

French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Nursemaids*, ca. 1765

Artist	Jean-Baptiste Greuze, French, 1725–1805
Title	<i>The Nursemaids</i>
Object Date	ca. 1765
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Les Sevreuses; The Dry Nurses</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	12 1/2 x 15 5/8 in. (31.8 x 39.7 cm)
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 31-61

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Catalogue Entry

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At the Paris Salon of 1765, Greuze exhibited a painting representing a rustic interior in which two women attend a group of six children. The picture was not listed in the Salon *livret*, the small catalogue printed for the benefit of visitors, meaning it likely was a late addition to the

sixteen paintings, pastels, and drawings that the artist submitted that year.¹ The accounts of the picture offered by critics present a detailed description of the composition. Denis Diderot (1713–1784) was particularly specific in his review of the Salon that year:

*Moving from right to left, three upended barrels in a row; a table; on this table a bowl, a small saucepan, a cauldron, and other household utensils. In the foreground, a child leading a dog by a leash; to this child is turned the back of a peasant woman in whose lap a little girl is asleep. Further back, an older child holding a bird; one sees a drum at his feet. The bird's cage is attached to the wall; then another seated woman grouped with three small children; behind her, a cradle. On the foot of the cradle a kitten; on the floor, beneath it, a chest, a pillow, some sticks, and other gear associated with cottages and nursemaids.*²

The picture in Kansas City conforms closely to Diderot's account (although the birdcage is not attached to the wall but rests on a table) and matches almost precisely the reproductive engraving issued in 1769 by Pierre Charles Ingouf (1746–1800) (Fig. 1). Entitled *Les Sevreuses*—usually translated as "The Nursemaids"—the engraving reverses the orientation of the composition, as typically happens in the printing process.³ The

principal difference between the Nelson-Atkins painting and the engraving occurs at the bottom of the composition, where the painting is missing several objects—some planks, a ball, and a bowl and spoon—that appear in the print. Technical evidence confirms that the tacking margins and a small amount of the bottom edge were trimmed at some point, perhaps when it was relined; it is likely that the painting originally included the extra floor space and objects recorded in the engraving.⁴



Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste Tilliard and Pierre Charles Ingouf, after Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses* (*Infants Being Weaned*), 1769, engraving, plate: 14 13/16 x 16 9/16 inches (37.6 x 42 cm), sheet: 15 1/2 x 17 15/16 in. (39.3 x 45.5 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, with additional funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985, 1985-52-26024

The painting was acquired by the William Rockhill Nelson Trust in 1931 on the recommendation of Harold Woodbury Parsons, the trust's art adviser, part of an aggressive strategy to build a collection of French pictures for the fledgling museum. Parsons had discussed its potential purchase in the summer of 1930 with Count Antoine Sala (1876–1946), formerly an attaché at the French Embassy in Washington, DC, and the Paris representative of the London dealer Thomas Agnew and Sons.⁵ The distinguished provenance of *The Nursemaids* was undoubtedly a factor in convincing the officials of the trust: Agnew had acquired the painting in 1927 from the descendants of Sir Anthony Nathan de Rothschild (1810–1876).⁶ It had been catalogued by the

pioneering connoisseur John Smith in 1837 as the picture engraved by Ingouf, and he traced its provenance back to the Dubois sale in Paris in 1785.⁷ Smith catalogued it again in 1842, changing its title from *Les Sevreuses* to *The Nursery* and noting that it was now in the collection of Baron de Rothschild;⁸ in 1870 the baron lent it to an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where it was given the title *A French Family*.⁹ All these references recorded the dimensions of the canvas as 12 by 15 inches (30.5 x 38.1 cm), roughly those of the Nelson-Atkins picture.

For many years following its acquisition, the Kansas City painting was assumed to be the picture Greuze had exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1765. Early authorities such as Smith (cited above) and Jean Martin and Charles Masson, who wrote the first catalogue raisonné of the works of Greuze in 1905, identified the painting in the Rothschild collection—i.e., the picture now in Kansas City—as the original sold in 1785.¹⁰ Later writers such as Anita Brookner and Carol Duncan, focusing more on interpreting the imagery of *The Nursemaids* than its authorship, also accepted the Nelson-Atkins painting as authentic.¹¹ Nevertheless, Edgar Munhall, the leading recent authority on Greuze, did not include the painting in his groundbreaking Greuze exhibition of 1976–1977 and later consistently maintained that it was a copy of the lost original.¹² Subsequent scholars generally deferred to his opinion, and, as a result, the status of the Nelson-Atkins *Nursemaids* became uncertain; the museum reflected this uncertainty by designating the picture as “attributed to Greuze.”¹³

Yet there are reasons to reconsider the painting and to accept it as Greuze's original exhibited at the Salon of 1765.¹⁴ The argument can be made on several grounds. To start, the Kansas City *Nursemaids* is by far the best of the known versions of the composition, the only one qualitatively equal to the artist's style of painting in the mid-1760s. Greuze was a frequently copied artist, even in his own lifetime; we know, for example, that his student Louis Joseph Donvé (1760–1802) exhibited a copy of *The Nursemaids* at the Salon in Lille in 1785.¹⁵ This copy is untraced, but several others have come to light in recent years. The best of these, which emerged in France in 2013, appears to be an early copy of some quality, perhaps made in the eighteenth century (Fig. 2).¹⁶ It is roughly the same size as the Nelson-Atkins painting and, tellingly, shows the extended area of the floor with the objects at the lower edge that appears in the engraving, but stylistically it bears little relationship to Greuze's manner of painting. A far inferior copy, recorded in

