a large group of drawings, many of which are now in the Louvre and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lille, while others are in the collection of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.