

Royal Academy of Arts

Jean-Etienne Liottard



Large
Print

List of Works

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Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



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Welcome and Introduction



Self-Portrait in profile, 1753



Marie Liotard-Fargues with Her Eldest Son Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1761-1762



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Self-Portrait Laughing, c. 1770,
'Drawn and Drawing' 1782 or 1783



Self Portrait Holding His Chin,
c. 1778-81



Richard Pococke, 1740



Two Turkish Musicians, 1740-42, Young
Woman of Constantinople, 1738-42



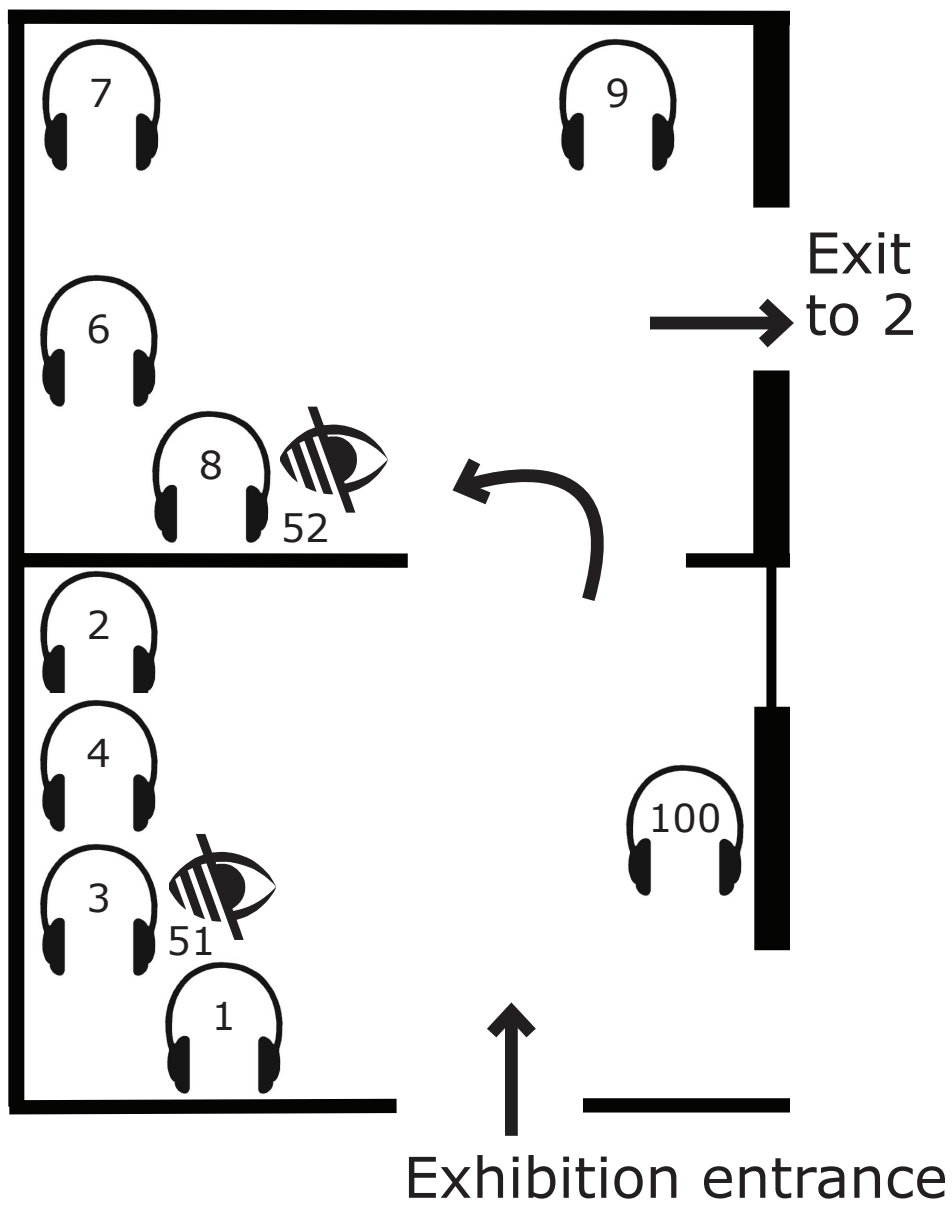
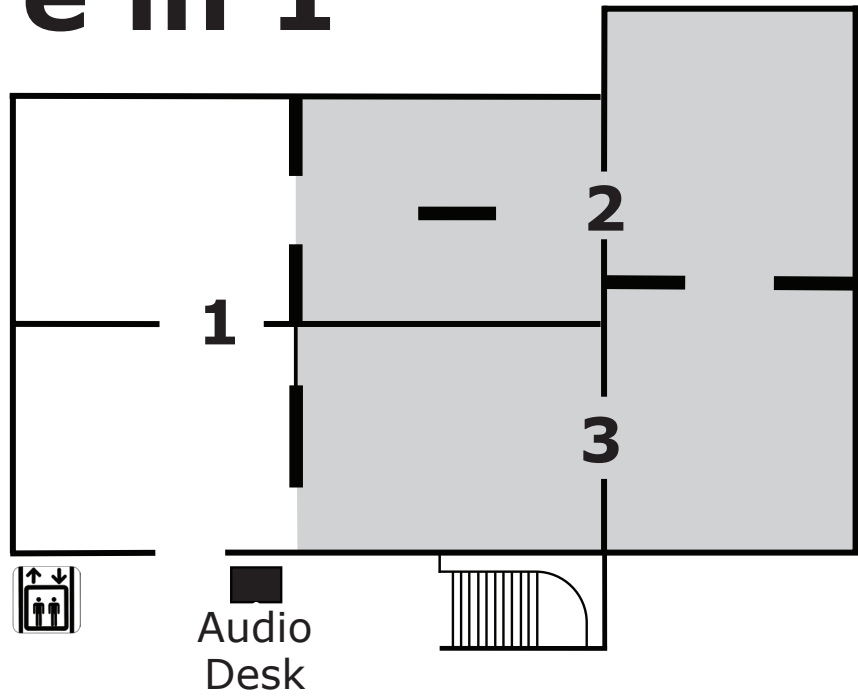
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Woman on a Sofa Reading, 1748-52,
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Jean-Etienne Liotard

24th October - 31st January 2016

In the Sackler Wing of Galleries, Burlington House.

This exhibition has been organised by the
Royal Academy of Arts, London.

2009-2016 Season

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Jean-Etienne Liotard



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Jean Etienne Liotard (1702–1789) was one of the most sophisticated artists of Enlightenment Europe. A creator of brilliant, candid portraits, he excelled at the delicate art of pastel.

He was an outstanding draughtsman, painted in oil, and made enamels and highly refined prints. Although he favoured the relatively modest half-length format, he also mastered the miniature and the full-length portrait.

Liotard was born in the republic of Geneva. A peripatetic artist who quickly recognised that his career lay in the centres of wealth and patronage across Europe, he travelled extensively in search of commissions – from Paris to Rome, Vienna, Amsterdam and London, eventually settling in his native city.

(continued over)

Unusually, he also spent four years in Constantinople, recording exotic subjects that met the new European enthusiasm for orientalist scenes, or 'turqueries'.

The artist's reputation stood so high that he commanded what some considered to be inflated fees and attracted the patronage of the crowned heads of Europe, including the French, Habsburg and British royal families. His art was demanded by social élites such as the British aristocracy and the higher echelons of Genevan society.

Although his sitters were drawn to the unflinching truthfulness with which he portrayed their likenesses, they also appreciated the minute attention he paid to rendering the nuances of their fashionable dress and the textures of fabrics and fur trims.

This commitment to verisimilitude was brought to bear on his brilliant still-lives, scenes of contemporary life and 'trompe-l'œil' conceits.

This exhibition includes many pastel paintings, whose safe handling has been ensured through important developments in the understanding of the medium's physical properties and advances in methods of art transportation.

These have made it possible to organise this exhibition, the first to be devoted to Liotard in this country, which reveals an artist who never ceases to impress and surprise.

Liotard and His Family

Throughout his long life Liotard captured his own features in a wide range of media, from meticulous miniatures to an almost full-sized oil that shows him laughing enigmatically.

From his earliest self-portrait, made in 1733, Liotard's representations of his facial features span almost fifty years and include some of the most unusual and urbane self-depictions of the eighteenth century. Many show him with his characteristic Oriental attire and long beard, both reflections of the exotic and eccentric image he wished to project after his wanderings in Eastern Europe and the Levant.