Germany in 1999, is larger in size and shows the composition in reverse, indicating that the copyist was working from the reproductive engraving.¹⁷ Another, also in reverse and even less convincing, sold at an auction in Nantes in 2015 as a copy made in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ No doubt others will surface over time. Of course, Greuze's original may also still be awaiting rediscovery, but the painting technique and materials of the Nelson-Atkins picture are typical of eighteenth-century French practice and consistent with the work of Greuze. Moreover, while early copies were sometimes confused with originals even in Greuze's lifetime, it is significant that the provenance of the Kansas City *Nursemaids* can be definitively traced to 1840, and very likely to 1785, and that the picture was long esteemed by early connoisseurs.¹⁹



Fig. 2. After Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, oil on canvas, 12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (32 x 40 cm), private collection, Saint-Cloud, France

Nevertheless, Munhall's refusal to accept the Nelson-Atkins painting as Greuze's original needs to be addressed. To the present writer, the disturbing features of the painting that most affect an appreciation of its quality result from two factors: the painting's current condition and its unusually small format, both of which create an impression of a picture that is not up to Greuze's usual confident handling of paint and exquisite rendering of details. At some point in its history the canvas was removed from its stretcher and its tacking edges trimmed, with between 1/8 to 3/8 inch (0.3 to 0.95 cm) of the bottom picture plane cut in the process, where several of the objects noted by Diderot ("some sticks, and other gear associated with cottages and nursemaids") and that appear in the engraving (see Fig.

1) and the early copy (see Fig. 2) are missing.²⁰ The resulting relining flattened the paint layers, and the surface of the paint film has suffered abrasion in some areas. This is especially evident in the figure and face of the middle boy reaching for the bird, which are badly skinned, but other areas—the seated girl with a doll on her lap, the cheek and neck of the nursemaid at the left, the face of the boy leading the dog at the right—have also lost their glazes and other layers of paint. The profile of the boy at the right, for instance, has nearly disappeared into the dark ground layer of the background. Nevertheless, there remain beautiful passages that reveal a quality of brushwork and design entirely worthy of Greuze and hard to reconcile with the hand of a copyist: the convincing texture of the wicker cradle at the left, the crisp folds of the bonnet worn by the nursemaid on the right, the glint off the copper cauldron in the right background.



Fig. 3. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Laundress* (*La Blanchisseuse*), 1761, oil on canvas, 16 x 13 in. (40.6 x 33 cm), J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 83.PA.387

However compromised the current state of the picture may now be, it still exhibits the picturesque qualities that caught the attention of the Salon critics: "Here we recognize the ingenious naïveté of the author," wrote

the critic Charles Joseph Mathon de la Cour. "This painter sees nature as an artist should see it, that is to say, in love, with eyes that miss nothing and embellish everything."²¹ For Diderot, who was reminded of works by the Dutch genre painter Adriaen Ostade (1610–1685), "the resulting effect rings true. . . . You believe yourself to be in the cottage, nothing suggests otherwise, in either its content or its handling." Looking at the picture today, however, it is difficult to follow him when he exclaimed that "One can't paint any more vigorously;" or to agree with him that "as for myself, it's the picture itself that I'd ask for."²² But viewers today need to be mindful that the picture no longer presents itself as it must have in 1765.

Diderot's enthusiasm aside, the Nelson-Atkins *Nursemaids* is unusual in a more fundamental way: Greuze used an exceptionally small canvas for a multigure genre scene, an anomaly that was noted at the time. In his review of the 1765 Salon, Mathon de la Cour described it as a "little picture" and that "the figures in this picture are very small."²³ The inscription in the lower margin of the reproductive engraving (Fig. 1) notes that the print is the same size as the corresponding painting ("Gravé d'après le Tableau Original du même grandeur de Jean Baptiste Greuze, Peintre du Roy"), so we can be sure that the scale of the painting reflects Greuze's original intentions. The small scale of the Kansas City painting makes it an anomaly in artist's oeuvre: Greuze normally painted his crowded domestic subjects on considerably larger canvases (normally at least 65 x 80 cm or 73 x 94 cm during this period, and sometimes larger) and to reserve his small canvases for single figures or, at most, pairs.²⁴ The single-figure *Laundress* exhibited in 1761 (Fig. 3), for example, was painted on a canvas of similar size to the Kansas City *Nursemaids*, although it is oriented vertically. The engaging laundress in the Getty composition—who is the same general size as the protagonists who populate his larger multigure pictures of the same period—fills the composition with a forceful presence; the nursemaids and children in the Kansas City painting appear, by contrast, miniscule and doll-like. Why Greuze chose in this instance to employ such a small canvas for what is a complex arrangement of eight figures (and a dog and cat) in a crowded, object-filled interior is unclear. The five surviving preparatory drawings he made for the principal figures—such as those of the girl burying her head in the nursemaid's lap and of the young boy leading the dog (Figs. 4 and 5)—are far larger in scale than the corresponding figures in the painting.²⁵ Translating these bold, confidently drawn figures into

the diminutive inhabitants of the painted work could not have been easy for the artist, and one senses the effort cramped his technique.



Fig. 4. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Figure of Little Girl*, ca. 1765, red chalk on white laid paper, 12 1/8 x 7 15/16 in. (30.7 x 20 cm), State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Greuze's motivation for painting *The Nursemaids* at such a small scale may relate to its original function. In his Salon review Diderot referred to the picture as "another sketch" ("autre esquisse"), the same term he had used in a previous passage for Greuze's drawings of *The Well-Beloved Mother* and the pendants *The Father's Curse: The Ungrateful Son* and *The Punished Son*.²⁶ But he also commented that "one cannot paint with more vigor," acknowledging that *The Nursemaids* he was describing was indeed a painting.²⁷ In this instance, he may have used the term *esquisse* to mean a sketch in oils, reacting to a very small painting that he might have assumed was a preliminary painted study for a larger picture. No such larger version is documented, and the finicky detail of the Kansas City *Nursemaids* is very different from the few known oil sketches by Greuze.²⁸ For example, *The First Lesson in Love*, datable to around 1761 (Fig. 6)—and painted on a 16 x 12 3/4-inch canvas—is much more

fluidly brushed, even to the point of seeming unfinished.²⁹



Fig. 5. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Study of a Boy Walking*, 1765–1769, red chalk on cream paper, 11 7/16 x 7 7/16 in. (29.1 x 19 cm), State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, OP-14978

