

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Richard de LALONDE (Paris 1735 - Paris 1808)**

## **Study for a Commode with the Monogram of Marie-Antoinette**

Pen and black ink and watercolour, drawn on a large album page.

A scale drawn in black ink and annotated with numbers in pencil at the bottom.

Inscribed *Meuble à étagère / à Trianon* and numbered 24 in pencil on the verso.

184 x 318 mm. (7 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.) [image]

This drawing by Lalonde is a design for a type of commode sometimes known as an *entre-deux*, combining a chest of drawers with a low cabinet and intended to full fill a space between windows, and is distinguished by the incorporation of the prominent monogram of Queen Marie-Antoinette. Lalonde's design seems to have been used, with slight variations, for a magnificent pair of meubles d'entre-deux sideboards commissioned in 1786 from the *maître-ébéniste* Guillaume Beneman for Marie-Antoinette's Salon des Jeux de la Reine in the Château de Compiègne and now in the Louvre.

A group of drawings by Richard de Lalonde, formerly in the collection of Hippolyte Destailleur, is today in the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin; these include three stylistically comparable designs for console tables, although executed only in pen and ink and grey wash. Other drawings for furniture by Lalonde are in the collections of the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin, the Courtauld Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

A closely related drawing by Lalonde for a commode, also with the monogram of Marie-Antoinette, was sold alongside the present sheet in the de Béhague sale in 1995. A drawing for a mirror frame by the artist, likewise incorporating the Queen's monogram, is in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York.

The present sheet was part of a large group of around seventy drawings – including designs for carved and upholstered furniture, doors, fireplaces, beds, chandeliers and carriages – by Lalonde and other designers that were in the possession of the de Béhague family in the 19th and 20th centuries.

## **Exhibitions**

New York, Brame & Lorenceau, Kate de Rothschild and Didier Aaron at Didier Aaron, Inc., *Master Drawings*, 1996, no.26; Stanford, Stanford University, Cantor Center for Visual Arts, *Classic Taste: Drawings and Decorative Arts from the Collection of Horace Brock*, March-May 2000.

### **Artist description:**

Relatively little is known of the life and career of Richard de Lalonde, who was active as an architect, furniture designer, ornamental draughtsman and decorator in the late 18th century. Although a significant figure in the history of Neoclassicism in France, his work is known mainly through engravings and he remains little-studied today. Active between about 1760, when his name is first recorded in the accounts of the Menus-plaisirs du roi, and 1796, Lalonde was firmly established by the 1780s. (As early as 1781, the Parisian colour merchant and varnishmaker Jean-Félix Watin, in his *L'art du peintre, doreur, vernisseur* published that year, praised Lalonde for his 'perfect and modern taste.') Lalonde also enjoyed some Royal patronage. Among his clients was the brother of the King, the Comte de Provence, for whom he designed a chest of drawers in 1786 that was later acquired by Louis XVI, while in 1788 he was commissioned to design two mahogany console tables for the Château de Saint-Cloud.

Lalonde worked at the Garde Meuble de la Couronne and also for such Parisian marchands-merciers as Simon-Philippe Poirier and Dominique Daguerre, producing numerous designs for furniture, ornament and silver. (An album of nearly a hundred watercolour designs for furniture and various decorative elements by Lalonde, perhaps intended for a marchand-mercier, is today in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.) The range of the artist's extensive oeuvre is thoroughly documented in two volumes of engravings after his designs, the *Oeuvres diverses de Lalonde, décorateur et dessinateur, contenant un grand nombre de dessins pour la décoration intérieur des appartements à l'usage de la peinture et de la sculpture en ornement des meubles de plus nouveau genre*, published between 1776 and 1788. The *Oeuvres diverses* was made up of twenty-six cahiers, each containing six plates, and its purpose was stated clearly on the title page: 'This collection is useful for artists and anyone wishing to decorate with good taste.' ('Ce Recueil utile aux Artistes et aux personnes qui veulent décorer avec goût.') The drawings provided a large number of designs, including for such items of furniture as commodes and secrétaires, which were used and adapted by cabinetmakers such as Guillaume Beneman, Martin Carlin, Joseph Stockel and Adam Weisweiler. The wide dissemination of the *Oeuvres diverses* spread Lalonde's reputation as a designer throughout France and the rest of Europe, notably in Austria and Hungary. After the French Revolution he continued to provide drawings and designs for furniture to several print publishers.