The artist also made portraits of family members, which provide a delightfully

intimate insight into his domestic life. In 1756 he married Marie Fargues, the daughter of a French merchant living in Amsterdam, whom he depicted with characteristic clarity and precision. This portrait, like those featuring his children, is a private glimpse of Liotard's domestic life, not intended for exhibition.

He also used some of his children, nephews and nieces as models in his published engravings and genre pieces, portraying them always with tender affection (see Gallery VI).

In his advancing years, Liotard continued to return to his early model: himself. Some of the most honest and least idealised self-portraits he produced show him as an elderly man – his beard newly regrown after the death of his wife in 1782 – and recall Rembrandt's equally frank examinations of old age.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

Self-portrait in Profile, 1753



Enamel

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Few of Liotard's enamels are as exquisitely executed as this one. The white background is unique among his portraits, and the artist has exploited it to stunning effect when silhouetting his beard, simultaneously conveying its texture and transparency.

The beard was shaved off in deference to his wife, whom he married in 1756. Details such as the fine embroidery on the artist's shirt are also brilliantly and exactingly defined.

The portrait's owner, Horace Walpole, had it engraved for his 'Anecdotes of Painting' (1765).

The Artist's Wife, Marie Liotard, née Fargues, 1757

Pastel on vellum

Musée des beaux-arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds

Marie Fargues (1728–1782), the daughter of an exiled French Huguenot merchant living in Amsterdam, probably met Liotard through the artist's nephew, a pastor in Delft.

They were married in Amsterdam in 1756, and returned to Geneva the following year. Marie remained in the city until her death in 1782. The couple had five children; portraits of three are included in this exhibition.

Liotard 'Drawn and Drawing', 1782 or 1783

Black and white chalks on three sheets of (faded) blue paper

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. Gift of Bernard Naef

Liotard had turned 80 when he drew this, his last of some seventeen extant self-portraits; it was a study for a now lost oil. He represents himself dressed in Eastern garb with a full beard, which he had grown once more after the death of his wife.

It remains a poignant image of old age by an artist who had lost none of his prowess.

Self-portrait Laughing, c. 1770



Oil on canvas

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire
de la Ville de Genève

Liotard appears to have used this highly unusual self-portrait as a marketing device. He took it with him to Paris, London and the Netherlands from 1770 to 1774, including it in the exhibitions and auctions he organised, and describing it as “His own portrait in oil, laughing and pointing with his finger, a very strong expressive figure”.

The unsettling combination of a grin and an extended finger – taking the place normally assigned to a brush or crayon – was also employed by La Tour in a 1737 self-portrait.

Self-portrait Holding His Chin, c. 1778–81



Mezzotint with etching and roulette, first state,
without letters

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

While writing his 'Traité des principes et des règles de la peinture' (1781), Liotard prepared engravings (such as the portrait of Marie-Thérèse) illustrating the principles he expounded. Unusual in their mixture of printmaking techniques, these were issued as an independent suite.

This self-portrait, the first work in the suite, illustrated his discussion of chiaroscuro. In the text accompanying this picture, Liotard's mastery of the effect is implicitly, and favourably, compared to that of Rembrandt.

Marie Liotard-Fargues with Her Eldest Son Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1761–62



Black and red chalk, with watercolour washes on the verso

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. Gift of the Société auxiliaire du Musée

This study is among the most intimate of Liotard's family portraits. His wife holds their eldest son, and Jean-Etienne the younger (1758–1822) contemplates his father as he sketches.

Early in his career, Liotard mastered the use of black and red crayons, which were popularised by Jean-Antoine Watteau at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here he employs them with refinement to depict the faces of his sitters, and more freely to suggest the forms of their clothes.

Marianne Liotard Holding a Doll, c. 1775

Pastel on parchment

Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Vienna

Marie-Anne-Françoise, known in the family as Marianne (1767–1830), was the youngest of Liotard's children. Her elder brother wrote of this work that "with her finger she makes the sign to keep silent, her doll being asleep". It is Liotard's only portrait of Marianne to have survived.

The composition is close to that of a print after a painting by Jean-Siméon Chardin. Liotard would have been familiar with his contemporary's works from his early days in Paris, and took inspiration from them throughout his career.

Marie-Thérèse Liotard, 1780

Mezzotint

Collection of Jean Bonna, Geneva

Marie-Thérèse (1763–1793) – whose godmother was Empress Maria Theresa, wife of the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I – was Liotard’s second daughter and about 16 years old when this mezzotint was made.

It is one of six engravings Liotard made to accompany his 1781 treatise on art, in which he refers to the “graceful posture, naivety and agreeable mien” of this sitter. Marie-Thérèse wears a fashionable hat and admires a miniature, presumably one made by her father.

The Levant

In 1736, while in Rome, Liotard encountered two British Grand Tourists, John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, and William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon and later 2nd Earl of Bessborough.

They invited Liotard to accompany them to the Levant as a draughtsman charged with making souvenir drawings of their travels, especially “the dresses of every country” and “prospects of all the remarkable places”.

After sailing from Naples on 3 April 1738, they stopped in Sicily, Malta and then Greece, where they explored various Classical antiquities such as the Acropolis.

The party then sailed to the Cyclades before reaching Smyrna on the western Turkish coast.

Several weeks later they arrived in Constantinople, where their host was the British Ambassador, Sir Everard Fawkener, who became an important intermediary between the artist and aristocratic patrons.

Liotard stayed in Constantinople for about four years, securing portrait commissions from the substantial British trading population, as well as roaming the city and finding more local subjects among the Muslims, Jews, Greeks and Armenians.

In a series of refined drawings, Liotard recorded and often annotated an important array of furnishings, customs and dress; about eighty of these have survived.

His work echoed the newly fashionable 'turquerie': a distinctive strand of Orientalist art that both distilled and indulged the European fascination with the Ottoman Empire.

It was in Constantinople and subsequently in Moldavia, then part of the Ottoman Empire, that Liotard adopted the exotic ethnic dress and long beard that became such a striking aspect of his self-portraits and a focus of curiosity for his patrons.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

Woman on a Sofa
Reading, 1748–52



Oil on canvas

Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

This genre scene, derived from two drawings made in Constantinople, was probably painted in Paris after Liotard's return to Europe, where there was a growing demand for 'turqueries'. In contrast to similar works by other artists, Liotard's depiction of a young Turkish woman displays a commitment to ethnographic accuracy, here demonstrated in the austere setting and the sitter's flower-embroidered costume and tarbush, which he brought from the Levant.

The one concession to the work's European origin is the book: a discussion of virtue written in French.

Lady Anne Somerset, 1755

Pastel on vellum

The Devonshire Collection

This pastel depicts the 14-year-old Lady Anne Somerset (1741–1763), who was just entering London society. Her flowered Turkish dress and tarbush, both studio props that Liotard brought back from Constantinople, suggest an exotic persona.

Anne Somerset was the eldest child of Charles Noel Somerset, 4th Duke of Beaufort. In 1759 she married Charles Compton, 7th Earl of Northampton, and later accompanied him to Venice when he became Ambassador Extraordinary. She died four years later in Naples at the age of 22, a victim, like her husband, of tuberculosis.

Maid Serving Tea, c. 1740–42

Black and red chalk over pencil on two sheets of paper

Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur

Here Liotard portrays the traditional tea ceremony that enjoyed a central position in Turkish society. Tea in Turkey during much of the eighteenth century was considered a beverage to be enjoyed at leisure. It was served in porcelain cups that were made to a tulip design without handles, just as Liotard has recorded here.

The Divan House of Liotard in Constantinople, c. 1742

Red chalk and graphite on paper

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. Gift of the Société auxiliaire du Musée

A note on the verso in the hand of the artist's son confirms this as Liotard's sparsely furnished Turkish living quarters: "Room of the painter Liotard in Constantinople". Its subject, an empty interior, is an exception within the output produced in the city, but the room served as the setting for portraits and genre scenes such as 'Woman on a Sofa Reading', which hangs nearby.

Richard Pococke, 1740



Oil on canvas

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève. On permanent loan from the Gottfried Keller Foundation

Richard Pococke (1704–1765) was one of the pioneer archaeologists of the Middle East. He spent four years in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, and published a much admired account of his travels: 'A Description of the East and Some Other Countries' (1743–45).

This life-size image is Liotard's largest surviving work. It shows Pococke in Turkish garb of "blew linnen" lined with fur, and wearing a turban over his shaved head.

The background gives a glimpse of the Golden Horn and the Princes' Island.

Young Woman of Constantinople, 1738–42



Red and black chalk on paper

Musée du Louvre, Paris,

Département des Arts graphiques

One of the tasks requested of Liotard by Viscount Duncannon and the Earl of Sandwich, his patrons in the Levant, was to make detailed records of local costume.

