

# COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Marguerite Dubois  
(1883 - ?)

*Head study of a bearded man wearing a headscarf*

Monogrammed and dated: *MD / 1907*

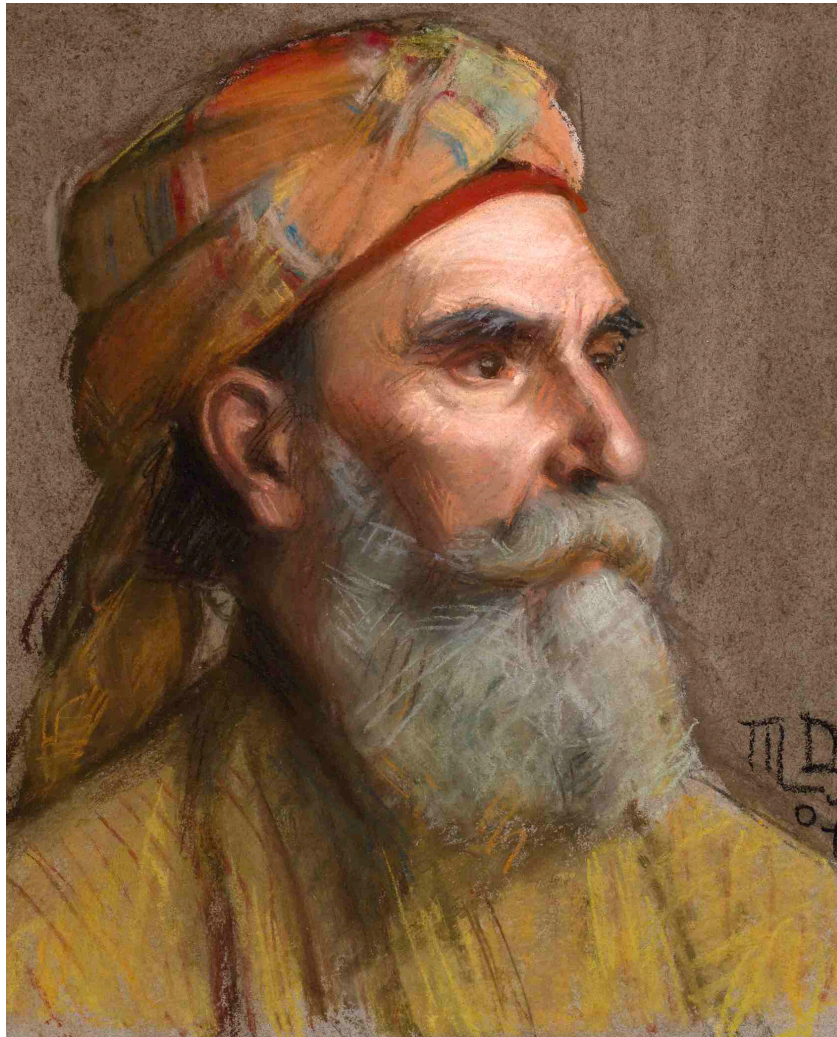
Inscribed on the reverse in pencil: *20<sup>e</sup> / 30 Décembre 1907*

Pastel on paper

45.8 x 38 cm. (18 x 14 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)

Provenance:

By descent in the family of the artist until 2023.



Very little is known about Marguerite Dubois. Born in 1883, she is listed in the rolls of the Académie Julian, where she studied under Henri Royer, Marcel Baschet and Adolphe Déchenaud. From the paucity of information regarding her life, one can assume that Dubois' promising career was halted by marriage, an all too familiar story amongst many of the talented female students at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beyond its obvious quality and the strength of the image, this head study of a bearded man in an orange headscarf is of interest because of its connection to the Académie Julian and its insight into the life class at this famous and pioneering school.

Founded in 1868, the Académie Julian was a private art school which offered a program and level of teaching comparable to those of the École des Beaux-Arts. Unlike the École, which excluded women until 1897, the Académie Julian gave women artists the same opportunities as men, notably in giving them access to the life class and the chance to depict the nude. In fact, the Académie was the pre-eminent art school for women on an international level, achieving a reputation for excellence in academic figure studies, attracting students from across the western hemisphere.



Fig. 1, Photograph from circa 1892 depicting a life class at the Académie Julian, with a series of bust-length head studies on the walls behind

As extant works and turn of the century photographs of the ateliers of the Académie Julian confirm (fig. 1), bust-length head studies were a mainstay of the educational program at the school. Many of these studies show sitters in non-Western attire, offering the students the chance to depict different fabrics and volumes (fig. 2). Other head studies from this period exist in Dubois' oeuvre, including a striking depiction of a man in Algerian costume dated 1906 (fig. 3). Though very powerful, it is not quite as refined as the present work, drawn a

year later, and a comparison of the two demonstrates the development of Dubois' artistic skills over the intervening time.



Fig. 2, Berthe Burgkan, *Head study of a man in a fez*, 1898, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 38 cm, Private Collection



Fig. 3, Marguerite Dubois, *Head study of a man in Algerian costume*, 1906, pastel on paper, 54 x 45 cm, Colnaghi Elliott Master Drawings