One possible reason for Greuze painting the scene with such precision and at this small size is that he made it specifically to be engraved and therefore scaled his canvas appropriately (at 32 x 40.2 cm, the print is indeed roughly equal in size to the painting) and carefully articulated all the details to guide the engraver. The artist's usual practice was to contract printmakers to work directly from his original paintings, whatever their size, or from detailed copy drawings that he himself produced for that purpose; in this instance, he may have intended the picture from the start to serve as a scale model for a print.³⁰ The best evidence for this scenario lies in the inscription included at the lower margin of the

engraving itself: "The Nursemaids. Engraved after the original painting of the same size by Jean Baptiste Greuze, Painter to the King. Taken from the collection of Monsieur de la Reynière; begun by Mr. Tilliard, and finished by Pierre Charles Ingouf in 1769."³¹ Jean-Baptiste Tilliard (1740?–1813) must have started working on the plate sometime after the Salon of 1765 and then passed the work on to Ingouf (1746–1800) to finish, which he completed only in 1769 (its publication was announced on October 30, 1769);³² Greuze likely sold the painting to Laurent Grimod de La Reynière (1734–1793) near the end of this process.



Fig. 6. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The First Lesson in Love*, ca. 1760, oil on canvas, 16 x 12 3/4 in. (40.6 x 32.4 cm), Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH. Currier Funds, 1976.²⁶

Whatever function was served by the Nelson-Atkins picture, its subject represents exactly the kind of scene of domestic life that earned Greuze a considerable reputation in the 1750s and 1760s. These genre subjects, bearing such titles as *A Father Reading the Bible to his Family*, *A Marriage Contract*, *The Spoiled Child*, and *The Well-Beloved Mother*, played into Enlightenment debates regarding family life, motherhood, and childrearing that captured the public's imagination in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Paintings with these subjects

were eagerly sought by prominent collectors: the first recorded owner of *The Nursemaids*, Laurent Grimod de La Reynière, was a wealthy and well-connected *fermier général*; it later appeared in the sale of works belonging to Jean Dubois (active 1768–1789), a goldsmith and jeweler who assembled a celebrated collection.³³

The practice of wet nursing—common across all classes of society, even as it was roundly condemned by such advanced thinkers as Jean Jacques Rousseau—was a theme Greuze explored on several occasions.³⁴ In the Kansas City painting, Greuze depicted the subject with wry humor, evident in its shabby interior setting and the seemingly grouchy nursemaids, yet its warning against the dangers of farming children out to nursemaids would not have been lost on viewers. Munhall, noting that the French word *sevrage* means weaning, more specifically identified the women as “dry nurses,” who introduce broth and milk soup (*bouillie*) into the child’s diet as they transition from breastfeeding.³⁵ This comports with the actions represented in the painting, as the women are not shown actually nursing the children, and a bowl and spoon are visible on the table in the right background. In expressing a transitional moment in childhood, Greuze was typically intent—at least as revealed by the Kansas City picture and the reproductive engraving—in bringing meaningful specificity to the expressions and actions of the figures. Bernadette Fort recognized that the activities of the older children conform to traditional gender roles: “domination” for the two boys, one of whom controls the dog while the other places a bird in a cage, and “domesticity” for the girls, one of whom sits quietly holding a doll in her lap (anticipating the action of the central nursemaid) while the other turns to the second nurse for assistance.³⁶

Normally, the critics reveled in such meaningful nuances in Greuze’s paintings, yet the few writers who discussed the painting focused more on its aesthetic qualities than its broader meanings. Diderot offered a telling exception, informing his readers that Greuze’s picture was hung at the 1765 Salon beneath Alexandre Roslin’s group portrait of the La Rochefoucauld family (private collection, France), a painting that was roundly criticized by Salon reviewers: “It’s as though he’d written below one of these paintings, ‘Example of Discord,’ and below the other, ‘Example of Harmony.’”³⁷

Richard Rand
March 2020

Notes

1. *Explication des Peintures, Sculptures, et Gravures, de Messieurs de l’Académie Royale*, exh. cat. (Paris: Jean-Th. Herissant, 1765), nos. 110–25.
2. “En allant de la droite à la gauche, trois tonneaux debout sur une même ligne; une table; sur cette table une écuelle, un poëlon, un chaudron, et autres ustensiles de ménage. Sur le plan antérieur, un enfant qui conduit un chien avec une corde; à cet enfant tourne le dos une paysanne, sur le giron de laquelle une petite fille est endormie. Plus vers le fond, un assez grand enfant qui tient un oiseau, on voit un tambour à ses pieds, et la cage de l’oiseau attachée au mur. Ensuite une autre femme assise et groupée [*sic*] avec trois petits enfans [*sic*]; derrière elle un berceau; sur le pied du berceau un chaton; à terre, au-dessous, un coffre, un oreiller, des bâtons de coteret [*sic*] et autres agrès de chaumières et de sevreuses”; Denis Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 1765; repr., in Jacques-André Naigeon, ed., *Œuvres de Denis Diderot* (Paris: Deterville, 1799–1800), no. 121, pp. 13:194–95; translation by John Goodman, *Diderot on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1:109–10.
3. Yves Bruand and Michèle Hébert, *Inventaire du Fonds Français: Graveurs du XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1970), no. 15, p. 11:609.
4. Conservation records indicate that the painting has been relined, and a radiograph reveals the location of a fill along the bottom edge, ranging between 1/8 and 3/8 inch in height, that extends to the edge of the picture plane across the length of the bottom edge. See the accompanying technical entry by Mary Schafer.
5. Harold Woodbury Parsons to J. C. Nichols, NAMA trustee, July 8, 1930, NAMA curatorial files.
6. *Catalogue of Pictures by Old Masters and some Water Colour Drawings, The Property of The Hon. Mrs. Yorke, deceased, Late of 17 Curzon Street, W. 1, and Hamble Cliff, Netley, Southampton, Most of the Old Pictures were Inherited from her Father, the Late Sir Anthony Rothschild, Bt.; Also Choice Pictures of the French School, the Property of the Rt. Hon. Viscountess Harcourt and Old Pictures and Drawings From Other Sources* (London: Christie, Manson, and Woods, May 6, 1927), lot 28, p. 7.
7. John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French*