This is one of many studies of standing women that served less as portraits than as acute observations of national dress – a precursor to Liotard’s later attention when recording the fabrics and fashionable attire of his European sitters.

Two Turkish Musicians, 1740–42



Red and black chalk on paper

Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Liotard made several drawings of street musicians during his sojourn in Constantinople.

In this example he emphasises the instruments, which are Western violins introduced into Turkey through the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Liotard's sense of observation is exceptionally acute, as can be seen in the finesse of the lines that define the forms.

Sir Everard Fawkener, 1738–40

Black and red chalk on paper

Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery (Norfolk Museums Service)

Sir Everard Fawkener (1694–1758) came from a family of merchants with interests in the Levant. In 1716 his father sent him to Constantinople where he remained for nine years. On his return, Fawkener worked in the family business, was knighted, and then returned to the Sublime Porte as Ambassador.

In this capacity Fawkener introduced Liotard to the British expatriate community, and probably convinced him to remain in Constantinople when his party left.

Liotard's portrait shows Fawkener seated in his English cane chair, attired in an oriental robe and slippers. He wears a local hat rather than the customary wig.

The Dwarf Ibrahim, 1740–42

Black and red chalk on paper

Musée du Louvre, Paris,

Département des Arts graphiques

As in the European courts, dwarfs were employed in the Ottoman Empire as jesters and musicians. Liotard's sensitive drawing of Ibrahim is a particularly touching image, revealing an older man who has spent his life in service to the Sultan and providing an example of Liotard's ethnographic interest in the Levant.

Lady Caroline Cavendish, Viscountess Duncannon, c. 1739–40

Oil on canvas

On loan from the Trustees of the Stansted Park
Foundation

When Viscount Duncannon (whose portrait hangs nearby) returned to England from the Levant in 1739, he married Lady Caroline Cavendish (1719–1760), daughter of William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Devonshire, for whom Duncannon served as private secretary.

Lady Caroline wears a remarkable embroidered costume that has been described variously as Venetian and Florentine. However, the pose and the costume correspond with a drawing of another sitter that Liotard made in Constantinople in June 1738 (now in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris), which must be the source for this work.

William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, 1738

Oil on canvas

On loan from the Trustees of the Stansted Park
Foundation

The Hon. William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, later 2nd Earl of Bessborough (1704–1793), was part of the group that met Liotard in Rome in 1736 and invited the artist to accompany them to Constantinople, where this portrait was almost certainly painted.

Duncannon wears the Turkish costume that he brought back to England to wear at meetings of the Society of Dilettanti, of which he was a founding member. He became Liotard's principal British patron and was the intermediary between the painter and potential sitters among the aristocracy.

Laura Tarsi, c. 1741

Watercolour and bodycolour on ivory

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge

Little is known about Laura Tarsi, except that she was in Liotard's circle of friends in Constantinople. This miniature is a rare example of the artist's use of watercolour on ivory.

He clearly took great delight in recording the elaborate details of his sitter's garb, especially the velvety blue caftan, ornate headwear, jewellery – including the tiny ring on her right hand – and the belt decorated with circular plaques.

Ekaterina Mavrocordato, 1742–43



Red and black chalk on paper

Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

In 1742 Liotard travelled to Moldavia where he drew portraits of the court, including the ruler's wife, Ekatarina Mavrocordato, née Catherine Rosetti (c. 1715–1775).

The drawing depicts her seated on an austere throne in ornate royal robes. In the area around the right hand, a strip of paper has been added by Liotard, presumably to correct a flaw in the drawing.

Simon Luttrell of Luttrellstown, 1753–54

Oil on canvas

Owned by the city of Bern,
on permanent loan to Kunstmuseum Bern

Liotard painted this portrait of Simon Luttrell (1713–1787), later Baron Irnham and 1st Earl of Carhampton, during his first London sojourn. Although Luttrell – a noted libertine and member of the Dublin Hellfire Club – never went to the Levant, he opted to be painted in this fashionable mode. The costume was supplied by Liotard from those he had brought back from Turkey.

James Nelthorpe, 1738

Pastel on paper

The Holburne Museum, Bath

While on the Grand Tour, James Nelthorpe (c. 1719–1768) met the Earl of Sandwich, Viscount Duncannon and Liotard in Rome. In April 1738 they set sail for Constantinople, where Nelthorpe remained until October, 'the terminus ad quem' for the portrait.

The work is the only one featuring a member of the group of Grand Tourists that Liotard made in pastel while in the Levant.

Your feedback, please

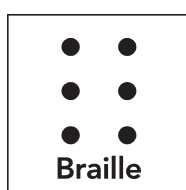
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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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Royal Academy of Arts

Jean-Etienne Liottard



Large
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List of Works

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Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Showcase - Pastels



 Eva Marie Garrick, c. 1754

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William Constable, 1770



Katherine Countess of Guilford, 1754



John Stuart, Viscount Mountstuart, c. 1763, The Right Honourable John Lord Viscount Mountstuart, 1774



Prince Charles Edward Stuart, 1737, Prince Henry Benedict Stuart, 1737



Madame Henriette of France, 1749



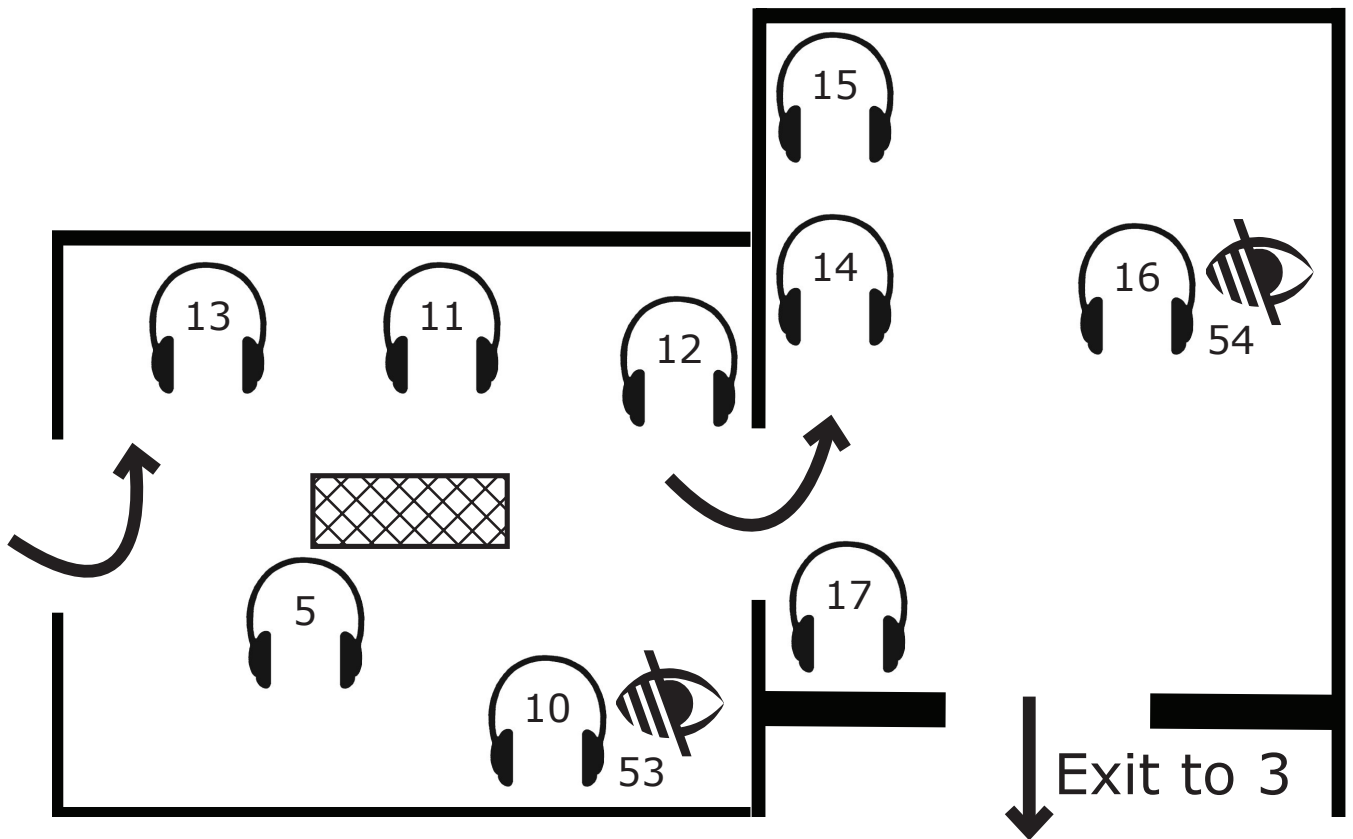
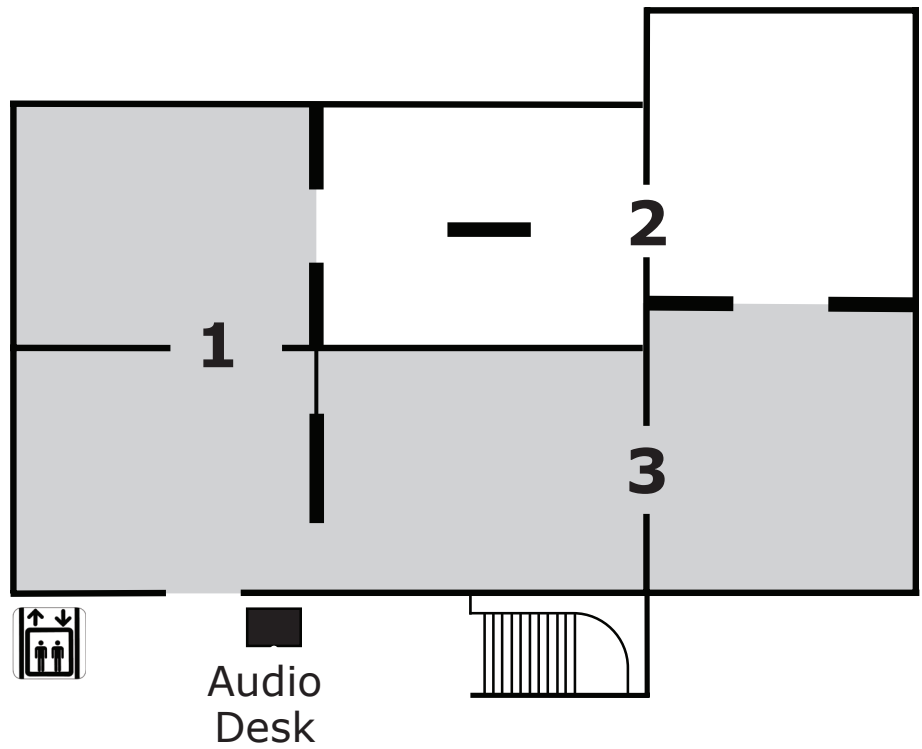
 Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, 1754

