
Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's Pastel Studies of the Mesdames de France

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A pastel portrait representing Madame Élisabeth, the youngest sister of King Louis XVI of France, was recently given to The Metropolitan Museum of Art by Mrs. Frederick M. Stafford. A study for a painting by Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803) exhibited at the 1787 Salon, this reticent, informal likeness of the young princess (Figure 1) offers a glimpse of the artistic, political, and social forces at work in France during that uneasy period leading up to the Revolution. Considered in relation to Labille-Guiard's finished portraits, this pastel and two other studies depicting Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire, the king's maiden aunts (Figures 2, 3), not only suggest a more accessible side of these royal personages, represented without the artifice and pomp typical of official portraits, but also reveal a less familiar aspect of Labille-Guiard's art. They are among a very few pastel studies, handled with great immediacy, that prepared the way for her more ambitious, monumental portrait style.

In mid- to late eighteenth-century France, many women were actively involved in making and exhibiting art, in spite of less than hospitable circumstances. They were admitted to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture only as exceptions, with a limit of four female members. Barred from the life drawing classes and study of anatomy available to men in the studio system, women were not prepared to undertake the large historical narratives stressing civic virtue favored by the academy and greatly admired by the Salon judges and critics. Their artistic and financial survival lay instead in the development of a reputation and client base in the painting of portraits, still lifes, or genre scenes. Not surprisingly, portraits account for a majority of the surviving works by female artists of the time.

Three women, Anne Vallayer-Coster (best known for her still lifes), Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, were talented and fortunate enough to receive royal patronage and ultimately to become members of the Académie Royale. All three were linked to the French court through the women of the royal family: Marie-Antoinette commissioned many works from Vallayer-Coster

and Vigée Le Brun, and was especially attentive to their needs.¹ The king's aunts, determined to forge a separate identity, held their own court at the château de Bellevue, near Versailles, in opposition to the queen and her entourage. They supported Labille-Guiard.

Unlike her better-known and more prolific contemporary Vigée Le Brun, Labille-Guiard left no autobiography. The details of her personal history, however, present a clear picture of a hardworking and ambitious young woman, advancing in a disciplined manner through the various stages of artistic training available to her, aiming to compete in the closely guarded world of the official Salon. She was not born into a family of artists or artisans, a historically common path to becoming a painter, but became an artist through personal choice and sheer determination. She studied first with the miniaturist François-Élie Vincent, whose studio was near her father's haberdashery in Paris on the rue Neuve des Petits-Champs. At some point between 1769 and 1774 she studied with Maurice Quentin de La Tour, one of the foremost pastelists of Europe, noted for the animation and vivid sense of physical presence with which he endowed his sitters. Labille-Guiard exhibited pastels and miniature portraits at the Académie de Saint-Luc (an alternative to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture) and, after its suppression, at the Assemblée Ordinaire des Savants et des Artistes, later known as the Salon de la Correspondance.² Finally, in 1776, she began to study the technique of oil painting with François-André Vincent, the son of her first teacher and already a promising young academician (he was to become her life's companion and, ultimately, her husband).³ She hoped, in this way, to gain admission to the academy and, with it, the privilege of exhibiting at the official Salon. It was not until 1783, at the age of thirty-four, that Labille-Guiard was admitted to the Académie Royale. Vigée Le Brun, then twenty-eight, became a member in the same year.⁴

At the 1783 Salon Labille-Guiard exhibited at least ten pastel portraits, some of which had been shown the previous year or in early 1783 at the Salon de la Correspondance.



1. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (French, 1749–1803). *Madame Élisabeth de France* (1764–1794), ca. 1787. Pastel study, 31 x 25¾ in. (78.7 x 65.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Frederick M. Stafford, 2007 (2007.441)

Most were bust portraits of academicians seen against a neutral background and appear to have been made over a period of several years in anticipation of her application for admission to the Académie Royale. As they sat for their portraits, these distinguished men, colleagues of Vincent and by this time acquaintances of Labille-Guiard, had the opportunity to become more familiar with the artist and her talent and were thus more likely to support her election to the Académie Royale.⁵ In the absence of wealthy, well-placed patrons, she could shine before the

collective membership of the Académie Royale and subsequently impress the public at the biennial Salon with the fruits of her labor. The visibility of these “clients” within the Paris art world made clear her talent in capturing a likeness.

Although Labille-Guiard had studied oil painting with Vincent for seven years, she was evidently more comfortable at the time of her Salon debut with the pastel medium and had yet to find a clientele for her portraits among the nobility or business classes of Paris. In a carefully consid-



2. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Marie-Adélaïde de France (1732–1800), called Madame Adélaïde*, ca. 1787. Pastel study, 28¾ x 23⅛ in. (73 x 58.8 cm). Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Photograph: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York



3. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Marie-Louise-Thérèse-Victoire de France (1733–1799), called Madame Victoire*, 1787. Pastel study, 28¾ x 22⅞ in. (73.1 x 58.1 cm). Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Photograph: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York

ered effort to improve her position as a professional artist, she began work on the extraordinarily ambitious *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* (Figure 4), an oil painting she exhibited at the Salon of 1785 and that is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, prominently displayed among masterpieces of the period in Gallery 2.⁶ A declaration of her ability to compete in the larger arena, this work was a bold and ultimately successful effort to appeal to the public imagination and generate the interest of potential sitters. The painting, which includes three lifesize figures, also carried a complex subliminal message of the kind familiar to the Salon-going public in history paintings of the pre-Revolutionary era.⁷ The subject and its handling suggest the importance of serving as an inspiration and guide to the young—of one's gender. At the same time, the subject indirectly addressed a political issue close to the artist's heart: the admission of women to the Académie Royale on an equal footing with men. The role of the artist-teacher in this work has some interesting

parallels with that of Socrates inspiring the young men of Athens in Jacques-Louis David's *The Death of Socrates* (MMA 31.45), painted two years later in 1787, although Labille-Guiard's painting is no doubt more wholesome in tone.⁸

The Salon regularly took place in September, and it is clear that Labille-Guiard's performance there made an immediate impression in high places. In a letter to the king of November 8, 1785,⁹ the comte d'Angiviller praised the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* as "worthy of the greatest masters of the French school." He recommends that the artist be granted a pension of 100 *pistoles*, as "Madame Guyard, in spite of her very distinguished talent, has no fortune and little business; in closing, he adds that "Madame Adélaïde tells me that she takes a particular interest in the success of this request." A second letter from d'Angiviller to the king, datable to November, provides further information. One of the studios in the Louvre had been vacated and Labille-

4. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils, Mademoiselle Marie Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818) and Mademoiselle Carreaux de Rosemond (died 1788)*, 1785. Oil on canvas, 83 x 59½ in. (210.8 x 151.1 cm). Signed and dated at left, on easel: *Labille fine. Guiard/ 1785*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Julia A. Berwind, 1953 (53.225.5)



Guiard had asked to have it (“m’a fait solliciter fortement pour l’obtenir”). D’Angiviller is reluctant to recommend this out of concern for the propriety of her pupils, all young women, wandering the dark corridors of the Louvre. Instead, he proposes she be granted a pension of 1,000 livres, “considering the great interest with which Madame Adélaïde wishes to honor Madame Guyard, who, in spite of her talent has little business.” In closing his letter he again mentions the “august protection with which Madame Adélaïde honors this artist.” The pension was granted, a sign of Madame Adélaïde’s continuing influence with her nephew and of her very particular commitment to Labille-Guiard.