- Painters; In which is included a short Biographical Notice of the Artists, with a Copious Description of Their Principal Pictures; A Statement of the Prices at which such Pictures have been Sold at Public Sales on the Continent and in England; A Reference to the Galleries and Private Collections, in which a Large Portion are at Present; and the Names of the Artists by whom they have been Engraved to which is added, A Brief Notice of the Scholars and Imitators of the Great Masters of the Above Schools* (London: Smith and Son, 1837), no. 39, p. 8:411.
8. John Smith, *Supplement to the Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters; In which is included a short Biographical Notice of the Artists, with a Copious Description of Nearly The Whole of Their Pictures; A Statement of the Prices at which Such Pictures Have Been Sold at Public Sales on the Continent and in England; A Reference to the Galleries and Private Collections, in which a Large Portion are at Present; And the Names of the Artists by whom They Have Been Engraved to which is added, A Brief Notice of the Scholars and Imitators of the Great Masters of the Above Schools* (London: Messrs. Smith, 1842), no. 10, p. 9:812
 9. *Exhibition of the Works of the Old Masters, Associated with A Collection from the Works of Charles Robert Leslie, R.A., and Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.*, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1870), no. 133, p. 14.
 10. J[ean] Martin and Ch[arles] Masson, *Le Catalogue Raisonné de l'Œuvre Peint et Dessiné de Jean-Baptiste Greuze*, in Camille Maudclair, *Jean-Baptiste Greuze* (Paris: H. Piazza, [1905]), no. 207, p. 16.
 11. Anita Brookner, *Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1972), 64, 106; Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in French Art," *Art Bulletin* 55, no. 4 (December 1973): 576–77.
 12. *Jean Baptiste Greuze, 1725–1805*, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, December 1, 1976–January 23, 1977; The California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, March 5–May 1, 1977; the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, June 4–July 31, 1977. See also Edgar Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, exh. cat. (London: Merrell, 2002), 115. Munhall characterized the execution of the Kansas City painting as "feeble" and never altered his view that it was a copy; see notes from a conversation between Ian Kennedy, NAMA, and Edgar Munhall, July 30, 2009, NAMA curatorial files.
 13. For example, Colin B. Bailey, *Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 211 ("whereabouts unknown, copy in Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum"); Emma Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 271n11 ("it is unlikely to be the work exhibited in 1765; it is probably a copy from another hand").
 14. More recently, Yuriko Jackall and Joseph Baillio have both supported the attribution to Greuze; personal communication with the author, July 2018.
 15. "33. Tableau d'après M. Greuze, représentant les Sevreuses. D'un pied neuf pouces de largeur, sur un pied cinq pouces de hauteur" (approx. 18 x 22 1/3 in. or 45.7 x 56.7 cm). Donvé spent most of his career in Lille, but he was registered at the Royal Academy in Paris as a student of Greuze between February 5, 1781, and March 1785; the 1785 Lille Salon opened on August 30 of that year. See Gaëtane Maës, *Les Salons de Lille de l'Ancien Régime à la Restauration (1773–1820)* (Dijon: L'échelle de Jacob, 2004), 228, 463. I am grateful to Yuriko Jackall for bringing this information to my attention.
 16. After Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, oil on canvas, 12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (32 x 40 cm), private collection. Edgar Munhall to Richard Rand, September 9, 2013, copy in NAMA curatorial files; this version is too small to be identified with the copy by Donvé (see note 15 above).
 17. As relayed to the author from Edgar Munhall. Its size is 19 15/16 x 23 5/8 in. (49 x 60 cm).
 18. "École XIXème s[iècle] d'après J-B Greuze," *Les Sevreuses*, oil on canvas, 20 7/8 x 26 3/8 in. (53 x 67 cm), reproduced in *Belle Vente Mobilière: Tableaux dont Moret Henry, Guerin Ernest; Art d'Asie dont un ensemble de Tanka, Boudha Maravijaya en Bronze 14e Siècle, Porcelaine Chine; Sculpture, Objets d'Art, Mobilier XVII, XIX, XXe Siècle* (La Baule, France: Salorges Enchères, August 12, 2015), no. 55, <http://www.encheres-nantes-labaule.com/vente-aux-encheres/22-belle-ventes-mobiliere/11541->

ecole-xixeme-s-d-apres-j-b-greuze-les-sevreuses-huile-sur-toile-53-x-67-cm.

