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AUGUSTE RENOIR

WATERCOLORS AND PASTELS

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Renoir

WATERCOLORS AND PASTELS

Selected with an Introduction and Commentaries by FRANÇOIS DAULTE

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COVER PICTURE: COLORPLATE I

Baby and Nurse

Painted 1895. Pastel, 23 1/2 × 18 3/8″. Unsigned

Collection Adolf Roniger – Hürlimann, Rheinfelden, Switzerland

During their infancy Renoir's three sons, Pierre, Jean, and Claude, served their father as models, each in turn. The artist was captivated by their pretty complexions, plump bodies, and graceful, natural gestures. In the pastel reproduced here we can recognize little Jean, Renoir's second son, in the arms of his nurse Gabrielle.

Jean Renoir, now one of the greatest of French motion picture directors, was born in 1894. Needing a new servant to take care of the little boy, Renoir engaged a sturdy peasant girl from Essoyes named Gabrielle, who soon became his favorite model. It is said that to reach the master one had to be accepted by the maid, mollify her with valuable presents and even jewelry. Madame Renoir would not stand for that and dismissed Gabrielle. But the latter returned on the sly and, after her mistress' death in 1915, took over the management of the household, remaining loyal and devoted to the end.

Very likely this pastel served as a study for the picture with the same subjects painted by Renoir during the summer of 1895 (André, 1931, Vol. 1, no. 134, pl. 46).

EX. COLL. Fils Renoir, Cagnes / Ambroise Vollard, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Fosca, in *Art et Décoration*, October, 1921, p. 105 (reprod.) / André, 1928, pl. 42 / Rewald, 1946, pl. 67

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April, 1921, no. 42

Auguste Renoir: Watercolors and Pastels

by François Daulte

In recent years, and particularly since the appearance of the remarkable studies by Albert André, François Fosca, and John Rewald, it has been realized that drawing occupied an important place in Renoir's work. In his sketches and studies, rather than in his large paintings, he reveals all his originality and freshness of vision. As we examine the pictures collected in the present volume we feel that we are catching a glimpse of the artist's innermost thoughts and can try to understand how he worked.

Like the masters of the past whom he admired—Rubens, Boucher, or Delacroix—Renoir did not look upon his drawings as finished works. Except for some very accomplished pastels, mostly portraits, it is easy to see that his sketches in red chalk, watercolors, or charcoal are merely studies for the arrangement of a group, exercises on a given theme, and notations of a movement—in short, the requisites for the preparation of important canvases.

For those who like to analyze ideas and penetrate the secret charm of a masterpiece Renoir's drawings offer considerable interest. They often enable us to trace the origin of a picture or follow the evolution of an idea in search of its final form. Thus, when Renoir jots down a rapid sketch in his notebook it is nearly always to fix the essential lines of a landscape that he wants to remember (colorplate 11). Elsewhere, when he multiplies the studies of the same subject, he does so in order to materialize his inner vision, to fix the composition of a picture (colorplate 7) or of a large decorative panel (colorplate 23).

No matter how spontaneous works like *The Seesaw* (1876), *The Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881), or *The Umbrella* (1883) may seem, there is no doubt that they were prepared by several preliminary sketches of the whole composition as well as studies of the single details.

Renoir became so obsessed with this anxiety to leave nothing to chance that, during the last years of his life, he was fond of repeating that a painter must respect his work and never under any pretext sacrifice the details. And he would add: "If even the greatest artist cannot do anything perfect, it is absolutely necessary for these imperfections to come from the unconscious if they are to give the work an added charm. When due to negligence or carelessness they are merely unforgivable errors."*

The drawings collected in this book do not merely help us to understand how Renoir worked; they also enable us to follow the evolution of his method of rendering reality. By degrees, as his painting alters, we see his drawing, too, undergo a change. Let us try to trace the stages of this

* Roux-Champion, *Le Figaro Littéraire*, July 9, 1955

evolution through the development of an artistic production that stretches over a period of nearly forty years.

We know little about the drawings Renoir did as a young man (1860 to 1870). Many were destroyed; others have disappeared. What, for instance, has become of the numerous sketches he gave two of his dearest friends—Frédéric Bazille, the painter from Montpellier who died an untimely death in the Franco-Prussian War, and Edmond Maître, the young art lover from Bordeaux who went to Paris to study law and was so happy there that he stayed for good? Probably we shall never know, although in their letters, still unedited, Bazille and Maître repeatedly mention drawings given them by Renoir.

However, as far as one can judge from the few examples we know, Renoir's early drawings were still lacking in boldness. The young artist strove scrupulously to render forms without falling into the academic manner. We can feel that he was not sure of himself. On the one hand he drew his inspiration from Courbet and Diaz, whom he recognized as his masters, while on the other he tended by degrees to evolve a personal style of his own.

During the ensuing period (1870–1883), when he might be called an Impressionist, Renoir's drawings went in quest of things very like those which were beginning to appear in his paintings. He not only represented scenes from everyday life as Boilly, Granet, Drolling, and Bonvin had done but, like Constantin Guys, extracted a new thrill from the most ordinary sights, made the commonplace wonderful, and, realizing the ideal of Baudelaire, discovered a new poetry in "modernity."

It may be recalled that Renoir used many drawings of that period, among them the studies for *The Seesaw* and *The Dance at Bougival*, to illustrate articles or short stories by his boon companions published in *La Vie Moderne*, the progressive magazine founded in 1879 by the publisher Charpentier to defend the cause of the Impressionists and living art. It was for the same magazine that Renoir drew the portraits of several celebrities of that day. In some of them a few symbolical details suggest the age, fortune, or profession of his subject. As a rule, however, he concentrated his whole attention on the face, keeping only the really significant features. We are shown in turn the Austrian Ambassador, Graf von Beust, the poet Théodore de Banville, and the composer Richard Wagner; Rosita Mauri, the dancer, suggesting a step of the *farandole;* Léon Riesener' the aged painter who was Berthe Morisot's confidant and a cousin of Delacroix, his expressive, kindly face framed in a medallion decorated with flowers and nude bacchantes, swept away by a veritable whirlwind.* Unfortunately the magazine was printed on such bad paper that it is hard to gauge the value of the original drawings from the reproductions alone. "I don't think I ever spent a single day without painting, except in cases of *force majeure*," said Renoir about 1910 to Albert André, a young artist for whom he felt a real friendship.**To this confidence Renoir might have added another and told his favorite pupil that he had never spent a day without drawing.

Renoir was indeed a tireless draftsman. He did a multitude of sketches in pen, pencil, sanguine, watercolor, charcoal, and pastel. For him drawing signified enrichment and expansion, discipline and release. Never once during his life—in his studio in the Rue Saint-Georges in Paris or in his country house at Essoyes; visiting the Louvre, the Venetian canals, or the *souks* of Algiers; going with Bazille and Monet into the forest of Fontainebleau or spending the day at Papa Fournaise's inn at La Grenouillère—did he forget to bring his sketchbook and jot down any scene that happened to attract his notice.

But if Renoir drew a great deal it is equally true that he set little store by his drawings. Many of those that littered his home were used to light the stove or ended their brief existence in the wastebasket. Moreover, till 1890, Renoir changed his studio very frequently and when he

* Cf. *La Vie Moderne* for April 17, May 8, July 3, and July 10, 1879, and for February 13 and April 21, 1883.

** Albert André, 1928, p. 49.

moved along he sometimes destroyed his portfolios of sketches or gave them away to the concierge. And, since the only works he showed during his long career were oils and pastels—the first exhibition of Renoir's drawings was held at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in Paris in 1921, two years after his death, and consisted of 31 watercolors, 33 pastels, and 78 drawings in sanguine or charcoal—it is easy to understand that for a very long time art historians devoted all their attention to Renoir's paintings and did not bother to find out whether he drew with charcoal, lead pencil, or colored chalks.

During the same period Renoir executed, besides these illustrations and simultaneously with his large pictures, several sketches heightened with pastel or wash. In some, like *The Promenade* (colorplate 2), two or three crayons were enough to fix the ephemeral postures of the pretty Parisiennes walking along the Boulevard de Clichy or crossing the Place de la Trinité. With their dazzling technique and their harmonies of lilac-blue and yellow, these pastel drawings recall the consummate works of Renoir's blue period. In some the artist envelops the forms of his models with minute touches of watercolor that recall the dabs of color he used in his paintings to render the play of light reflected on people and things. In others, as the delightful couple in *The Dance in the Country* (colorplate 6) waltzing in tender silence far from the madding crowd, Renoir heightens his India ink drawing with a few patches of watercolor, the better to render the sights of his day—the lively popular balls, the gay rustic taverns, the beauty of Paris on a fine Sunday afternoon.

It was about 1880 that Renoir's first pastel portraits appeared. If he used that medium frequently to depict those near and dear to him, it was because pastel, which combines color with line, enabled him to work rapidly and catch in all their vividness the rapid flash of intelligence and the fleeting shadow of emotion.

Employing an extremely sober range of colors—mostly blacks, blues, and jade greens—Renoir probes his sitters to their very souls and offers them boldly to our gaze; he brings them to life and makes us feel their presence. Take, for instance, the *Portrait of Cézanne* (colorplate 3). How tenderly Renoir has rendered his friend's expression! The eyes alone reveal the anxiety and reserve of the hermit of Aix who always feared that "someone might get a hold on him." In the *Portrait of Banville* (colorplate 4), Renoir enjoyed, instead, catching the ironical expression of the famed Parnassian poet. With his broad beret, loosely knotted cravat, and bright, keen eyes, Théodore de Banville might almost be brother to those Encyclopedists whom Quentin de la Tour immortalized a century earlier in his famous *Préparations*.

