

# CABINET OF THE MONTH



## CHRISTIAN VON MECHEL

(1737 Basel – Berlin 1817)

*Tombeau de Madame Langhans inventé et exécuté par M. I. A. Nahl dans l'Eglise paroissiale de Hindelbanck à deux lieues de Berne.*

*(Tomb of Madame Langhans invented and executed by I. A. Nahl in the parish church of Hindelbank, near Bern) Etching. 1786. 39,9:27,1 cm (printing plate) Nagler, volume 8, 14; Thieme/Becker, volume 18, p. 44; Wüthrich 38.*

The etching is accompanied by the text sheet Description du fameux Tombeau de Madame Langhans.

Maria Magdalena Langhans was the wife of Georg Langhans who served as priest in Hindelbank close to Bern since 1749. She died in childbirth as well as her child, on April 10th 1751, a Holy Saturday. At the time of her death, Johann August Nahl the Elder lived as a guest with the priest's family, since he was constructing a burial monument for Hieronymus von Erlach at the church of Hindelbank. Distressed by the young woman's death and the sudden sorrow afflicted on the priest's family, Nahl, on his own initiative, decided to create a tomb monument for the priest's young wife. The construction took place between 1751 and 1753. It was to become his opus magnum.

Albrecht von Haller described the artistic concept of the monument 1762 in his Sketches of Swiss Poems (Versuch Schweizerischer Gedichte): "The highly ingenious creation shows the stone of a tomb cracking open, revealing the deceased woman arising and lifting up her child with her arms stretched out." As Maria Magdalena and her child died in the night of Holy Saturday, thus tragically coinciding birth and death during the Easter Vigil, her tomb is generally interpreted as a monument of resurrection.

During the 18th century, the tomb was highly renowned and admired throughout Europe, receiving applause in written statements and poems from numerous visitors such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Christoph Martin Wieland, Arthur Schopenhauer and Albert Anker. The enormous success of the



monument was due to its compelling composition, the simplicity of the material as well as the emotional values which were in harmony with the current zeitgeist of the Age of Sensitivity (Empfindsamkeit). Finally, the fact that Hindelbank was a station to change horses of stagecoaches may also have been in favour of the exceptionally high number of visitors.

Due to the large interest raised by the monument, the need for graphic reproductions was high and Mechel's etching responded perfectly to that request. The etching represents the tomb with great exactitude. It allows for a vivid image of how the monument is sunken into the ground. Meanwhile Mechel has renounced to represent the three inscriptions on the tomb; they are quoted on the text sheet accompanying the etching.

## FERDINAND SCHIMON

(1797 Budapest - 1852 München)

*Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven.* (Beethoven.) Gem. v. Schimon 1819. Lith. v. P. Rohrbach 1875. Druck von J. Hesse in Berlin. (Eigenthum u. Verlag von E. H. Schroeder in Berlin). Lithograph. 47:37 cm.

Title and impressum trimmed in the margin. Foxing.

The famous oilpainting by Ferdinand Schimon, which served as model for this lithograph, belonged to Beethoven's secretaire and later biographer Anton Schindler. Later on, it became the property of the Berlin State Library and was given as a permanent loan to the Beethovenhouse in Bonn.

## ROBERT ZÜND

(1827 Luzern 1909)



