

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



François Masson (1745 - 1807)

A pair of portrait busts of Clémentine Beugnot (1788-1840)

Marble and Terracotta

50 cm and 59 cm respectively

c. 1805

A rare opportunity to compare the portrait of the same sitter by a sculptor in two different materials, terracotta and marble, in François Masson's busts of Clémentine Beugnot from circa 1805.

Born in Normandy, Masson was the pupil of Guillaume Coustou. His first important commission came from the Bishop of Noyon who asked him to produce a monumental fountain for the Place de l'Évêché in 1768-1770. After staying in Italy for five years he settled in Paris in the last years of the Ancien regime. He began to exhibit at the Salon in Paris in 1793. From the time of the Revolution onwards, he received numerous official commissions and was sculptor of the Consulate and the Empire. Now holding a distinguished position in the art world, he made the creation of portrait busts his speciality. In 1801 he exhibited at the Salon the busts of Kléber and Caffarelli, which had been commissioned for the Galerie des Consuls at the Palais du Luxembourg (now in the museum at Versailles). He also produced the Tomb of Vauban at Les Invalides, a Monument to the Memory of Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the Jardin des Tuileries, later in the Palais du Luxembourg, and an allegorical group Devotion to the Homeland, which was placed beneath the peristyle of the Panthéon.

A small group of female portraits by his hand are known. These representations give the image of a confident, elegant and stylish elite that was characteristic of the Directoire period. The present bust showing the young Clémentine Beugnot can be compared with the portrait of Suzanne-Charlotte Gobert (1795, Musée de la Révolution française, Vizille).

Clémentine Beugnot (1788-1840) seems to be about 18 years old in the present portrait. Her father the comte Beugnot was a minister in the imperial government and she married the comte Philibert Curial. Better known as Clémentine Curial, she had a passionate affair with Stendhal in the 1820s.

Literature:

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Catalogue des peintures, sculptures et dessins. Musée de la Révolution française, Vizille, 1996, n. 47e,
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