

Stuart Lochhead Sculpture





Jean Carriès

Lyon, 1855 - Paris, 1894

Portrait of Frans Hals with pointed beard

Patinated plaster

60 cm high

1885-1892

Signed and dated on the left on the bottom of the collar *Carriès / Paris / 85*

below *Portrait / du / grand peintre / Franz Hals*

On the right on the bottom of the collar *(Je) dédie cette / oeuvre à mon / ami Armand / en souvenir / en Hollande*

At the back on the base *Epreuve rare du / portrait du / peintre hals / à son ami / Granottier / Jean / Carriès / 92*

At the lower back on the plinth *Fondu par Bingen*

At the back on the right below the shoulder, fragment of a label: (...) Art (...) Lyon (...)

Provenance

- Collection of Victor Granottier, Lyon
- Private Collection, New York

Literature

- *Jean Carriès imagier et potier. Etude d'une oeuvre et d'une vie*, Musées de la Nièvre, Etude et documents. n. 4, 2001 [republishing of the 1895 biography by A. Alexandre], p. 113

Related literature

- *Jean-Joseph Carriès sculpteur (1855-1894)*, Paris, Galerie Patrice Bellanger, 1997
- *Jean Carriès. La matière de l'étrange*. exh. cat. by A. Simier (ed.), Petit Palais, Paris, 2007
- *Jean Carriès ou la terre viscérale*, S. Le Follic-Hadida et al., Les musées d'art et d'histoire - Auxerre, Association des amis du Musée du Grès - Saint-Amand-en- Puisaye, 2007

Carriès undoubtedly ranks among the most outstanding sculptors of the late 19th century. As Rodin poetically and succinctly stated, “The talent of Carriès is fine like amber.” Carriès left a varied and remarkable body of work that includes masks, portraits of his contemporaries or historical figures. His choice of subjects tended to be idiosyncratic and he also created intriguing heads of babies as well grotesque figures and fantastic animals. In the course of his career the artist showed originality not only in his selection of themes but also in his choice of materials: plaster, wax, lost-wax cast bronze and ceramic. For each of these he would experiment with patinas he had himself created. His life-long obsession with subtle varieties and modulations of surface colouration and patina are recorded by his friend and biographer Arsène Alexandre in his seminal 1895 work on Carriès: “... the plasters were submitted to a variety of different treatments together with a basic process that remained constant. First they were uniformly impregnated with oils and dried up to a determined point. Then some received applications of oxides, others were heightened with touches of oil paint or even watercolour, and still others—both more complex and more triumphant—were treated with oxides and paint simultaneously, resulting in indefinable amalgams.... More than one example of figures even in plaster have thus been enriched by the hands of the artist, so that despite their plurality they can be considered as rare objects and as prizes, since no one is identical to the other and each one guards the creative contact and flower - consequently, they have attained prices in sales and among collectors that one has never before witnessed for works in plaster.”¹ A large collection of works by the artist was bequeathed by his friend and fellow ceramicist George Hoentschel (1855-1915) in 1904 and is now in the Petit Palais, Paris.

The Portrait

During the summer of 1883 Carriès traveled to Holland with his friend Armand Gouzien, an art critic and inspector of the Fine Arts for the French state. The voyage made a lasting impression on the sculptor and inspired him to create the busts of *Frans Hals* and *Woman of Holland* (also known as *Madame Hals*). Carriès dedicated his bust of Hals to his companion in travel and all of the known versions of this bust carry an inscription to his friend at the bottom right of the collar: “(Je) dédie cette / œuvre à mon / ami Armand / en souvenir / en Hollande”. Gouzien himself was in possession of one of the patinated plaster versions. Neither *Woman of Holland* nor *Frans Hals* possess the tormented, strange, or tragic quality frequently evident in Carriès’ busts. Instead, the pair displays the Dutch cheerfulness that Carriès was able to enjoy during his Holland trip. His biographer Arsène Alexandre spoke of “the sad works like Charles I” versus the “rosy works like Frans Hals,” and it is true that this latter composition is extremely jovial - a dimension accentuated by the red and brown tones of the patina. During his stay in Haarlem, Carriès admired the paintings of Frans Hals (c. 1582-1666), remarking how his portraits “were worked to the finest detail and precision of material.”²

