

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

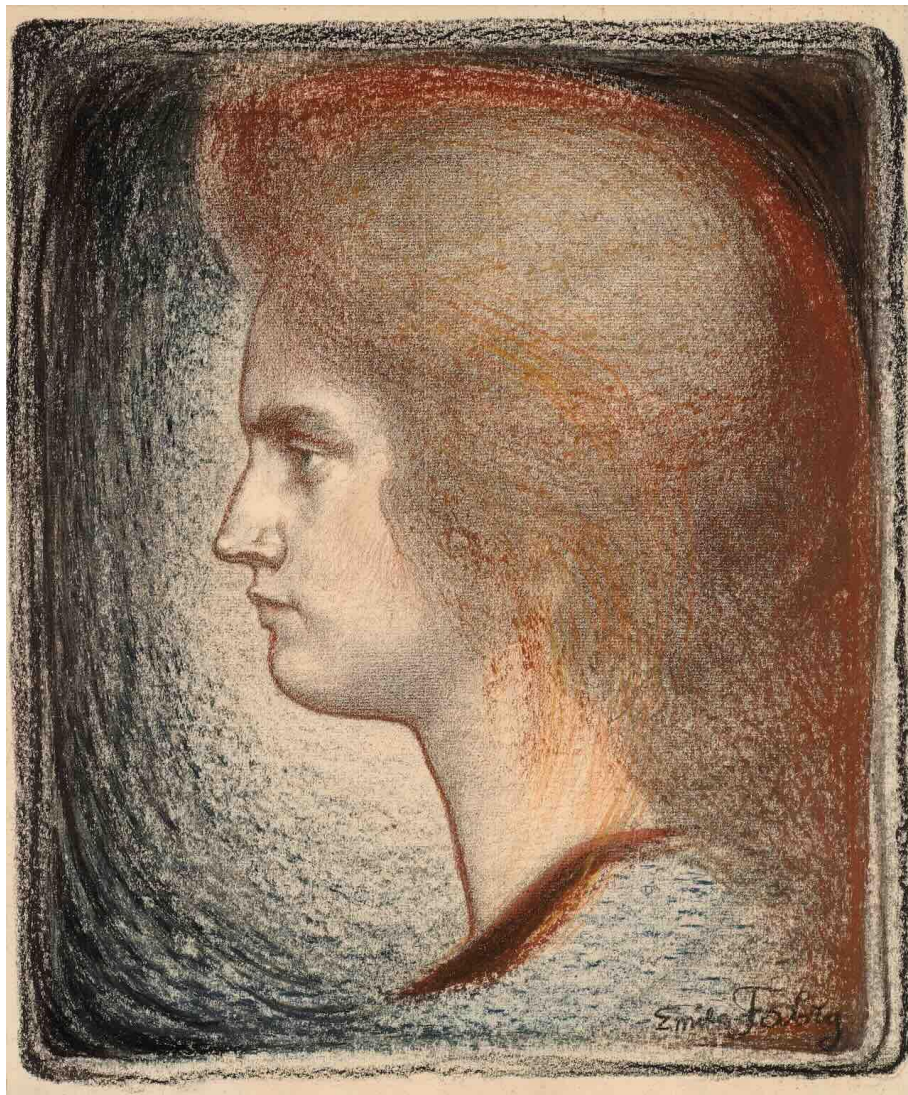
MASTER DRAWINGS

Emile Fabry
(Verviers 1865 – 1966 Woluwe-Saint-Pierre)

Portrait of the artist's daughter, Suzanne Fabry

Wax crayon on paper
45.5 x 37.5 cm.

Provenance:
Private Collection, Besançon, until 2024.



The Symbolist artist Emile Fabry depicts his daughter Suzanne, also an artist, in profile. Her wavy, auburn hair and strong features are recognisable from later self-portraits (fig. 1). The crayon drawing, technically impressive, is related to a double pencil portrait of Suzanne and her elder brother Barthélemy from 1921 (fig. 2). It can also be dated to the early 1920s when Suzanne was in her late teens. Fabry regularly used his family, and particularly his daughter, as models (fig. 3)



Fig. 1, Suzanne Fabry, *Self-Portrait*, 1932, oil on canvas, 111 x 74 cm, Private Collection



Fig. 2, Emile Fabry, *Suzanne and Barthélemy Fabry*, 1921, pencil on paper, 45 x 75 cm, Private Collection



Fig. 3, Emile Fabry, *Suzanne Fabry*, 1925, silver gelatin print, 11.9 x 9 cm, Musée de la Photographie, Brussels

Though today less well known than Félicien Rops or Ferdinand Khnopf, for example, in his day Fabry was an important Symbolist, and a member of prominent artists groups such as *Pour L'Art* and *La Rose+Croix*. In some ways a successor to Puvis de Chavannes, Fabry's work is characterised by *sfumato* effects and a sense of monumentality. Indeed, the artist was the founder of another group, *L'art monumental*, which aimed to produce large-scale art for the public sphere, and thereby elevating the public conscience by means of representing idealised, universal themes.

Three years before Suzanne's birth, Fabry was named Professor of Drawing at the l'Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, where he had been a student in the 1880s, and Suzanne's childhood was spent in his house-studio in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, a recently urbanised south-eastern neighbourhood of the city. In 1923, around the time of this portrait, Suzanne herself enrolled as a student at the Académie, where her teachers included Jean Delville and Constant Montald, both close friends of her father and co-founders of *L'art monumental*.

Having graduated from the Académie in 1928, Suzanne began her career as a painter in the 1930s, taking part in the triennial Salon in Antwerp and the quadrennial Salon in Liège. Around the same time, her father was completing a cycle of large-scale paintings for the entrance and staircase of Brussels' opera house, *La Monnaie*, where, many years later, Suzanne and her husband Edmond Delescluze would be employed as costume and set designer respectively.