According to the *Année littéraire* of 1785, Madame Adélaïde was so dazzled by the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* that she offered to buy it for 10,000 livres.¹⁰ She must certainly have noticed the careful blending of assertiveness with femininity, as well as the inclusion of symbols of filial devotion and virtue in the background sculptures (a bust of the artist’s father by Augustin Pajou and a statue of a vestal virgin). She was, in fact, eager to participate in a similar feat of self-promotion. Within the court at Versailles, it was common knowledge that the comte d’Angiviller had commissioned Vigée Le Brun to paint a portrait of Marie-Antoinette and her children to be shown at the Salon of 1787; the

project was conceived as a vehicle to help restore public confidence in the monarchy, shaken by Marie-Antoinette’s extravagance and—for the tradition-bound French court—carefree behavior. Never happy to have the queen outshine her, Madame Adélaïde, neither a mother nor a wife but at this point the oldest and most forceful of the unmarried daughters of Louis XV, commissioned a full-length portrait of herself from Labille-Guiard, one that would have the same carefully programmed subtext as the artist’s 1785 self-portrait.¹¹ In addition, portraits of her sister, Madame Victoire, and their young niece, Madame Élisabeth, were commissioned,¹² to be exhibited not far from the queen’s portrait at the Salon, in this way publicly affirming the claims of the “Mesdames” (as the unmarried daughters of French kings were known) and the more conservative values of the court of Louis XV in opposition to those of Marie-Antoinette.¹³ The gesture clearly originated with Madame Adélaïde; in reality Victoire, although conservative and a devout Catholic, was more or less apolitical, and Madame Élisabeth, who sometimes disapproved of the queen’s actions and the company she kept, did not, in the end, love her the less for her weaknesses. This series of commissions, in which several powerful and contrasting female personalities—both sitters and painters—overlap in a brief historical moment, creates the sense of a simmering pot containing a particularly potent stew.

When the portraits were commissioned (probably in early 1786), Labille-Guiard would have traveled to Versailles or to Bellevue, residence of the Mesdames, and possibly to Montreuil, home of Élisabeth, to work on a study from life of each princess. She would then have borrowed from each of them, or from the Service des Menus Plaisirs, the garments and attributes that would assist her in her studio, where she would execute the larger formal portraits.¹⁴ It appears to have been somewhat unusual for a royal portraitist to begin work on commissions of this kind with pastels, certainly with pastels that were so completely worked up. Having learned to “paint with crayons” from La Tour, whose sitters included the extended royal family under Louis XV, Labille-Guiard knew that he customarily began the portrait-making process with a *préparation*, a brisk study of the head alone or simply the face, more linear than modeled, often with minimal shading around the periphery to set off the image from the light tone of the paper. Many of these *préparations*, presumably kept by the artist, have survived. The final pastel was begun on a fresh sheet of paper. La Tour’s method, unique among pastelists,¹⁵ was probably never adopted by Madame Labille-Guiard, who seems in her preparatory studies of the Mesdames and their niece to have settled on a method that is something of a hybrid—at once informal and very complete—to capture the appearance and essential spirit of her important sitters.



5. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Marie Gabrielle Capet and Marie Marguerite Carreaux de Rosemond*, ca. 1783–85. Black chalk study, 15 x 19 in. (38 x 48.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Gifts from Mrs. Gardner Cassatt, Mrs. Francis Ormond, Bessie Potter Vonnoh, William Benton, Donald Silve, William M. Ivins Jr., and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, and other gifts, bequests, and funds, by exchange, 1998 (1998.186)

These preliminary studies for Labille-Guiard's first major royal commissions, in fact, her first important commissions of any kind—ours of Madame Élisabeth (Figure 1), and those of Adélaïde and Victoire (Figures 2, 3)—stand out for their spontaneity and directness, even among the artist's most successful pastel portraits. Although preparatory in nature, they share little in their purpose and handling with the black chalk drawing of Mademoiselles Marie Gabrielle Capet and Marie Marguerite Carreaux de Rosemond (Figure 5), one of the artist's few surviving compositional studies, made "to explore the nuances of light and cast shadow resulting from the sitters' unusual proximity to one another" in the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils*.¹⁶ The remarkable freshness of the three pastels may be due to the fact that they were understood by both the artist and her sitters to be a means to an end and thus incomplete as works of art—with the possible exception of the portrait of Madame Victoire. The latter, which has a more finished appearance, was signed, dated, and exhibited at the Salon along with the paintings of Madame Adélaïde and Madame Élisabeth, perhaps in the interest of generating a greater presence for the Mesdames de France in the mind of the public. The study of Madame Victoire has something of the appearance of a candid photograph; those of Madame Adélaïde and Madame Élisabeth are more complex and seem to be direct readings of their sitters' characters, the one agitated and unsettled, the other, with its closed forms, reserved and thoughtful. All three pastels are lacking in what would ordinarily be called elegance or glamour. One or the other was an unspoken necessity for

a successful female portrait in the eighteenth century, and the finished royal portraits of the Mesdames certainly succeed in this respect.

Artists of the pre-Revolutionary period, keenly aware of and molded by the art market, were inclined to mimic the style of their most successful colleagues, particularly Jacques-Louis David. This group of pastels, however, are curiously lacking in what was then understood as "style":¹⁷ the Mesdames are neither ennobled for our benefit nor distanced from our curious eyes. Perhaps these studies can be understood as the raw material to which Labille-Guiard later added style. We feel that we have caught the artist (and, by extension, her sitters) in an unguarded moment, and that what we see of these women is somehow "off the record," delivered to us unstaged through the lens of a particularly sensitive eye. The artist's actual intention was no doubt different. Within the Académie Royale's strict hierarchy of genres—with history painting at the top, followed by portraiture, then landscape and genre—Labille-Guiard must have seen herself as creating for Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire large "portraits d'apparat," the closest kin to history painting. On her way to making these paintings and the more conventional finished portrait of the young and still lovely Madame Élisabeth, she stepped briefly out of the confines of the contemporary art world. It is interesting that all three pastels, including the signed and dated likeness of Madame Victoire shown at the Salon, were kept by the artist and remained in her collection until her death in 1803.



6. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Madame Clodion, née Catherine-Flore Pajou* (1764–1841), 1783. Pastel, 26 x 21 5/8 in. (66 x 55 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques

Produced at the very end of the great age of pastel, at a moment when the artist herself was in the process of evolving from pastelist to oil painter, these studies reflect a historical as well as a personal transition. As Neil Jeffares has noted, the demise of the pastel was more precipitous in France than elsewhere in Europe, as “the Revolution brought about a return to a classicism that was better served by the Davidian style of history painting than by the essentially rococo texture of pastel, which was more suited to the *douceur de vivre* of the *ancien régime*.”¹⁸ Labille-Guiard’s formal pastels made before 1785 show the influence of Jean-Baptiste Greuze in the sweetness of their *sfumato* modeling, the slight sentimentality of the facial expressions, and their atmospheric backgrounds (see, for example, the 1783 portrait of Madame Clodion, Figure 6). We expect the pastels of the Mesdames to be spontaneous and searching because they are studies, but their psychological realism and greater monumentality signal the artist’s readiness to abandon the more formulaic approach of her finished pastels and move toward the greater solidity and monumentality of her large oil paintings.¹⁹

With the finished painting of Madame Adélaïde, Labille-Guiard reached discreetly toward the prevailing Neoclassicism of the Académie Royale; with her painting of the youthful Madame Élisabeth, she approached the more stylish feminine portraits of Vigée Le Brun. By August 1787, with these works either completed or nearing completion,

Labille-Guiard’s royal patrons were so well satisfied that they asked the king to confer upon her the title “*peintre des Mesdames*,” which would follow her name when it appeared in the Salon *livret*. Her first three Salon contributions for 1787 were described there as follows:

By Mme de Guyard, first Painter to the Mesdames, Academician.