19. A possible exception was when the painting appeared at the Paris sale of the Berthault collection in 1840; the expert writing in the auction catalogue noted that "this picture has always been considered by M. Berthault as the original," a backhanded compliment that might imply a modicum of doubt. "Ce tableau a toujours été considéré par M. Berthault comme original"; *Une Belle Collection de Tableaux Anciens et Modernes, Principalement des Ecoles Hollandaise, Flamande et Française, Miniatures, Aquarelles et Dessins De nos plus célèbres Artistes modernes, Objets de Curiosités, tels que Meubles en marqueterie, écaillé et bois de rose; Bronzes dorés et non dorés, Porcelaines d'ancien Sèvres, de Chine, du Japon et de Saxe; Pendules, Ivoires et Bois sculptés, Tabatières, Boîtes et Bas-Reliefs en argent repoussé et ciselé; Objets divers en pierre dure, Bustes en marbre, Vitraux anciens et Venise, Emaux de Limoges, Terres de Bernard Palissy et Faënza, Collection considérable d'Histoire Naurelle [sic], composée d'une suite de Coquilles marines, fluviales et terrestres; Oiseaux, Papillons indigènes et exotiques, Scarabés Reptiles, Minéraux, etc., dont la vente, Après le décès de M. Berthault, ancien Avoué* (Paris: Genevoix et Thérét, 1840), lot 40, p. 12.
20. See accompanying technical entry by Schafer.
21. "On y reconnaît la naïveté ingénieuse de l'Auteur. Ce Peintre voit la nature comme un Artiste doit la voir, c'est-à-dire, en Amant, avec des yeux à qui rien n'échappe, & qui embellissent tout"; *Troisième Lettre, à Monsieur **, Sur les Peintures, les Sculptures, et les Gravures, exposées au Sallon [sic] du Louvre en 1765*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Collection Deloynes, vol. 8, no. 110, p. 11, repr., in Charles Joseph Mathon de la Cour, *Lettres à Monsieur ** sur les Peintures, les Sculptures et les Gravures, exposées au Sallon [sic] du Louvre en 1765* (Paris: Bauche and D'houry, 1765), 59.
22. "On ne peint pas avec plus de vigueur. L'effet en est vrai . . . Vous croyez être dans une chaumière. Rien ne détrompe, ni la chose, ni l'art. On demande que le berceau soit plus piqué de lumière; pour moi, c'est le tableaux que je demande"; Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 195, English translation by Goodman, *Diderot on Art*, 110.
23. "Petit Tableau," and "Les figures de ce Tableau sont très-petites"; *Troisième Lettre, à Monsieur **, 10–11.*
24. For example, *Les Œufs Cassés* (Salon of 1757; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; 73 x 94 cm); *L'Accordée de Village* (Salon of 1761; Musée du Louvre, Paris; 92 x 117 cm); *Filial Piety* (Salon of 1763; Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; 115 x 146 cm).
25. The drawings in the collection of the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, are all in red chalk on white paper and are generally 30 x 20 cm to 38 x 30 cm in size. They are studies for the girl reaching up to the nursemaid at the left; the little girl seated with a doll in her lap; the boy holding a bird in his upraised hand; the nursemaid cradling a child at right; and the boy leading the dog. See François Monod and Louis Hauteceur, *Les Dessins de Greuze conservés à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Saint-Petersbourg* (Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1922), nos. 30, 33, 36, 40, 64, pp. 11, 15, 25–27, 30, 47. See Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, nos. 34–35.
26. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 194. For the other sketches, see Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, nos. 43, 48–49.
27. "On ne peu pas peint avec plus de vigeur" (Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 195).
28. The dimensions of the Nelson-Atkins painting approximate those recorded for *Les Sevreuses* that sold at auction in 1785 and 1831; see Le Brun, *Catalogue d'une Belle Collection de Tableaux des Écoles Flamande, Hollandoise [sic], Allemande et Française* (Paris: Le Brun et Julliot, 1785), lot 95, p. 45: "Hauteur 12 pouces, largeur 15"; Pierre Roux, *Catalogue d'une Précieuse et Riche Collection de Tableaux Provenant de l'Étranger, Après le Décès de M. Bondon, des Trois Écoles Anciennes et Modernes* (Paris: Coutellier, Roux, et Le Concierge de la galerie, 1831), lot 81, p. 38: "T. l. 14 p., h. 11 p."
29. For the Currier painting, see Edgar Munhall, "The First Lessons in Love by Jean-Baptiste Greuze," *Currier Gallery of Art Bulletin* (1977): 3–13. The oil sketch served as the model for the engraving by Nicolas Joseph Voyez.
30. Such copy drawings exist for the prints made after at least three of Greuze's paintings: *The Spoiled Child* (Salon of 1765), *The Well-Beloved Mother* (1769), and *The Father's Curse: the Punished Son*

(Salon of 1777); see Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, nos. 33, 70, and 82. A possible exception is a painted replica of the Getty *Laundress* in the Harvard University Art Museums undoubtedly by Greuze himself and nearly matching the quality of the prime version. Colin B. Bailey has suggested that this replica may have been painted as a guide for Jean-Claude Danzel's engraving of 1765; Bailey, *Jean-Baptiste Greuze: The Laundress* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2000), 20–22. Greuze's red chalk drawing for the central woman and child in *The Nursemaids* (Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum) is in reverse orientation (it is not a counterproof), which may indicate that it was made as part of the engraving process; see Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, 115. However, it is difficult to see how such a rough, sketchy drawing would benefit the engraver.

31. The full inscription reads: "Les Sevreuses. Gravées d'après le Tableau Original de même grandeur, de Jean Baptiste Greuze Peintre du Roy. Tiré du Cabinet de Monsieur de la Reyniere; Commencé par Mr. Tilliard, et fini par Pierre Charles Ingouf en 1769."

32. Bruand and Hébert, *Inventaire du fonds français*, no. 15, p. 609.

33. See Bailey, *Patriotic Taste*, 211, 225, 252n148, 303n35.

34. The best analysis is Bernadette Fort, "Greuze and the Ideology of Infant Nursing in Eighteenth-Century France," in Anja Müller, ed., *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: Age and Identity* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 117–34. See also Duncan, "Happy Mothers," 570–83; and Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment*, 271ff.

