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FÉLIX VALLOTTON

1865 Lausanne - Paris 1925

Femme à la cruche- Porteuse d'eau [Woman with a Pitcher – The Water Carrier]

Bronze with fine, greenish patina. Conceived in 1904 (the initial plaster model). One of 10 casts (executed in October 1928). Inscribed with the artist's monogram: *F. V.* on the base and numbered 4. With the foundry mark: *A. A. Hébrard*.

Height 28.0 cm

PROVENANCE: A.A. Hébrard, Paris - Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris - Madeleine Lecomte du Nouÿ, Paris – Thence by descent – Auction sale, *Estampes, Dessins & Tableaux Modernes*, M Loudmer, Drouot, Paris, 25 June 1990, lot 152/C] – Galerie du Carrousel, Paris – Auction sale, *Schweizer Kunst*, Sotheby's, Zurich, 2 June 1994, lot 88 – Private collection, Switzerland – Auction sale, *Tableaux, Dessins et Sculptures des XIX et XXème Siecles*, Tajan, Hotel George V–Salon Vendôme, Paris, 21 December 2000, lot 38 – Private collection, France - Auction sale, *Schweizer Kunst*, Sotheby's, Zurich, 11 June 2001, lot 440 - Collection Jean-Claude Givel, Roman-Dessous – Thence by descent

EXHIBITION: *Vallotton, Borgeaud, Soutter – Hommage à Jean-Claude Givel*, Musée d'art de Pully, 2016, unnumbered

LITERATURE: Marina Ducrey with Katia Poletti, *Félix Vallotton 1865–1925 – l'œuvre peint*, III, Zurich/Lausanne 2005, no. VI/4, p. 883, repr.

In 1904, Félix Vallotton made six figurines, four of which were cast in bronze by the Paris foundry Adrien A. Hébrard. The two remaining sculptures were destroyed by Vallotton soon after he had made them.¹ On his death in 1925, the heirs commissioned Hébrard to make a substantial number of new casts. However the exact size of the edition is unknown. Marina Ducrey, the author of the Vallotton catalogue raisonné, conjectures that around ten casts were made, all of which were produced in 1928 or 1930.² The most extensive collection of his sculptures is housed in the Claribel and Etta Cone Collection in the Baltimore Museum of Art.³

The present cast not only bears the artist's monogram and the foundry mark *A. A. Hébrard* on the base but it is also marked with the number 4. Ducrey considers it likely that it was cast in October 1928. It remained in the possession of the family of Vallotton's stepson Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques for many years.⁴

¹ As can be understood from Vallotton's personal catalogue raisonné, the *Livre de raison*, the pieces were modelled in a material which he called *pâte plastique* [modelling mass]. It is not known what this represented because the original models were lost, however it was certainly not plaster or clay. It is also unclear exactly how many bronze casts were produced by Hébrard in 1904 but it is likely to have been only a small number since further casts were made in subsequent years.

² Marina Ducrey with Katia Poletti, op. cit., III, Zurich/Lausanne 2005, p. 877 f.

³ Brenda Richardson, *Dr. Claribel & Miss Etta – The Cone Collection*, exhib. cat., The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore 1985.

⁴ In 2001, the present cast was acquired at auction by Jean-Claude Givel, a well-known collector based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

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Throughout history, the motif of a woman with a pitcher has been a traditional subject in art. One of the most famous examples is a painting by Ingres, whose work Vallotton held in very high regard. The painting was completed in 1856 and quickly entered the collection of the Louvre. It depicts the standing nude figure of a young woman holding a pitcher from which water flows [Fig. 1]. The representation of an unclothed female figure was a typically delicate topic and Ingres's solution was to give the painting a mythological inflection, titling it *La Source* [The Spring].

The fact that all Vallotton's sculptures were executed in late 1904 marks a turning point in his oeuvre. Unwonted as sculptural intervention was for him, it signified the start of a resolute shift towards the female nude that was also reflected in his painting. Although interiors were his main focus of interest in the first half of the year, in the second half, depictions of female figures began to take pride of place. Most of these are depictions of standing nudes and half-nudes.

In 1906 Vallotton realised a version in oil closely based on the present figurine [Fig. 2].⁵ This pictorial version testifies to the importance of the sculptures for his artistic development.

We are grateful to Rudolf Koella for sharing his research findings.

⁵ Marina Ducrey with Katia Poletti, op. cit., II, Zurich/Lausanne 2005, p. 359, no. 590.



Fig. 1: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
(1780 Montauban – Paris 1867),
La Source [The Spring], oil on canvas, 1856.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

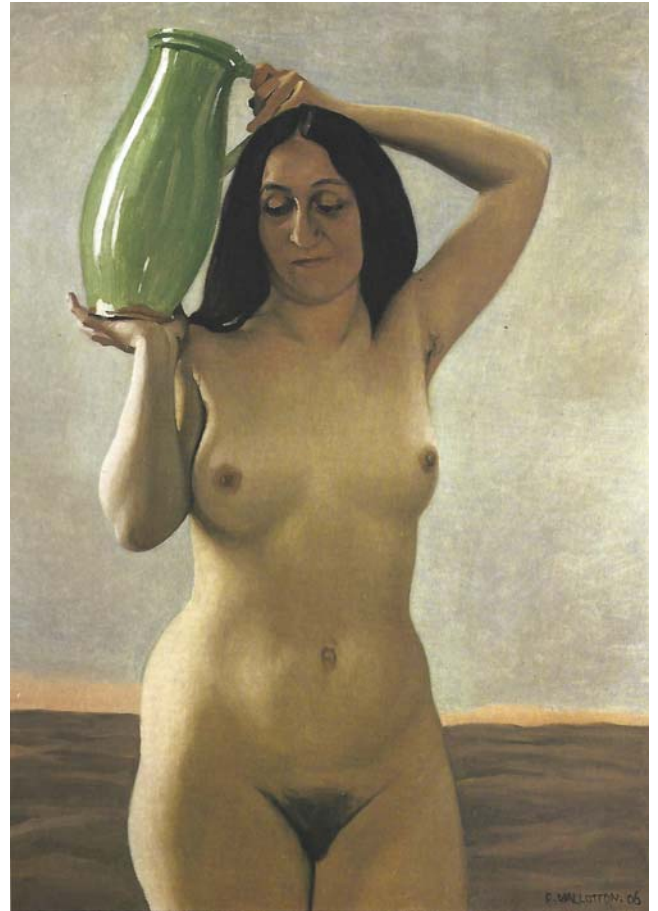


Fig. 2: *Femme à la cruche* [Woman with a Pitcher],
oil on canvas, 1906, 100 x 73 cm.
Formerly Hahnloser Collection, Winterthur;
private collection, Switzerland.