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After JOHANN GOTTFRIED SCHADOW
(Berlin 1764-1850)

CROWN PRINCESS LUISE OF PRUSSIA

ca. 1874

Incised in the interior: 2291 h.; partial paper label
Biscuit porcelain from Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur, Berlin
48.5 x 28 x 25.1 cm; 19 1/8 x 11 x 9 7/8 in.

Provenance

Private collection, Saint Cloud, from 1920s or 1930s;
By descent in the family;
Sale, Audap & Associés, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 6 April 2023, lot 99.

Comparative Literature

Yvette Deseyve (ed.) with Sintje Guericke. *Johann Gottfried Schadow, Embracing Forms*, Exh. cat. Berlin (Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), 2022.

Dorothee Heim. *Die Berliner Porzellanplastik und ihre skulpturale Dimension 1751–1825, Der Sammlungsbestand des Kunstgewerbemuseums Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*. Berlin 2016

Ulrike Krenzlin. *Johann Gottfried Schadow*. Berlin 1990.

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We are grateful to Dr Samuel Wittwer for considerable help with this entry.

This graceful biscuit porcelain bust of Crown Princess Luise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1776 – 1810), was made after a model by Johann Gottfried Schadow, the official court sculptor to the Prussian Crown, and the sculptor of the chariot on top of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Luise's gracile and idealised features were captured alongside those of her sister Frederike to mark their near simultaneous weddings. Luise married Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia on 24 December 1793, and Friederike married his younger brother a few days later.

When the sisters arrived in Berlin the 'triumphal procession' of the two princesses reached its zenith. Schadow reported "in 1794 a magic spell had taken effect in Berlin, extending through all estates, with the appearance of the aristocratic sisters [...]. Born in Mecklenburg but raised near the banks of the [River] Main, they had been blessed with the most pleasant of the German dialects, and those who also heard their voices in addition to enjoying the sight of their comeliness were delighted by these."¹

Baron Friedrich Anton Freiherr von Heinitz (1725-1802), a trustee of the Academy and head of the Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur or KPM, played a key role in arranging the princesses' sculptural portraits; he requested an initial sitting on Schadow's behalf. According to Schadow's autobiography, the Crown Prince was present at the sittings. It is known that the terracotta busts were completed sometime in the last week in July of 1795, as on 2 September 1795 Schadow stated that "five weeks ago, I completed the main images from life of Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess and her Royal sister". The terracotta of Princess Friederike survives;² that of Luise is lost.

The busts were exhibited in the Autumn exhibition of the Academy of Arts and on 11 November 1795, at the end of the exhibition, Schadow received 500 thalers from the Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur for the plaster models of the double portrait and the two busts of the princesses.³

¹ Deseyve and Guericke 2022, p. 79.

² Alte Nationalgalerie, Inv. No. B II 75 (CR 37).

³ Krenzlin 1990, p. 139, and Deseyve and Guericke 2022, p. 86, footnote 2.

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Schadow had the busts cast in plaster by Johann Nicolaus Beyer, a skilled moulder employed in his workshop. The first versions were completed by 2 September 1795 at the latest, and Schadow recorded selling twenty-six examples of Princess Luise and twenty of her sister. Luise was also copied in papier-mâché by the Ludwigscluster Cartonfabrik in 1795-96.⁴ The Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur produced a smaller scale version of 26cm high on a circular socle by Carl Friedrich Riese based on the model of Johann Gottfried Schadow in 1798 (Fig. 1).

Two earlier large busts in biscuit porcelain are known, one in the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, (inv. no, Hz 646) and another in Schloss Charlottenburg; the former came from the Hohenzollern Schloss and the latter was presented to the King in April 1803. The Kunstgewerbemuseum example was in the recent exhibition in the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, where it was dated (presumably incorrectly) to 1795.⁵ These 1803 models are differently structured having a back of the original cut away. Our bust is much closer to Schadow's original plaster even down to the mould lines on the side, the definition is sharper and more detailed and the hair at the back is also complete. The plaster of Luise in the Berlin Akademie der Künste measures 59 x 35 x 25cm. Our bust in biscuit porcelain is about 18 percent smaller, as one would expect from the normal shrinkage which occurs during the drying and firing of porcelain.

We know of one other version of our bust which was acquired by The Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg in 1964 (Skulpt.Slg 6011). The height is 48cm and appears to be identical to ours bearing the same incised 'Modell 2291'; this version was issued in 1874.

The two portrait busts taken from life were used as the basis for Schadow's great full-scale double portrait in plaster, which was presented at the Berlin Academy exhibition of 26 September 1795. The marble version (Fig. 2) was completed in 1797. Although it has now become the most beloved of all Berlin sculptures, Friedrich Wilhelm III, on becoming king, rejected a prominent place for the marble group, partly because his widowed sister-in-law

⁴ An example in papier-mâché survives in Potsdam, Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Inv. No. Skulpt.slg. 1062, GK III 4808.

⁵ Desevye and Guericke 2022, p. 182, cat 30.

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Friederike had fallen out of favour because of an unsuitable liaison. It was hidden from public view until 1893⁶ and relegated to an obscure part of the Berlin palace and seen by few until rediscovered and reassessed in the early twentieth century, notably through the Centennial Exhibition of German Art in the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, in 1906.⁷ After the demolition of the City Palace in 1950 it was moved to the Alte Nationalgalerie where it remains. The Prinzessinnengruppe has recently been the subject of an exhibition at the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin entitled 'Johann Gottfried Schadow, Berührende Formen' (see Fig. 3).⁸

Schadow had studied in Rome where he met Canova with whom he maintained a close artistic exchange. The Prussian minister von Heinitz, chairman of the Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur, found a position for Schadow at the royal factory in 1787. This led to his collaboration with the factory and proved decisive for its development.⁹ He was appointed Court Sculptor in 1788.

According to Schadow, female busts were "one of the most difficult tasks in art". The special difficulty consisted in "unifying likeness and gracefulness, encapsulating within a single moment the charm which life contains through the inspired motion and multifariousness of infinitely many moments",¹⁰ this requires "a delicate sense of art" and "a spirit of observation, I would almost say, bordering on cunning".¹¹

⁶ Krenzlin 1990, p. 141.

⁷ Deseyve and Guericke 2022, p. 200.

⁸ The exhibition ran from October 2022 to February 2023.

⁹ Deseyve and Guericke 2022, p. 49.

¹⁰ Deseyve and Guericke 2022, p. 42.

¹¹ Krenzlin 1990, p. 139.

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Fig. 1. Johann Karl Freidrich Riese, after Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Queen Luise of Prussia*, 1798.
Biscuit Porcelain, 2.5 x 10.5 x 7 cm
Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum

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Fig. 2. Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Momument to Princess Luise von Mecklenburg-Strelitz and her sister Friederike (Prinzessinnengruppe)*, 1797.
Marble, 172 x 102 x 61.5 cm
Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie.

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Fig. 3. From the recent exhibition in the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, from left to right: Princess Friederike, terracotta, 1795. Crown Princess Luise of Prussia (1) plaster, 1795, (2) papier-mâché (tinted pink) Ludwigscluster Cartonfabrik 1795, (3) biscuit porcelain, KPM and (4) marble 1798/99.