Edmé BOUCHARDON (Chaumont-en-Bassigny 1698 - Paris 1762)

Design for an Elevation of a Chapel or Church

Black chalk.

Inscribed *module* with a scale in pencil at the bottom.

Laid down on a full Mariette mount, inscribed *EDMUNDI* / *BOUCHARDON* in a cartouche at the bottom.

Further inscribed (by Eggimann) *Montage de Mariette* / *120-* and C*ollection Rodrigues* / *par Edme Bouchardon* / *1698-1762* on the reverse of the mount.

267 x 287 mm. (10 1/2 x 11 1/4 in.) [sheet]

521 x 408 mm. (20 1/2 x 16 in.) [mount]

Watermark: A fleur-de-lys within two circles with a V above.

Drawn during Edmé Bouchardon's time in Rome, the present sheet is a proposed design for an unidentified chapel or church, in which the artist seems to have included two different options for the vaulted dome. The use of black chalk, instead of the red chalk that Bouchardon preferred for almost all of his drawings, is a characteristic of 18th century architectural draughtsmanship, since it allowed for revisions and corrections to be made more easily. The artist also used black chalk for a handful of drawings of copies of other sculptor's works.

Bouchardon's extensive corpus of drawings includes very few architectural studies, among which is a sketchy design in red chalk for the Trevi Fountain in Rome, today in a private collection. That the artist was nevertheless capable of such ambitious architectural projects as seen in the present drawing is evident in the fact that his proposed plan for the renovation of the Trevi fountain in Rome involved the reconstruction of much of the building behind the fountain itself.

The present sheet once belonged to the 18th century collector and connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774) and remains on his distinctive blue mount, although it does not bear his collector's mark. Mariette was one of Bouchardon's closest friends and most fervent admirers and also became the foremost collector of his drawings. As Mariette recalled of Bouchardon, '*during his lifetime, he had distributed practically all of [his drawings] to his friends, and especially to me, as I have the greatest number of them.*' Mariette came to own well over seven hundred drawings by the artist, which were dispersed at auction some two years after his death. At the Mariette sale the present sheet is likely to have been part of a lot of fifteen drawings by Bouchardon acquired by one of the major buyers at the auction, the engraver and collector Abbé Charles-Philippe Campion de Tersan (1736-1819).

A later owner of this drawing was the Parisian solicitor Eugène Rodrigues (1853-1928). Along with Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, Walter Gay and other connoisseurs, Rodrigues was a founder member of the Société de Reproduction des Dessins de Maîtres in 1909. His large collection of drawings dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries, which included numerous architectural and ornamental studies, was dispersed at several auctions in Paris in the 1920s. At one of the sales of Rodrigues's collection in 1929 the present sheet was paired with another drawing by Bouchardon; a study in black chalk for the tomb of Clement XI. This drawing was then acquired, probably at the 1929 sale, by the Genevan bookseller, publisher and art historian Charles-Jean Eggimann (1863-1948), who had settled in Paris in 1905. Eggimann's collection, like that of Rodrigues, included a large number of ornamental and decorative drawings.

Exhibitions

Paris, Nicolas Schwed, *Dessins anciens et du XIXe siècle*, 2018, no.15.

Literature:

Pierre Rosenberg, *Les dessins de la collection Mariette: École française*, Milan, 2011, Vol.I, p.95, p.108, under no.F 357; Paris, Nicolas Schwed, *Dessins anciens et du XIXème siècle*, exhibition catalogue, 2018, unpaginated, no.15; Pierre Rosenberg, *Les dessins de la collection Mariette: Écoles flamande, hollandaise et allemande*, Madrid and Paris, 2022, Vol.II, p.478, illustrated under nos.F929 to F943 (as location unknown); Mickaël Szanto, 'Le dessin monté et emborduré au XVIIIe siècle', in Patrick Ramade, Nicolas Schwed and Pierre Stépanoff, ed., *Dessins français des collections privées françaises*, exhibition catalogue, Amiens, 2026, p.30, fig.5.

Artist description:

One of the most significant French sculptors of the 18th century, Edme Bouchardon was a pupil of Guillaume Coustou and won the Prix de Rome for sculpture in 1723. He spent the next nine years in Rome, receiving commissions for sculptures and portrait busts from British and French visitors to the city, and was admitted to the Roman Accademia di San Luca in 1723. He was also involved in several significant sculptural projects and competitions during his time in Rome, notably the design for the tomb of Pope Clement XI in St. Peter's and that of the Trevi Fountain. Bouchardon returned to Paris in 1732 and in 1736 was appointed draughtsman to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, with an annual income of 1,000 livres. Over the course of the next twenty-five years, from 1737 until a few months before his death, Bouchardon provided a large number of designs for both medals and tokens to be executed by various graveurs-médailleurs for the Royal Mint. Admitted into the Académie Royale in 1745, Bouchardon obtained prestigious Royal and public commissions throughout his later career - notably the Fountain of the Four Seasons on the rue de Grenelle in Paris and an equestrian monument to Louis XV, which stood on the Place de la Concorde until the Revolution - and his fame and reputation as a sculptor was unrivalled in the 18th century.

Bouchardon was regarded by connoisseurs, collectors and fellow artists as one of the finest draughtsmen of his day. He was as well known for his drawings as for his sculptural works and indeed

chose to exhibit both sculptures and finished drawings (mainly historical and allegorical subjects, as well as portraits) at the Salons. Bouchardon worked almost exclusively in red chalk, and while many of his drawings were intended as preparatory studies for his sculptural projects, many more were done as independent works. That his drawings were greatly admired by his contemporaries is seen in the comments of the artist Charles-Nicolas Cochin, who described Bouchardon as 'certainly the greatest sculptor and the best draughtsman of his century.' The 18th century collector and connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette likewise rated Bouchardon very highly as a draughtsman and assembled the largest private collection of his drawings, including the present sheet. Similarly, artists as François Boucher, Jean-Baptiste Deshays, Charles-Joseph Natoire and Jean-François de Troy all owned drawings by Bouchardon. Around two thousand drawings by Bouchardon survive today, of which by far the single largest group – numbering around 1,300 sheets, mostly acquired by bequest from the artist's descendants – is today in the Louvre.