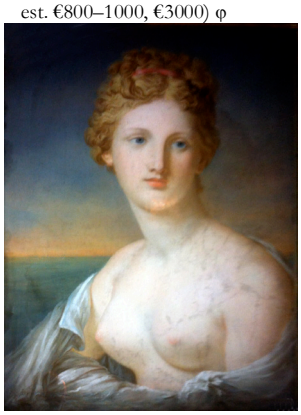
## MAURICE, Louis-Joseph

Épinal 1730 – Paris 1820

Trained as a lawyer, he gave up his profession to dedicate himself to portraiture as a miniaturist and pastellist. In 1758 he travelled to St Petersburg, where he was appointed premier peintre to the Tsaritsa Elisabeth. He was selected in 1763 to organise the celebrations for the coronation in Moscow of Catherine the Great, who also nominated him premier peintre (his miniature of her is at Versailles, MV 4511). Although the early sources say that he travelled from Russia to Italy in 1779, he must have returned to Paris by 1772, when he was portrayed by Hall (miniature, New York, MMA, inv. 95.14.53). A 1775 group portrait (in oils) of Maria Theresia and four of her sons is in the Schönbrunn. Marie-Antoinette engaged him to provide objets d'art for her private apartments. He also had an impressive collection (sold p.m., Paris, 8.XI.1820), which included objets d'art and curiosities (no doubt assembled on his Italian trip), as well as paintings by Boucher and Fragonard and a pastel autoportrait by La Tour (Lot 191). Only one of his pastels has so far emerged, a neo-classical piece of c.1800.

**Bibliography**

Bénézit; Dussieux 1856, p. 406; Gabet 1831; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Michel 1829; Voreaux 1998

**Pastels**

J.5242.101 Jeune femme en Vénus, pstl, 53x40, inscr. *verso* "Venus. Maurice peintre de l'impératrice Catherine de Russie" (château de Digoine, Bourgogne; Paris, Drouot, Beaussant-Lefèvre, 23.III.2012, Lot 238 repr., est. €800–1000, €3000) φ