



Auguste Rodin

Étude pour le buste de Victor Hugo (Study for the bust of Victor Hugo), 1883

Brown ink and pencil on wove paper, 49 x 49 mm (378 x 308 mm)

on recto, lower right, signed in ink: "AR"

on verso, lower centre, inscribed in pencil: "108_11"

on verso, matting, inscribed in pencil, upper right: "158"; at centre: "12"

Provenance:

Until at least 1899, with the artist

(...)

(Probably acquired by Hildebrand Gurlitt in France in the 1940s)

Thence by descent to Cornelius Gurlitt, Munich/Salzburg

From 6 May 2014: Estate of Cornelius Gurlitt

Bibliographical references:

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Le Normand-Romain, Antoinette, and Hélène Marraud. *Rodin et le Bronze: Catalogue des œuvres conservées au Musée Rodin*. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2007. [cf. Victor Hugo studies, vol. 2, p. 434]

Primary sources:

Hildebrand Gurlitt and Cornelius Gurlitt Papers:

Correspondence: BArch, N 1826/175, fol. 59 f. [=vol. 9, fol. 54 f.]. Prof. Arthur Franz an Hildebrand Gurlitt, 14 August 1947

Miscellaneous: BArch, N 1826/186, fol. 14 ff. Address book France, n.d.

Photographs: BArch, N 1826 Bild-0929 [=9.1_F916], [17 November 1943]

Register of Salzburg works, 2014, no. Wien 108_11

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Dossier Galerie Devambez Paris 1909

D. 2109/5360/2166, drawings related to this sheet

Further sources consulted (selected):

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Base Rose Valland MNR

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Database "Central Collecting Point München"

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Galerie Heinemann Online
Galerie Sagot – Le Garrec, Paris (Private archive)
Getty Provenance Index, German Sales Catalogs
Heidelberger Digitale Bibliothek (Auktionskataloge; Heidelberger Historische Bestände)
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Institut national d'histoire de l'art (French sale catalogues)
Les Archives Municipales de Nancy
Lootedart.com
Lost Art
Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris (Centre de Documentation)
Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Archives diplomatiques, Paris
Musée d'Orsay, Paris (Documentation de la conservation)
Maison de Victor Hugo, Paris
Répertoire des Biens Spoliés
Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Museum Archives)
Verzeichnis national wertvoller Kunstwerke ("Reichsliste von 1938")
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
Witt Library, London

Note:

In 1883, the journalist Edmond Bazire advised Rodin to make a portrait of the famous French writer Victor Hugo. The artist made numerous preliminary drawings of Hugo from different standpoints; Rodin's bronze bust (now at the Musée Rodin) was completed in the same year.

It is estimated that about sixty head studies of Victor Hugo exist. Twenty-eight were discovered in the Schwabing Art Trove; fifteen are preserved at the Musée Rodin (which acquired those works in 1927 as a gift of Marcel Guérin); another four are in French and Japanese private collections.

The drawings most likely remained with the artist until the publication in 1899 of the first Rodin monograph. That monograph was authored by the art critic Léon Maillard and included numerous reproductions of Rodin's portrait studies of Victor Hugo. This work, however, is not among those illustrated.

This sheet was not previously known, and is therefore not included in the 1992 catalogue raisonné of Rodin drawings by Claudie Judrin.

Research has shown that on the occasion of a Rodin exhibition in Paris in 1909, Galerie Devambez sold two drawings to a Monsieur Gurlitt of Berlin (most likely the art dealer Fritz Gurlitt). The gallery noted Monsieur Gurlitt's interest in mounting a Rodin exhibition in Berlin, and his willingness to acquire three additional drawings in exchange for a loan of thirty drawings. Alain Beausire records a Rodin exhibition dedicated to Victor Hugo in the fall of 1912 at Kunstsalon Paul Cassirer in Berlin. It is unclear whether there may be any connection to the Rodin drawings in the Gurlitt Trove.

The personal papers found in Cornelius Gurlitt's Salzburg home include a collection of about 2,400 photographs of artworks. Photograph no. 9.1_F916 is a reproduction of this work; inscribed on verso, a statement of authenticity by the art expert André Schoeller of Paris, 13, Rue de Téhéran,

dated 17 November 1943. This document shows that the work was on the market in the 1940s in occupied France; there is a high probability that Gurlitt acquired the work during that period.

It is most likely that this sheet was acquired together with the other Victor Hugo portrait studies as part of one portfolio from a single source. One hypothetical source might be the Galerie Jean de Ruaz in Paris, which specialized in Rodin and mounted a Rodin exhibition in 1946. The gallery's business address is noted in Gurlitt's Paris address book.

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