



PROANTIC
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Jean-auguste-dominique Ingres (montauban 1780 - Paris 1867) - Apelles Holding His Palette



6 000 EUR

Signature : Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (Montauban 1780 - Paris 1867)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 30

Width : 18

Description

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
(Montauban 1780 - Paris 1867)

Apelles holding his palette and brushes

Late reinterpretation after The Apotheosis of
Homer - c. 1860

Black chalk, stumping and white heightening on
light brown laid paper, laid down on thin card
300 × 180 mm

Signed and inscribed lower left: "à Mr Visconti /
Ingres"

ProvenancePrivate collection, France

Description

This standing male figure, shown in left profile,
wears a classical chlamys and laced sandals. He
holds a round painter's palette in one hand and a
bundle of brushes in the other -- unmistakable
symbols of the artist's profession. The character

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clearly represents Apelles, the legendary Greek painter featured among the artistic geniuses paying homage to Homer in Ingres's celebrated canvas *The Apotheosis of Homer* (Louvre, INV 5417, Salon of 1827).

However, the drawing does not appear to be a preparatory study for the 1827 painting, nor for the grand graphite composition completed in 1865 (*Homer Deified*, Louvre, Department of Prints and Drawings). Instead, this is likely a later independent reprise, executed around 1860, in the final years of the artist's life. The technique -- softened lines, diffused contours, sculpted light -- corresponds to Ingres's mature style.

On the inscription "à Mr Visconti"

The dedication may represent a posthumous tribute to Louis-Tullius Visconti (1791-1853), architect to Napoleon III and fellow member of the Institut de France. A close contemporary and admirer of classical antiquity, Visconti shared many aesthetic affinities with Ingres. Rather than a gift made during his lifetime, the inscription could thus mark a symbolic homage -- Ingres offering the figure of Apelles, a mirror of the inspired artist, in memory of his deceased peer.

Importance

- Only known independent rendering of Apelles by Ingres from the late period.
- Stylistic features characteristic of the artist's work between 1855 and 1865.
- The dedication suggests a commemorative function, adding a rare human and institutional context.
- Excellent condition; the sheet is intact, with vibrant highlights preserved.

We warmly thank Professor Sylvain Bédard (Université de Montréal) for his valuable insights, which greatly contributed to the understanding and writing of this notice.

Selected bibliography

- Gaillard, Ingres. *Dessins du Louvre*, RMN, 1999
- Cohn, *The Drawings for the Apotheosis of Homer*, Master Drawings, 2004

- Ingres. Dessins du Musée de Montauban, Somogy, 2010
- Bédard, private correspondence, 2025