

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Suzanne Fabry
(Brussels 1904 – 1985)

Study of a female nude, with the artist as model

Black chalk on paper
75 x 54.5 cm. (29 ½ x 21 ½ in.)

Provenance:
Estate of the artist;
Thence by descent until 2024.



This large-scale study of a female nude highlights Suzanne Fabry's exceptional skill as a draughtswoman. Remarkably, the model for the piece is the artist herself. A prolific self-portraitist, Fabry often used her own image in her work during the 1920s and 1930s, sometimes in direct self-portraits and at other times integrating her features into broader compositions (figs 1 and 2). It is therefore unsurprising that she chose herself as the subject for this impressive academic study, likely created in the early 1930s.



Fig. 1, Suzanne Fabry, *Self-portrait*, 1940, red chalk on paper, 63.5 x 56 cm, formerly with Colnaghi Elliott Master Drawings



Fig. 2, Suzanne Fabry, *Triple Self-portrait*, 1934, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 89.5 cm, formerly with Elliott Fine Art

Born in Brussels in 1904, Suzanne Fabry was the daughter of the renowned Symbolist painter Emile Fabry (1865–1966). While not a Symbolist herself, Suzanne possessed a lyrical, dreamlike sensibility, which was particularly evident in her portraits.

During World War I, Suzanne and her family relocated to England, first living in Herefordshire and later in the coastal town of Saint Ives, Cornwall. They returned to Belgium after the war, and in 1923, Suzanne began her studies at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts. There, she was mentored by Jean Delville (1867–1953) and Constant Montald (1862–1944), prominent members of *L'art monumental*, an artistic movement co-founded by her father. This group sought to elevate cultural consciousness through monumental public art, focusing on idealized and universal themes. Their commanding depictions of the human form would deeply influence Suzanne's artistic vision.

After graduating from the Académie in 1928, Suzanne launched her career in the 1930s, participating in prestigious exhibitions such as the Antwerp Triennial in 1930 and the Liège Quadrennial in 1931. Around this time, her father was completing a series of large-scale paintings for the entrance and grand staircase of Brussels' opera house, La Monnaie. Years later, Suzanne and her husband, Edmond Delescluze (1905–1993), would contribute to the opera house as costume and set designers, respectively.

Suzanne continued to paint throughout her life, balancing her artistic career with her role as head of La Monnaie's costume workshop. Her work retained its distinctive sensitivity and elegance until her death in 1985.