109. Madame Elisabeth, painted just to the knees, leaning on a table furnished with several attributes of the Sciences.

Painting of 4 feet 8 inches, by 3 feet 8 inches.

110. Madame Adélaïde

Below, medallion portraits of the late King, of the late Queen, and of the late Dauphin, united in a bas-relief made to look like bronze; the Princess, whom one takes to have painted them herself, has just traced these words:

“Their image remains the charm of my life.”

On a folding chair is a roll of paper on which is drawn the plan of the Convent founded at Versailles by the late Queen, and of which Madame Adélaïde is the director.

The scene is set in a gallery decorated with bas-reliefs representing several episodes in the life of Louis XV; the most visible relates the last moments of this King, in which, having just sent away the princes because of the risk of the illness, Mesdames entered against all opposition, saying: “Happily, we are only princesses.” Another bas-relief can be seen in which Louis XV shows the Dauphin, his son, the field of battle at Fontenoy, telling him: “Behold the cost of a victory.”

This full-length portrait, is 8 feet 6 inches high, by 6 feet 2 inches wide.

111. Madame Victoire.

Study in pastel, to serve as the pendant to the Portrait of Madame Adélaïde²⁰

The pastel study of Madame Adélaïde, a preliminary study for the painting that figured as no. 110 at the Salon, shows the princess when she was between fifty-four and fifty-five years old. A psychological tour de force, it is one of the artist’s masterpieces. The color is kept to a bare minimum: the chair cover is bright blue, the dress the palest blue satin. A ruffled bonnet known as a butterfly cap,²¹ made of dotted swiss muslin finished with a pale blue and white striped satin ribbon, is the only part of the costume that remains in the finished picture, where it is entirely white. Strokes of unblended blue pigment, visible in the background at the upper right, contribute an airiness to the composition as a whole. Adélaïde’s sleeve, her right cheek and

7. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard.
Detail of *Madame Adélaïde*
(Figure 2)





8. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Adélaïde de France, Daughter of Louis XV, called "Madame Adélaïde," Represented in 1787, Painting the Medallion Portraits of Her Parents and Her Deceased Brother, 1787.* Oil on canvas, 106¾ x 76¾ in. (271 x 195 cm). Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York

9. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Marie-Louise-Thérèse-Victoire de France, Daughter of Louis XV, called "Madame Victoire," Represented in 1788 before a Statue of Friendship at the Château de Bellevue, 1788.* Oil on canvas, 106¾ x 65 in. (271 x 165 cm). Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York

neck, and the chair's back are artfully modeled through the blending of similar tones with the fingertip (see Figure 7), creating the impression of continuous three-dimensional surfaces. Individual strokes, "rendered decisively with the edge of a broken crayon," are clearly visible in other parts of the composition.²² The ruffled collar that sits over the fichu, a transparent scarflike drapery around Madame's shoulders, is drawn in loosely and freely with a white crayon; black, brown, and gray lines suggest shadows and outline the collar against the lighter background on the right side of the figure. In the fichu, firmly applied stripes and dots of white crayon, along with some lightly sketched-in lines indicating slight creases in the drapery, create an illusion of transparency.

The effect of the whole is something like that of an Impressionist portrait sketch, although the sitter retains the appearance of a staunch supporter of the old order. One is struck by the living presence of this complicated, intelligent woman—fierce but fragile, author of numerous court intrigues—who, with her parted lips, curiously intense gaze, and slack jaw, remains, by some miracle, feminine. A governess of the sisters, Madame Campan, describes Adélaïde as having "more wit than Madame Victoire; but she was

altogether deficient in that kindness which alone creates affection for the great,—abrupt manners, a harsh voice, and a short way of speaking, rendering her more than imposing."²³ Of the younger daughters of Louis XV and Marie Leszczyńska, Adélaïde was the only one permitted to remain at court, having pleaded tearfully with her father on the morning of their departure; for reasons of economy, the four youngest, ranging in age from five to just under one year old, were sent to the Abbaye de Fontevrault, far from Paris, between 1738 and 1750. After the death of her older sister Henriette, Adélaïde became her father's favorite and a determined adversary of his mistress, Madame de Pompadour.

The large finished painting of the princess (Figure 8),²⁴ among the artist's most imposing works, was hailed as a triumph by the critics. Labille-Guiard had subtly advanced her position as a painter of the "portrait historiée" by including a narrative frieze in the background representing the selfless devotion of Adélaïde and Victoire to their father, Louis XV, on his deathbed (in spite of the threat of smallpox), and by placing on an easel in the middle ground a drawing with the profiles of her deceased father, mother, and brother—all described in the *Salon livret* (see above) in the language characteristically used for the description of



10. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. Detail of *Madame Élisabeth de France* (Figure 1)

history paintings. Such a connection may have been reinforced by its position just above David's *Death of Socrates* at the Salon. Indeed, Labille-Guiard's portrait manages to convey a moral and political message with some dignity. Vigée Le Brun's portrait of the queen, *Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France, and Her Children* (Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon),²⁵ placed to the right of *Madame Adélaïde*, represents the dynasty's future, while the carefully constructed iconography of Madame Adélaïde's portrait emphasizes the distinguished rulers of the past and the sitter's loyalty to them.

The pastel study of Madame Victoire, then fifty-four years old, was produced at more or less the same time as that of Madame Adélaïde. It must be the work displayed at the 1787 Salon as no. 111, made in preparation for Labille-Guiard's full-length portrait of the sitter (Figure 9). The latter, not completed until 1788, was exhibited at the Salon of 1789. Although Labille-Guiard seems to have begun this pastel in the same informal spirit as the study of Madame Adélaïde, it has a considerably more finished appearance, and an effect of greater realism; this is most evident in the handling of the face and fichu. The brown, blue, and white

tones of the background have been thoroughly blended, but in the end suggest a cool indoor light more than the atmospheric effect often seen in finished eighteenth-century pastels. The artist has again faithfully represented the sitter's character, and the highly decorative bonnet featuring a light blue ribbon was transferred directly to the painting (where it is rendered, like Adélaïde's, all white for this more formal context). According to Madame Campan, Victoire, "good, sweet-tempered, and affable, lived with the most amiable simplicity in a society wherein she was much cherished; she was adored by her household. Without quitting Versailles, without sacrificing her easy chair, she fulfilled the duties of religion with punctuality, gave to the poor all she possessed, and strictly observed Lent and the fasts."²⁶ Labille-Guiard's pastel study of Victoire, thought to be the most beautiful of the princesses in her youth, reflects the good-natured, uncomplicated woman described by those who knew her. Like her sister Adélaïde, she was opposed to the anti-Church policies of the National Assembly and fled with her to Italy, seeking religious freedom and a haven from the Revolution. She died in Trieste in 1799; Adélaïde would survive her by only eight months.

