



Portrait Of Marie Massé Des Longeais, By Nicolas De Largillierre



48 000 EUR

Signature : Nicolas de LARGILLIERRE

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 63

Height : 78,5

Description

This oil on canvas portrait, by Nicolas de Largillierre, probably represents Marie Massé des Longeais (around 1702-1781), a figure of the French nobility of the 18th century.

This woman seated in three quarters, typical of portraits of the period, wears a black dress with delicately crafted white lace trim and refined ornaments.

A golden fabric with floral decoration in red and white, with a drop pearl carefully attached, gracefully adorns her left shoulder. An ornamentation of gold and pink beads contrasts the dark color of the dress. At its end, a majestic and dazzling red flower with its leaves is positioned at the level of the bodice.

Largillierre regularly plays with material effects, here the light and delicate lace contrasts with the

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denser fabric of the dress, the almost transparent pearls harmonize with the almost imperceptible and translucent ribbon tied on her right arm, the flower, moving and of its shimmering color, refines this harmony and recalls the red ornamentation linking a pearly pearl in her hair. Finally, her gray-white hair is styled in an elaborate style typical of Largilliere's paintings, adorned with a golden ribbon that appears to be of the same nature as the fabric.

In the background, as if to emphasize the beauty of this woman, Largillierre has subtly determined an interior with grandiose characteristic features. The vision of an imposing antique-style column and the subtle play of nuances to mark the depth of the piece, makes us think that this lady of quality is sitting in a castle.

This type of portrait is typical of representations of the European nobility or high society.

Largillierre, master of French Baroque portraiture, is recognized for his talent in capturing the elegance and distinction of his models. This portrait, characterized by the softness of the face, the delicate rendering of textures and the refined ornamental details, reflects the technical mastery and sophisticated taste of the period.

The warm palette and subtle contrasts highlight the subject's luminous complexion, highlighting the painter's ability to combine decorative richness and human sensitivity.

This painting testifies to the prestige of aristocratic commissions in the 18th century and illustrates the essential role of the portrait in the social and cultural representation of high society. We can find here all the beauty of a Largillierre, due to its quality and its composition which is reminiscent of several other portraits sold in recent years.

Thus in Largillierre's works, red, often used with finesse and brightness, plays an essential symbolic and stylistic role. We find this game in the painting *Portrait of a Woman, Half-length* sold for 529,200 euros at Christie's in 2024, with

this beautiful red fabric and the hair flowers.

The red flower, frequently pinned to the bodice or held by the model, is a recurring motif which enriches the composition with its chromatic intensity and meaning.

It can be found in many of his compositions, such as Presumed Portrait of Countess Elisabeth de Saint-Périer (1701-1777) sold in 2021 by Sotheby's in Paris for 50,400 euros.

Also in the Portrait of the Comtesse de Montchal (1715-1793), sold by Sotheby's of New York in 2007 for 138,420 euros Or in Portrait of a quality lady with blue drapery, sold by Piasa in 2002, in Paris, for 55,000 euros. And more previously, the portrait of Brigitte Ansart wearing a blue dress, sold in pair with Joachim Deleated in a brown coat for around 77,000 euros in 1992 by Christie's in London.

There we find the play of this deep red which contrasts with the softer and subtle tones of the skin tones and sometimes the fabrics, creating a focal point which attracts the viewer's eye and a symbolism of the flower as an ornament evocative of wealth and refinement.

It is regularly associated with headdress jewelry and a background of ancient architecture, such as his Portrait of a Lady (1713) sold for 58,750 euros in 2004 in Paris by Christie's. or his Portrait of a woman in a golden dress near a column, estimated at 30,000 euros.

in 2023 by Collin du Bocage in Paris, whose pearly pearl is found followed by a red jewel in his headdress. These ornate elements in the hair, another signature element of Largillierre's portraits, reflect the sumptuous and complex fashion of the time.

Elaborate hairstyles, often embellished with ribbons, beads or jewelry, demonstrate the model's distinguished social status and taste. The sophistication of these hair details underlines the virtuosity of the painter in the representation of precious materials and the effects of light.

