

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Max von Chézy
(Paris 1808 – Heidelberg 1843)

Portrait of a woman holding roses

Signed and dated lower right: *Chezy. 1833*
Pencil on paper
25.2 x 20.5 cm.

Provenance:
Private Collection, Paris.



This sensitive portrait drawing depicts a young woman seated half-length, her gaze directed calmly towards the viewer. Across her lap she holds a few stems of roses, evoking youthful beauty and tender affection, and underscoring the sitter's modesty and emotional reserve. Executed in graphite with fine contour lines and restrained tonal modelling, the work demonstrates a controlled and precise approach to draughtsmanship. The sitter's costume, with its pronounced gigot sleeves and high-waisted bodice, together with her coiffure of ringlets and high chignon, marks her out as a fashionable young lady of the early 1830s.

Born in Paris in 1808, Chézy was the second son of the French orientalist scholar Antoine-Léonard de Chézy (1773–1832) and Helmina von Chézy (1783–1856), a prominent German writer, poet and librettist. He was thus raised in an unusually cosmopolitan and intellectually rich artistic milieu, shaped equally by the visual arts and by literature, music and theatre.

Chézy received his artistic training in Dresden, Vienna, Munich and Paris, studying under notable figures including Ferdinand Hartmann, Karl Wilhelm Wach and Louis Hersent. By the early 1830s, his work reflects this diverse formation, combining academic discipline with the intimate, understated sensibility characteristic of German Biedermeier portraiture. Executed in 1833 during his Baden-Baden period, the present drawing exemplifies this synthesis with particular refinement.