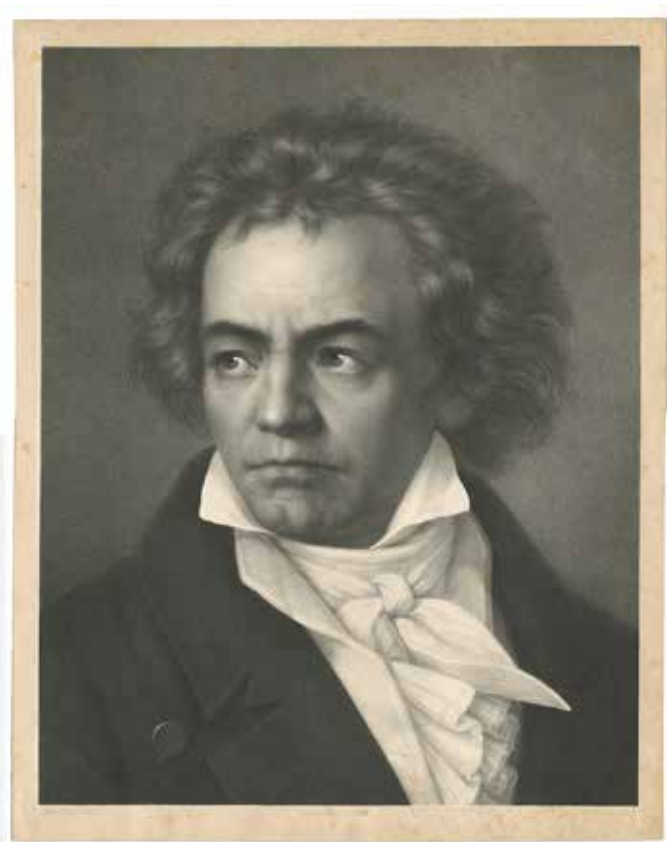
*View on the Lake Lucerne.* Pencil, chalk and brown and white brush. 41,4:61 cm.

Some restored tears only visible verso.

Together with Rudolf Koller and Frank Buchser, Robert Zünd is one of the most famous Swiss landscape painters of realism. Zünd travelled little during his life. He looked for motifs near his studio. His pictures concentrate mainly on the surroundings of his hometown Lucerne which he recorded in intensive study work of mountain landscapes, rocky and bank parties, trees and animals.

The present drawing is one of Zünd's works showing the Lucerne area. Depictions of the view of the city and its mountain, the beautiful and fearful *mons fractus* - Pilatus - were popular also with Lucerne guests.

Robert Zünd was an individualist, both as a man and as an artist. He occupies a special place in the Swiss landscape painting of the 19th century. Zünd dealt little with his contemporary artists, or even with masters of bygone eras. With the intense study of nature, he developed his own talent and technique, and became a painter of pronounced individuality. The main part of his oeuvre are his drawings, which reveals his commitment to life-like representation. They are either direct the expression of a first impression of nature or preliminary studies for paintings. Zünd considered his studies and sketches not as works on their own rights but rather as helpful tools. They were never exhibited or sold by him, but they testify to the long development process he employed in producing his paintings.



## FELIX VALLATTON

(Lausanne 1865 - 1925 Paris)

### *Crimes et châtements*

A set of 23 color-lithographs, one forming the cover, published in a special number of the magazine *L'Assiette au Beurre* of 1 March 1902. The "Notice" reproduced below was printed on page 4 of the cover sheet. It sold for 50 centimes and the artist was paid 1000 francs.

Original brochure.