In her full-length portrait, in which the sunlight and cast shadow on her blue satin dress are dramatically contrasted, Madame Victoire is shown walking in her beloved garden at the château de Bellevue, pointing toward the left, where a statue of “Friendship” is elevated on a pedestal. The subject is entirely appropriate to this princess, who rarely concerned herself with affairs of state and who wrote such delightful letters to her lady-in-waiting and good friend the comtesse de Chatellux. Her enthusiasm for her garden and the entire natural world is evident in a letter to her friend: “I passed the whole of Thursday night in the garden. Oh, how lovely the sun-rise was, and what glorious weather. . . . Madame de Mesmes was with me, in a delightful mood. I was really enchanted with the fine weather, the beautiful moon, the dawn, and the splendid sun; and then my cows and sheep and chickens, and the movement of all the work-people, who began their day’s work so light-heartedly.”²⁷ With a less weighty program than that employed in her painting of Madame Adélaïde, Labille-Guiard again created a portrait with the discursive narrative content suggestive of a history painting. In composition and handling, the influence of Anthony van Dyck and painters of the British school, such as William Beechey, John Hoppner, and Thomas Lawrence, is pronounced. As Passez has noted, the large portraits of the sisters are pendants (although they differ in width by 30 centimeters), and must have hung opposite each other at Versailles or at Bellevue.²⁸ Warm colors prevail in the interior with Madame Adélaïde, and cooler tones dominate Victoire’s daylit setting. With their figures facing obliquely, both sisters look out at the viewer, gesturing toward classicizing and personally meaningful works of art.

Madame Élisabeth, Adélaïde’s and Victoire’s niece, was between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-three when she sat for Labille-Guiard’s pastel study (Figures 1, 10). Compared with the finished painting of the sitter (Figure 11),²⁹ shown as number 109 at the 1787 Salon, the pastel can be seen as a private rather than a public portrait, suggesting Élisabeth’s reserve and modesty more than her charm. Her gaze is direct and serious; the pale blue redingote she wears—a garment that had just become fashionable—captures her youthful slenderness.³⁰ Also at the height of fashion was the immense turban of gauze and silk that can be generically categorized as a pouf. This article of clothing and the general position of the head were transferred to the painting and most of its replicas, just as the butterfly cap and pose of the head in Labille-Guiard’s pastels of Adélaïde and Victoire are carried over into their full-length portraits.³¹ These details seem to have been agreed upon in advance between the sitters and the artist. The pastel’s background is a deeper, cooler shade of blue than that used in the pastel study of Adélaïde, and the handling overall is slightly more finished; in comparison with the study of Victoire, however,



11. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Madame Élisabeth de France*, 1787. Oil on canvas, 57 3/4 x 45 1/4 in. (146.7 x 115 cm). Private collection, South America. Photograph courtesy of the Wildenstein Institute, New York

the surface is more vibrant, with more unblended—often warm—color accents in the figure. The artist seems to have found pleasure in modeling the rounded, youthful forms of this essentially half-length figure, balancing the ovoid head and slender neck with Élisabeth’s torso and arm, which cut into the space diagonally. A great deal of attention was devoted to the blue redingote, clearly too informal for use in the finished portrait. The double collar is wonderfully detailed, with its slightly curling edges, and the snug fit of the jacket is emphasized by the presence of several creases. Quick strokes of orange on the metal buttons, drawn with a light ochre that also reflects the blue of the jacket, provide a warm focus; strokes of cream or light yellow crayon around the upper left edges of the buttons read as brightly reflected light. The stillness of the composition, with its solid interlocking forms, the steady gaze of the sitter, and the artist’s faithful description of the ripeness of youth, all work together to produce a haunting portrait.

Élisabeth de France, born at Versailles on May 3, 1764, was the daughter of the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (Adélaïde’s and Victoire’s brother) and Marie-Josèphe of Saxony, both of whom had died of tuberculosis by the time she was three. Although she is described as a proud and fiery-tempered child, she became a pious and reserved young woman and a serious student, deeply attached to her family and the young girls with whom she was educated. To the latter she

12. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Madame de Pompadour*, 1748–55. Pastel, 69 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (177 x 130 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York



seems to have revealed a more spirited and playful side. Under the wings of her devout and conservative maiden aunts, Élisabeth had dedicated herself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the time she was sixteen. She was dearly loved by her brother Louis XVI, who found her presence steadying during his “ordeal” as King of France, a role for which he was ill-suited, and she was not inclined to forge a dynastic marriage that would require her to leave his side at Versailles. The happiest years of her life were spent at Montreuil, the château Louis presented to her on her eighteenth birthday, on condition that she not live there independently until she was twenty-five. At Montreuil Élisabeth started a dairy farm that provided milk and cheese to orphans and the elderly in the nearby village; the rest of her time was devoted to quiet study, prayer, and walking in the countryside with her friends. Although her biographers tend to emphasize her purity and goodness, she was not altogether naïve about the political situation in France. She understood but did not share the public’s antipathy toward Marie-Antoinette and was well aware of the problems created by her brother’s weakness and indecisiveness. In a letter of March 1, 1790, written to her close friend Angélique Mackau, marquise de Bombelles—then safely out of France—her royalist inclinations and her pragmatism are apparent: “If we had known how to profit by occa-

sions, believe me, we could have done well. But it was necessary to have firmness, it was necessary to face danger; we should have come out conquerors. I consider civil war is necessary. . . . Moreover anarchy never can end without it; the longer it is delayed, the more blood will be shed.” In the end, unwilling to seek exile with her aunts or be separated from her brother and the queen, she was executed in Paris during the Reign of Terror on May 10, 1794, by all accounts a tower of strength and kindness to those who accompanied her to the scaffold.

In Labille-Guiard’s finished painting (Figure 11), Madame Élisabeth is represented with heightened color in her cheeks, her head cocked slightly to the left, and her throat and wrists surrounded by ruffles. She is accompanied by “several attributes of the Sciences”: the table on which she rests her arm holds a globe, a compass, and a musical score opened on a stand, and in her right hand she holds a half-opened book. The Mesdames, and certainly Labille-Guiard, would have known La Tour’s full-length portrait of Madame de Pompadour seated at a desk, completed in 1755 (Figure 12). In La Tour’s magnificent pastel, which must have inspired the setting for Labille-Guiard’s finished portrait of Madame Élisabeth, the marquise is shown dressed with a quiet elegance, looking up from the open musical score she holds on her lap; her left arm rests on a desk, laden with attributes of the arts, literature, music, and astronomy, as well as a large globe.