But, no matter how interesting Renoir's first sketches and pastel portraits may be, we must admit that is was not till later—between 1883 and 1886—that drawing assumed an important part in his work.

"Toward 1883 a sort of break occurred in my work. I had reached the end of Impressionism and come to the conclusion that I could neither paint nor draw. In a word, Iwas in a blind alley."* This statement made to Ambroise Vollard, who was to Renoir to some extent what Eckermann was to Goethe, is fraught with significance. In fact, after a journey in Italy (1881–1882), where he discovered the portraits of Ingres, the antiquities of Naples, and the frescoes of Pompeii, and still more after meditating on Cennino Cennini's *Treatise on Painting*, Renoir experienced a sort of crisis.

He started by realizing instinctively that it was dangerous to work exclusively in the open air, after nature, directly on the motif. "Outdoors," he tells us, "there is a greater variety of light than in the studio, where it is always the same; but for that very reason outdoors you are held by the light; you have no time to attend to the composition; and, besides, outdoors you can't see what you are doing."*

* Vollard, 1920, p. 135.

Indeed, to try and fix an instant in a nature that never keeps still is a gamble. The sun revolves; the clouds pass; the leaves quiver. What is more—and Renoir felt this very intensely—obsession with the open air leads straight to the suppression of form and line. Its paradoxical result is to lead to inconsistency.

For all these reasons Renoir decided to return to the school of the great masters. In this new apprenticeship he took as his guides the Raphael of the Farnesina and the Ingres of *La Grande Odalisque* and *La Source*. Condemning to the flames what he had formerly adored, Renoir scorned to render atmosphere, gave up representing scenes from everyday life, and strove for style and precise drawing. Fearing that he had sacrificed too much to grace and facility, he submitted himself to a strict discipline.

The studies for *The Bathers* of 1885, like most of the drawings of that phase, are typical of this new manner. With lead pencil or sharply pointed sanguine Renoir delineated portraits that astonish us by their density and precision of line. The bodies of the nymphs we see frolicking in a river or drying themselves in the sun are marked by a firm contour. Often a single line suffices to make us feel the roundness of a bosom, the slope of a shoulder, the slight fall of a hip, the curve of an arm, or the twist of a body as it straightens up. What consummate skill there is in the strokes, now thick, now thin, and in the delicacy of a touch that deliberately glides or presses. With what incomparable artistry Renoir combines purity and sensuality.

During the whole of his Ingres period—Renoir himself called it his "sour manner"—we see him multiply preparatory or corrective drawings for *The Bathers*. It is worthwhile devoting some time to these studies in order to understand just how Renoir worked. Before roughing out on the canvas the large composition of *The Bathers* he did not make any sketches in the strict sense of the word but preferred to do a whole series of drawings in the spirit of the subject. Some represent an isolated figure (colorplate 7), some a general view of the scene; but Renoir looked upon them all as exercises, as a sort of training for the complete work.

In the course of his researches Renoir had noticed that a form suitable for a small sheet of paper is not right for the larger dimensions of a canvas or cartoon. That is why he did not adopt the method that consists in using squares to enlarge sketches made from nature. Rather than employ this trick Renoir preferred, right from the start, to do large drawings that he could subsequently transfer to his canvas. That is how he proceeded for *The Bathers*, which, after belonging to Jacques-Emile Blanche, is now in the Tyson Collection in Philadelphia.

It is worth noting that it was during his Ingres period that Renoir began to use the sanguine—a crayon made of ferruginous clay—which makes it possible to incorporate color in a drawing. Thanks to the incomparable mellowness and delicacy of this medium, Renoir was able to suggest the charms of the flesh while presenting a new image of the eternal feminine. There would be much to say about Renoir's use of the sanguine. Need it be stressed that his partiality to that medium—which, after all, is merely a means of expression—reveals a trait of his character and derives from his innermost trends? On the other hand, the use of the sanguine by Fragonard' Boucher, Renoir, and Maillol, far from being fortuitous, undoubtedly indicates a connection among those artists, who are so different in other respects.

In a few admirable studies Renoir showed himself the heir of Boucher and the charming *petits maîtres* of the eighteenth century; at the same time the statuesque forms of his bathers made him a forerunner of Maillol. "As far as I am concerned," Renoir used to say, "my aim has always been to paint people as if they were luscious fruits."*

Renoir did not take long to free himself from the strictures of his precise, linear Ingres manner and recover the boldness and facility of his youth. He retained, however, the feeling for volume and well-rounded forms. From 1886 on, the springtime blossoming of his art is

* Vollard, 1920, pp. 129–130.

revealed by an increasing opulence. As time passes, his drawings became freer and at the same time more spacious and supple. In Albert André's words, "it is no longer bas-relief but sculpture in the round."*

In the drawings Renoir produced between 1886 and 1895, many of which represent women bathing (colorplates 14 and 16), every factor serves to show to advantage the female figure in all its full-blown magnificence. Thus, to bring out the roundness of the forms Renoir heightens with white his sketches in sanguine or charcoal. His favorite medium is chalk, which he crushes onto the paper, here in strong accents, there in delicate lines (colorplate 16). Elsewere, as in his *Mother and Child*, he mixes black lead pencil, sanguine, and white chalk to celebrate the mystery of the mother nursing her baby. The fine drawing (colorplate 9) is all curves, and the mother and child are like well-filled ears of corn or heavy fruits ripened in the summer sun.

To the same period belongs a whole series of pastels representing young women or children seated indoors (colorplates 13 and 19), bathing at the seaside (colorplate 14), or chatting in a garden (colorplate 17). All too often these pastels have been considered preliminary studies for paintings, whereas the majority actually are replicas or variants of pictures already painted.

Renoir started, as a rule, by lightly sketching his subject with a few vague lines and curves, which he went over again later and made more precise until, little by little, out of the shapeless mass be brought forth spacious, solid forms. Works like *Baby and Nurse* (colorplate 1) and *Child with an Orange* (colorplate 15) are typical of this manner. Their opulent technique and sense of volumes recall the finest pastels of Degas. In other sketches, as *Bathing* (colorplate 14), Renoir employed a rather different method. He began by lightly crushing his crayons into powder on the white paper in order to make the color penetrate its grain; then he went over this preparation, scoring it with bold strokes which he then left untouched. One cannot admire too greatly the firmness and vigor of this process. It has been said far too often that what counts most in pastel work is stumping, blending, and "canoodling," as Diderot called it. In my opinion, instead, the manner of the great pastelists—whether Chardin, Perronneau, Delacroix, Odilon Redon, Manet, or Degas—is characterized by its boldness and vigor, by a stroke that scores the paper rather than glides over it.

We should note, finally, that in the pastels of his mature period Renoir neglected subjects borrowed from contemporary society—what the Goncourt brothers called "slices of life"—and devoted himself almost entirely to portraits and nudes. As François Fosca put it, "the women Renoir now shows us are no longer undressed Parisiennes surprised at their toilette, surrounded by furniture, wrappers, and lingerie. Now he paints nude figures and sets them in the open air. They have always been naked and if they clothe themselves it is in soft materials that merely flow over them. They move in a pearly light, and their rosy flesh sparkles among the greenery."

About 1900, just when he was reaching the peak of his career and the height of his artistic powers, Renoir was stricken by a cruel disease that he never got rid of. Little by little, rheumatism took hold of his limbs until he became a complete cripple. That did not, however, keep him from painting and drawing. In search of health he decided to move to the south of France. After spending some time at Magagnosc and Le Cannet, he made his home finally at Cagnes in 1903.

The move to the Rivera must be considered one of the most important events in Renoir's life. Right at the start he discovered there a nature, at once orderly and luxuriant, of which he never tired. Till the very end of his life he found in his garden at "Les Collettes" a copious source of inspiration.

It was at Cagnes that Renoir did several watercolors that render quite perfectly the light of Provence (colorplate 21), the marvelous brilliance of that land whose ruddy tints are heightened by the proximity of the deep blue sea. We must admire the spontaneous quality of these rapidly

* André, 1928, p. 73.

washed studies. With a few touches of blue, red, and green, Renoir gives us back the familiar silhouette of a Provençal cabin with its ocher-hued walls, sunbaked red-tile roof, wild shrubbery, and corners of light and shade (colorplate 20).

The second discovery Renoir made when he settled on the shores of the Mediterranean was that of classical antiquity. Under the blue sky of that Provence which is so like Greece he felt he was living over again the old legends of the Golden Age on which the imagination of the ancients had been nurtured.

"What wonderful people, those Greeks!" Renoir declared one day to the poet Joachim Gasquet. "Their life was so happy that they imagined the gods came down to earth to find heaven and love. Yes, earth was heaven for the gods... That's what I want to paint."*

For the last twenty years of his life Renoir was wrapped up in antiquity. He endeavored to breathe new life into the idylls of Anacreon and the bucolics of Theocritus by endowing his maid Gabrielle and the washerwomen of Cagnes with the noble graces of the Olympian divinities. There is a whole series of large drawings in sanguine for *The Rhône and the Saône* (colorplate 23) and *The Judgment of Paris* in which Renoir succeeded in recovering the ample forms and finely balanced gestures of classical sculpture.

It is worth noting that these are the last real drawings Renoir produced. At the end of his life his hands were so deformed that the aged artist could not hold such friable and easily broken tools as a stick of charcoal, a pastel, or a colored chalk. Yet, as we know from Albert André's invaluable testimony, that did not prevent Renoir from drawing. But he executed those drawings "on his canvas with the paintbrush; they are so close to painting that he could not stop in his work and a few minutes after outlining them he had already enriched them with colors. Had it been possible to take certain canvases away from him at the moment when line was about to yield to color, what precious seeds would have been presreved and what a broad sense they would have given to the word 'drawing.'"**

A study of the sanguine, watercolors, heightened drawings, and pastels collected in this album leads one inevitably to make certain observations of a general character about Renoir's art.