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Archduchess Marie-Antoinette, 1762

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British Society Portraits

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Court Portraits

Jean-Etienne Liotard

24th October - 31st January 2016

In the Sackler Wing of Galleries, Burlington House.

This exhibition has been organised by the
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2009-2016 Season

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British Society Portraits

Having found important patrons in Constantinople, Liotard used these connections to build a highly successful and lucrative career as a portrait painter.

Averse to any idealisation of his sitters, he delivered images of the upper echelons of society that were marked by verisimilitude in the treatment of physical features and costume.

Although the portrait painter's role was to capture the likeness of the sitter, Liotard's portraits often went beyond that mechanical task.

Particularly distinctive in many of his depictions are not only a compelling likeness of the sitter, but also a sense of intimacy that makes the viewer alert to the temperament of the model.

Some of these appear particularly informal, as though the sitter had stopped for a moment to pose while engaged in other activities.

Many are presented in relaxed attitudes, others highly animated, and some especially bold in their composition. In some instances, Liotard bridged the gap between portrait and genre painting with seamless dexterity.

Liotard initially travelled to London in 1753, encouraged by the rising demand for portraits from increasingly wealthy social élites.

He returned twenty years later, exhibiting at the Royal Academy (in 1773 and 1774) and offering his collection of Old Masters and a selection of his own work for sale.

During his two sojourns in the capital he undertook commissions from contacts made in Constantinople, such as Sir

Everard Fawkener and the Earl of Bessborough. At the same time he broadened his base to include portraits of leading members of the aristocracy.

Such was his reputation as a portrait painter that British patrons sought him out at his other places of residence: David Garrick sat to a portrait in Paris in 1751, Viscount Mountstuart was painted when he was passing through Geneva in 1763 on his Grand Tour, and William Constable commissioned a likeness when in Lyons in 1770.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

Lady Anne Conolly,

c. 1754

Pastel on vellum

From the collection at Wrotham Park

Anne Wentworth (1713–1797) was the daughter of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford. She married the Rt Hon. William James Conolly, an Irish politician, in 1733, assuming the title of Lady Anne Conolly.

This portrait was made in London. It shows Lady Conolly wearing a curious floral fancy dress that casts her in an Arcadian mode.

John Stuart, Viscount Mountstuart, c. 1763



Pastel on vellum

Collection of the Earl of Harrowby

This portrait shows Mountstuart, in a pose taken from the full-length depiction of him that is recorded in the adjacent mezzotint.

It has been suggested that this bust-length portrait was made for Mountstuart's Genevan hosts, the Pictet family, with whom he was staying prior to travelling to Italy. The sitter, seen here aged 19, later became a Member of Parliament and Privy Councillor, an Envoy to the court in Turin and Ambassador to Spain.

The Right Honourable
John Lord Viscount
Mountstuart,
1774



John Raphael Smith (1752–1812),
after Jean–Etienne Liotard

Mezzotint

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge

In 1763 the 3rd Earl of Bute commissioned Liotard to portray his son John Stuart, Viscount Mountstuart (1744–1814), who was passing through Geneva on his Continental Grand Tour. The large pastel portrait that Liotard executed (held at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) was an elaborate full-length study in an ornate interior setting. Its composition is recorded in this fine, reduced-format mezzotint, which Smith made over a decade later.

William Constable, 1770



Pastel on paper

Burton Constable Foundation, Hull

As a Catholic, William Constable (1721–1791) was denied a university education; however, he developed profound interests in science, botany and architecture, becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society. In spite of poor health, he made three Grand Tours.

This portrait was painted in 1770 in Lyons, where Constable had befriended the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The sitter's costume of Armenian cloak and fur hat may be a homage to Rousseau, who was similarly attired in the portrait Allan Ramsay made of him four years earlier.

John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer, c. 1753–55

Miniature enamel set in a carved ivory snuffbox

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection,
on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Liotard met John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer (1734–1783), through the Hon. William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon. Spencer had come into his inheritance at the age of 11 and bought works of art lavishly for the family estate at Althorp, Northamptonshire. He is about 20 in Liotard's portrait, and sports an ensemble more reminiscent of theatrical costume than everyday dress.

The ivory panels on the box were probably made in Dieppe; the lid is carved with a depiction of Darius before Alexander, after a painting by the seventeenth-century French artist Charles Le Brun.

Frederick Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, later 3rd Earl of Bessborough, 1773

Pastel on vellum

On loan from the Trustees of the Stansted Park
Foundation

Liotard made this portrait during his second trip to London, when the future 3rd Earl of Bessborough (1758–1844) was 16 years old.

He holds a 'porte-crayon' to indicate his interest in drawing and watercolour, at which he was quite proficient. Ponsonby later married Henrietta Spencer, the daughter of John Spencer, whom Liotard also depicted. The marriage was fraught with difficulties: Henrietta took a series of lovers while Frederick squandered the family fortune through gambling.

Katherine Furnese, Countess of Guilford, 1754



Pastel on vellum

Kunstmuseum Bern

When Liotard painted this portrait of Katherine Furnese (1715–1766), during his first London sojourn, she was already married to Francis North, 1st Earl of Guilford. The pastel is an example of the artist's credo of adhering to an absolute naturalism, which in this case hardly flatters the sitter; her plump features are objectively recorded rather than disguised.

Charlotte Boyle, Marchioness of Hartington, 1754

Pastel on paper

The Devonshire Collection

Charlotte Boyle, 6th Baroness Clifford (1731–1754), was sole heiress of the immense wealth and estates of her father, Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, which included Chiswick House and Burlington House in London. In 1748 she married William Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington, later 4th Duke of Devonshire.

She was to die from smallpox at the age of 23, shortly after this portrait was painted.

David Garrick, 1751

Pastel on paper

The Devonshire Collection.

Gift of the 3rd Earl of Burlington, 1760

The renowned actor, playwright and theatre manager David Garrick (1717–1779) was depicted by numerous artists. Liotard's portrait was made in Paris in 1751, when the artist's celebrity in France was at its peak. Garrick recorded his meeting with "Leotarde" in his journal, pronouncing the portraits he saw in the studio "very like".

Eva Maria Garrick, c. 1754



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Pastel on paper, heightened with
gouache

The Devonshire Collection.

