



Charles Chaplin

1825-1891

"Jeune fille au chat"

Charcoal drawing / Signed lower right

Dimensions : 78 x 52 cm

Dimensions : 30.71 x 20.47 inch

## Biography

Born in June 1825 of a British father and of a French mother, Charles Chaplin was educated in France but he only became a french citizen in 1886.

In 1840, aged 15, he went to study at the Fine Arts School in Paris under the tutoring of Michel Martin Drolling. Upon finishing his studies, he had become an accomplished painter, pastellist, etcher and lithographer. He started showing his work at the French Artists Salon in 1845 with a portrait of a young woman and exhibited regularly every year until his death in 1891. This painting brought attention to Chaplin's ability to paint whimsical portraits of women and children, and would crystallize his career, making him one of France most famous portrait artist. From 1847 he also became a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy in London.

At the beginning of his artistic career, Chaplin was painting very realistic portraits and landscapes but soon he rejected his early manner in favor of a more supple and gracious style that ensured him fame and success as a portrait artist. He depicted smart and elegant ladies and became renowned and appreciated for his precious and charming style. He adopted the tradition of the great English portraitists, the fresh colours, the delicate palette tones of silvery grey, white and pink shades, in his portraits of the Parisian aristocracy and high society: Mrs Priestley, Mrs Feydeau, Mrs Musard, Countess La Roche Foucauld, Princess Chimay, the artist Madeleine Lemaire among others. His portraits of women, often wearing transparent clothing and posing in misty settings, appealed to the circles of the society of the Third Republique and he was among Napoleon III and Imperatrice Eugénie's favorite court artists. (In 1859, when his portrait of "Aurora", was rejected by the jury of the Salon because of being too erotically suggestive, Napoléon III took his defense and abolished the prohibition order.)

He was equally appreciated as a decorator and was commissioned to redecorate the appartments of Imperatrice Eugénie. In 1861, he painted the ceiling and several glass pannels over the doors of the Salon des Fleurs in the Tuileries, and a part of the Salon de l'Hémicycle in the Palais de l'Elysée. He also painted genre scenes and mythological scenes in a 18th century style, "First roses", 1857, "Souvenirs" 1882, "Soap bubbles" 1864, "Playing Loto" 1865.

His artistic skills and taste were acknowledged during his life and he received many awards and honors throughout his career. In 1851 he received a third class medal , a Second Class medal in 1852 and an Honour Medal in 1865. He was named Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur in 1879 and Officer in 1881.

His style was inspired by British artists as Reynolds and Gainsborough, but also by Rubens, (whom works he used to engrave), and the French artists Boucher, Greuze, Chardin and Lépicier. Nevertheless, he did create his very own style, becoming the artist of "gracious and delicate female paintings", depicting their opalescent, mother-of-pearl complexion with a subtle palette of light greys and rosy flesh tones. He was a very skilled draughtman, his stroke being very precise but light at the same time. He became very famous for his luminous and lively portraits, among which many were many of his daughter, as in our picture.

## Museums

Paris, Louvres Museum, Graphic Art department

Paris, Orsay Museum

France, Fine Arts Museums of:

Bayeux, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Mulhouse, Dijon, Lyon, Reims, Rouen, Royan

London, Victoria & Albert Museum

Bowes Museum, County Durham, UK

San Francisco Fine Art Museum



Indianapolis Museum of Art  
St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum  
Buenos Aires, The Fine Art Museum  
Tokyo, Morenci Museum

#### Bibliography

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