The first fact that strikes us is that Renoir always kept very close to nature. He succeeded in remaining simple in his attitude toward reality while doing his best to perfect the talents he had received at birth. His school was the physical world and he observed with a keen eye and a simple heart the sights and scents that the world lavished upon him at every moment. "How hard it is," said Renoir, "to find in a picture the exact point where imitation of nature should cease. A painting must not stink of the model, yet it must keep the scent of nature. A picture is not a police report. Personally, I like a picture that makes me want to stroll about in it, if it is a landscape, or touch a breast or a back if it is a female figure."***

Unlike the many contemporary artists who disfigure and distort nature till you cannot recognize it, Renoir endeavored to show nature under the most pleasant light. In his themes and his colors he refused to see the slightest trace of gloom, evil, ugliness, disease, or night. Perhaps it has not been sufficienlty stressed that Renoir never painted a winter or fog and that he could not understand how snow, "that leprosy of nature," could attract his friends Monet, Sisley, and Pissarro.

The fact is that in Renoir's eyes art was health, light, and joy. "For me," said the patriarch of Les Collettes, "a picture must be something pleasant, gay, and pretty... yes, pretty! There are enough boring things in life without our having to make still more. I know it is hard to make people admit that a painting can be very great art and still be gay. Just because Fragonard laughed

* Gasquet, *L'Amour de l'Art*, February, 1921.

** André, 1928, p. 73.

*** André, 1928, p. 42.

it wasn't long before he was called a painter of no account. People who laugh are not taken seriously. Art in a tail coat, whether it be painting, music, or literature, will always take people in."*

It is almost twenty years since the last smile, indeed even the last face, disappeared from painting. But we still have at least the privilege of being able to gaze at the pictures and colored drawings in which Renoir has depicted the things that will always make men happy—children, fruit, flowers, beautiful women, and happy landscapes on which the sunlight dances.

Last, this painter of happiness was also preeminently the painter of women. In most of Renoir's works we are shown a type of female beauty that already existed, no doubt, in the artists's imagination and that, unconsciously, he imprinted on the faces he found in the world around him.

Even in the days when he produced the *Moulin de la Galette* (1876) and the *Place Clichy* (1880), Renoir tended to reduce to a single pattern the faces of the pretty Parisiennes he took as his models—the same charming little foreheads, turned-up noses, almond eyes under sharply drawn brows, and vermilion mouths made rather for exchanging kisses than for pronouncing human speech (colorplates 2 and 5). Later, Renoir mostly painted nudes and sought especially to render the female form in its full-blown magnificence. Be she labeled Venus or Nini, Margot, Dédé, or Gabrielle, Renoir's woman is fleshy, with a long torso, broad hips, short legs, and smooth round arms. She is undoubtedly the sister of those regal handmaidens who shared the beds of the gods and whose dazzling flesh made the sun seem pale (colorplate 24).

"Man lives and dies in what he sees, but he only sees what he dreams." This profound maxim of Valéry's fits no one better than Renoir. During his whole long career the artist accepted only the part of reality that pleased him, and he sought to make his models resemble the type that dwelt within him as a sort of ghostly inspiration.

And is it not significant that the last watercolor executed by the aged painter, crippled with rheumatism and pinned to his wheel chair, is a symbol of love and eternal youth, a Venus and *Venus Victrix* at that?

* André, 1928, pp. 31–32.

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COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS. Basel, Hans Hinz, 1, 2, 10, 16, 19, 20; Chicago, Illinois, Richard Brittain, 7; Knebworth, Hertfordshire, England, Sir Geoffrey Cory-Wright, 9; New York, Master Photographers, Inc., 3, 5, 6; Nice, Bérard & Fils, 18; Paris, André Thévenet, 4, 11, 12, 13, 21, 24.

COLORPLATE 2

The Promenade

Painted 1879. Pastel, 24⅞ × 20½″

Signed, lower right: R. *Musée National, Belgrade*

This pastel shows us an extremely lifelike scene. Two girls out walking are caught in a shower; they have just opened their umbrellas and, with a charming gesture, lift their skirts so as not to soil the flounces. It was probably on the Boulevard de Clichy that Renoir sketched the modish figures of the two little *midinettes*.

Why are we touched by a sketch of so ephemeral an incident? Why is it so different from the works of the painters who were in fashion about 1880? It must be because Renoir has not been satisfied simply to paint the world around him. From that world he has taken—as he has pleased—a pretext and some materials. To a true picture of contemporary life he has added elements of eternal poetry. He has hidden every slightest trace of imperfection in these chance models, even transmuting their cheap cotton frocks into rich brocades. In short, he has eternalized the fleeting moment.

That is why, as we look at these two young girls taking shelter under their umbrellas, we feel that we are breathing a peculiar atmosphere of gaiety and pleasure and living over again an hour that is past and will never return.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris / Erich Šlomović, Belgrade / acquired by the Musée National, Belgrade, in 1949

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 6, pl. 22

COLORPLATE 3

Portrait of Paul Cézanne

Painted 1880. Pastel, 21 3/8 × 17″

Signed and dated, upper left: Renoir, 80

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ittleson, Jr., New York

Renoir was on very close terms with Cézanne. The two artists met when they were working at the Académie Suisse and in the studio of the painter Gleyre. This is what Renoir says of their first encounter: "It was in 1863 that I met Cézanne. At that time I had a small studio which I shared with Bazille. One day the latter came in with two young fellows. 'I have brought you two first-rate recruits!' he said. They were Cézanne and Pissarro." Later the two painters became intimate friends and stayed together several times at L'Estaque and the Jas de Bouffan.

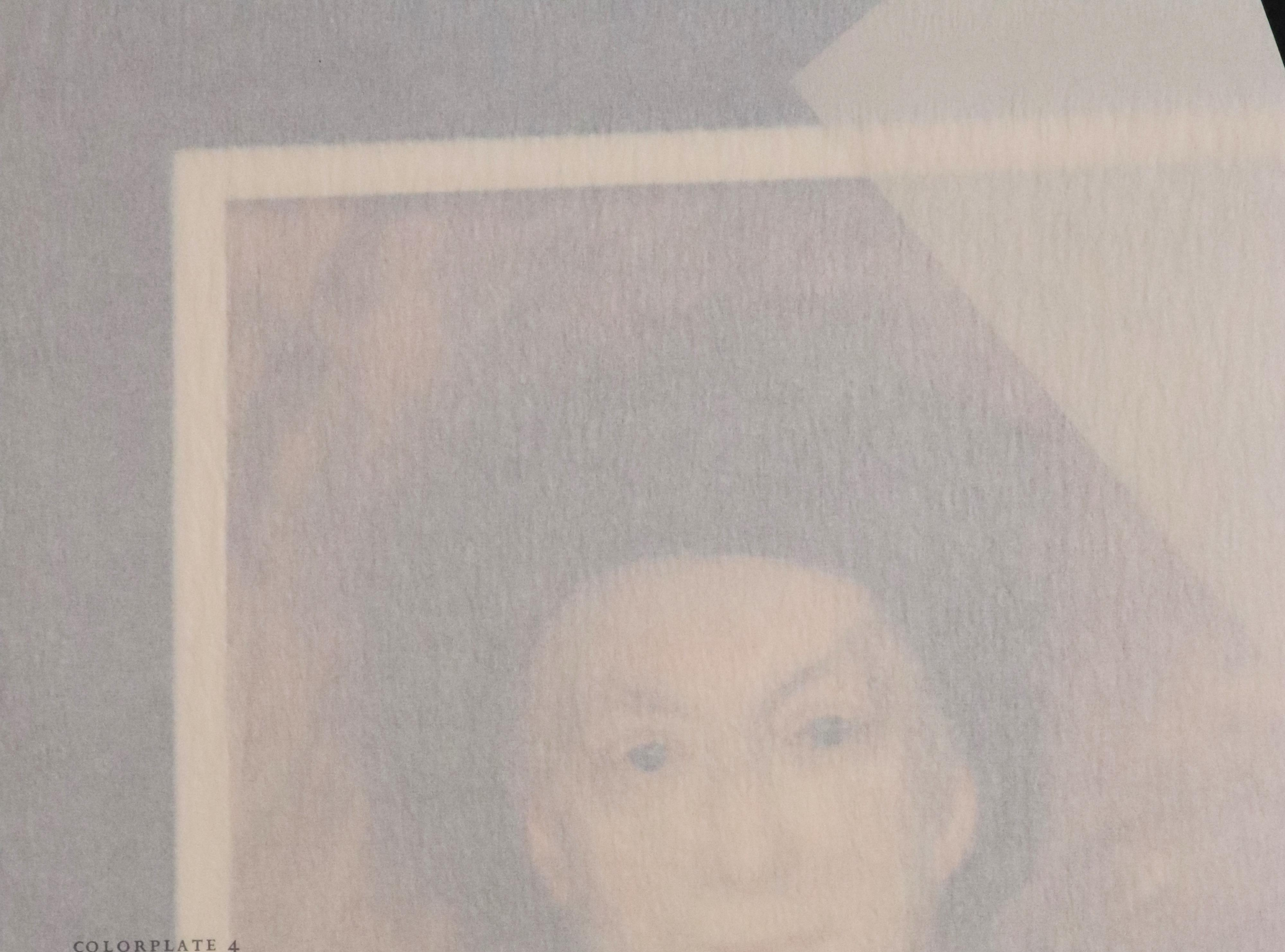
It was in 1880 that Renoir did the pastel reproduced here in his studio on the Rue de Norvins in Paris. It is undoubtedly one of the most lifelike of all the portraits of Cézanne that have come down to us.