Gift of the 3rd Earl of Burlington, 1760

This portrait was created in London, some three years after that of David Garrick (which hangs nearby). Eva Maria Garrick, née Veigel (1724–1822), a celebrated Viennese dancer, had come to Britain in 1746 using the stage name 'Violette'.

On her marriage to Garrick in 1749 she renounced her dancing career in order to support her husband in his various theatrical activities. Liotard's portrait shows her aged about 30. She outlived Garrick, dying at 98.

Sir Everard Fawkener, 1754

Enamel

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Sir Everard Fawkener (1694–1758) was a key patron of Liotard's. His post as secretary to the Duke of Cumberland, George II's fourth son, facilitated Liotard's introduction to Augusta, Princess of Wales, in 1753.

This enamel miniature was created in London when Fawkener was 60. It was possibly intended to enrich his collection of miniatures and gems, which had been praised by his friend Voltaire. Fawkener gambled away his wealth and died four years later in Bath, poor and intestate.

Lady Fawkener, 1754

Pastel on vellum

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

In February 1747 Harriet Churchill (1725–1777) married Fawkener, the former British ambassador in Constantinople who had befriended Liotard from the beginning of his sojourn in the Levant. Although she was the illegitimate daughter of Lieutenant-General Charles Churchill, she was accepted by society without prejudice.

This accomplished and informal portrayal shows her wearing a simple country dress, a brilliantly depicted shawl of black lace and a dark, flat-brimmed hat. Her left hand holds a thread, her right searches for something in her sewing box.

Miss Bacon, c. 1753–55

Pastel on parchment

Private collection

A label found attached to the back of this portrait suggested the sitter's identity. The pastel dates from Liotard's first visit to England (1753–1755), when he capitalised on the connections that he had established with British patrons while in Constantinople.

The sitter wears an exquisite French gown of blue silk, as seen in other portraits by Liotard. It has been adapted by the artist to the English taste for greater informality by replacing the tightly laced bodice with one buttoned at the front.

Showcase in centre of gallery

Pastel



While Liotard mastered a number of media, including oils, and enamel painting for miniatures, his preferred manner for portraiture was pastel. Pastel painting became especially popular in France in the eighteenth century through the works of such practitioners as Jean-Baptiste Perronneau, Maurice-Quentin de La Tour and the Venetian Rosalba Carriera.

In England, 'crayon painting' was recognised as an important technique by Francis Cotes RA, whose pupil John Russell RA wrote the treatise 'Elements of Painting with Crayons' (1772). Pastels consist of powdered pigments bound together with a binder, usually gum arabic, and shaped into small sticks.

The pigments in this dry medium provide an artist with a startling range of pure colours, and the sticks may be manufactured with varying degrees of hardness, allowing the artist to work broadly or with remarkable detail.

Pastels have significant advantages over oils, since they can be applied fairly rapidly, layered and gently mixed by rubbing the surface of the image directly. Moreover, unlike oils, they require no drying time: a boon when depicting busy sitters. Once completed, a pastel painting would be treated with a fixative, framed and glazed.

Liotard used pastels on especially prepared paper and vellum (calf skin), creating images of dazzling audacity on an intimate scale. In his own treatise on art, published in 1781, he advocated the importance of not applying pastels loosely in the form of 'touches'; rather, he sought to ensure that

any marks of application were invisible to the eye, so that the illusion of reality became paramount. In his practised hands, pastels recorded the subtleties of flesh and the intricacies of costume, conveying the sense of a direct encounter with the sitter.

Dictionarium polygraphicum:
or, the whole body of arts
regularly digested, vol. 1,
London, 1735

Royal Academy of Arts

Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, London (founded 1754, granted a Royal Charter in 1847)

Over the winter of 1772–73 the Society's Committee on the Polite Arts conducted an inquiry into the quality of pastel crayons made by Charles Pache. Pache was an erstwhile partner of Bernard- Augustin Stoupan (1701–1775) of Lausanne, from whom Jean-Etienne Liotard acquired pastel crayons.

Pache presented four boxes of pastels to the Society to be assessed by leading practitioners of the medium, including Liotard. In 1773 Pache was awarded 21 guineas by the Society "For establishing a manufactory [of Pastels]"; this opened in London the following year.

Photography: Prudence Cumming Associates Ltd.

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 1772

'Resolved that proper trials be made of the crayons and that the Secretary be directed to request some of the most eminent artists in that way, to make such trials as are necessary and report their opinion to the Committee.'

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 1772

'The Secretary acquainted the Committee that he had applied to Mr Moreland and Mr Liotard and that Mr Moreland acknowledged the crayons to be very beautiful but says those crayons being made on the principles of the Switzerland crayons are not in his opinion so good as some made here. Mr Liotard not having an opportunity of comparing these crayons with his own cannot determine on their merit.'

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 1772 (i)

'The Secretary acquainted the Committee that he had seen Mr Russell and Mr Milbourne two pupils of the late Mr Cotes and who frequently had been employ'd in making crayons for him, who inform'd the Secretary that these [Pache's] crayons were in every respect equal to the best made by Mr Stoupan of Lausanne of whom Mr Cotes always bought crayons ...'

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 1772 (ii)

'The following certificate from Mr Liotard was also produced to the Committee

"I declare that the crayons of Mr Pache are as good as those of Stoupan, and that the dark browns are rather more beautifull [sic]." '

Box containing a specimen of
paper and pastel chalks used
by John Russell RA
(1745–1806)

Late eighteenth century

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Reproduction of Jean-Etienne
Liotard, 'Self-portrait at the
Easel',
1751–52

Pastel on paper (several sheets), 97 × 71 cm

Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

Photography: Bettina Jacot-Descombes

Porte-crayon

A 'porte-crayon' was a drawing instrument used from the seventeenth century onwards. Split at the end, and with a sliding ring to secure the crayon, it enabled the artist to work more easily with short lengths while protecting his or her fingers. Liotard depicted himself using one in 'Self-portrait at the Easel', reproduced nearby.

Selection of present-day soft pastels made by Unison

Lent by L. Cornelissen & Son,
Great Russell Street, London

Sample of blue paper

Lent by L. Cornelissen & Son,
Great Russell Street, London

Blue paper was the common support for pastel in the eighteenth century. Liotard prepared his paper with a formula of fish glue and wine mixed with pumice dust, which he applied after gluing the paper to canvas.

As well as being popular for its thickness, it had chromatic advantages as the pastel pigment interacted with the coloured background.

Sample of vellum

Lent by L. Cornelissen & Son,
Great Russell Street, London

Liotard appears to have favoured working on vellum, preferring calf skin to goat. Its firm surface retains the brilliance of the pastel pigment and, unlike paper, does not become coarse after rubbing.

Court Portraits

Liotard's introduction to the royal families of Europe began in 1742 when he was invited to portray the court of Prince Constantine Mavrocordato of Moldavia.

After ten months, Liotard continued to Vienna where he won the favour of Maria Theresa and her husband, Francis Stephen of Lorraine, the future Holy Roman Emperor. With such credentials, Liotard was able to secure commissions from Louis XV when he settled in Paris in 1746, painting miniatures and vivid pastel portraits of his family.

Although these were intended for the king's private apartments, some were exhibited publicly in Paris in 1751 and 1752. The royal portraits of Augusta, Princess of Wales, and her children – a commission orchestrated by Fawkener – were painted in London in 1754.

These are some of Liotard's finest examples, made at the peak of his artistic prowess.

They are at once respectful of his sitters' regal standing and also brilliant artistic probes into their individual characters. Many reveal a sympathetic relationship between artist and model, the latter often shorn of the official attributes that court portraiture generally demanded.

In 1762 Liotard returned to Vienna, this time to portray the children of Empress Maria Theresa. Each of these brilliant drawings explores the distinctiveness of the sitter in Liotard's characteristic two-colour chalk technique, which he heightened with the addition of watercolour and gouache on the verso to give colour and depth.

The portraits were intended for Maria Theresa's private use, and she remarked that she took them with her during her travels as pictorial mementoes.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

Prince Henry Benedict
Stuart, 1737



Prince Charles Edward
Stuart, 1737

Watercolour and gouache on vellum

Private European collection,
courtesy of Tomasso Brothers Fine Art

In 1737 the exiled Old Pretender, James Francis Edward Stuart, commissioned Liotard to create these watercolour miniatures, which were copied by other artists and sent to Jacobite supporters.

Henry Benedict Stuart (1725–1807) and his elder brother Charles Edward Stuart (1720–1788) both wear the riband of the Order of the Garter.

Eight years after the commission, Charles, known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, attempted to regain the British throne but was thwarted at Culloden.

