



JANE POUPELET (1874-1932)

Seated Female Nude

Brown ink on Japanese paper

Signed: J Poupelet

H. 33, W. 22.8 cm

Provenance

- France, Private collection

Bibliography

- Dumaine, Sylvie, *Les dessins de la statuaire Jane Poupelet (1874-1932), collection de dessins déposée à Roubaix, La Piscine, musée d'art et d'Industrie-André Diligent*, (The Drawings of the Sculptor Jane Poupelet (1874-1932, the collection of drawings held in Roubaix, La Piscine, the André-Diligent Museum of Art and Industry), master's thesis, directed by Frédéric Chappey, Université de Lille III, 2 volumes, 2003.
- Rivière, Anne (director), *Jane Poupelet 1874-1932 "la beauté dans la simplicité"* ("Beauty in Simplicity") Roubaix, La Piscine, the André-Diligent Museum of Art and Industry, October 15 2005- January 15, 2006; Bordeaux, Beaux-Arts museum, February 24 - June 4 2006; Mont-de-Marsan, Despiau-Wlérick Museum, June 24 - October 2, 2006, Editions Gallimard, 2005.

“For Jane Poupelet, drawing was a daily exercise, a necessary gymnastic, an essential step on the way to definitive action and the finished work. Judging by the large number of sketches and studies that she left behind, she experienced it as an imperious demand.”^[1] Jane Poupelet had a very special relationship to drawing, which she maintained, uninterrupted, all her life. And yet she was also driven by a desire to become a sculptor, and so entered the École des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux as one of the first women ever allowed to take masters’ courses in anatomy and perspective.^[2] She later became the only woman sculptor in the “bande à Schnegg.”

There’s nothing academic about Jane Poupelet’s drawings; they offered her a way to explore various possibilities for future sculptures, letting her try out different poses in order to arrive at the one that she would ultimately use. The *Seated Female Nude* evokes the plaster *Seated Woman*^[3]; the sitting model has a straight back with the shoulders lowered and the head inclined. Though the arms of the nude in the drawing are crossed and the feet are left unfinished, Poupelet executed both her sculptures and her drawings with the same firm, concise line, treating the shadows and the volumes with vigor.

But Poupelet’s drawings can’t be reduced simply to studies for her sculptures; they are primarily a mode of reflection, visible stages in a quest for the female form translated with candor and finesse, with neither decoration nor artifice. The framing employs a composition that Poupelet used frequently;^{[4],[5]} it is tight around the truncated figure, completely filling the paper, revealing a search for the model’s proper attitude.

^[1] Dumaine, Sylvie, 2003, p. 33.

^[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

^[3] First version, dated 1915. See Rivière, Anne, 2005, p. 44.

^[4] Jane Poupelet, *Femme à la chemise blanche assise sur un coin de table, jambe gauche au sol, bras croisés sur la cuisse gauche* (Woman in a White Blouse Sitting on the Corner of a Table, Left Foot on the Ground, Arms Crossed on the Left Thigh), charcoal and pastel on paper, H.42, W. 53, private collection.

^[5] Jane Poupelet, *Femme debout relevant sa chemise au niveau des hanches*, (Standing Woman Raising her Blouse at the Level of her Hips), red pencil on chiffon paper, H. 63.5, W. 39 cm, private collection.