

EDMÉ BOUCHARDON

Chaumont-en-Bassigny 1698-1762 Paris

Male 'Académie' seated and viewed from the back

Red chalk. Inscribed, lower right: *Bouchardon*.
533 x 376 mm.

PROVENANCE: Galerie Charles et André Bailly, Paris 1989 – Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, Monte Carlo 1990 – John Elder, Toronto – Thence by descent

LITERATURE: Galerie Charles et André Bailly, *Dessins et esquisses de maîtres anciens et modernes*, May 17-July 21, Paris 1989, no. 19, illus. (catalogue written by Olivier Meslay) – sale cat., Sotheby's, Monte Carlo, June 15, 1990, no. 29, repr. - Anne-Lise Desmas, Edouard Kopp, Guilhem Scherf, Juliette Trey, exhib. Cat., *Edmé Bouchardon (1698-1762), une idée du beau*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, September 14- December 5, 2016; *Bouchardon: Royal Artist of the Enlightenment*, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, January 10-April 2, 2017

EXHIBITIONS: Galerie Charles et André Bailly, *Dessins et esquisses de maîtres anciens et modernes*, Paris, May 17-July 21, 1989, no. 19, repr.

A celebrated French sculptor during the reign of Louis XV, Edmé Bouchardon is justly appreciated today for his admirable red chalk drawings. From the copies he made in Rome after the Antique and Renaissance masters to his final project of the equestrian statute of Louis XV, his style hardly evolved from the strict linear approach and subtle shading of his youth. He rarely drew in black chalk after arriving in Rome, preferring the technique of red chalk throughout his career.

Bouchardon perfected his drawing style during the nearly decade he was a *pensionnaire* at the French Academy in Rome. During this time he copied antique sculpture available to him like the Apollo Belvedere, Farnese Hercules, Laocoön and particularly the Barberini Faun for which he sculpted a life size copy in marble as an obligation of all *pensionnaires* at the French Academy in Rome.¹

Upon his return to Paris, he published two albums of *académies* between 1737 and 1739, several of which were destined for use by students and others for an audience of collectors: *Livre de diverses figures d'Académies dessinées d'après le naturel par Edme Bouchardon, Sculpteur du Roy* in 1737 followed by a second volume in 1739.² Each of these volumes comprised 12 plates engraved by Perroneau, Aveline, Aubert and Huquier after Bouchardon's drawings, with the second album including six studies of women, rare in the sculptor's *académies* apparently due to the cost of hiring female models outside the French

¹ A.-L. Desmas and Juliette Trey in Anne-Lise Desmas, Edouard Kopp, Guilhem Scherf, Juliette Trey, exhib. Cat., *Edmé Bouchardon (1698-1762), une idée du beau*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, September 14- December 5, 2016, pp. 70-75 in which copies after these aforementioned antique sculptures are reproduced.

² J. Trey in Desmas, Kopp, Scherf, Trey, *op. cit.*, pp.142-147, "Presque d'un seul trait, sans hésiter et sans se reprendre," *Les académies de Bouchardon*. » Trey believes (p.154) that these *académies* were not necessarily meant as a lexicon for his students, since the sculptor taught at the Académie Royale's *Ecole du modèle* only during one month in 1748.

Academy's strict parameters, directly connected to the Rue de Grenelle fountain design.³ These albums were published concurrently with similar albums by other artists like Charles Natoire, François Boucher, Carle Van Loo, Hyacinthe Collin de Vermont and Pierre-Charles Trémolières, all meant to instruct young artists in their appreciation of the human figure.

Bouchardon's *académies* were quite popular with an enlightened clientele; Pierre Mariette owned 25 of them and the Swedish ambassador Carl Gustav Tessin 4. Several of these are reproduced in the catalogue of the current Bouchardon exhibition at the Musée du Louvre.⁴

In our drawing, a male figure is depicted seated on a cushion or stone, his back to the viewer, both hands clasping his ankles. The position of the model's back, from the lower left corner of the sheet to the right, its muscle's defined with subtle modeling, is similar to the back of the Belvedere torso (fig. 1), an antique sculpture often copied by Renaissance artists and which may have inspired Bouchardon to make the present drawing after having seen it while in Rome in the Vatican collections. The intricate hatching in the background of the drawing enables the figure to detach itself from the picture surface thereby lending it a three dimension sculptural result.



Fig. 1: *Belvedere Torso*, marble.
Vatican collections, Rome

³ J. Trey, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁴ J. Trey, *op. cit.*, nos. 59-69.