In 1902 Renoir used the same pastel, line for line, to make a lithograph of his friend (Delteil, Vol. 17, no. 34). Later, between 1915 and 1917, he commissioned Richard Guino to take it as the model of a medallion representing Cézanne surrounded by a garland of flowers and fruit. A cast of that work was set up on one of the fountains at Aix-en-Provence, the ancient city where Cézanne lived and worked (Haesaerts, 1934, no. 16, pl. 26).

EX. COLL. Renoir sold this portrait to M. Victor Choquet, a Paris collector. M. Choquet was a government official who succeeded in building a remarkable collection with limited means. He had the rare merit of being one of the first to take an interest in the Impressionists. After the death of this likable art lover, the portrait of Cézanne was sold as No. 152 at the auction held at the Galerie Petit in Paris on July 1, 3, and 4, 1899. It passed later to Durand-Ruel in Paris, the Art Institute of Chicago, and, finally, to Mr. and Mrs. Leigh B. Block, Chicago.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Meier-Graefe, 1912, p. 101 (reprod.) / Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 84, pl. 336 / Vollard, in *L'Art et les Artistes*, 1920, no. IV, p. 164 (reprod.) / Rivière, 1921, p. 39 (reprod.) / André, 1928, pl. 13 / Meier-Graefe, 1929, p. 140, pl. 123 / Rivière, in *L'Art Vivant*, septembre 1928, p. 675 (reprod.) / Grappe, in *L'Art Vivant*, juillet 1933, p. 280 (reprod.) / Roger Marx, 1933, p. 83 (reprod.) / Terrasse, 1941, pl. 20 / Rewald, 1946, pl. 12

Renoir .80



COLORPLATE 4

Portrait of Théodore de Banville

Painted 1881. Pastel, 20½ × 16¼″

Signed, upper right: à Théodore de Banville/Renoir. *The Louvre, Paris*

Théodore de Banville (1823–1891), one of the best poets of the Parnassian school, was a member of the group of writers and painters who used to meet at the Café Guerbois before 1870. It was there that he met Renoir. Later he came across the painter again in the salon of Madame Georges Charpentier, the wife of the Paris publisher, who lived in a fine house on the Rue de Grenelle. It must have been about that time that Banville asked Renoir to paint his portrait.

Renoir did a first portrait of Banville, in pencil, in 1879. It appeared in No. 14 of *La Vie Moderne* on July 10 of that year.

EX. COLL. Théodore de Banville, Paris / Catulle Mendès, Paris / Purchased with the assistance of the Amis du Musée de Luxembourg

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. I, p. 96, no. 384 / Robida, 1958, p. 100

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir. Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, 1883, no. 65 / International Exhibition, San Francisco, 1915, no. 70

COLORPLATE 5

Woman with a Muff

Painted about 1883. Sanguine, $22^{5}/_{8} \times 15^{1}/_{4}$

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

On his return from Italy, Renoir bade farewell to the Seine and the oarsmen of Bougival by drawing this *Woman with a Muff* which is the first, still unsure manifestation of his "sour manner."

Needless to say, this sanguine is remarkable, first and foremost, for its precise, linear style; nonetheless, it captures our attention by the charm it exudes. In this young Parisienne who approaches us so gracefully with averted gaze, her back arched and her shoulders slightly bowed, Renoir offers us a new image of womanhood.

Although, no doubt, this image is impregnated with the fashion and taste of the period, in the main it is the offspring of the painter's personal vision. Like all great artists, Renoir created a new universe all his own. Proust gave this concept a definite form in one of his novels: "And now the world—which was not created only once but is recreated whenever an original artist arises—appears to us quite different from before, but perfectly clear. Women pass in the street, different from those of yore because they are all Renoirs, the Renoirs we once refused to see as women."

Renoir did other drawings of this same subject. Mr. Matthiesen, of London, has a study that is almost identical with the Metropolitan Museum's, but executed in pen and lead pencil.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. W. George, *Le Dessin français de David à Cézanne*, Paris, 1929, pl. 62 / Vaudoyer, 1953, pl. 3

COLORPLATE 6

The Dance in the Country

Painted 1883. Brush, with India ink and watercolor, $18^{7}/_{8} \times 11^{5}/_{8}$″

Signed, lower right: R. *Collection Miss Edith Wetmore, New York*

This watercolor drawing is a preliminary study for the large picture, now in the Durand-Ruel Collection in Paris, painted in 1883. Paul Lhote, a friend of Renoir, posed for the male figure, Suzanne Valadon for his partner. But, as Jean-Louis Vaudoyer has said: "It is not a case of two models who posed passively but of two human beings at a memorable moment of their life. No matter how discreetly this amorous emotion is suggested, our imagination is encouraged to embroider. In the presence of this man whose eyes we cannot see and this woman whose averted face expresses at once such reserve and such perplexity, we share the waltz with them and our own fancy supplies a title: *Before the Proposal*."

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris / Hugo Perls, Berlin

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 10, pl. 37 / Meier-Graefe, 1929, p. 171, pl. 156 / Rewald, 1946, frontispiece

COLORPLATE 7

Study for "The Bathers"

Painted about 1884. Black crayon, red crayon, and white chalk, 38 3/4 × 22 3/8″

Unsigned. The Art Institute of Chicago (Kate L. Brewster Bequest)

This drawing is a very advanced study for the figure on the right in the famous painting in the Carroll S. Tyson Collection, Philadelphia. Renoir started working on that picture on his return from Italy in 1882 and only finished it in 1885. It was exhibited at the Salon of 1887. Both the composition and the postures of the nymphs were inspired by Girardon's bas-relief of *Diana Bathing* which adorns the pool in the Allée des Marmousets at Versailles.

In the large work Renoir has depicted the frolics of a group of bathers, some of whom are seated on the river bank, the others standing in the water. The drawing in the Chicago collection is a study for the young girl in the foreground scooping up water in her cupped hands to splash her companions. This heightened drawing, which is very close to the final composition, constitutes the climax of Renoir's linear researches. Here the artist has detached himself entirely from Impressionism and, under the influence of Ingres and Raphael, tends toward a classical style.

EX. COLL. Adrien Hébrard, Paris / Mr. and Mrs. Walter S. Brewster, Chicago / Bequeathed by Kate L. Brewster to the Art Institute of Chicago

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Meier-Graefe, 1912, p. 119 (reprod.) / Meier-Graefe 1929, p. 193, pl. 176 / Dr. Kucker, 1944, pl. 4 / Rewald, 1946, pl. 41

EXHIBITIONS. De David à Toulouse-Lautrec, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, 1955, no. 87, pl. 52

COLORPLATE 8

Two Little Girls Reading

Painted about 1885. Pastel, $11\frac{7}{8} \times 14\frac{3}{4}''$

Signed, lower left: Renoir. *Formerly private collection, Berlin*

As a painter of family scenes, Renoir often evoked the charm and simplicity of everyday life, and reading was one of his favorite themes. Catching his youthful models in so tranquil a pastime as leafing through a novel or picture book, Renoir was able to give them a calm, harmonious, and, above all, natural pose.

For the simplicity of the execution and the dulcet harmony of the pastel tints, *Two Little Girls Reading* deserves a special place among Renoir's drawings. What charm there is in the posture of these two children with intent profiles, their heads almost touching in order not to miss a word of the absorbing tale! The whole scene has an intimate and personal quality.

EX. COLL. Paul Cassirer, Berlin / O. Gerstenberg, Berlin

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Hausenstein (Marées), 1920, pl. 14 / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 19

Renoir

COLORPLATE 9

Mother and Child

Painted 1885. Sanguine with white chalk highlights, 29 1/2 × 21 1/8"

Signed and dated, lower right: Renoir 85. *Korda Collection, London*

About 1885 Renoir painted several pictures of his wife nursing her first son, Pierre. The drawing reproduced here is a study for the picture that belonged to Claude Renoir and is now in Mrs. Hunt Henderson's collection in New York.

In this wonderful sanguine Renoir's only aim was to depict delightful curves, but in doing so he has composed a hymn to motherhood. No other artist ever expressed with such charm and naturalness the mystery of the mother nursing her child—"that transfusion of nutriment from one being to the other."

Many years later—in 1916—Renoir used this composition as it stood for a sculpture in bronze executed by Richard Guino under his direction. (Haesaerts, 1947, no. 17, pl. 32).

EX. COLL. Deutsch, Paris / Wildenstein, New York

BIBLIOGRAPHY. F. Daulte, *Le Dessin français de Manet à Cézanne*, Lausanne 1954, pl. 24

EXHIBITIONS. French 19th Century Drawings, Wildenstein Gallery, New York, 1947–1948, no. 43 / Drawings Through Four Centuries, Wildenstein Gallery, New York, 1949, no. 81 / The Art of Drawing, 1500–1950, London, 1953, p. 11, no. 97 / Renoir. The Tate Gallery, London, 1953, no. 18, pl. 7

COLORPLATE 10

Boating

Painted 1886. Watercolor, pen, and lead pencil, 10¾ × 9⅛″

Unsigned. Private collection, Basel

In his book on Renoir published in 1928, Albert André reproduced an oblong drawing showing a boating scene. Due to an accident the drawing was cut in two; the left-hand fragment shows a young woman rowing; in the right-hand piece, one can recognize Madame Renoir with her eldest son, Pierre, seated on her lap.

