

# Sotheby's

## Important Old Master Paintings and Sculpture

New York | 30 Jan 2014, 10:00 AM | N09102



**LOT 297**

**SOLD WITHOUT RESERVE**

**ELISABETH-LOUISE VIGÉE LE BRUN**

PARIS 1755 - 1842

PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN, PRESUMABLY THE BROTHER OF THE COMTESSE DE  
VERDUN

oil on canvas, oval

25 1/2 by 21 1/4 in.; 65 by 54 cm.

**ESTIMATE □40,000-60,000 USD**

### **PROVENANCE**

Anonymous sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 4 April 1928, lot 55;

Anonymous sale, Paris, Drouot-Richelieu, 7 December 1989, lot 160 (as École français du XVIIIe siècle);

There acquired by the present owner.

## CATALOGUE NOTE

Elisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842) was one of the most successful portraitists of her generation. Trained by her father, Le Brun succeeded in gaining entrance to both the Accademia San Luca and, in 1783, to the Royal Academy, no easy feat for a female artist at the time. In 1779 she completed her most famous portrait, of Queen Marie Antoinette, which greatly advanced her reputation. During the Revolution Le Brun left France and traveled throughout Europe for many years. She was greeted warmly in most aristocratic circles, and in the tradition of the courtier-artist, was often treated as the social equal of her sitters. She returned to Paris in 1809 and spent the remainder of her life in France. She recorded her autobiography during this time, and died in 1842.

The present portrait, a late work by the artist from circa 1780 is believed to depict the brother of Anne Catherine Le Preudhomme de Chatenoy, Comtesse de Verdun (circa 1741-1822). Though little is known of her immediate family, they all belonged to the influential circle of the Comte d' Artois, brother of King Louis XVI. The Comtesse married Jean Jacques Marie, Comte de Verdun in 1777, a wealthy tax farmer (*fermier général*). Though unrecorded in Vigée Le Brun's personal records, this portrait, along with portraits of the Comte and Comtesse de Verdun were illustrated and sold together in the 1928 Hôtel Drouot auction of the collection of a family descendant.

To be included in the forthcoming catalogue raisonné of the works of Vigée Le Brun, by Joseph Baillio.