

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



AUGUSTIN DE SAINT-AUBIN

1736 - Paris - 1807

Portrait of a Young Man

Pen and grey ink and wash, with touches of green wash and white heightening.

Signed and dated at the lower left: *Aug. St. Aubin inv. 1777.*

106 x 79 mm

PROVENANCE: Georges Bourgarel, Paris – Galerie Charles et André Bailly, Paris 1989 – Jean-Luc Baroni, New York 1991 – Charles Ryskamp, New York – Private collection, Germany

The most successful and prolific member of a prominent family of artists, Augustin de Saint-Aubin was among the foremost portrait engravers in France in the latter half of the 18th century. Like his elder brother Gabriel, Augustin was not just a skilled engraver but a gifted draughtsman as well. He entered the studio of the engraver Etienne Fessard in 1755, and soon won first prize in the drawing competition at the Académie Royale. In 1757, Augustin worked alongside François Boucher and Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger in designing illustrations for an edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. His early reputation rests upon his series of some forty portrait medallions engraved after designs by Cochin *fils*. A great admirer of the artist, who he claimed 'could put life even into the drawing of a wig'¹, Cochin nominated Saint-Aubin for the Académie, where he was accepted in 1771. Six years later, Augustin succeeded Fessard as *Graveur et Dessinateur de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, although after the outbreak of the Revolution he found himself with fewer prospects for Royal patronage. He continued to regularly exhibit both drawings and prints at the Salons until 1789, and spent the last years of his career designing book ornaments and engraving medallions and portraits for a succession of bourgeois patrons.

¹ Jean Adhémar, *Graphic Art of the Eighteenth Century*, 1964, pp. 103-4.