35. Munhall, *Greuze the Draftsman*, 115–16; see also Fort, "Greuze and the Ideology of Infant Nursing," 119.

36. Fort, "Greuze and the Ideology of Infant Nursing," 120–21.

37. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 194. The "he" referenced was the artist Jean Siméon Chardin (1699–1779) who served as Salon *tapissier* (curator responsible for the installation) from 1761 to 1773. Diderot further related that Roslin competed with Greuze for the commission, ultimately winning it through the intervention of the marquis de Marigny. The

unsatisfactory result (in the opinion of Diderot) prompted the critic to describe in detail what Greuze would have painted; Naigeon, ed., *Œuvres de Denis Diderot*, 131–37. For Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's sketch of Roslin's portrait, see Gunnar W. Lundberg, *Roslin: liv och verk* (Malmö: AB Allhems Förlag, 1957), no. 209, pp. 1:87–89; 3:41–42. For criticism of Roslin's portrait, see Emma Barker, " 'No Picture More Charming': The Family Portrait in Eighteenth-Century France," *Art History*, 40, no. 3 (2017): 535–36, <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1111/1467-8365.12247>. In Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's celebrated drawing of the Salon installation in 1765 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), one can make out several small, framed pictures hanging directly beneath Roslin's large painting in the middle of the left wall, one of which must be Greuze's *Sevreuses*. Unfortunately, Saint-Aubin did not provide sufficient detail to identify the picture precisely.

Top of section

Technical Entry

Citation

Chicago:

Mary Schafer, "Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Nursemaids*, ca. 1765," technical entry in *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.316.2088>.

MLA:

Schafer, Mary. "Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Nursemaids*, ca. 1765," technical entry. *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, edited by Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2023. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.316.2088.

The Nursemaids was acquired by the Nelson-Atkins in 1931 as an autograph work by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and its authenticity was first questioned in 1979; up until recently, many Greuze specialists referred to the painting as a copy of a lost original. In his accompanying catalogue essay, Richard Rand summarizes the provenance and recorded dimensions of the small-scale canvas and identifies select passages that align with

Greuze in terms of quality and style, in spite of the compromised paint surface from past cleaning. Technical study of *The Nursemaids* with transmitted infrared (IR) photography and raking illumination has revealed several artist changes that are significant for any painting whose status has been questioned.

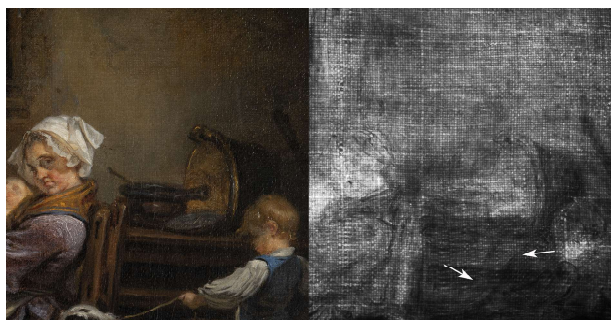


Fig. 7. Details of the objects on the tabletop in the right edge of *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765). On the left, normal illumination detail. On the right, a transmitted infrared digital photograph that reveals the outlines of an earlier shape, possibly a cloth.

The outlines of a earlier shape are apparent in transmitted IR, curving downward from the overturned pot and overhanging the table (Fig. 7), presumably a textile like those portrayed in *The Laundress* (curatorial Fig. 3). Although Greuze eventually replaced this element with a blue-gray plate, thick white paint strokes associated with the cloth remain visible with raking illumination. Similar underlying paint textures that deviate from the final painting are evident beneath the slumbering infant's knee, in which a curving stroke moves from this location up to the caregiver's forearm (Fig. 8). Additionally, the layered construction of two elements suggests that they may have been introduced at a later stage in the painting process. Infrared reflectography (IRR) shows that the upper horizontal edge of the crib and brown paint of the background continue beneath the blue blanket (Fig. 9), and transmitted infrared confirms that the horizontal shelves of the cabinet extend beneath the right boy's arm and chest (Fig. 7), as if the blanket and boy were absent from the artist's initial design. Rather than suggesting a copyist, these compositional changes bolster the painting's current attribution, revealing modifications and decision-making by an artist who was actively developing the composition.



Fig. 8. Photomicrograph of the sleeping child with raking illumination, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765). Thick underlying paint textures are present at the infant's knee and extend toward the caregiver's forearm.

Although the tacking margins have been removed and brown paper conceals the outer edges of the painting, cusping at all four perimeters suggests that the current dimensions of *The Nursemaids* (12 1/2 x 15 5/8 inches) are close to its original size.¹ The five-member stretcher with mortise-and-tenon joinery may also be original, considering its construction and level of oxidation. Moreover, the London-based Thomas Agnew and Sons label affixed to the bottom stretcher member connects to the painting's established provenance, which includes recorded dimensions of 12 x 15 inches (Fig. 10).²



Fig. 9. Reflected infrared digital photograph of the crib on the left side of *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)



Fig. 10. Stretcher reverse of *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)

The plain-weave canvas appears to have been prepared with a white or off-white ground,³ over which Greuze blocked in the composition with fluid washes of color and possibly sketched out elements with finely painted outlines.⁴ Many of these preliminary washes remain

visible at the outer edges of forms. For instance, a pink-brown wash is visible along the edge of the left child's sleeve and beneath the blue-gray dress at her upper back (Fig. 11). Brown washes function in areas where this first layer was intentionally left exposed, for instance the vertical windowpane at the upper right (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11. Photomicrograph of the pink-brown wash that lies beneath the left child's arm, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)



Fig. 12. Photomicrograph of the exposed brown wash between the windowpanes, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)

Scumbles of cool gray and brown indicate various features within the dimly lit interior, while items hanging from the clothesline were efficiently painted with limited shades of muted gray. Greuze further developed the figures and foreground elements through a combination of washes, scumbles, glazes, and thicker opaque paint to define highlights, mid-tones, and shadows. Paint was applied with wet-over-wet and wet-over-dry brushwork. Details throughout the composition—the woven wicker of the crib, wood grain and knots of the staircase, and reflections on the copper pot—were rendered with a fine brush (roughly one millimeter wide) and painterly

brushwork. Final touches of vivid pink and orange-brown were applied to the figures, accenting the facial features, neck, and contours of the hands. This aspect of the artist's technique has been observed on other works,⁵ including *Head of a Girl* (31-55).