The large painting of Élisabeth is somewhat uncharacteristic for Labille-Guiard, as the costume and pose approach the seductiveness of Vigée Le Brun’s female portraits. Although references to the arts and sciences accurately reflect the breadth of the sitter’s learning and interests, they read awkwardly in this portrait of a very young woman whose costume, including a turban adorned with an enormous white ostrich feather, is hardly understated. It is interesting that the replica of the portrait made for Élisabeth’s close friend the marquise de Bombelles omits all but the music on its stand. No color reproductions of the original are available, but Anne Marie Passez describes Madame Élisabeth as “dressed in the style of the Directory, with harmonious gradations of off-white, ivory, mother of pearl, and gray. Elements of color are provided by the gold of the tunic, the belt of precious stones, the red of the table and the blue velvet of the armchair.”³² Madame Élisabeth, although not intending to marry, must have been aiming for a different kind of self-definition than her maiden aunts, who were no longer of marriageable age. The portrait was greatly admired by Salon critics, and the authors of the *Mémoires secrets* noted that when she wanted to, Labille-Guiard “could give sparkle and brilliance to her brushwork. . . . The beauty of the flesh tones holds up beside those of Madame Le Brun and, as the touch of Madame Guiard is firmer, she is better able to convey the liveliness and elasticity of youth.”³³

A third “portrait en pied” by Labille-Guiard was exhibited at the Salon of 1789 along with the finished painting of Madame Victoire. It was the posthumous portrait of Louise-Élisabeth of France, duchess of Parma, with her son Don Ferdinand (now in the Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon). The eldest of the eight daughters of Louis XV, and the only one to marry, she had died of smallpox in 1759 on a visit to Versailles. This striking work—which, like the large portrait of Madame Victoire, uses daylight and shadow to great dramatic effect—must have been commissioned by Madame Adélaïde. Its presence is recorded in the artist’s studio in her posthumous inventory, along with the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils*: it was apparently never paid for.

A last royal commission came to Labille-Guiard through her association with the “old court” at Bellevue. This was the *Reception of a Knight of Saint Lazarus by Monsieur, Master of the Order*, commissioned by the comte de Provence (known as Monsieur), the considerably older brother of Madame Élisabeth, who later became Louis XVIII. A study for this enormous painting survives in the Musée de la Légion d’Honneur, Paris, and can be dated to 1788; Labille was still working on the project in September 1790.³⁴ In 1791, with the picture still incomplete, the comte de Provence left France without paying any part of the settled price of 30,000 livres or the expenses incurred over two and a half years. In the most difficult moment of her career, in August 1793, Labille-Guiard was ordered by the National Convention to burn the large picture, which measured more than 14 by 17 feet, as well as an autograph copy and all related studies. Besides the compositional study in Paris, she was able to preserve a pastel study for the head of the count (ca. 1788; Musée Antoine Lécuyer, Saint-Quentin), which is comparable in principle to the three studies of the Mesdames. Monsieur’s costume is loosely sketched in, but the head has a finished quality; the count’s appearance, not his character, has been faithfully recorded. This pastel also remained with the artist and was included in her husband’s posthumous sale in 1816.

Joachim Lebreton emphasizes the pride that Labille-Guiard took in her large picture for the comte de Provence.³⁵ According to him, the full-length portraits of the Mesdames de France and their sister the duchess of Parma “consolidated her reputation,” but “infinitely more precious to her than all the other favors of the court, was the opportunity to execute one of the largest paintings an artist of her time would ever be called upon to produce.” After many years of hard work and dedication, a door had opened for Labille-Guiard through the support of Madame Adélaïde following the Salon of 1785. Just six years later, with the flight of Monsieur in 1791, she lost her only remaining royal patron. Until the destruction of her most ambitious



13. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Tournelle, Called Dublin* (1761–1820), ca. 1799. Oil on canvas, 28 1/8 x 22 1/2 in. (71.4 x 57.2 cm). Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Bequest of Greville L. Winthrop (1943.230). Photograph: © Harvard Art Museum/Art Resource, New York

composition, the artist was moving forward in her usual steady manner, with a particular goal in mind, a strategy. Had she not been forced to destroy this work, the response of those who saw it suggests that it would surely have been admired as a history painting by her colleagues within the Académie Royale.³⁶

In spite of her association with the royal family, Labille-Guiard managed to reinvent herself in the eyes of the National Assembly as a supporter of the Revolution and seems to have been allied with the more moderate faction backing a constitutional monarchy in France.³⁷ She sought out Maximilien Robespierre as a sitter³⁸ and exhibited a pastel of him at the Salon of 1791, along with at least thirteen other portraits of members of the Assembly. Apparently, most were pastels, a medium of choice under the circumstances, as it was portable and required no drying time; only one is known to have survived. At the Salons of 1795, 1798, and 1799, Labille-Guiard was represented by a number of highly accomplished three-quarter-length oil portraits (the largest measuring 39 by 31 inches), depicting intellectuals and friends more than politicians. Most of them, enlivened by distinguishing attributes, suggest small-scale historiated portraits. These works reflect a warmer, humanized variant of the Davidian sensibility then “in the air”; in fact, the artist’s last recorded Salon contribution, the striking portrait of the actor Dublin, a member of the Théâtre Français (Figure 13), was long erroneously attributed to David. Living

through most of that extremely difficult time in Paris and in Pontault-en-Brie, where she had purchased a house with Vincent, Mademoiselle Capet, and Victoire d'Avril (another former pupil), Labille-Guiard died following a brief illness in 1803 at the age of fifty-three.

The three pastel studies of the Mesdames remained with her until the end of her life. Beyond their importance as souvenirs of early professional victories and of her association with the powerful Mesdames de France (as well as the almost saintly Élisabeth), the artist may have found pleasure in the remarkable vitality of these studies. No doubt she felt immense gratitude to—even affection for—the Mesdames, particularly Madame Adélaïde, who had so forcefully encouraged the king to grant her a pension, and who was also the direct or indirect source of her most important commissions. An autograph copy of the full-length painting of Madame Adélaïde, a copy of it by another hand, and the compositional study for the large portrait of Madame Victoire in her garden must have remained with the artist, as they were included in Vincent's posthumous sale.

The pastel of Madame Élisabeth was kept by Vincent after the death of his wife, and it was purchased at his estate sale in 1816 by Gabrielle Capet. This favorite pupil and longtime companion of Labille-Guiard lived with Vincent until his death in 1816, surviving him by only two years. The pastel was included in the sale of her effects in 1818.³⁹ We lose track of it until 1909, when it is lent by Jacques Meyer to the Paris exhibition "Portraits de femmes sous les trois Républiques." In about 1963 the pastel reappears in the collection of Madame Louis Paraf (Élisabeth Wildenstein), from which it finds its way to Galerie Pardo, Paris. Pardo apparently had a connection with the William H. Schab Gallery in New York, and it was at the Schab gallery in 1969 that Mrs. Stafford acquired the portrait of Madame Élisabeth.

It is especially satisfying to have under the same roof the pastel study of Madame Élisabeth and Labille-Guiard's painted masterpiece, the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils*, the artist's first step in an all-too-brief campaign to achieve the status of history painter, the highest level of art production in France, and follow the path to glory as defined by the male-centered establishment of the Académie Royale. Only with hindsight might she have grasped the irony of the situation. Labille-Guiard left a relatively small oeuvre, and it is perhaps the desire to understand the direction her art might have taken had her life been longer and less difficult that leaves us with a special interest in understanding every aspect of her artistic personality. The recently acquired pastel of Madame Élisabeth, the large formal *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils*, and the Museum's lovely compositional study for the painting all suggest the remarkable breadth of her talent.⁴⁰ By itself, the pastel offers a rare glimpse of Labille-Guiard's mature style and sensibility as it was developing, before she had experienced the losses and disappointments of the revolutionary years.