Louis XV, 1750

Pastel on blue-grey paper

Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano, Stupinigi, Turin

Louis XV (1710–1774, the great-grandson of Louis XIV, ascended the French throne at the age of 5. He is shown in a traditionally formal pose, with a brilliantly coloured red coat and the blue sash of the Order of the Holy Spirit proudly displayed across his chest.

Princess Henriette of France, 1749



Pastel on paper with gouache highlights

Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano, Stupinigi, Turin

Anne-Henriette (1727–1752) was a despondent figure in the French court: by the time Liotard painted her she had given up all hope of marriage. This portrait shows her garbed in a particularly elaborate court dress, the details of which the artist laboured over to present an exceptionally refined image of velvety textures and delicate lace.

Louis, Dauphin of France, 1749–50

Pastel on vellum, heightened with gouache

Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano, Stupinigi, Turin

The only son of Louis XV to survive into adulthood, Louis (1729–1765) died of tuberculosis at the age of 36 and never ascended the throne. This modest, well-educated, devoutly religious and highly cultivated man had 13 children, three of whom became kings of France.

Louis, like his father, adopts a conventional pose. His status is indicated by the riband of the Order of the Holy Spirit, and the richness and luminosity of his blue coat and its elaborate gold-braid trimming have been heightened by the addition of gouache to the pastel chalks.

Princess Victoire of France, 1749

Pastel on vellum

Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano, Stupinigi, Turin

Marie-Louise-Thérèse-Victoire (1733–1799) was Louis XV's fifth daughter, and Liotard painted her twice, on the first occasion dressed in blue with a cape.

This was the only one of the commissioned group of portraits that Louis XV found deficient, which may explain why Liotard painted the second version shown here, presenting her in a green dress, as a more attractive figure.

George, Prince of Wales, 1754

Pastel on vellum

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

When Liotard created this portrait of George, the Prince of Wales's coat was probably bright red. This fugitive pigment now appears to have lost much of its hue, although the rich blue riband has retained its brilliance. The image served as the source for Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of the Prince, made in about 1759.

George, Prince of Wales, 1754

Enamel

The Trustees of Sir Walter Luttrell's Will Trust,
care of Robert Holden Ltd

This enamel miniature shows the 15-year-old Prince of Wales (1738–1820); it can be compared with a pastel of the Prince that hangs nearby. Miniatures were made for the royal family, and several replicas, such as this, produced for distribution to court favourites.

George's hair is either powdered or he wears a bagwig; the only distinctive signifier of his position is the blue riband of the Order of the Garter.

Princess Louisa Anne, 1754

Pastel and gouache on vellum

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

One of the most endearing of all Liotard's royal portraits, this study depicts Louisa Anne (1749–1768), the seventh child of Augusta and Frederick, at the age of 5. He captures both her curiosity and frailty; in poor health all her life, she died of tuberculosis shortly after her nineteenth birthday.

Liotard emphasises his sitter's youth by placing her in an oversized chair, and her vulnerability by showing her in a dress that is clearly too large.

Augusta, Princess of Wales, 1754

Pastel on vellum

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1719–1772) married Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1736. They had nine children; the eldest was crowned George III in 1760.

This portrait is noteworthy for its natural, self-effacing mien and a lack of royal trappings save for the ermine trim of her outer robe. It was commissioned as a pendant to a pastel portrait of her late husband; the works hung together in the King's bedchamber at Buckingham House.

Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, 1754



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Pastel on vellum

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Henry Frederick (1745–1790), Duke of Cumberland and the sixth child of Augusta and Frederick, is seated at a table upon which he has built a house of cards. The image borrows its theme from Chardin's paintings of children engaged in the same activity.

In such contexts cards are often intended as an allusion to the fragility of life; however, here the 10-year-old Henry Frederick is perhaps simply amusing himself while posing for the artist.

Princess Elizabeth Caroline, 1754

Pastel on vellum

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Elizabeth Caroline (1740–1759), the fourth royal child, is depicted here aged 14. Like her sister Louisa Anne, whose portrait hangs nearby, she was in ill health throughout her short life.

Horace Walpole saw the Princess act in a play when she was 8; although too unwell to learn to read, she memorised her part by listening to her siblings perform.

Archduchess Maria Christina of Austria, 1762

Black and red chalk, graphite pencil, watercolour and watercolour glaze on paper, heightened with colour on the verso

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. On permanent loan from the Gottfried Keller Foundation

Maria Christina (1742–1798), the fourth daughter of Maria Theresa and the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I, is depicted here at the age of 20. She was an accomplished amateur painter, and is shown at her painting table, brush in hand.

She married Albert of Saxony (1738–1822), the youngest son of Friedrich Augustus II, Elector of Saxony, who had acquired three important pastels from Liotard for his collection in Dresden. Albert shared Maria Christina's artistic interests, and his collection formed the core of the Albertina museum in Vienna.

Archduchess Maria Anna of Austria, 1762

Black and red chalk, graphite pencil, watercolour, gouache and watercolour glaze on paper, heightened with colour on the verso

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève. Property of the Confédération Suisse, Gottfried Keller Foundation

Maria Anna (1738–1789) was Maria Theresa's eldest surviving child. She was born with a spinal defect that precluded any dynastic marriage and devoted herself to religious activities that led to positions as Abbess in Prague and Klagenfurt.

Maria Anna was intelligent and inquisitive, with a deep interest in science and the arts. She wrote about her mother's politics, collected coins and financed archaeological expeditions.

Archduke Peter Leopold of Austria, 1762

Black and red chalk, graphite pencil, watercolour
and watercolour glaze on paper, heightened with
colour on the verso

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville
de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. On
permanent loan from the Gottfried Keller Foundation

Peter Leopold (1747–1792) was Maria
Theresa's third son, destined from an early
age for a career in the church. He was
interested in both mathematics and
architecture, and Liotard's portrait, one of
the most formal of the series, shows him
at work on the design of a fortress. While
the emphasis is clearly on his sitter's
features, Liotard delighted in portraying
the details of dress and furniture.

Archduchess Marie Antoinette of Austria, 1762



Black and red chalk, graphite pencil, watercolour and watercolour glaze on paper, heightened with colour on the verso

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. On permanent loan from the Gottfried Keller Foundation

This portrait of Maria Theresa's fifteenth child, Marie Antoinette (1755–1793), shows the 7 year old winding a sewing thread and already possessed of considerable poise.

The intense pink of her dress has been achieved by applying a watercolour wash on the verso of the sheet. In 1770 she was married to the Dauphin of France, and became Queen four years later.

Her subsequent history – her extravagances, frivolities and decapitation at the hands of French Revolutionaries – is well known.

Your feedback, please

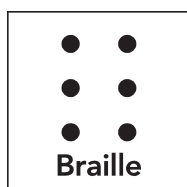
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Royal Academy of Arts

