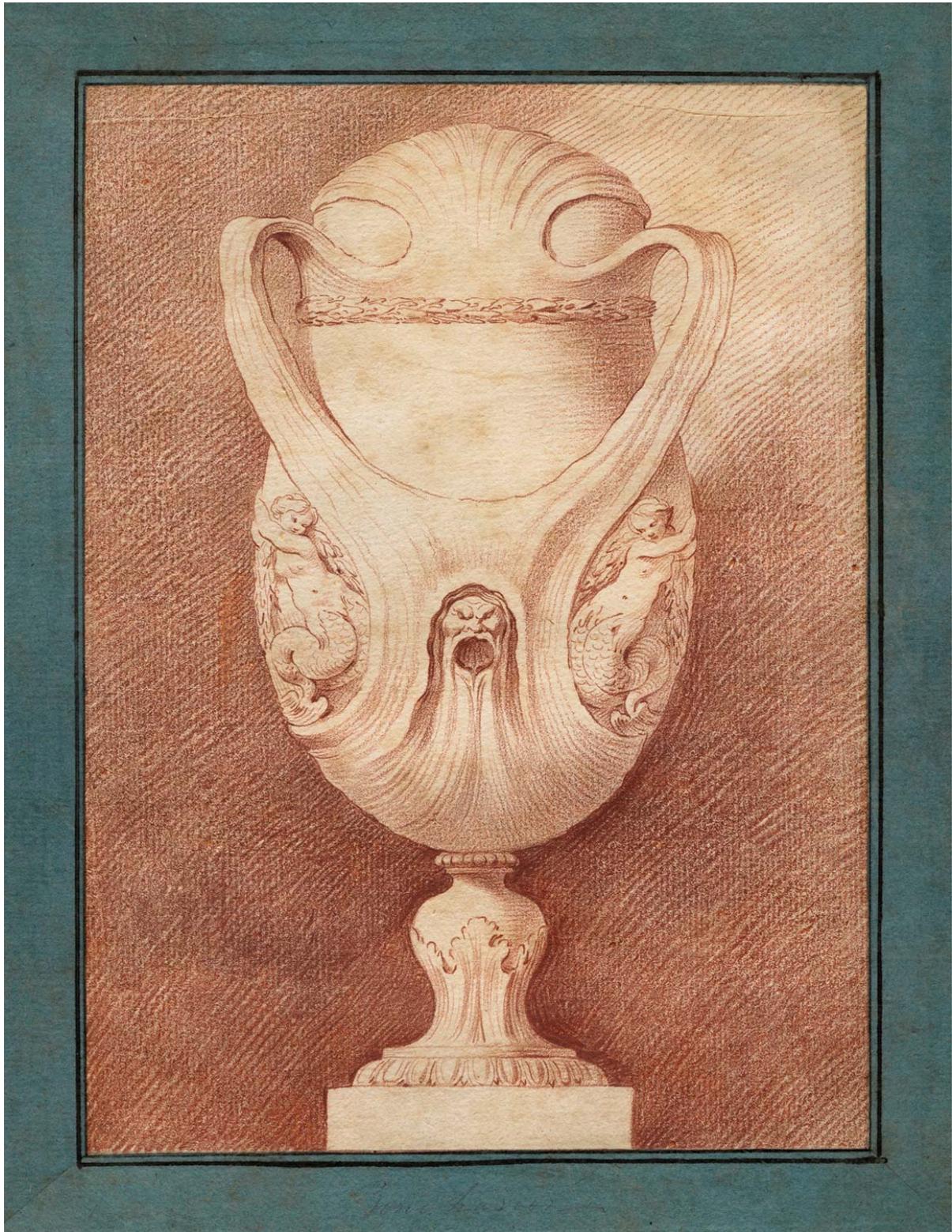


# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

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EDME BOUCHARDON

1698 Chaumont - Paris 1762

*Design for a covered Vase, the Handle joined to the Lid*

Red chalk on laid paper, in its old mount; executed before 1737.  
223 by 163 mm

PROVENANCE: Captain F. J. C. Holdsworth, Widdicombe House, Kingsbridge, Devon – Sale, Christie's, London, 24 May 1921, part of lot 12 – The collection of Paul Oppé (1878-1957), London

