

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Suzanne Fabry
(Brussels 1904 – 1985)

Self-portrait

Signed and dated at upper left: *SUZANNE FABRY 1940*

Sanguine and black chalk on paper

63.5 x 56 cm. (25 x 22 in.)

Provenance:

Estate of the artist;

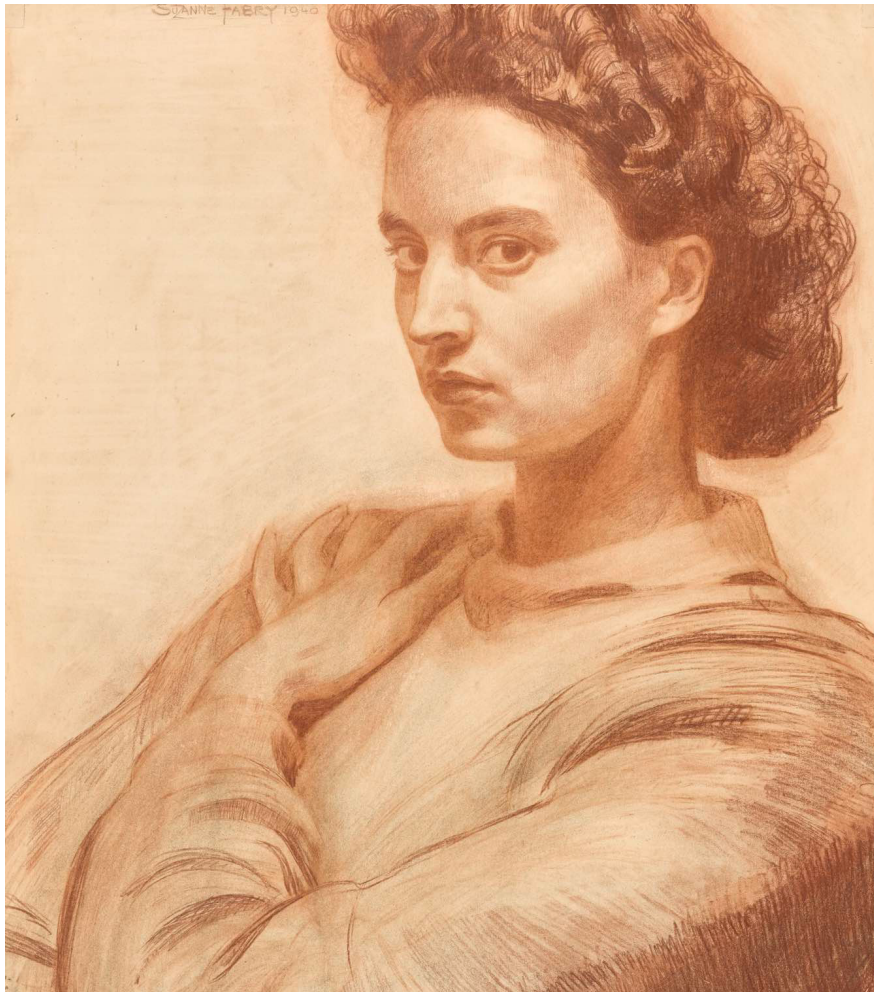
Inherited by the Miseur-Recourt family, Brussels, 1993;

Sotheby's London, 16 March 2023, lot 3.

Exhibited:

Brussels, Société Royale des Beaux-Arts, *Salon de Printemps*, 1941;

Brussels, Maison-Atelier Émile Fabry, inventory number P342, until 2017.



Born in Brussels in 1904, Suzanne Fabry was the daughter of the Symbolist painter Emile Fabry (1865–1966). Although she was not herself a Symbolist painter, she was possessed of a lyrical and dreamlike temperament and a very distinctive sensibility, especially evident in her portraits.

At the start of World War I, Suzanne moved with her family to England where they remained until the end of the war, first in Herefordshire and later in the Cornish town of Saint-Ives. They returned to their home in Belgium after the war and in 1923 Suzanne enrolled as a student at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts where she studied under Jean Delville (1867-1953) and Constant Montald (1862-1944), two of the founders, alongside her father, of a group of artists who called themselves *L'art monumental*. The group's aim was to produce public, monumental, and culturally sophisticated art that would elevate consciousness through the representation of idealised, universal themes. Their commanding nudes would constitute an important source of inspiration for Suzanne's own work.

Suzanne graduated from the Académie in 1928 and embarked on her career as a painter in the 1930s, taking part in the triennial Salon in Antwerp in 1930 and the quadrennial Salon in Liège in 1931. Around the same time, her father was completing a cycle of large-scale paintings for the entrance and staircase of Brussels' opera house, La Monnaie, where, many years later, Suzanne and her husband Edmond Delescluze (1905-1993) would be employed as costume and set designer respectively. She continued to pursue her career as a painter, alongside her work as head of the opera's costume workshop, until her death in 1985.



Fig. 1, Suzanne Fabry, *Self-portrait*, c. 1925, pencil and chalk on paper, 55 x 45 cm, Lancz Gallery

Fabry's most impactful and original work tends to date from the 1930s and early 1940s. Self-portraiture was a recurrent and significant theme during this period (fig. 1), with her attempts, executed across a range of media and styles, ranging from introspective and mediative investigations to more direct observations like the present work. Here, the closely cropped, bust-length format with head turned to three-quarters profile is reminiscent of Italian Cinquecento portraiture, whilst the Mannerist hand passed across the chest perhaps references Parmigianino (fig 2).



Fig. 2, Parmigianino, *Madonna of the Long Neck* (detail) c. 1535-40, oil on panel, 216 x 132 cm, Uffizi Gallery