

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Albert BARTHOLOMÉ (Thiverval-Grignon 1848 - Paris 1928)

The Artist's Nephew, Prosper Raymond de Fleury, Lying in Bed

Pastel on brown paper, laid down on canvas.

Signed and inscribed à mon neveu Prosper / ABartholomé and dated, possibly in a different hand, 1882 in black chalk at the upper left.

489 x 609 mm. (19 1/4 x 24 in.)

The young subject of this superb pastel, Prosper Raymond de Fleury (1880-1960), was Bartholomé's nephew by marriage. Although the present sheet is dated 1882 (possibly by a different hand from that of the artist), Thérèse Burolet, in her recently published catalogue raisonné of the artist's works, has dated this pastel to 1887, which would accord better with the apparent age of the sitter. The eldest child of Prospérie de Fleury Bartholomé's brother Olivier de Fleury, Georges-Marie Prosper Raymond de Fleury was born on 23rd April 1880 and appears in two other works by his uncle. A painting of him as a baby, accompanied by a nurse, was exhibited at the Salon in 1881 and is today in a private collection in Switzerland, while a pastel portrait of Prosper de Fleury at the age of three, wearing a sailor suit, is in a French private collection.

Relatively few pastels by Albert Bartholomé have survived to this day. (In her 2017 monograph and catalogue raisonné of Bartholomé's work, Thérèse Burolet lists a total of nineteen pastels by the artist.) Among stylistically comparable examples is a pastel portrait of the artist's first wife Prospérie reading, dated 1883, in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Exhibitions

San Francisco, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Legion of Honor, Judging by Appearance: Master Drawings from the Collection of Joseph and Deborah Goldyne, 2006, no.9; San Francisco, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Legion of Honor, Color into Line: Pastels from the Renaissance to the Present, 2021-2022, no.37.

Literature:

Robert Flynn Johnson and Joseph R. Goldyne, Judging by Appearance: Master Drawings from the Collection of Joseph and Deborah Goldyne, exhibition catalogue, San Francisco, 2006, pp.34-35, no.9; Thérèse Burolet, Albert Bartholomé 1848-1928, Paris, 2017, p.35, p.164, under no. P.8, p.173, under

no. PA.8, pp.175-176, no.PA.16, illustrated p.34, fig.PA.16 (where dated 1887); Furio Rinaldi, Color into Line: Pastels from the Renaissance to the Present, exhibition catalogue, San Francisco, 2021-2022, pp.66-67, no.37.

Artist description:

One of the finest sculptors of the 19th century in France, Albert-Paul-Auguste Bartholomé began his career as an artist following service as a volunteer in the French army during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. He was initially active as a painter, having studied under Barthélemy Menn at the Ecole des Figures (later the Ecole des Beaux-Arts) in Geneva and with Jean-Léon Gérôme at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Bartholomé made his debut at the Paris Salon in 1879, showing two portraits that earned praise from the critic Joris-Karl Huysmans and the painter Edgar Degas, among others. The artist continued to exhibit paintings and pastels at the Salons between 1879 and 1884, to continued, albeit modest, critical acclaim. He became a close and lifelong friend of Degas, who may have encouraged him to try his hand at sculpture. Following the death his young wife Prospérie de Fleury in 1887, Bartholomé designed and executed an evocative sculpture – depicting the artist embracing the body of his wife - which stood over her grave in Crépy-en-Valois. From this point onwards Bartholomé worked exclusively as a sculptor, exhibiting his works at the yearly exhibitions of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts from 1891 onwards. He made a particular speciality of funerary sculpture, and his best-known public work is a very large Monument to the Dead in the Parisian cemetery of Père Lachaise in Paris. Measuring over ten metres in width and made up of numerous larger than life size figures flanking the entrance to a tomb, the work was executed over a period of about a decade and was completed in 1899. The following year Bartholomé won the Grand Prix for sculpture at the Paris Exposition Universelle.