The brightest areas of fabric were constructed with lively strokes of thick white paint (Fig. 13), while dark glazes deepen areas of shadows. In the construction of the right female's dress and the right boy's pants, thickly painted highlights establish the drape and fold of the fabric beneath an overlying violet glaze (Fig. 14).⁶ A glimpse of transparent magenta is evident on the boy's pants (Fig. 15), and a pink UV-induced visible fluorescence on the woman's purple sleeve may indicate a red lake.⁷ Although no analysis has been conducted on *The Nursemaids*, technical study of other Greuze paintings has confirmed significant color changes resulting from the artist's use of fugitive red and yellow lakes that disappeared after exposure to light.⁸

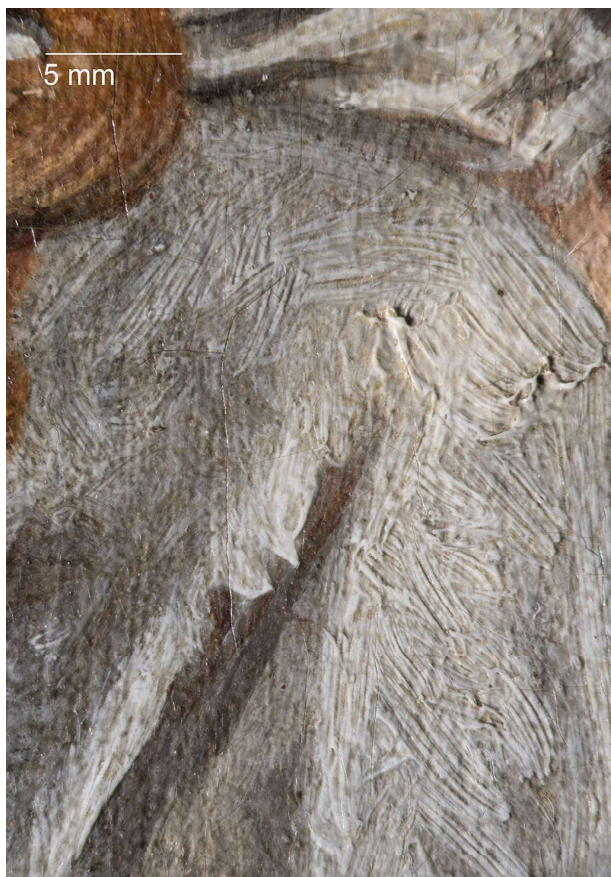


Fig. 13. Photomicrograph with raking illumination, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765), showing the painterly brushwork of the woman's skirt

During an earlier treatment that likely predated the 1933 acquisition, thin paint layers that were susceptible to solvents were inadvertently thinned and removed. The consequences of this inexpert cleaning are most severe in the figures, where the loss of thin paint layers has disrupted upper layers and exposed paint colors that were once covered. The cleaning resulted in somewhat blurred and illegible faces, while at the same time distorting the artist's careful rendering of volume. Figure 16 illustrates how the loss of shadows and scumbles has significantly altered the proper right side of the figure in lavender's face, twisting it forward, toward the viewer.

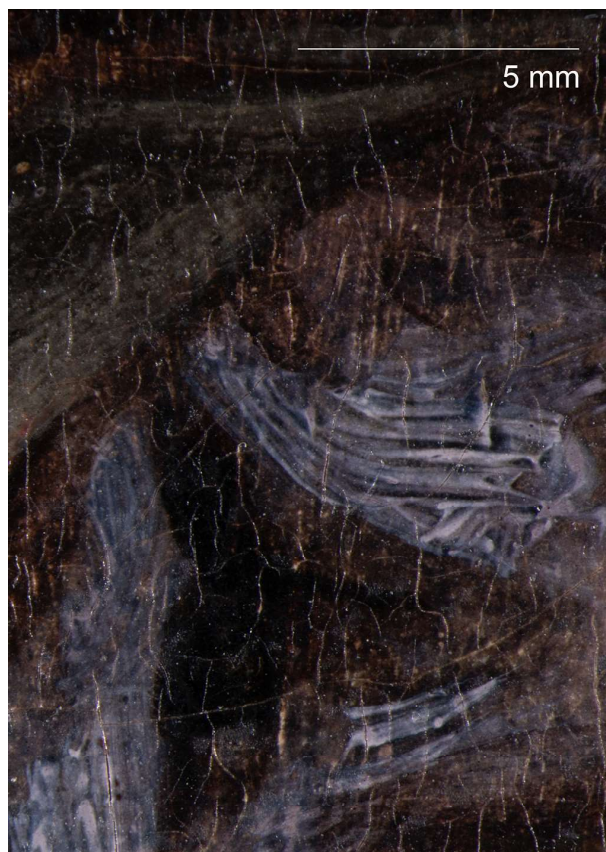


Fig. 14. Photomicrograph of the thick white highlights, overlying glaze, and dark semitransparent shadows of the woman's blouse, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)

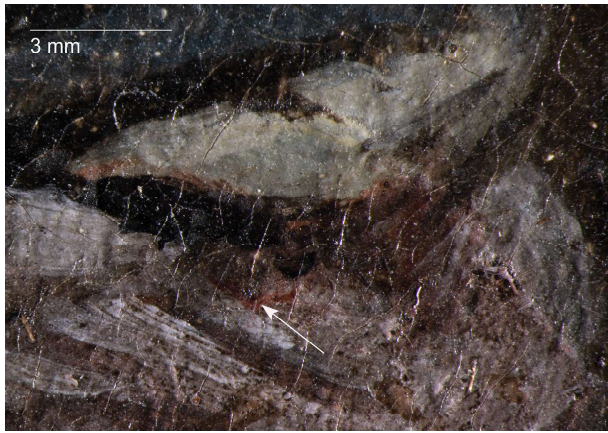


Fig. 15. Photomicrograph of transparent magenta on the right boy's pants, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)



Fig. 16. Photomicrograph of the right woman, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765), underscoring the deleterious effects of overcleaning on Greuze's thin paint layers and delicate scumbles

The original canvas does not continue to the bottom foldover edge of the painting; this irregular edge ends roughly between 3.2 and 9.5 millimeters above the current bottom edge, and a crack has formed where fill material and original paint meet. The canvas was glue-lined, resulting in a flattening of paint textures, weave

interference, and a prominent vertical texture throughout. The painting was most recently treated in 1992.⁹ Fine retouching, which is discolored in places and appears dark or non-fluorescing in the ultraviolet (UV)-induced visible fluorescence photograph (Fig. 17), does not address all the pinpoint-size abrasion. Retouching is also present along the entire bottom edge.