LITERATURE: *Edme Bouchardon (1698-1762). Une idée du beau*, exhib. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris 2016 and J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles 2017, p. 295, note 17. (*Le dessin, non localisé, est connu par une photographie visible dans les cartons «Bouchardon» de la Witt Library au Courtauld Institute à Londres (H. 0,220; L. 0,160; [coll. F. J. C. Holdsworth; sa vente, Londres, Christie's, 24 mai 1921, no 15, repr.]*)  
Pierre Rosenberg, 'Boucher et le génération de 1700', in *François Boucher et l'art rocaille dans les collections de l'École des beaux-arts*, exhib. cat., Ecole nationale des beaux-arts, Paris, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, 2003-2006, p. 183, ill. 5 (with the erroneous information that the drawing is preserved at the Courtauld Institute).

EXHIBITED: *The Paul Oppé Collection*, Royal Academy, London 1958, no. 339

ENGRAVING: In reverse by Gabriel Huquier for the *Premier Livre de Vases | inventés par | Edme Bouchardon | Sculpteur du Roy | a Paris chez Huquier*, plate 2, Paris 1737. [Fig. 1]

The present drawing is a preparatory drawing for the series of engraved vases. Bouchardon, as was his habit, carefully prepared the engravings by executing lavish red-chalk drawings (reversed with respect to the engraving), polished in every detail. The *Premier* and *Second Livre de Vases*, with twelve pieces each, engraved by Gabriel Huquier from drawings by Bouchardon, were announced in the *Mercure de France* in May 1737.

From the sixteenth century on, artists seized upon the vase as a support for decorative creations that gave them great freedom for the creative imagination. Bouchardon, a collector of prints and illustrated books, fed off of these engraved series. He was certainly familiar with the series of antique vases by Agostino (Muzi) Veneziano (1530-31): one of them, with astonishing coils of snakes in the guise of handles, is found in one of Bouchardon's creations.<sup>1</sup> He may also have been struck by the anthropomorphic figures adorning the top of the ewers by Enea Vico (1543).<sup>2</sup> One can scarcely go wrong pointing out the influence on his imagination that the extraordinary series by Jean Lepautre (1618-1682) must have had, since it is known that he collected them.<sup>3</sup>

But Bouchardon's approach to the subject was different from that of his predecessors. His vases are characterized by the simplicity of their presentation. The motif is always seen on the same scale, tightly framed by the boundary line on a bare, striated background with a few light and shadow

<sup>1</sup> Bouchardon, *Second Livre*, no. 6

<sup>2</sup> Bouchardon, *Premier Livre* nos. 4, 12, and *Second Livre*, nos. 3, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Bouchardon owned a number of Lepautre vase prints (catalogue of his sale, November 1762, nos. 112, 413).

effects. The originality of Bouchardon's subjects and the clarity of his graphic line (perfection of the contour, fluidity of the volumes) make each of his vases a pinnacle of the art of design.

There is little doubt that these two series influenced and inspired François Boucher and Jacques Saly (1746), who both authored series that were either contemporary with those by Bouchardon or appeared a few years later.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 1: Gabriel Huquier after Edme Bouchardon,  
Vase (A-2), etching, from the set: *Premier Livre de Vases*, plate no. 2.  
Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Bibliothèque, Collection Jacques Doucet, [Inv. 4 est 312].

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<sup>4</sup> The text is based on the entry by Édouard Kopp, 'Secular Compositions', in *Bouchardon, Royal Artist of the Enlightenment*, exhib. cat., The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, January 10 to April 2, 2017, pp. 292-294.