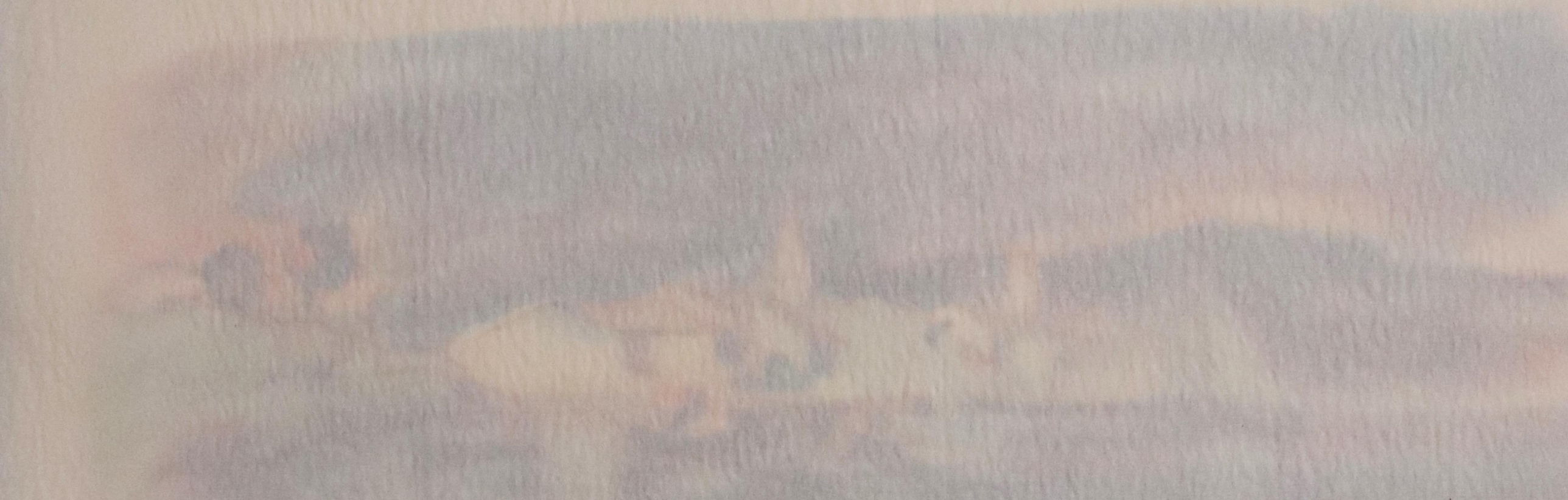
Note with what delicacy Renoir has heightened with light touches of color, the cheeks of his young wife, her flower-decked hat and the branches against which the mother and child are silhouetted. An extremely meticulous treatment is visible through the transparent watercolors. For instance, all the leaves on the branches were drawn one by one with pen or pencil and colored afterwards as in an illumination.

Renoir did a few drawings in this precise and charming manner about 1886. In the Philip Hofer Collection, Cambridge, Mass., there is a sheet very like the one reproduced here. It represents *Two Young Women in a Boat*. Their rounded faces and beribboned hats stand out against a background of willows with feathery foliage (Rewald, 1946, pl. 51).

EX. COLL. Durand-Ruel, Paris / Lucas Lichtenhan, Basel

BIBLIOGRAPHY. André, 1928, pl. 99

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir. Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April, 1921, no. 4 / Impressionisten, Kunsthalle, Basel, 1949, no. 35



COLORPLATE II

Fishermen's Houses at Les Martigues

Painted 1888. Watercolor, 5 1/8 × 9 1/4″

Unsigned. The Louvre, Paris

In January, 1888, Renoir spent three weeks with Cézanne at the Jas de Bouffan. From there he went to Les Martigues, where he stayed till the end of March. He took advantage of this stay to do several rapidly brushed watercolors. Whether they were meant to be transposed into paintings or were finished works in their own right, these delicate sketches may be considered as variations on the same theme. Most of them represent the lagoon of Berre or the little port of les Martigues.

The landscape in the Louvre reproduced here belongs to that series of watercolors done in a very free technique. What a skillful transposition of nature and what brilliant light! The whole scene is conceived in a very personal gamut, reduced to three colors—purplish blue, yellow, and orange-red. But even with such limited means Renoir has realized a harmony of the greatest rarity.

EX. COLL. Fils Renoir, Cagnes / Paul Cézanne fils, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Meier-Graefe, 1929, pl. 2 / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 21

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April 1921, no. 10 / Renoir. L'Œuvre sculpté, l'œuvre gravé, aquarelles et dessins. Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1934, no. 16

COLORPLATE 12

The Toilette

Painted about 1890. Sanguine, black and white chalk, $22^{7}/_{8} \times 17^{3}/_{4}$″

Signed and dedicated: à Roger-Marx Bien Amicalement, Renoir. *Collection Roger-Marx, Paris*

Between 1880 and 1900 Renoir took a very special pleasure in painting young women bathing in all the splendor of their naked beauty. Whether reclining or standing erect, washing or drying themselves, dressing a wound or taking a nap, Renoir's women have only one task—to expose their bodies to the light.

This sanguine is beyond doubt one of the finest versions of a subject tackled constantly by Renoir. It would be impossible to overestimate the artistry with which Renoir has heightened with crushed white chalk the back of his bather in order to enhance both its vigor and breadth.

EX. COLL. Renoir gave *The Toilette* to Roger-Marx to thank him for inviting the Impressionist painters to show their works at the Centennial Exhibition of 1900. At a time when living art was still opposed in official circles, Roger-Marx was one of the few critics to defend it. Born at Nancy in 1859, he was still a young man when he was appointed Inspector of Fine Arts. He campaigned in favor of innovation in the field of decoration and furnishing and made an important contribution to the revival of original engraving. At his death in 1914 the sanguine reproduced here entered the collection of his son, the art critic Claude Roger-Marx.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Roger-Marx, 1933, p. 59 (reprod.) / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 13

EXHIBITIONS. Exhibitions of French Art, Royal Academie of Arts, London, 1932, no. 974 / Renoir, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, 1933, no. 141 / Renoir, L'Œuvre sculpté, l'œuvre gravé, aquarelles et dessins, Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1934, no. 34

Roger Marx
Son ami reconnaissant
Renoir

COLORPLATE 13

Berthe Morisot and her Daughter

Painted 1894. Pastel, 23 1/4 × 17 1/2″

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Petit Palais, Paris*

"I must say that Madame Morisot was one of the firmest friends I ever had," Renoir declared one day to his dealer Ambroise Vollard. Renoir's relationship with Berthe Morisot remained for many years on the level of being merely group comrades, but in 1885 the two artists became close friends. Berthe Morisot had married Eugène Manet, the painter's brother, and their home was extremely hospitable. Renoir dined there very frequently with Mallarmé, Degas, the Astrucs, or Claude Monet.

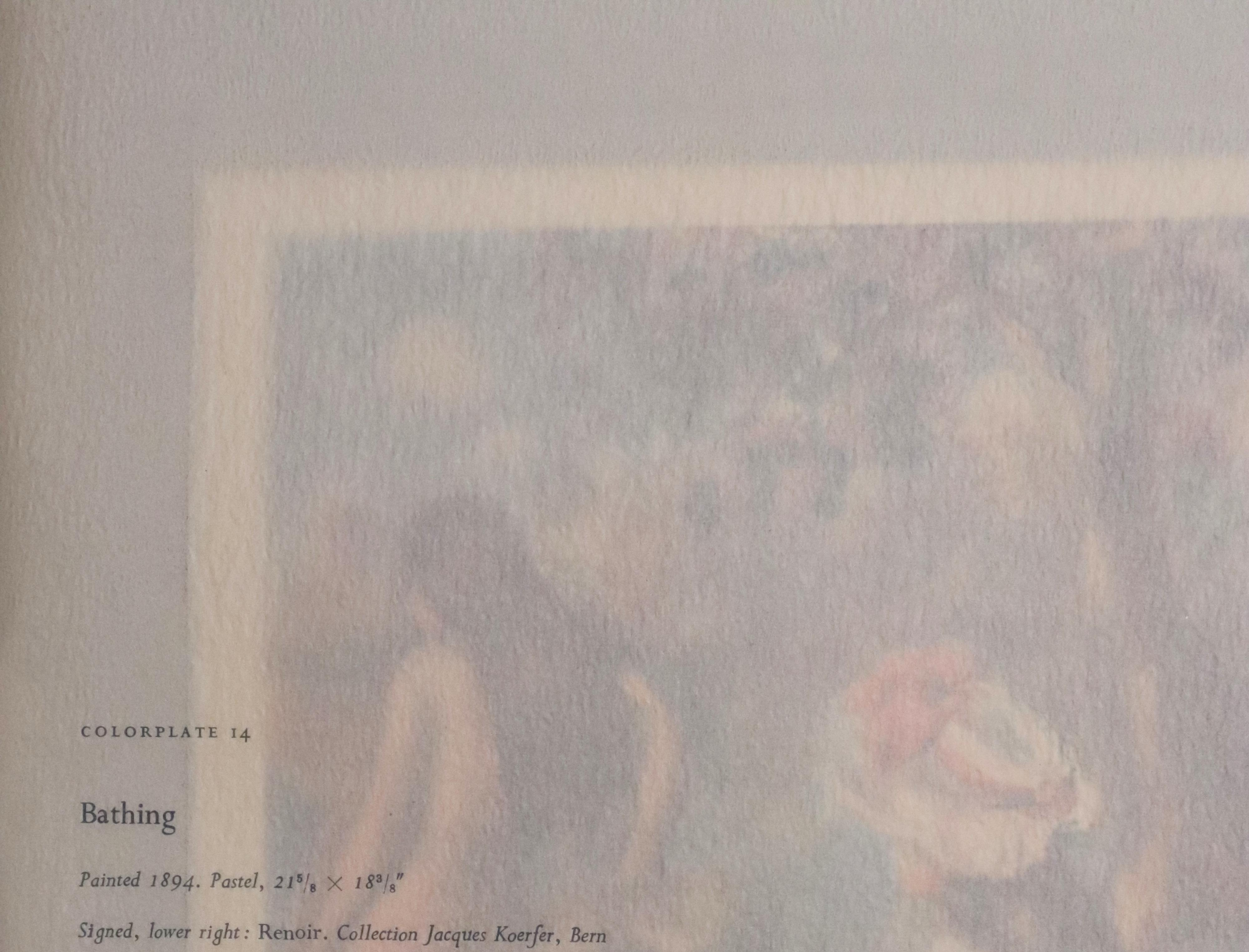
This is how Henri de Régnier describes the Manet's salon: "It was at Berthe Morisot's that I came across Renoir again. Mallarmé had taken me to the Rue de Villejust and we often used to go there on Sundays after the concert. It was an unusual and extremely distinguished circle. Eugène Manet, Berthe Morisot, and their daughter Julie lived in an upper middle-class setting of the purest taste... Berthe Morisot with a lofty, chilly courtesy, a remote elegance under her white hair and a keen, melancholy gaze, and little Julie, a wild, silent child with artlessly rosy cheeks."

