

# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

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PAUL SIGNAC

1863 - Paris - 1935

*Paris, le Pont des Arts*

Pen and sepia ink with wash on paper.

In the lower margin dedicated, dated and signed: *meilleures vœux pour 1933 / P. Signac.*

105 x 140 mm.

PROVENANCE: Dr. Hans Werner Riedel and Dr. Ralf Dieter Loher-Riedel, Munich.

The Pont des Arts, dating from 1803, was one of the first cast-iron bridges ever built. West of the Île de la Cité, this pedestrian bridge crosses the Seine from the Quai de Ponty to the Quai du Louvre. Signac depicted this elegant bridge several times from different points of view. The subject first appears on a charcoal drawing dating from 1910<sup>1</sup>, a bit later in two paintings from 1912, and then in paintings and watercolours, executed between 1924 and 1931.<sup>2</sup>

It is likely that Signac drew this composition from the Pont Neuf looking westwards. On the left bank there is a tug boat anchoring under the trees. On the right bank we can see the Louvre, with the Pavillon de Flore in the distance, today the home of the Louvre's drawings cabinet.

Signac mostly worked with watercolour, but this did not prevent him from continuing to practice black-and-white drawing with equally obvious pleasure. The Conté-pencil drawings of the early years were succeeded by wash drawings, made in india ink of sepia. Signac, who admired Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin, used this technique in the tradition of classical art for sketches after nature and for a series of large scale cartoons, preparatory for his paintings.<sup>3</sup>

Our drawing is full of contrasts between shade and light, and the color of the wash reaches from dark brown in the construction of the bridge and in the boat to light, and nearly dissolving tones in the clouds. This small scale drawing was used to send the artist's 'best wishes for the year 1933' to one of his friends.

The authenticity of the drawing was confirmed by Marina Ferretti in a letter of 24 March 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> *Paul Signac. A Collection of Watercolors and Drawings* [James Dyke Collection], with Essays by Marina Ferretti Bocquillon and Charles Cachin, exhib. cat., Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas 2000, p. 59, no. 42, repr.

<sup>2</sup> Françoise Cachin, *Signac, Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, Paris 2000. See the paintings nos. 492, 493, 564, 569, 582, and 593.

<sup>3</sup> Marina Ferretti Bocquillon, 'The James Dyke Collection: Paul Signac's Graphik Work. The large india-ink-wash drawings', in *Paul Signac. A Collection of Watercolors and Drawings*, op. cit., p. 23.