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APPENDIX: WORKS RELATED TO ADÉLAÏDE LABILLE-GUIARD'S PASTEL STUDIES OF THE MESDAMES DE FRANCE

The portrait of Élisabeth shown at the 1787 Salon (Figure 11) was sold by Wildenstein, Paris, before World War II to a South American collector, and presumably survives in a later generation of this family. This portrait probably came from the château de Bellevue, residence of the Mesdames. A study for it was sold at Ader Picard Tajan, Paris, April 8, 1990,⁴¹ and it is reproduced in color in the advertising pages of the first issue of the *Revue du Louvre* (1990). The costume as it appears in the final work has been established, but the table with its accessories has not yet been brought into the composition. At this point, as Passez reports, the color of the dress is aqua and the velvet armchair is "cranberry."

An autograph replica of the final composition⁴² came from the château de Montreuil, the estate of Madame Élisabeth, which was developed in the 1970s as a luxury hotel. The picture was apparently removed from the château during its restoration, as it belonged in 1973 to Lydie Chantrell (Paris), daughter of Jean-Baptiste Chantrell, the architect in charge of the restoration. A second autograph replica⁴³ was made for Madame Élisabeth's close friend Angélique Mackau, marquise de Bombelles, and was inherited through the marriage of her daughter or granddaughter by the Casteja family, France.

An oval painting based on the head and torso of Elisabeth as it appears in the 1787 Salon portrait is in the château de Versailles (Figure 14).⁴⁴ In this variant, the turban of gauze and silk is replaced by a smaller confection of lace and ostrich feathers.

Marie Gabrielle Capet may have traveled with Labille-Guiard on her important first visits to the Mesdames, as the engraver S. C. Miger used profile drawings ascribed to her as the basis for oval medallions of Adélaïde and Victoire.⁴⁵ The bonnets and costumes of the Mesdames in these drawings are very similar to those in which they appear in Labille-Guiard's pastel studies, as are the upholstered chairs with their rounded backs.

Several miniatures attributed to Mademoiselle Capet may represent Madame Élisabeth. An unsigned miniature in the Musée du Louvre, Paris,⁴⁶ now generally identified as a portrait of Madame Élisabeth by Capet, shows a standing young woman wearing a simple white muslin dress with an empire waist created by a dark sash; based on the costume,



14. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. *Élisabeth-Philippine-Marie-Hélène de France, called "Madame Élisabeth,"* 1788. Oil on canvas, 31 7/8 x 25 in. (81 x 63.6 cm). Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Photograph: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York

Arnould Doria dates the miniature to about 1787. A fine signed miniature by Capet (present whereabouts unknown)⁴⁷ portrays a young woman in a simple light-colored (possibly blue) dress with a white fichu and a feathered turbanlike headdress, quite similar to the costume in our pastel; the upholstered chair with rounded back is also present. (Doria erroneously identifies the sitter as Labille-Guiard.) A third miniature, sold at Galerie Charpentier, Paris, December 2, 1955, is signed by Capet and said to represent Madame Élisabeth. She is wearing a striped dress and a bonnet with three layers of lace.⁴⁸

ABBREVIATION

Passez 1973

Anne Marie Passez, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, 1749–1803: Biographie et catalogue raisonné de son oeuvre*. Paris, 1973.

NOTES

1. See Colin B. Bailey, "A Still-Life Painter and Her Patrons: Collecting Vallayer-Coster, 1770–1789," in *Anne Vallayer-Coster: Painter to the Court of Marie-Antoinette*, ed. Eik Kahng and Marianne Roland Michel, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Dallas Museum of Art; Frick Collection, New York (Dallas, 2002), p. 68; and Joseph Baillio, *Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, 1755–1842*, exh. cat., Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas (Fort Worth, 1982), pp. 6, 49, 61–64, 78–81.
2. This was a weekly exhibition of books, paintings, mechanical inventions, and natural curiosities organized by Mammès Claude Pahin de la Blancherie and known after May 14, 1783, as the Salon de la Correspondance.
3. At the age of twenty, she had married Louis-Nicolas Guiard, but the couple appears to have had little in common. They were divorced after the Revolution when this was legally possible. Vincent and Labille-Guiard did not marry until 1800.
4. Opinion is divided about how actively the two best female portraitists of the period competed with each other. Some authorities see the "competition" as simply a talking point for Salon critics, who focused on the charms and the relative merits of the work of Labille-Guiard and Vigée Le Brun in an attempt to "sell the news." Others take the existence of their competition for granted, as there is evidence of enmity toward Labille-Guiard in Vigée's memoirs, although no record exists of Labille-Guiard's feelings toward her; they were, after all, representing feuding camps within the royal family. Joseph Baillio (conversation with the author, May 2008) is convinced that the very quality of their work during the years that they were both exhibiting at the Salon is evidence of their competitive spirit. In contrast to Labille-Guiard, a serious and private woman who worked slowly and deliberately, Vigée Le Brun was a social animal, a beautiful woman confident of her charms and at ease among the nobility of Paris; her paintings seem to convey some of this easy elegance. Unlike Labille-Guiard, who came to painting late, Vigée, the daughter of a portrait painter, was already established in her profession by 1770 at the age of fifteen and produced her first commissioned portrait of Marie-Antoinette when she was just twenty-three. Never at a loss for commissions or clients, she was also able to command much higher prices for her portraits. Contemporary critics admired Labille-Guiard's work for what they saw as its virility, firmness, and truth; Vigée Le Brun's paintings were seen as livelier (especially in their color), more feminine, and more flattering. It was generally agreed that the latter was more inventive in the way she posed her sitters.
5. Because malicious rumors, including those published and later suppressed in the *Suite de Malborough* [sic] *au Salon 1783* (transcribed in *Collection Deloynes*, vol. 13, no. 302, p. 748), suggested that Labille-Guiard was romantically involved with Vincent and that he was touching up her work—in spite of the fact that he had no experience with the pastel medium—some authors (including Joachim Lebreton, *Nécrologie: Notice sur Madame Vincent, née Labille, peintre* [Paris, an XI (1803)], offprint from *Nouvelles des arts* 2, no. 18, p. 4) claimed that she painted "numerous academicians, so that they would know from their own experience that her talent was entirely her own." For a discussion of the slanderous article and Labille-Guiard's handling of it, see Laura Auricchio, "Self-Promotion in Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's 1785 *Self-Portrait with Two Students*," *Art Bulletin* 89 (March 2007), pp. 47–48.
6. The available provenance offers little evidence that these early pastels were made for the sitters (see Passez 1973). For example, Labille-Guiard kept the portrait of Joseph-Marie Vien, the teacher of Jacques-Louis David, and after her death it remained with Vincent. Labille-Guiard's early pastel of Vincent (Musée du Louvre, Paris) was shown in June 1782 at the Salon de la Correspondance with the title "Le portrait de M. Vincent, peintre du Roi, peint au pastel pour M. Suvée, peintre du Roi," but as Passez notes (1973, p. 92), it was not included in Joseph-Benoît Suvée's 1807 estate sale. Likewise, the pastel of the painter Guillaume Voiriot, described as having been made for Vincent at the Salon de la Correspondance in June 1782, is not mentioned in the posthumous inventory of Labille-Guiard or Vincent.
7. Some indication of the informal arrangements between the artist and these academicians is suggested by Augustin Pajou's 1784 bust of Claude-Edme Labille, father of Labille-Guiard; it was made two years after the latter's 1782 pastel of the sculptor and a year after her 1783 portrait of his daughter Flore (Figure 6). The portrait of Pajou served as Labille's first *morceau de réception* at the Académie Royale. The bust of her father is included in the background of the *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* and remained in her studio until her death in 1803. James Draper, in *Augustin Pajou: Royal Sculptor, 1730–1809*, exh. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris, and MMA (New York, 1997), p. 259, notes that "with it Pajou thanked Mme Labille-Guiard for her earlier pastel of him."
8. Labille-Guiard's artistic development between her first Salon exhibition in 1783 and the following one in 1785 was extraordinary. It can be seen not only in the well-known *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* but also in her portrait *The Comtesse de Flahaut and Her Son* (according to Passez 1973 in the Hood Collection, Jersey, Channel Islands), the large *Portrait of the Painter Charles-Amédée van Loo (1718–1795)* (Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon), and a number of other impressive portraits in oil.
9. According to Mouffle d'Angerville, author of the 1785 commentary for the *Mémoires secrets* (see Bernadette Fort, ed., *Les Salons des "Mémoires secrets," 1767–1787* [Paris, 1999], p. 300), Labille-Guiard was not alone in this inclination. He describes her self-portrait as "un tableau historié" and later notes that "most of the portraitists exhibiting [at the 1785 Salon] seem to have aimed higher, approaching history [painting] as closely as possible." Marie H. Trope-Podell further discusses this phenomenon in "'Portraits historiés' et portraits collectifs dans la critique française du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue de l'art*, no. 109 (1995), pp. 40–45.
10. The omission of women as subjects from history painting, or their relegation to a separate, more passive part of a picture—as in David's *The Victors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (Musée du Louvre, Paris)—during the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary periods has been the subject of considerable art historical attention in the past fifteen years. See, for example, Thomas Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven, 1995), in which "an increasing masculinization of advanced art," particularly in David's studio, is thoroughly discussed. In Labille-Guiard's *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils*, we must admire her pictorial imagination as she turns the solipsism of the times to her advantage in a context that seems completely natural.
11. This letter and the one subsequently discussed are published in Passez 1973, p. 301.