It was in 1894 that Renoir asked Berthe Morisot to sit for him with her daughter. The sitting took place in his studio on the Rue Tourlaque at Montmartre. The pastel reproduced here was sketched at the same time as the large portrait that now belongs to Madame Ernest Rouart, the former Julie Manet.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 148, pl. 586

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir et Berthe Morisot, Limoges, 1952, no. 53 / Un siècle d'Art français, 1850–1950, Petit Palais, Paris, 1953, no. 453



COLORPLATE 14

Bathing

Painted 1894. Pastel, 21 5/8 × 18 3/8″

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Collection Jacques Koerfer, Bern*

At Beaulieu-sur-Mer during the summer of 1894 Renoir did several pictures of holiday makers in summer frocks resting on the seashore or getting ready to bathe. With their long, tumbling tresses, their hats adorned with bright-colored ribbons, these young girls fit marvelously into a landscape drenched with light.

This pastel is one of the most attractive versions of a subject that Renoir tackled frequently. Before this vivid, sensual, sunny work, before this bather whose lithe body mingles with the curves of the foliage and the blue of sea and sky, one recalls the famous phrase of Proust about the painter Elstir, who was none other than Renoir: "The charm of each [of Elstir's works] consisted in a sort of metamorphosis of the things represented similar to what in poetry is termed 'metaphor,' and that if God the Father created things by naming them, it was by taking away their name and giving them another that Elstir re-created them... It is of the rare moments when one sees nature as she is, poetically, that Elstir's work is made."

EX. COLL. Fils Renoir, Cagnes / Feilchenfeldt, Zurich

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 45, pl. 180 / André, 1928, pl. 41 / Meier-Graefe (Marées), 1929, pl. 6 / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 8

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April 1921, no. 40

COLORPLATE 15

Child with an Orange

Painted about 1895. Pastel, 19 1/8 × 13 1/4″

Signed, lower left: Renoir. *Collection Mrs. Harris Jonas, New York*

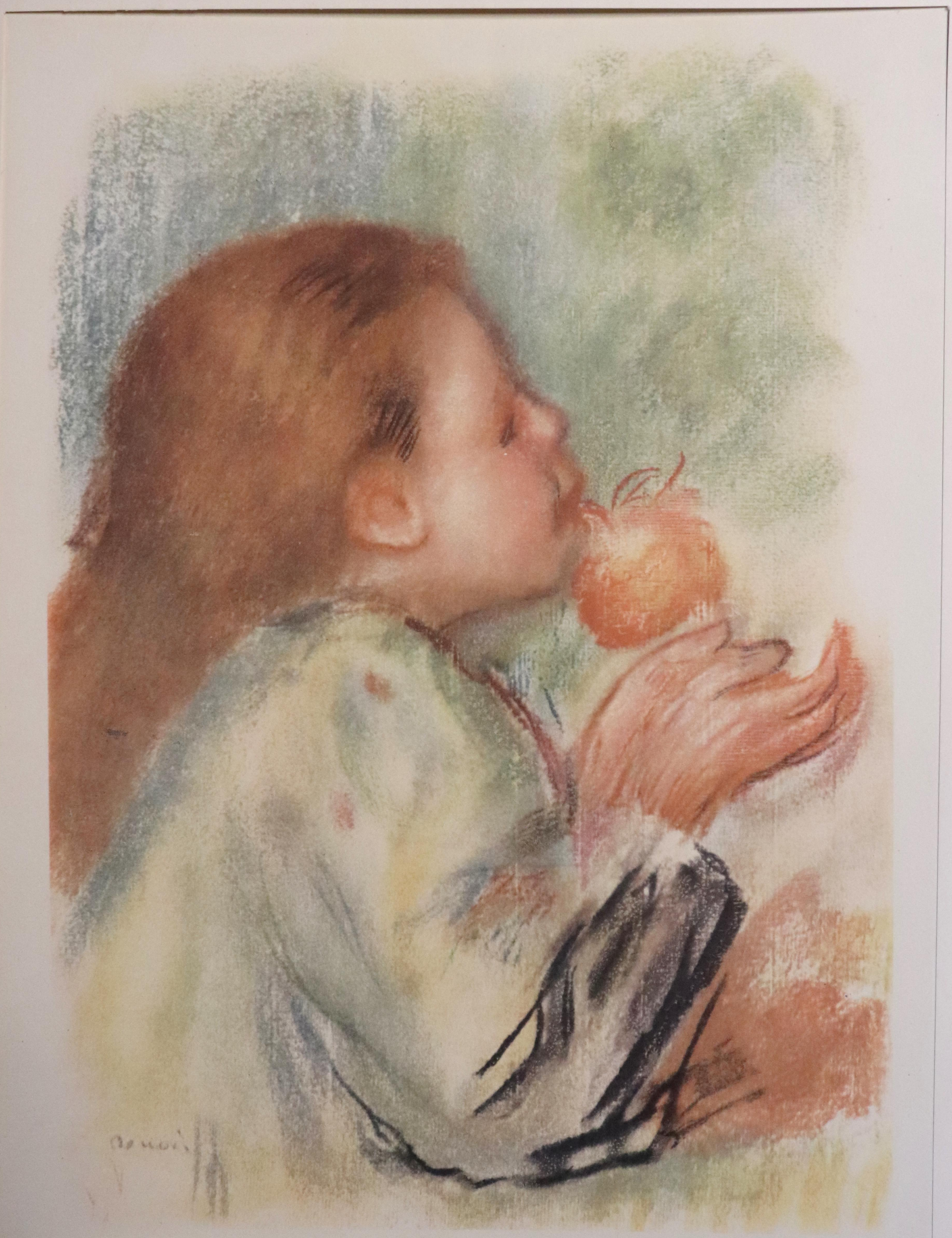
About 1895 Renoir painted a large picture of his second son Jean sitting on Gabrielle's lap and trying to grasp an orange offered him by the concierge's daughter. The baby's tense and awkward gesture in endeavoring to seize the fruit, and the affection one can read on the woman's face are rendered with naturalness and nobility.

To prepare this picture, now the property of Mrs. Harris Jonas of New York, Renoir did a quantity of sketches for the composition and of drawings of details. In the Bernheim Collection there is a pastel representing the general effect of the scene (Meier-Graefe, 1929, p. 207, pl. 182). The drawing reproduced here is a study for the figure of the concierge's little girl offering the baby the coveted orange.

In this pastel one can see how Renoir starts by suggesting his subject with vague curves. He next colors the sheet with luscious velvety tints and finally goes over the drawing once more with thick black strokes to stress the gesture of an arm and the movement of the fingers.

EX. COLL. Durand-Ruel, Paris / Otto Henkell, Wiesbaden

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Hausenstein (Marées), 1920, pl. 10 / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 6



COLORPLATE 16

After the Bath

Painted 1895. Sanguine, 16 × 12″

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Collection E. G. Bührle, Zurich*

This sanguine, which shows us a type of girl dear to Renoir, is a study for the large picture painted in 1895 and formerly in the Durand-Ruel Collection in Paris (Meier-Graefe, 1929, p. 256, pl. 249).

With a few precise arabesques Renoir brings home to us the indefinably radiance of youth; two or three strokes suffice to indicate the form of a profile half candid, half greedy, the simplicity of an artless gesture, the modeling of a hand, the contour of a leg, the long tresses that tumble over the girl's shoulders with unstudied grace. His crayon delights to design the soft arabesque of the body, a curve that is unique in all the world.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris / Feilchenfeldt, Zurich

BIBLIOGRAPHY. *Aus der Sammlung Emil Georg Bührle*, in *Du*, Jg. 17, Zurich 1957, no. 12, p. 50 (reprod.)

Renoir

COLORPLATE 17

Two Girls, *or* The Conversation

Painted 1895. Pastel, 30 3/4 × 25 3/8″

Signed, lower left: Renoir. *Collection R. A. Peto, Bembridge (Isle of Wight)*

This pastel is one of the finest versions of a theme that Renoir treated very frequently during his long career, namely, the conversation or confession.

One cannot fail to note that this large drawing is almost like a painting. Renoir started out by covering his sheet of paper with light hatchings, which he took the trouble to crush and blend. Then he went over this colored ground with clearly visible strokes that render to perfection the velvety texture of the dresses and the airiness of the plumes on the hats of his chance models.

In his second work on Renoir, Albert André reproduced an oil painting which, except for some few variants, is almost identical with this pastel (André, 1928, pl. 53).