This particularity is shared in other portraits with

identical composition, just like the Portrait of a woman in *Urania*, in three-quarter view, near a celestial globe, estimated at 60,000-100,000 euros in 2024 by Christie's in Paris. Also in the Half-length Portrait of a Woman, known as 'portrait of the Countess of Courcelles' sold for 88,200 euros in 2022 by Christie's in Paris and her Madame Houzé de la Boullaye, née Marguerite Elizabeth de Largilliere (1714) sold for 87,200 euros in 2001, in Paris.

Whose similar background by the column and the pearly drop of water jewel and connected to a red stone, is represented in the center of her bodice, with the reminder of a pearly drop of water in the hair and the flower on the chest.

By combining vibrant red and rich hair ornaments, Largillierre manages to balance majesty and delicacy, while infusing a symbolic and narrative dimension into his portraits.

These details, far from being purely ornamental, fully participate in the expression of the character and presence of his subjects, as does the background.

Finally, it is not uncommon to find oval portraits at Largillierre, such as his Portrait of Angélique d'Hautefort, half-length, in a red & gold Bodice (1969) sold for 75,670 euros in 2007 by Christie's in London.

many other numerous portraits of men and women of high society: Presumed portrait of Madeleine Charlotte Le Tellier (1704) sold in 2000 for 79,200 euros in Nice, Lady possibly Marie-Adélaïde de Savoie (1685-1712) Duchess of Burgundy (1705), sold for 55,240 euros by Christie's in New York in 2000

Le Portrait of a man in a red coat sold for 121,220 euros in 2019 in Paris

Or the Portrait of François-Emmanuel Pommeyer (1703-1779) sold for 50,890 euros in 2011 in New York,

And the Portrait of a Gentleman sold for 50,500 euros in 2005 in N.Y

And many others.

Our portrait, initially oval in shape, was adapted

to a rectangular format during subsequent relining.

This painting is presented in a carved and gilded wooden frame, decorated with a full-length cartel, testifying to the refinement of art frames in the 18th century.

The cartouche bears the annotation "Countess of Longeais", while the reverse of the canvas reveals several old labels, some of which probably date from the 19th century. These mention references such as "2354 / Largillièr" and "3304 / Largillièr / Ctesse Longeais".

These labels constitute valuable clues to the circulation of the painting in the 19th century.

These last two mentions in particular, probably linked to exhibition catalogs or collection inventories, indicate that the portrait was submitted to the appreciation of the public or to artistic circles on several occasions, reinforcing the idea of the importance and recognition of this work and its artist at that time.

A label printed at the beginning of the 20th century bears the number "20554", probably a museum exhibition or for sale. This information bears witness to a rich history of exhibitions and enriches our understanding of the coast of this great artist. This painting was, moreover, widely mentioned in publications and exhibited over the past century. In this, it is the observation of exceptional work and is defined as an illustrious piece by Largillier. Provenances: This portrait has a prestigious provenance, having belonged to several influential art dealers and collectors:

Charles Sedelmeyer (1837-1925), eminent Parisian art dealer, Then his son-in-law, Eugène Fischhof (1853-1926), art dealer operating in Paris and New York. Theron J. Blackeslee (1853-1914), art dealer based in New York and Boston. And Maurice Segoura (1930-2013), famous Parisian antique dealer.

It was also sold during the Fischhof sale at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries in New York, February 22-23 1907 (lot no. 103, illustrated) and

during a sale at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris, on June 16, 1987 (lot no. 48, illustrated).

The work is mentioned in several publications, notably: J.E. Whitby, "Brussels Exhibition of French Art of the Eighteenth Century", in The Connoisseur, vol. 9, May-June 1904, p. 101, as well as in the catalog of the exhibition "French Art in the 18th Century", Brussels, French Charitable Society, Jean Malvaux and Charles Bulens, 1904. It was also exhibited in Brussels from January to March 1904 during the exhibition "French Art in the 18th Century", under number 40.

Largillierre being a very great master of this period, he is often represented in museums and some of his paintings can reach heights, such as the painting of La belle Strasbourgeoise sold by Christie's in 2020 for 1,570,000 euros in Paris.

Dimensions: H: 78.5 cm x L 63 cm

Dimensions with frame: H: 111 cm x L 93 cm