



FRANÇOIS BOUCHER

(Paris, 1703 - Paris, 1770)

Studies of legs and a torso for Saint John the Baptist

black and white chalk

225 x 285 mm (made up along lower right edge, and upper corners)

Provenance:

Possibly Jean-Denis Lempereur (1701–1779), Paris

Possibly his sale, Chariot et Joullain, Paris: 19 October 1775, Lot 110 (“Cinq, don’t un étude de Saint Jean”)

Private collection, France

Literature:

Possibly A. Ananoff and D. Wildenstein, *François Boucher*, II, Lausanne, 1976, p. 63, no. 361.2

This powerfully rendered depiction of legs and a torso is a preparatory study for the figure of Saint John the Baptist in Boucher’s painting, *Saint John the Baptist*, at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis. The painting was commissioned in circa 1755 by Jeanne Antoinette Poisson, the Marquise de Pompadour, for a chapel in the Capuchin Convent in Paris where she owned an apartment. As her patron saint Madame de Pompadour had a particular interest in the figure of Saint John and she commissioned Boucher to paint several scenes from his life during the late 1750s and early 1760s. The Minneapolis painting is the first recorded example.

Madame Françoise Joulie has confirmed the attribution from a direct inspection.