Jean-Etienne Liottard



Large
Print

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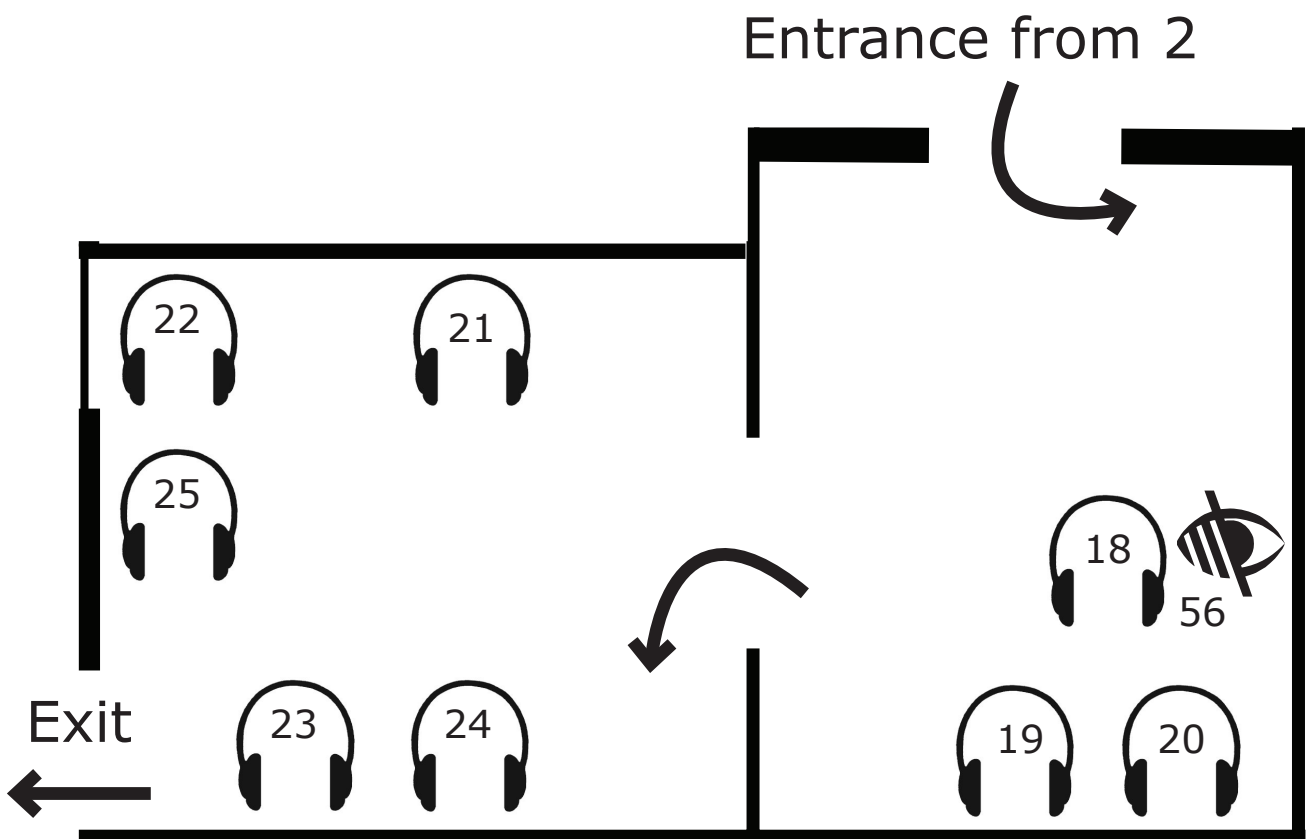
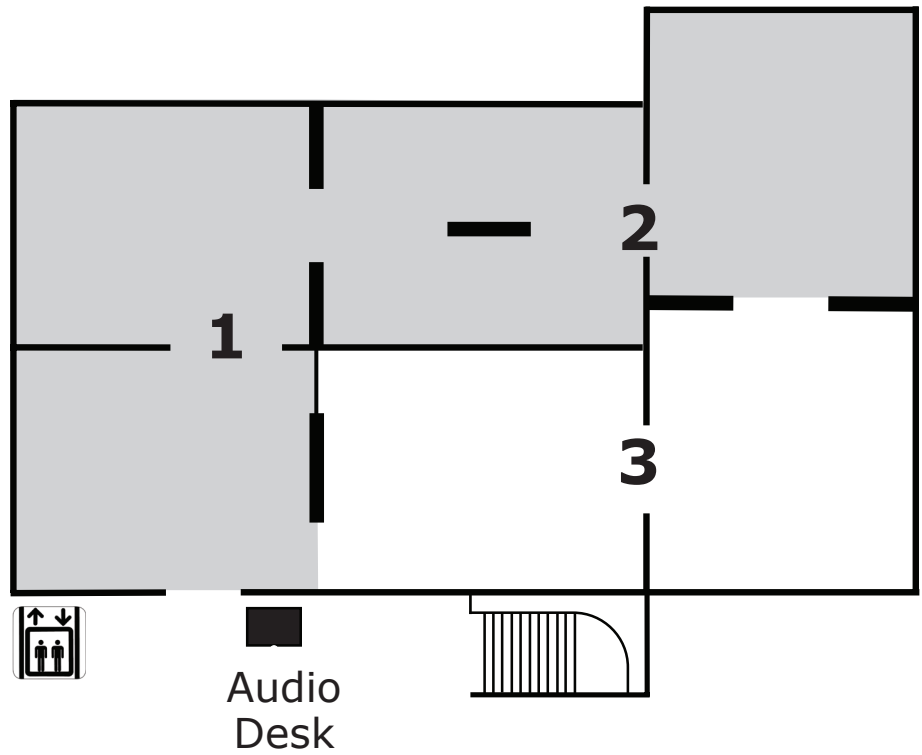
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Still-life, Trompe l'œil and Genre Scenes

Jean-Etienne Liotard

24th October - 31st January 2016

In the Sackler Wing of Galleries, Burlington House.

This exhibition has been organised by the
Royal Academy of Arts, London.

2009-2016 Season

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Continental Society Portraits

Liotard commanded an international market for his portraits. Wherever he resided, he would receive commissions from the social and professional élites, which included bankers, diplomats and physicians; writers, actors and singers; and men and women of fashion.

Of particular note was the large number of such portraits that he made following his decision to settle in Geneva from 1757.

With the exception of the portrait of Madame Vermenoux – uncharacteristic for its ambitious scale and allegorical reference – the portraits generally convey a sobriety in keeping with Geneva's dominant Protestant ethos.

Liotard's commitment to a realistic rendering of his sitters' likeness brought a liveliness and sense of immediacy to each portrait.

Verisimilitude and a complete mastery of the pastel technique ensured that he also astutely described the fineries of dress and costume of his more affluent sitters with almost obsessive minuteness.

Fine silk dresses, fur trims, curling ribbons, intricate lacework and diverse jewellery, all were depicted with astonishing fidelity, adding decorative details that greatly enhance the image of the sitter and bespeak his or her social standing.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

Count Jean Diodati, c. 1763–70

Red and black crayon, pencil and white gouache

Private collection

Count Jean Diodati (1732–1807) was ennobled for his political services in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Liotard met him in Geneva, probably through the physician Théodore Tronchin, whose daughter Diodati would marry in 1770. The Diodati family boasted some of the foremost figures in Genevan society.

At the time Liotard drew this profile portrait, Jean Diodati lived in his villa in Cologny, outside Geneva; the same villa in which (after Diodati's death) Byron, Polidori and the Shelleys were later to hold the famous ghost story competition that led Mary Shelley to write 'Frankenstein'.

Dr Théodore Tronchin, c. 1763

Graphite, red and black chalk, with a slight glaze of blue watercolour on paper

Private collection

Dr Théodore Tronchin (1709–1781) studied in Cambridge and then Leiden, where he earned his medical degree in 1730. After practising in Amsterdam, he established himself in his native Geneva in the early 1750s. There he won acclaim for his progressive ideas concerning hygiene, general health and particularly inoculation against smallpox.

This careful drawing is a preliminary study for a finished pastel portrait now in a private collection.

Julie de Thellusson-Ployard, 1760



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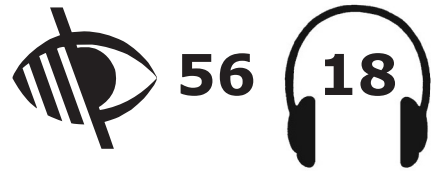
Pastel on vellum

Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur

Julie de Thellusson, née Ployard (1740–1820), came from Marseilles, where her Swiss father had a successful trading firm. This portrait, together with that of Isaac-Louis (displayed nearby), was occasioned by their marriage in September 1760.

She wears a miniature portrait of her husband on her left wrist. The two were conceived as pendant images, hence the luxurious employment of rich blue tones in both pastels.

Isaac-Louis de Thellusson, 1760



Pastel on vellum

Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur

Isaac-Louis de Thellusson (1727–1790) was a member of a powerful Genevan banking family. The pose that Liotard chose for this portrait is relaxed and informal: Isaac-Louis gazes affectionately at his new bride, Julie de Thellusson-Ployard, whose portrait hangs nearby (and appears also on the ring on his finger).

Liotard's finesse in depicting the textures of the sitter's blue silk robe remains one of the finest examples of the importance he accorded to textures and patterns in his art.

Marie-Justine-Benoîte Favart-Duronceray, 1757



Pastel on vellum

Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur

Marie-Justine-Benoîte Favart- Duronceray (1727–1772) was an accomplished musician and dancer, achieving celebrity status on the Paris stage in 1744. The following year she married Charles-Simon Favart, whose portrait is displayed nearby, and continued to perform and write comedies.

This lively portrait showing the sitter mid-performance is unusual in Liotard's work, as is the remarkable shadow that her profile casts on the wall, which gives the semblance of a double portrait.

Madame Paul Girardot de Vermenoux, 1764



Pastel on vellum

Private collection

Anne-Germaine Girardot de Vermenoux (1739–1783), famed for her beauty, was widowed at 19 and inherited a considerable fortune, thereafter moving in sophisticated social circles in Paris and Geneva. She was plagued by ill health and in 1758 sought treatment in Geneva from Dr Tronchin (whose portrait hangs nearby).

In gratitude for her cure she commissioned this exceptionally large pastel portrait, an allegory showing her in theatrical costume in the role of a vestal virgin paying homage to Tronchin, who appears as a Greek god of medicine, Aesculapius.