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, The Tate Gallery, London, 1953, no. 28. Reprod. on the cover of the catalogue

COLORPLATE 18

Study of an Actor

Painted 1900. Sanguine and colored crayons, $16^1/_2 \times 11^1/_4''$

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Collection Albert Flament, Cannes*

In the spring of 1900, Dorival, a famous actor of the Comédie Française, asked Renoir to paint his portrait in one of his favorite parts, Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Renoir acquiesced and the result was a picture full of gusto (André, 1931, Vol. 1, no. 219, pl. 70). This sanguine is a first sketch for that portrait.

Dorival was not only a great actor; he had also the merit of being one of the first collectors of the Impressionists. To decorate his apartment on the Boulevard de Clichy he bought pictures by Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, and, later, landscapes of Utrillo's white period. He had a remarkable flair and it was he who discovered, in a bric-à-brac shop in Bern, Manet's *La Partie de Croquet*, which is now one of the masterpieces of the Frankfurt Museum.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1919, p. 143 (reprod.)

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April 1921, no. 112

C L

COLORPLATE 19

Jean Renoir with a Hat

Painted about 1900. Pastel, 24 7/8 × 18 7/8″

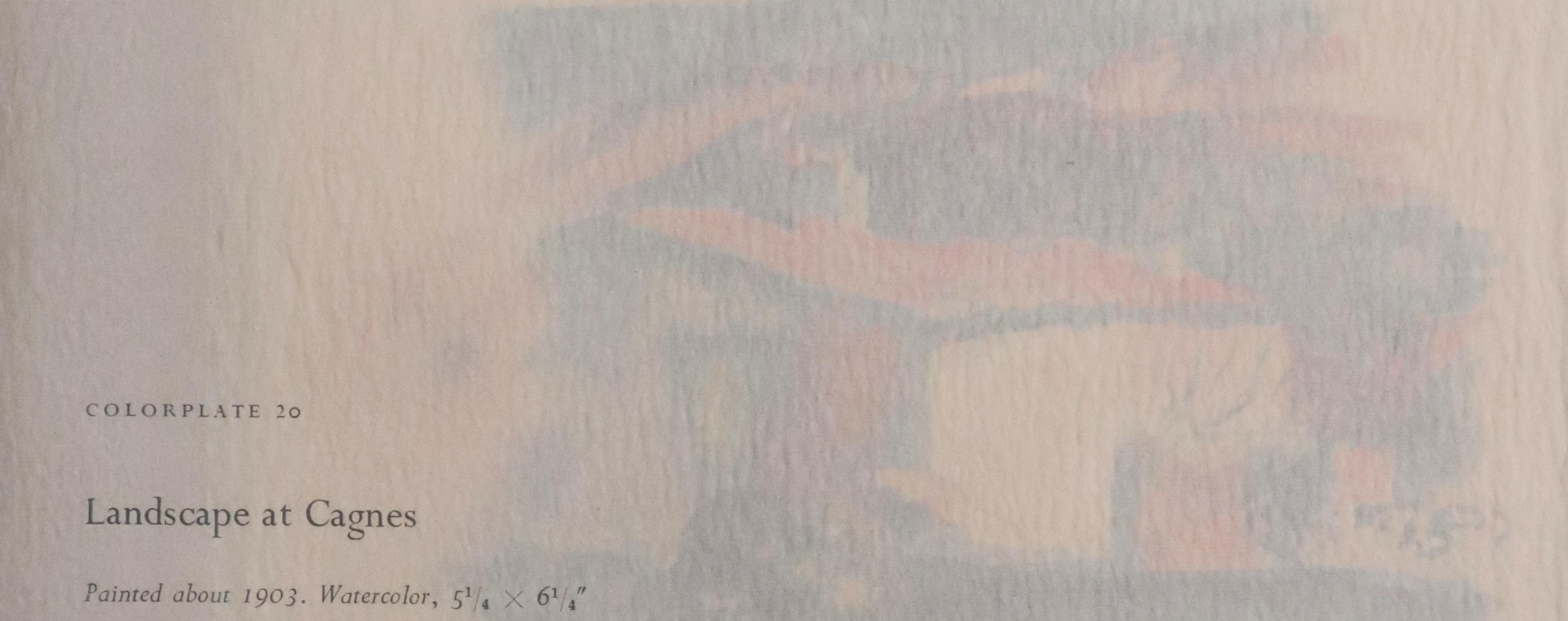
Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Musée National, Belgrade*

Renoir excelled in rendering the artlessness, freshness, and awkwardness of children. His second son Jean, born in 1894, seems to hold pride of place among all his youthful models; Renoir nowhere else took such delight in observing the eyes and laughter of a little child as it gradually discovers life. Indeed, as we look at the many portraits of the boy we almost feel that we are watching him grow. First we see him as a chubby-cheeked baby in the arms of his nurse Gabrielle (plate 1); later we find him sewing, learning the alphabet, playing with his hoop, or dressed up as Pierrot. As Jean grew older his father took more and more interest in rendering his attentive gaze and the awakening of his intelligence.

It is amusing to note that in the portraits by his father little Jean very often looks like a girl. Renoir was fascinated by the freshness and bloom of a new epidermis and really recognized the woman in the child. Thus, in this pastel, he amused himself by portraying his son with long locks reaching to his shoulders and clutching with clumsy hand a large, flower-decked hat that keeps slipping off his knees.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris / Erich Šlomović, Belgrade / Acquired by the Musée National, Belgrade, 1949

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 131, pl. 520



COLORPLATE 20

Landscape at Cagnes

Painted about 1903. Watercolor, $5^1/_4 \times 6^1/_4$″

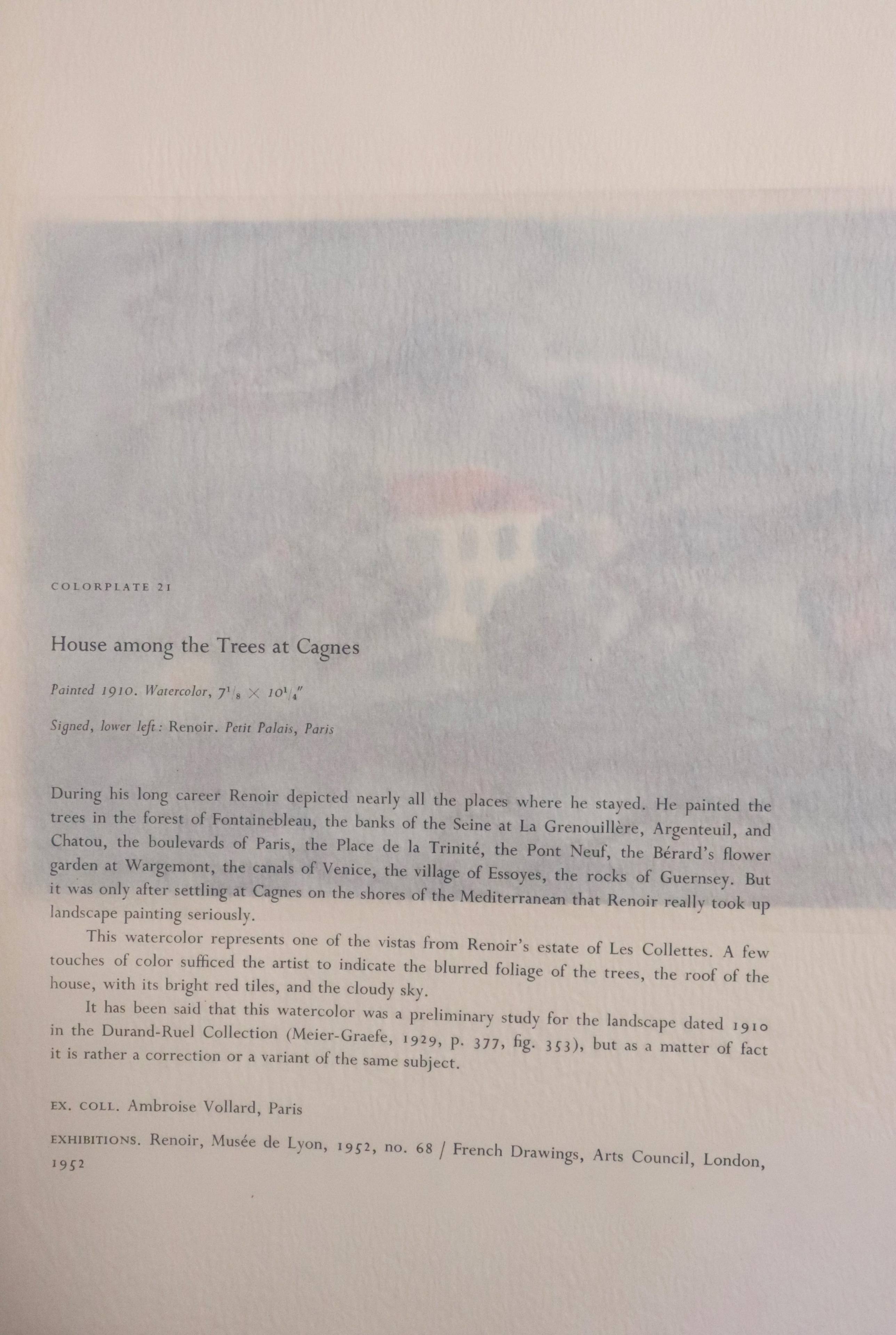
Unsigned. Collection Hans R. Hahnloser, Bern

In 1903 and 1904, Renoir made long stays in the south of France. To lodge his family and himself he rented a spacious apartment on the top floor of the post office at Cagnes. From its windows he could see all the little town and often took advantage of this to paint its houses and narrow streets, the horizon limited only by the gradually rising tiers of hills that lose themselves in the distance.

This watercolor is one of that series of landscapes of Cagnes in which Renoir succeeded in rendering to perfection the light of the south—a warm, crystalline light saturated with sea mist.