10. *Année littéraire* 8 (1785), transcribed in *Collection Deloynes*, vol. 14, no. 349, p. 796.
11. This commission has been the focus of several articles: see Jean Cailleux, "Portrait of Madame Adélaïde of France, Daughter of Louis XV," *Burlington Magazine* 111 (March 1969), pp. I–VI (advertising supplement), who first discusses Labille-Guiard's portrait of Madame Adélaïde in relation to Vigée Le Brun's portrait of Marie-Antoinette and her children, also exhibited at the 1787 Salon, as reflecting a political division within the royal family; and Jennifer Milam, "Matronage and the Direction of Sisterhood: Portraits of Madame Adélaïde," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Melissa Hyde and Jennifer Milam (Aldershot, England, 2003), pp. 115–37, who discusses (p. 117) the means by which Madame Adélaïde "directed a type of female power most appropriate to her situation through the pairing of her own portrait with those of her sisters," first in relation to Jean-Marc Nattier's portraits of the three older sisters as young women, and continuing with the portraits commissioned from Labille-Guiard. In the absence of direct evidence for Madame Adélaïde as patroness for many of these pictures, Milam coins the term "matronage" to describe her (presumed) involvement in the fashioning of her image as well as those of Victoire and Louise-Élisabeth, duchess of Parma. Melissa Hyde ("Under the Sign of Minerva: Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's *Portrait of Madame Adélaïde*," in Hyde and Milam, *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 139–63) focuses on the context and development of Labille-Guiard's portrait of Madame Adélaïde, which she views as presenting alongside Vigée Le Brun's portrait of Marie-Antoinette and her children "a united front of Bourbon nobility, goodness and legitimacy that extended along the entire axis of its past, present, and future" (p. 144).
12. Although no contracts for these commissions survive, there appear to be records of payment for the original portraits of Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire, at 5,000 livres per portrait, as well as considerable correspondence between the interested parties regarding payment for replicas of these works once the Mesdames had left France (see Passez 1973, pp. 182, 303–4; and Casimir Strykowski, *The Daughters of Louis XV (Mesdames de France)*, trans. Cranstoun Metcalf [London, 1912], p. 191). The price set on each replica was 5,000 livres. Records of payment by Madame Élisabeth for her original portrait and two replicas, at 3,000 livres per portrait, remain in the Archives Nationales de France (see Passez 1973, p. 28). A price of 4,000 livres seems to have been established for the portrait of the Infanta, Louise-Élisabeth of France, but this picture remained in the artist's studio at her death and appears never to have been paid for. The autograph replica of the portrait of Madame Adélaïde included in the posthumous sale of Vincent may similarly be a work that was never paid for.
13. As Cailleux ("Portrait of Madame Adélaïde," p. IV) puts it, "in opposition to the Queen's extravagance, to her capricious nature, to her friends, in opposition to the feebleness of the King who yielded to the demands of his wife, there was the coalition of the daughters of Louis XV, Mesdames. The latter represented the spirit of the old Court, the rigid moral and Christian principles of their mother and of the Dauphin, their brother."
14. *Ibid.*, pp. I, III; and Xavier Salmon, *Les pastels: Musée National du Château de Versailles* (Paris, 1997), p. 102.
15. Marjorie Shelley, "Pastellists at Work: Two Portraits at the Metropolitan Museum by Maurice Quentin de La Tour and Jean Baptiste Perronneau," *MMJ* 40 (2005), p. 110.
16. Perrin Stein in *Eighteenth-Century French Drawings in New York Collections*, by Perrin Stein and Mary Tavenor Holmes, exh. cat.,

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1999), pp. 188–90, no. 82, ill. This drawing was recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum. Stein notes that "a tiny corpus of drawings has been connected to her oeuvre."
17. An author in the *Mercure de France* on September 22, 1787 (pp. 176–77; see *Collection Deloynes*, no. 396, p. 835), commenting on Labille-Guiard's submissions to the 1787 Salon, observed, "Elle a dans le pastel une manière molle et dénuée de tout effet" (She has in her pastels a style that is weak and lacking in effect [that is, flat]).
 18. Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (London, 2006), p. 22.
 19. The pastel portrait study as a type appears to have had a limited life span within Labille-Guiard's oeuvre. Portraits of the vicomte and vicomtesse de Gand were exhibited by the artist as numbers 115 and 116 and presented as "Études en pastelle" at the Salon of 1787 along with the three portraits of the Mesdames. Only the portrait of the vicomtesse, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., has survived. It shows an attractive young woman with a fetching hat and a small bouquet of flowers attached near her bosom. Although its handling has the looseness and informality of Labille-Guiard's preparatory studies of the Mesdames, it is more decorative in effect and lacks the intense focus that the artist brought to the studies discussed here. There are no documented "finished" portraits of the couple by Labille-Guiard. A pastel study appears to have preceded the oil painting of the comtesse de Selve (Salon of 1787, Paris; see Passez 1973, nos. 90, 91). The present location of the pastel, which is signed and dated 1785, is unknown; the painting is now in a private collection in New York. Finally, a pastel study of the head of the comte de Provence, which must date from 1788, preceded an important commission for him that is discussed below.
 20. "Par M.^{de} Guyard, premier Peintre de Mesdames, Académicienne.
109. Madame Elisabeth, peinte jusqu'aux genoux, appuyée sur une table garnie de plusieurs attributs de Sciencès.
Tableau de 4 pieds 8 pouces, sur 3 pieds, 8 pouces.
110. Madame Adélaïde
Au bas des portraits en médaillon du feu Roi, de la feüe Reine & du feu [Dauphin], réunis en un bas-relief imitant le bronze, la Princesse, qui est supposée les avoir peints elle-même, vient de tracer ces mots:
"Leur image est encore le charme de ma vie."
Sur un ployant est un rouleau de papier sur lequel est tracé le plan du Couvent fondé à Versailles par la feüe Reine, & dont Madame Adélaïde est Directrice.
Le lieu de la scène est une galerie ornée de bas-reliefs représentant différens traits de la vie de Louis XV; le plus apparant retrace les derniers moments de ce Roi, où, après avoir fait retirer les princes à cause du danger de la maladie, Mesdames entrent malgré toutes les oppositions en disant: "Nous ne sommes heureusement que des Princesses." On y aperçoit un autre bas-relief où Louis XV montre au Dauphin, son fils, le champ de bataille de Fontenoy, en disant: "Voyez ce que coûte une victoire."
Ce Portrait en pied, a 8 pieds 6 pouces de haut, sur 6 pieds 2 pouces de large. [These are old French units of measurement, very close to current feet and inches (i.e., 1 pied = 1.066 foot).]
111. Madame Victoire.
Étude en pastel, pour faire le pendant du Portrait de Madame Adélaïde"

