

DAVID & CONSTANCE YATES

EUROPEAN SCULPTURE, OIL SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS

FRANÇOIS RUDE
(Dijon 1784 - 1855 Paris)

Head of Gaspard Monge
(Beaune 1746 - 1818 Paris)

Cast and reworked plaster with brown and burnished gold patina
14 ½ × 14 ¾ inches (36.8 × 37.5 cm), excluding base
20 ¼ × 14 ¾ inches (51.4 × 37.5 cm), including base
c. 1848

François Rude first studied sculpture in his native Dijon with François Devosge (1732-1811), the director of the local art academy. In 1807, recognizing the talent of the young artist, Devosge sent him to Paris, with a letter of recommendation addressed to Baron Vivant Denon. He was soon admitted to the École des Beaux Arts and, in 1812, won the Prix de Rome.

Always an ardent republican, Rude was obliged to flee to Brussels in 1815, where he was welcomed into the circle of French exiles which included Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). David took a special interest in Rude and was instrumental in helping the young sculptor gain several governmental commissions, including his appointment as the official sculptor to the Court of the Netherlands.

In 1827 Rude finally returned to Paris at the age of forty-three. In spite of his success in the north, he was virtually unknown in France. He triumphed, however, in the Salon of 1828, with the result that his work was introduced to a new public. In 1833 he received a commission from the July Monarchy of Louis Philippe for two reliefs destined for the Arc de Triomphe: *The Return of the Army from Egypt* and *The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792*. Both of these reliefs are touchstones of French Romanticism and they allowed Rude to fully express his republican ideals.

In January 1846 the citizens of Beaune commissioned François Rude to make a full-length, bronze sculpture which represented Gaspard Monge (Beaune 1746 – 1818 Paris). Born there in 1746, Monge was a mathematician and the inventor of descriptive geometry. He served as the Minister of the Marine during the French Revolution and accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte on his Egyptian campaign.

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Rude's bronze statue was exhibited at the Salon of 1848 and installed on the Place Monge, Beaune in 1849. His plaster maquette for the statue is in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Beaune (inv. 849.1.1), and his plaster model of the head is in the collection of the Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. RF 879).

RELATED LITERATURE:

Louis de Fourcaud, *François Rude, sculpteur: ses oeuvres et son temps 1784-1855*, Paris, 1904, pp. 315-325, 484-485.

Stanislas Lami, *Dictionnaire des Sculpteurs de l'école française au dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris, 1921, vol. 4, p. 213.

François & Sophie Rude: Un couple d'artistes au XIXe siècle, citoyens de la Liberté (exh. cat., Musée des Beaux-Arts and Musée Rude, Dijon, 12 October 2012-28 January 2013), Paris, 2012, pp. 165, 261-262 cats. 123-124.

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