

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Charles-Louis Bazin
(Paris 1802 – 1859 Yssingeaux)

Portrait of Alexandrine Émilie Brongniart

Signed and dated lower edge: *Charles Bazin / d'après F Gérard / 1852*

Pencil on paper

17.8 x 12.5 cm. (7 x 4 in.)

Provenance:

Private Collection, Paris;

Giquello, Paris, 5 July 2024, lot 109.



Charles-Louis Bazin's drawing is a copy of François Gérard's now fragmentary portrait of Alexandrine Emilie Brogniart (fig. 1), exhibited to great success at the Salon of 1795. The drawing itself was used as the basis for Bazin's lithograph of the same subject (fig. 2).



Fig. 1, François Gérard, *Portrait of Alexandrine Emilie Brogniart*, 1795, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 38.1 cm, Yale University Art Gallery



Fig. 2, Charles Louis Bazin, *Portrait of Alexandrine Emilie Brogniart*, 1852, lithograph, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

The portrait, alongside his *Belisarius*, constituted Gérard's Salon debut. The sitter, then aged fifteen, was the second daughter of the architect Alexandre Théodore Brogniart, one of Gérard's most important early patrons. Emilie demonstrated artistic talent from a young age and received drawing lessons from Jacques-Louis David and Gérard himself. Gérard depicts her, arms crossed, with stylus in hand.

Emilie mentions her portrait sessions with Gérard in her diary. From these entries, we know that the initial composition was sketched out in April and was finished by the 30th *Germinal* (20th April) 1795. It seems, however, that Gérard was dissatisfied with this work. In her entry from 17th May, Emilie writes, 'Gérard was so unhappy with my portrait that he insisted on starting over.'

The reworked version was a great success and the Salon critics were full of praise. The *Mercure de France* for instance wrote that: '*This amiable young girl presents herself to the critic with modesty, but without fear. She's alive, is about to blush if you look at her with an interested eye. The budding roses and lilies of her flesh announce the dawn of a life to which blossoming adulthood already gives added attraction.*'

As a pupil of Gérard, Bazin could well have been granted access to the original canvas, which remained in the Brogniart collection until 1897. He was not the only artist to copy the

famous portrait: there exists also a small Ingres pencil sketch in the Musée Montauban, as well as a larger chalk study by Constance Charpentier (fig. 3), now in a private collection.



Fig. 3, Constance Charpentier, *Portrait of Alexandrine Emilie Brogniart*, chalk on paper, 47 x 32.5 cm, Private Collection