EX. COLL. Roger Marx, Paris, Roger-Marx Sale, Paris / Galerie Manzi-Joyant, 11–14 Mai, 1914, Catalogue no. 196 / Arthur Hahnloser, Winterthur. Dr. Arthur Hahnloser and his wife shared with Oskar Reinhart the distinction of being the first Swiss collectors to open their doors to the Impressionists. They bought works by Renoir, Van Gogh, Cézanne, and the Nabis when they were cheap. But, more important still, the Hahnlosers were extremely hospitable and all the painters who stayed with them would endorse Félix Vallotton's word: "I felt warm again in your home." When Frau Hedy Hahnloser died, this picture passed into her son's collection in Bern.

EXHIBITIONS. Von Ingres bis Picasso, Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne, 1938 / Die Hauptwerke der Sammlung Hahnloser, Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, 1940, no. 203



COLORPLATE 21

House among the Trees at Cagnes

Painted 1910. Watercolor, $7^{1}/_{8} \times 10^{1}/_{4}''$

Signed, lower left: Renoir. *Petit Palais, Paris*

During his long career Renoir depicted nearly all the places where he stayed. He painted the trees in the forest of Fontainebleau, the banks of the Seine at La Grenouillère, Argenteuil, and Chatou, the boulevards of Paris, the Place de la Trinité, the Pont Neuf, the Bérard's flower garden at Wargemont, the canals of Venice, the village of Essoyes, the rocks of Guernsey. But it was only after settling at Cagnes on the shores of the Mediterranean that Renoir really took up landscape painting seriously.

This watercolor represents one of the vistas from Renoir's estate of Les Collettes. A few touches of color sufficed the artist to indicate the blurred foliage of the trees, the roof of the house, with its bright red tiles, and the cloudy sky.

It has been said that this watercolor was a preliminary study for the landscape dated 1910 in the Durand-Ruel Collection (Meier-Graefe, 1929, p. 377, fig. 353), but as a matter of fact it is rather a correction or a variant of the same subject.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Musée de Lyon, 1952, no. 68 / French Drawings, Arts Council, London, 1952

COLORPLATE 22

The Washerwomen

Painted 1913. Sanguine, black and white chalk, $22^{7}/_{8} \times 16^{3}/_{4}$"

Signed, lower right: Renoir. *Private Collection, Paris*

In 1906, Renoir bought a large estate at Cagnes called *Les Collettes*. It was there that he died on December 3, 1919. During this last period of his life, most of which he spent in the south of France, he often painted women washing clothes or hanging them up in the sun to dry.

This sanguine is one of the preliminary sketches Renoir did for his famous picture *The Washerwomen Beside the Stream*, dated 1913, now in the Mr. and Mrs. George Friedland collection, New York.

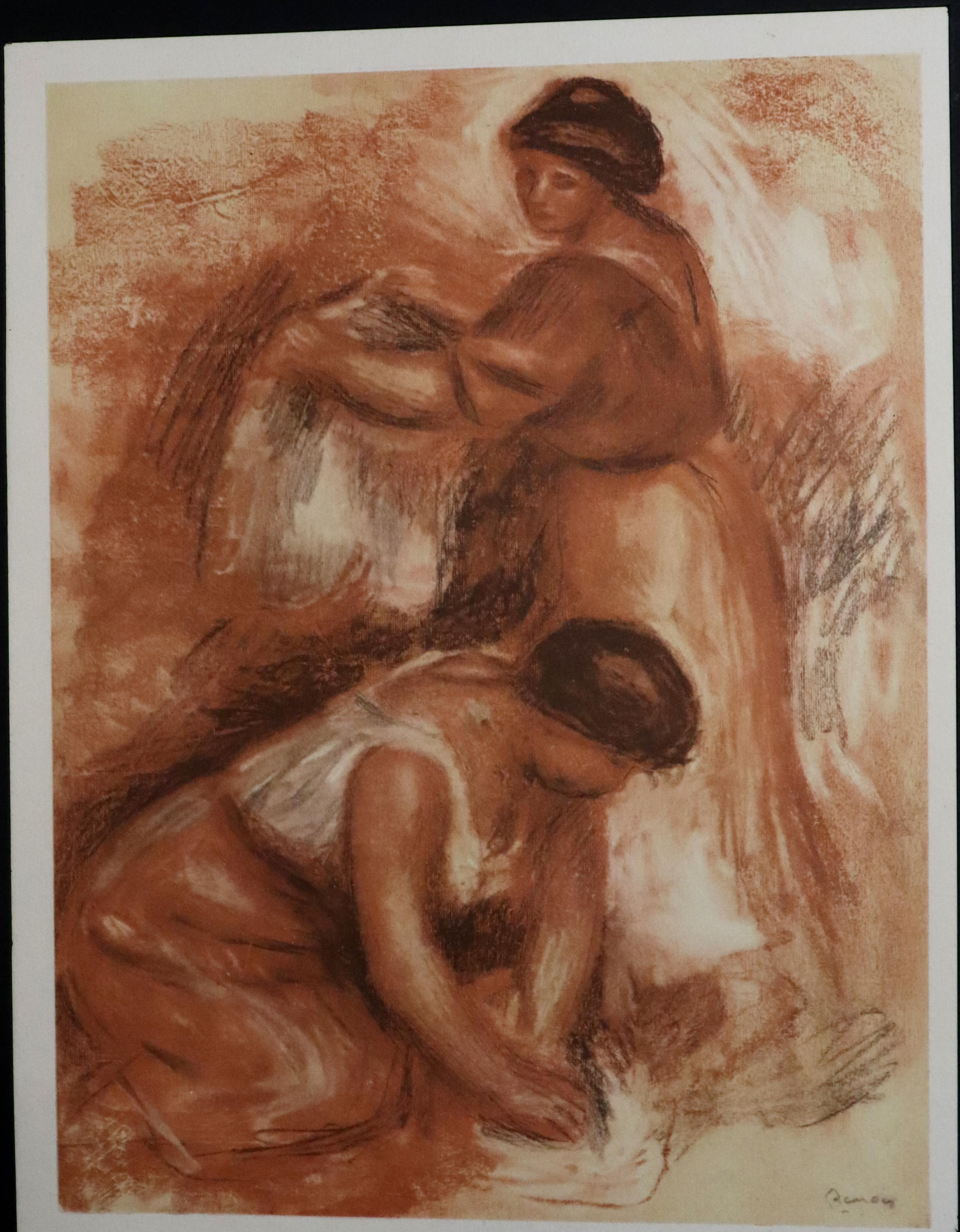
See how red predominates in this forceful drawing. That color alone appeared to Renoir sufficiently rich, sumptuous, and brimming over with life to render the supple and ample bodies of his two washerwomen. The blood had to flow to their faces, arms, and hands, even if they gave the impression of being red for having washed too much. "It is lovely to paint a woman's hands," said Renoir, "but they must be hands used to housework."

Note, too, that Renoir places his two washerwomen in an almost motionless posture. Unlike Degas, he makes no attempt to catch unstable attitudes or rapid gestures. He is quite happy to lend all his attention to the folds of the materials, the volumes of the bodies, the forms of the arms and hands, and some few gestures as simple and familiar as possible.

EX COLL. Fils Renoir, Cagnes

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Meier-Graefe (Marées), 1929, pl. 5 / Rewald, 1946, pl. 88 / Leymarie, 1949, pl. 15

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir. Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April 1921, no. 60



COLORPLATE 23

The Rhône and the Saône

Painted 1913. Sanguine, charcoal, and white chalk, 24 × 18 3/4″

Unsigned. Korda Collection, London

About 1913, Renoir had the idea of painting a large decorative panel representing, in allegorical form, the Saône rushing into the arms of the Rhône. The drawing reproduced here is one of the principal studies for that important composition, which was never executed. Nonetheless, the theme so pleased Renoir that he took it up again more than once. He did two etchings of the same subject (Delteil, vol. 17, nos. 24 and 25), and, in 1915, painted two large sketches in oils showing us, once again, the Saône in the shape of a nymph advancing fearlessly towards the Rhône, a splendid old man waiting with arms outstretched to receive her.

EX. COLL. Fils Renoir, Cagnes / Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. André, 1928, pl. 108 / Meier-Graefe (Marées), 1929, pl. 14 / Rewald, 1946, pl. 85 / Vaudoyer, 1953, pl. 34

EXHIBITIONS. Renoir, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, April 1921, no. 52

COLORPLATE 24

Study for the Venus Victrix

Painted 1914. Watercolor, 12 × 9″

Signed, lower left: Renoir. *Inscribed, upper left:* Que le socle de la statue soit au niveau de l'eau avec des petits rochers et plantes aquatiques. (The base of the statue should be at the level of the water with some small rocks and aquatic plants.) *Petit Palais, Paris*

This watercolor is the first idea sketch for a sculpture that Renoir had Richard Guino execute in 1915 and 1916 and which was named *Venus Victrix*. It is Venus or Aphrodite who, according to mythology, after competing with the goddesses Hera and Athene, has just received from the shepherd Paris the apple inscribed "to the most beautiful." (Haesaerts, 1934, no. 6, pl. 14–21).

A young flower girl of Cagnes, Maria by name, posed both for the watercolor and the statue.

EX. COLL. Ambroise Vollard, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vollard, 1918, Vol. 2, p. 143 (reprod.). / Graber, 1943, p. 236

EXHIBITIONS. Meisterwerke aus Frankreichs Museen, Albertina, Vienna, 1950, no. 245 / Renoir, Musée de Lyon, 1952, no. 71 / Un siècle d'Art français, 1850–1950, Petit Palais, Paris, 1953, no. 454

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