Charles-Simon Favart, 1757

Pastel on seven sheets of paper

Private collection

Charles-Simon Favart (1710–1792) was a fashionable dramatist, theatre impresario and librettist of comic operas. In 1743 he became the Director of the Comédie-Française.

Favart later directed other theatres, while continuing to write comic plays that were admired for their wit and fluency. This counterpart to the portrait of his wife shows Favart in a casual pose.

Madame André Naville, née Susanne des Arts, 1777

Pastel on vellum

Private collection

When she married the wealthy André Naville in 1749, Susanne des Arts already possessed a considerable fortune as the daughter of a prosperous Genevan family. Despite this, the sobriety of her dress reflects her strict Calvinist beliefs.

Her portrait was conceived by Liotard as a pendant to that of her husband (shown nearby), and adopts the same tonalities.

André Naville, 1777

Pastel on vellum

Private collection

André Naville (1708–1780) was a member of a venerable Genevan family that had amassed a fortune in textile manufacturing, an enterprise which André Naville expanded further in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Although both this portrait and its pendant, shown nearby, were made relatively late on in Liotard's career, the masterful description of Naville's features, animated by the light reflected in his pupils, belies any decline in the artist's skill.

Count Francesco Algarotti, c. 1745

Pastel on vellum

Kasteel Huis Doorn, Utrecht

Count Francesco Algarotti (1712–1764) was a remarkable polymath whose interests extended to philosophy, art criticism and science. He travelled extensively and became renowned for his good looks and brilliant conversation. In London he associated with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and John Hervey, 2nd Lord Hervey, both of whom were romantically linked to him.

This portrait, the first of two versions, was created in Venice, Algarotti's city of birth. It probably marks Liotard's appreciation of the cognoscente's central role in acquiring his famous 'La Chocolatière' for the celebrated pastel collection of Friedrich Augustus II in Dresden.

Still-life, Trompe l'œil and Genre Scenes

Liotard had made genre scenes – images that illustrate contemporary life – in Constantinople. He continued to create such works, drawing on European subjects as well, throughout his career.

Strongly influenced by Dutch seventeenth-century examples, several of which were in his collection of Old Masters, these scenes encapsulate his total commitment to a heightened degree of realism, be it the rendering of the fabric of a costume or the surface finish of an object.

In some instances his genre scenes use identifiable models, such as members of his family, thus eliding portraiture with a contemporary narrative subject.

The close attention that he gave to their still-life elements highlights Liotard's engagement with the genre of pure still-life.

Although relatively small in number, these works, in both oil and pastel, demonstrate the artist's skill in recording the texture of a specific fruit or ribbon, or the sharply observed reflections and shadows of a china tea set placed on a lacquer tray.

He drew upon these same exceptional skills for the making of a small number of 'trompe-l'œil' pictures, that is, paintings in which the objects depicted are so realistically portrayed that the viewer is convinced that they are indeed real.

Plaster bas-reliefs appear suspended by actual ribbons from real nails driven into wooden panels; drawings seem inadequately attached to their support; and a portrait looks partially occluded by the slow closure of a wooden shutter.

List of works

(clockwise in order of hang)

La Chocolatière, c. 1744–45

attributed to Jean-Etienne Liotard

Pastel on parchment

Private collection courtesy of Derek Johns Ltd,
London

'La Chocolatière' is probably Liotard's most celebrated and certainly one of his most impressive genre studies. The prime version is in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden. In 1745, Count Francesco Algarotti acquired the pastel from Liotard on behalf of Friedrich Augustus II, Elector of Saxony.

In a letter of 1751, Algarotti described it as displaying "imperceptible gradations of light and with a perfect modelling [...] it is a Holbein in pastel".

The pastel shown here is almost identical – in scale and in the subtlety of detail – to the Dresden work. It may well have been derived from the full-scale line drawing (shown nearby) that Liotard kept in his collection.

It was Liotard's practice on a number of occasions to produce replicas of his most renowned portraits and genre subjects. These enabled him to respond to commercial demands for a specific subject, such as 'La Chocolatière', as well as serving to demonstrate his skills to potential patrons. They also became part of his own collection, which included extensive holdings of works by Old Masters, notably Dutch seventeenth-century artists.

'La Chocolatière' was the second most copied masterpiece in the Dresden gallery after Raphael's 'Sistine Madonna'. It became widely known from the later

eighteenth century through prints, and was copied by students and professional artists, especially during the nineteenth century.

La Chocolatière, c. 1744

Transfer drawing in brown ink on two sheets of paper

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, Cabinet d'arts graphiques. Gift of the Société auxiliaire du Musée

Trompe l'œil with a Partial Portrait of Maria Theresa of Austria, 1762–63

Oil on panel

Private collection

Maria Theresa (1717–1780) was the ruler of Habsburg domains that included Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, the Netherlands and much of northern Italy. She succeeded to the throne in 1740 and in 1745 – through the election of her husband, Francis Stephen of Lorraine – she became consort of the Holy Roman Emperor.

The partial portrait of the Empress that forms the right-hand part of this audacious 'trompe l'œil' was based on a pastel that Liotard made in Vienna in 1762.

Sir Everard Fawkener, 1754



Pastel on vellum

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This is the most unconventional of the three portraits of Fawkener in this exhibition. Here, Liotard has depicted the sitter's profile as a 'trompe l'œil', transforming it into a bas-relief medallion suspended by a ribbon on a blue wall.

The decision to portray Fawkener in this way might have been prompted by his association with the Chelsea Porcelain Manufactory, which he, with the Duke of Cumberland, supported financially.

Trompe l'œil with Two Bas-reliefs and Two Drawings, 1771



Oil on silk mounted on canvas

The Frick Collection, New York

The plaster bas-reliefs show Venus reclining on drapery (left) – derived from a work by François Boucher – and on a cloud (right), in each case accompanied by Cupid. The two fragments of chalk drawings – now lost – by Liotard are of the head of a Turkish woman (left) and the head of a woman from Ulm in Germany (right).

The cosmopolitan nature of the subjects and their hyperrealistic treatment suggest that Liotard saw this 'trompe l'œil' as a declaration of his life as a peripatetic artist and a master of verisimilitude.

L'Écriture, 1752



Pastel on six sheets of blue paper

Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Vienna

Although both models can be identified, this work is essentially a genre scene with a narrative.

The young man, Liotard's nephew Jacques-Antoine Lavergne, completes a letter that will be sealed with the red wax on the table using the heat of the candle carried by the boy, Jacques-Antoine's nephew. Brilliantly articulated still-life objects populate the writing table.

The work was bought together with 'Suzanne Curchod' (displayed nearby) by Empress Maria Theresa in 1762.

Still-life: Tea Set, c. 1770–83



Oil on canvas mounted on board

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

This porcelain Chinese export tea service in disarray on a Japan lacquer tray may be unique as a subject in Liotard's 'œuvre'. However, the artist does incorporate elements of such services in both his genre scenes and portraits, including 'A Dutch Girl at Breakfast', which hangs nearby.

Still-life: Pears, Apples, Prunes and Nuts, c. 1784–86

Pastel on parchment, mounted on canvas

Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur

Suzanne Curchod, c. 1761



Pastel on four sheets of vellum

Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Vienna

Suzanne Curchod (1737–1749) moved to Geneva in 1760, where she met both Liotard and her future husband, Jacques Necker, who was to become the finance minister of Louis XVI.

From 1764, in Paris, she presided over a sparkling salon of politicians, writers and scholars. The couple's child, Anne-Louise-Germaine, later known as Madame de Staël, would become a celebrated woman of letters of the Napoleonic era.

Curchod, seated by a ravishing array of fruit and glassware, pauses as if interrupted in her reading. The pastel elides portraiture, still-life and genre painting.

Still-life: Pears, an Apple, Plums and Walnuts on a Plate, 1787

Pastel on parchment, mounted on canvas

Private collection

Still-life: A Basket of Apples, c. 1786

Pastel on paper

Private collection

A Dutch Girl at Breakfast, 1756–57

Oil on canvas

On loan from the Trustees of the Stansted Park
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The intense realism of the still-life, the reflections on the polished table, the model's satin dress and the notation of the light source from the left – echoing that in the painting on the wall – suggest that this work is a homage to Dutch seventeenth-century scenes of contemporary life.

Liotard owned a number of such works (acquired primarily in the Netherlands between 1755 and 1757), including depictions of church interiors. It is probably one of these that figures in this composition.

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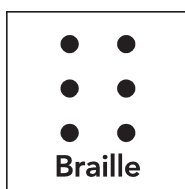
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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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