

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Jean-Démosthène DUGOURC (Versailles 1749 - Paris 1825)**

**La Beauté sacrifie aux Grâces, récompense les talents et est couronnée par l'Amour ('Beauty Sacrifices to the Graces, Rewards Talent, and is Crowned by Love')**

Pen and black ink and grey wash, with framing lines in brown ink. Oval.

Signed with the artist's monogram and dated JDD / 1776 at the lower left.

Laid down an 18th century mount, inscribed LA BEAUTÉ SACRIFICIE AUX GRACES, RECOMPANCE LES TALENTS, ET EST COURONNÉE PAR L'AMOUR. in the outer margin, which is in turn laid down.

The whole overmounted with a second, later mount decorated with flowers and ribbons in pen and black ink and grey wash, within framing lines in black ink, bearing the title LA BEAUTÉ / SACRIFICIE AUX GRACES, / Recompance les talents & est couronnée par / l'Amour. at the bottom.

Further inscribed Dessin Original / de Du Gourc. 1776 at the lower right of the overmount.

192 x 148 mm. (7 5/8 x 5 3/4 in.) [sheet, at greatest dimensions]

278 x 218 mm. (10 7/8 x 8 1/2 in.) [with mount, at greatest dimensions]

338 x 246 mm. (13 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.) [overmount]

Dated 1776, the present sheet depicts Beauty, crowned by Love, who sacrifices herself to the Three Graces on the right, while she rewards Talent – personified by figures representing Music, Painting and Military Courage – at her feet. Although this drawing remains unconnected with any known work by Dugourc, it has been tentatively suggested that it might be related to his designs for the interior of the château de Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne, constructed in 1777 by Bélanger for the Comte d'Artois.

### **Artist description:**

A hugely inventive and gifted artist, Jean-Démosthène Dugourc was active as a painter, draughtsman, watercolourist, decorator, engraver and sculptor, while also producing designs for book illustrations and frontispieces, furniture, stage sets and costumes, and fabrics. Born to a fairly wealthy and socially prominent family – his father was in the service of the Duc d'Orléans – the young Dugourc was permitted to study alongside the Duc's son Louis Philippe II, the future Philippe-Egalité, who was two years older. He received a classical education at the Oratorian-run Collège de Jully and showed an aptitude for drawing and an interest in perspective and the study of architecture from an early age. At fifteen Dugourc made a brief trip to Rome, where he met the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who inspired a fondness for antiquity in the young artist. Following the death of his mother and the loss of his father's wealth after a lawsuit, Dugourc decided to devote himself to a career as a professional artist. In 1776 he married the sister of the architect François-Joseph Belanger, Inspecteur des menus-plaisirs and court architect to Charles-Philippe, Comte d'Artois and brother of Louis XVI, and the future Charles X. Dugourc began collaborating with his brother-in-law on the decoration of the chateaux of Bagatelle, Saint-Cloud and Maisons. He also designed country houses and gardens for two of the wealthiest men in France, the banker Jean-Joseph de Laborde and the financier Claude Baudard de Saint-James, Treasurer of the Navy.

In 1780 Dugourc was appointed designer in the household of the King's brother, the Comte de Provence, for whom he worked on the decoration of the Château de Brunoy, now demolished, while two years later he published a series of engravings entitled Arabesques. In 1784 he was named dessinateur du garde-meuble de la couronne; in this role he was responsible for the design of interiors, furnishings and objects for the various royal palaces and chateaux, until the Revolution. Dugourc was, in fact, one of the first artists to introduce arabesque ornamentation, as well as Etruscan motifs, into architecture, furniture and fabrics during the reign of Louis XVI. Dugourc also provided scenery for the Paris Opéra and worked for both the Swedish and Russian courts, as well as supplying designs for cabinetmakers such as Georges Jacob and for the Pernon silk manufactory in Lyon between 1774 and 1790. In 1800 he went to Spain, where he was appointed architect at the court of Charles IV and worked for such members of the Spanish aristocracy as the Duchess of Alba and the Duchess of Osuna. Two years after his return to France in 1814 Dugourc was reinstated as dessinateur du garde-meuble. He died in Paris in 1825, at the age of seventy-five.