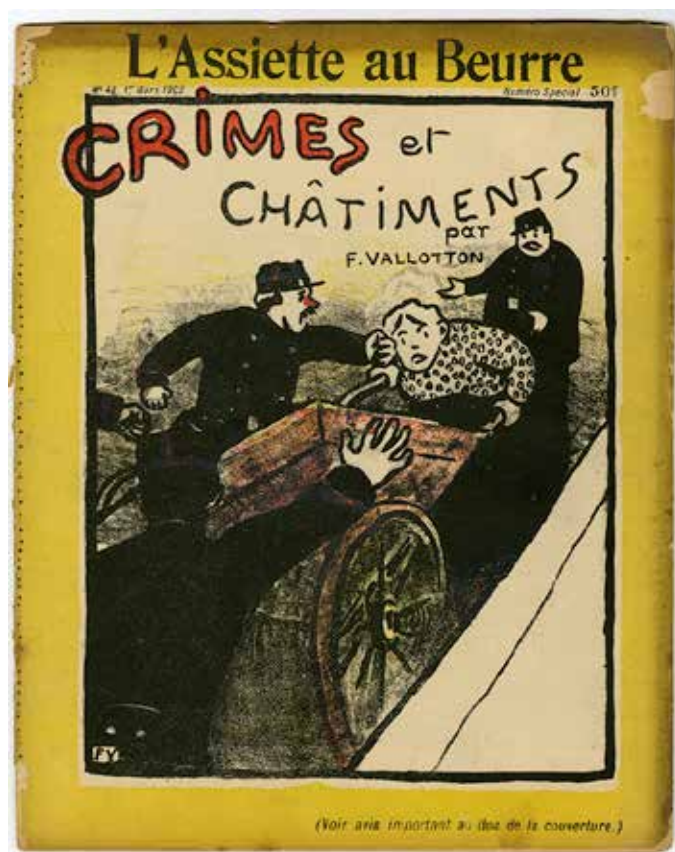
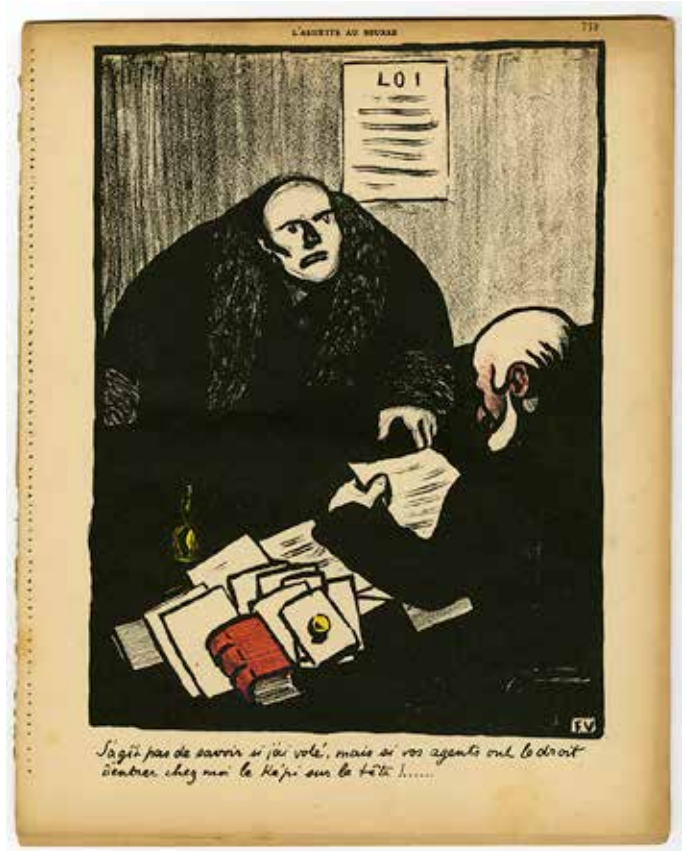
31,9:25,6 cm

Ref: Vallotton / Goerg No. 56-78

Complete magazine. Age-related signs of usage.

Like the drawings of "Gatherings" published in 1892 and the "Paris intense" set published in 1893-94, this third series of prints is a realistic description of street scenes and social life. But the artist is now more committed and violent.

Trial proofs in black-and-white, or in color are still extant for each of these lithographs, some of them with notes in the artist's hand. These extremely rare proofs were printed with a fine-grained stone. The printing of *L'Assiette au Beurre* was executed, after transfer, with a different stone of coarser grain.



**CHRISTIAN VON MECHEL**  
(1737 Basel – Berlin 1817)

*(Costumes suisses publiés à Bâle, chez Chr. de Mechel, ca. 1820).* 4°. With 28 coloured etchings, some also with aquatint. Modern marbled cased binding.

First Edition. Lonchamp 1959. Wüthrich 243, 245, 248, 250-252, 256, 257, 259-264, 266-269, 273-276, 278, 280, 282-285.

One of the most beautiful collections of costumes at the end of the 18th century. Mechel plays an important part, both time- and quality-wise, within the 18th century's fashionable new trend to edit Swiss costumes launched by Ludwig Aberli. Mechel conceived several precursors to the trend, such as Guggisberg's Three Graces which he did as early as 1774, and the Winegrower of Murten in 1783, immediately after his stay in Vienna. According to a handwritten offer of Mechel dated 1804, he published a standardized series of 26 prints. Wüthrich lists 34 prints altogether, all of which 5 depict only variations.

The very fine coloured costumes are inlaid into the book pages and outlined with a fine black line. Rare.