21. The butterfly cap was an essential part of the Bellevue uniform. The comtesse de Boigne (daughter of one of Madame Adélaïde's ladies-in-waiting) describes Madame Adélaïde in her early memoirs of the French court: "I can still see her tall, thin figure, her tucked violet dress (which was the uniform at Bellevue), her butterfly hat, and two large teeth, which were the only ones she had. She had been very pretty, but at this time was extremely ugly, and so I thought her." See Comtesse de Boigne, *Mémoires of the Comtesse de Boigne*, ed. Anka Muhlstein, 2 vols. (New York, 2003), vol. 1, p. 4. Stryiński (*Daughters of Louis XV*, pp. 187–88) identifies the bonnet worn in the Versailles portrait of Madame Adélaïde as a butterfly cap. We can see how consistently enforced the wearing of the Bellevue uniform was from Labille-Guiard's oil painting of the duchesse de Narbonne (Passez 1973, no. 85). The duchesse, another lady-in-waiting to Adélaïde, is portrayed in a satin dress, fichu, and bonnet that appear to be identical to those worn by Madame Victoire in the pastel study.
22. Shelley, "Pastelists at Work," p. 111. Shelley notes that to achieve such verisimilitude without mixing colors, "the pastelists had to apply the tints in imperceptible tonal steps and blend the strokes of adjacent hues either with the crayon or 'sweeten' them with the finger or the stump [a roll of leather]. These skills, among the most important for those working in this medium, required only the slightest pressure so as not to flatten the powder."
23. Madame Campan, *Mémoires sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette*... (Paris, 1849), p. 58.
24. The painting is visible in Bornet's engraving after Martini, *Exposition au Salon du Louvre en 1787*; see Passez 1973, fig. 3.
25. As Joseph Baillio has pointed out ("Marie-Antoinette et ses enfants par Mme Vigée Le Brun [deuxième partie]," *L'oeil*, May 1981, p. 59), the impossibility of presenting Marie-Antoinette with the timeless authority appropriate to her position as queen by divine right and simultaneously suggesting "the delicate and transitory joys of a mother surrounded by her children" burdened this beautifully painted and carefully conceived portrait with an awkwardness that was noted by many critics.
26. Campan, *Mémoires*, p. 57.
27. Stryiński, *Daughters of Louis XV*, p. 154.
28. Passez 1973, p. 210. Juliette Trey, curator at Versailles, reports (in emails to the author, September 2008) that both portraits have been relined, which would obscure any evidence that the portrait of Victoire was cut down. She adds that the records at Versailles do not mention such an alteration, but "restorations have been badly documented in the past."
29. Passez 1973, no. 72.
30. The redingote was an adaptation of the English riding costume, taken up first by fashionable Frenchmen and then adopted by the women; it was exactly the sort of costume described by J. Quicherat (*Histoire du costume en France*... [Paris, 1875], p. 613) as gaining in popularity in 1786: "Nos dames commencèrent à porter des robes en redingote, qui avaient des revers, des parements, un double collet et des boutons de métal" (Our women have begun wearing dresses *en redingote*, with lapels, cuffs, a double collar, and metal buttons).
31. Passez (1973, p. 76) calls it a "réplique au pastel de l'original ou étude préparatoire" (replica in pastel of the original or a preparatory study). The simplicity of the costume, consistent with those in the pastel studies of her aunts, as well as the informal handling, would tend to cast doubt on the identification of this work as a replica of the Salon picture. Jeffares (*Dictionary of Pastellists*, p. 271) calls it a study for the Salon picture.
32. Passez 1973, p. 172.
33. Fort, *Salons des "Mémoires secrets"*, p. 323.
34. See her letter of September 10, 1790, to Monsieur de Boistel, in Passez 1973, pp. 303–4.
35. Joachim Lebreton, a young teacher who became the head of the Bureau des Beaux-Arts in the French Ministry of the Interior during the Republic, befriended the artist in 1795 and wrote the obituary that is the most reliable source of information about her: *Nécrologie: Notice sur Madame Vincent, née Labille, peintre* (see note 5 above). Through him she would acquire the lodgings in the Louvre that had earlier been denied her. Their friendship is documented in Labille-Guiard's charming portrait of this young man, which was recently acquired by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.
36. It also seems reasonable to suppose that if Labille-Guiard's career had not been interrupted just as it was being launched, she would gradually have abandoned the production of finished pastels in favor of the large historiated portraits in oil that appear to have been her ultimate goal.
37. Laura Auricchio (conversation with the author, June 18, 2008). Auricchio's book, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard: Artist in the Age of Revolution* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, forthcoming 2009), clarifies the artist's engagement in the sociopolitical world of Paris at the time.
38. As Auricchio (see note 37 above) points out, Robespierre was not at this point the key player in the Reign of Terror he would later become.
39. The posthumous inventories of Labille-Guiard (Madame Vincent), the sale of F. A. Vincent, and the posthumous inventory of Marie Gabrielle Capet are published in Passez 1973, pp. 305–13.
40. As this article was going to press, the Museum acquired a fourth work by Labille-Guiard, a gift of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman. The *Study of a Seated Woman Seen from Behind (Marie-Gabrielle Capet)*, a polished *tête d'expression* in red, black, and white chalk, is dated 1789. See Perrin Stein in *The Wrightsman Pictures*, ed. Everett Fahy (New York, New Haven, and London, 2005), no. 72.
41. Passez 1973, no. 71, pl. 58 (103 x 83 cm).
42. *Ibid.*, no. 73 (151 x 118 cm).
43. *Ibid.*, no. 74, pl. 56.
44. *Ibid.*, no. 75.
45. See Arnauld Doria, *Gabrielle Capet* (Paris, 1934), p. 72, nos. 19, 20.
46. *Ibid.*, no. 21.
47. *Ibid.*, no. 23.
48. My thanks to Joseph Baillio at Wildenstein for bringing this work to my attention.