As suggested by Le Follic-Hadida, an event might have crystallised further the effects of the sculptor’s Dutch voyage. In March 1885 the Louvre Museum acquired three pictures by Frans Hals, two of which were rumoured to be by another hand and Carriès must have heard about the developing scandal. According to Le Follic-Hadida’s hypothesis, the artist would have then created his *Frans Hals* and *Woman of Holland* following this event, therefore somewhat later than the date of 1884–85 originally assigned by Alexandre. Le Follic-Hadida has also noted the resemblance between Carriès’ imaginary portrait of Hals and the painter’s *Portrait of Paulus van Beresteyn*, the only one of the three Hals portraits acquired by the Louvre that was

¹ see lit., *Jean Carriès imagier et potier*, p.45

² *ibid.*, p. 55

accepted at the time as authentic (“pointed chin, immense ruff, mustache, and goatee”)³. Carriès therefore would have chosen to imagine Hals in the likeness of one of the many bourgeois members of the Haarlem Guild that he had portrayed so expertly.

Issued from the mould made from the raw clay model, the present patinated plaster carries the range of Carriès’s inscriptions found on the bronze and other plaster versions, including his mention of the founder Bingen. Our plaster version of the composition possesses a unique feature, or rather an added element: it includes a special dedication to Granottier, in which the sculptor underlined the rarity of this particular proof. In 1892, seven years after the creation of the model, Carriès characteristically returned to his subject in order to endow it with a special patina. First, however, he took the trouble to trace the long dedication to his friend Granottier with the point of a stylus, so that the new dedicatory inscription, stretching the length of the back, would join the original dedication to Gouzien located elsewhere on the sculpture. Interestingly, during this period when Carriès revisited this light-hearted subject, the sculptor was in the midst of a troubled period full of many difficulties relating to his work on the monumental doorway commissioned by Winaretta Singer, Princess of Sceaux-Montbéliard.

Victor Granottier, avid collector of Carriès

Victor Granottier was an entrepreneur in Lyon, where the work of Carriès was well appreciated and collected by the city’s industrial bourgeois citizens. A close friend of Carriès he owned several works by the sculptor; the catalogue of Carriès’ works included at the end of Arsène Alexandre’s monograph lists numerous sculptures in Granottier’s possession: *The Cook*, terracotta; *The Nun*, wax; *Medallion of a Young Girl*, called *The Sister of Carriès*, dedicated à *mon ami Bingen*, a bronze cast in the lost-wax method; *The Martyrdom of Saint Fidèle*, wax maquette at a third life-size; *Frans Hals*, patinated plaster ; *Statuette of a French Gentleman*, called *Le Callot*, wax. This list of seven sculptures indicates the importance and quality of Granottier’s collection of works by Carriès, which also included many ceramic pots.

Other versions of the Portrait of Frans Hals:

- Patinated plaster, Musée du Petit Palais (cat. Carriès, 2007, p. 202, cat. 60, repr.)
- Patinated plaster, private collection (cat. Bellanger 1997, p. 61, n. 16, repr.)
- Another example with variations: *Frans Hals with Two-Pointed Beard*: patinated plaster, retouched with wax, 1884–85?, Musée du Petit Palais (cat. Carriès, 2007, p. 202, repr.)

The portrait of Carriès in his studio painted by Louise Breslau in 1886–87 (Musée du Petit Palais) shows the artist working on the bust of Frans Hals with a two-pointed beard.)

³ see lit., *Jean Carriès ou la terre viscérale*, p. 66



Portrait of Jean Carriès in his studio by Louise Breslau (1856-1927),
Musée de Petit Palais, Paris