Fig. 17. Ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence photograph, *The Nursemaids* (ca. 1765)

Mary Schafer
March 2023

Notes

1. See film-based x-radiograph, no. 234, Nelson-Atkins conservation file, 31-61.
2. For an overview of the painting's provenance history and recorded dimensions, see the accompanying catalogue entry by Richard Rand.
3. Although double grounds have been identified in many works by Greuze, the white or off-white ground described here is based on limited visual observation without analysis. See Humphrey Wine, *The Eighteenth Century French Paintings* (London: National Gallery, 2018), 221, 225, 229.
4. No clear underdrawing was identified when the painting was examined with the stereomicroscope. Although finely painted lines at the girl's wrist in Figure 11 suggest a preliminary sketch, these reinforcing strokes lie on top of the gray sleeve. However, transmitted IR photography

suggests the use of fine paint strokes to mark compositional elements.

5. James Thompson, "Jean-Baptiste Greuze," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 47, no. 3 (1989): 10–12.
6. While the materials of the Nelson-Atkins painting have not been analyzed, Greuze's writings describe pigment mixtures for rendering violet and yellow drapery: "For violet draperies / White lake, burnt 'cendre,' d'angleterre, ultramarine for the lights / For the shadows burnt carmine, Prussian blue." See "Undated 'Liste de pigments manuscrite par Greuze,'" Fondation Custodia, Paris, invoice no. i9069a, translated and cited in Yuriko Jackall, Barbara H. Berrie, John Delaney, and Michael Swicklik, "Greuze's Greens: Ephemeral Colours, Classical Ambitions," *Burlington Magazine* 165, no. 1440 (March 2023): 279.
7. Helmut Schweppe and John Winter, "Madder and Alizarin," in *Artists' Pigments: A Handbook of their History and Characteristics*, ed. Elisabeth West FitzHugh (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 3:124.
8. See David Saunders and Jo Kirby, "Light-Induced Colour Changes in Red and Yellow Lake Pigments," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 15 (1994): 81; Humphrey Wine, *The Eighteenth Century French Paintings*, 255; and Jackall, Berrie, Delaney, and Swicklik, "Greuze's Greens," 268–79.
9. Scott Heffley, September 14, 1992, treatment report, Nelson-Atkins conservation file, 31–61.

Documentation

Citation

Chicago:

Glynnis Stevenson, "Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Nursemaids*, ca. 1765," documentation in *French Paintings, 1600–1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.316.4033>.

MLA:

Stevenson, Glynnis. "Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Nursemaids*, ca. 1765," documentation. *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, edited by Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2023. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.316.4033.

Provenance

Laurent Grimod de la Reynière (1734–1793), Paris, by October 30, 1769 [1];

Jean Dubois (active 1768–1789), by December 20, 1785 [2];

Purchased from his sale, *Une belle collection de tableaux des écoles flamande, hollandaise, allemande, et française, par M. Le Brun, garde des tableaux du mgr. Comte d'Artois, ce catalogue est suivi de celui des marbres, figures de bronze, et bronzes dorés, porcelaines du Japon, de la Chine, laques, bijoux, meubles de Boule, et autres objets de curiosité, par Ph. F. Julliot*, Hôtel de Bullion, Paris, December 20, 1785, no. 95, as *L'intérieur d'une Maison de paysan, où l'on voit une famille au nombre de sept personnes, femmes et enfants, parmi lesquels on distingue principalement et sur le devant une jeune femme assise, tenant dans ses bras un enfant à la mammelle, et près d'elle un jeune garçon debout tenant un chien en lesse*, by Louis François Saubert, 1785—at least February 13, 1793 [3];

Bondon (probably Louis François Bondon, 1767–1825, Darmstadt, Germany), by January 12, 1825 [4];

His posthumous sale, *Une Précieuse et Riche Collection de Tableaux Provenant de l'Étranger, Après le Décès de M. Bondon, des Trois Écoles Anciennes et Modernes, la salle Lebrun, rue de Cléry, no. 21, Paris, June 7–8, 1831, no. 81, as les Sèvres*;

Berthault (possibly Nicolas Gilles Berthault, ca. 1751–ca. 1840, Versailles), by 1840 [5];

His posthumous sale, *Une Belle Collection de Tableaux Anciens et Modernes, Principalement des Ecoles Hollandaise, Flamande, et Française, Miniatures, Aquarelles et Dessins De nos plus célèbres Artistes modernes, Objets de Curiosités, tels que Meubles en marqueterie, écaillé et bois de rose; Bronzes dorés et non dorés, Porcelaines d'ancien Sèvres, de Chine, du Japon et de Saxe; Pendules, Ivoires et Bois sculptés, Tabatières, Boîtes et Bas-Reliefs en argent repoussé et ciselé; Objets divers en pierre dure, Bustes en marbre, Vitraux anciens et Venise, Emaux de Limoges, Terres de Bernard Palissy et Faenza, Collection considérable d'Histoire Naturelle, composée d'une suite de Coquilles marines, fluviales et terrestres; Oiseaux, Papillons indigènes*

et exotiques, Scarabés Reptiles, Minéraux, etc., dont la vente, Après le décès de M. Berthault, ancien Avoué, Hôtel des Commissaires-Priseurs, Paris, November 23–24, 1840, no. 40, as Les sevreuses;

Sir Anthony Nathan (Billy) de Rothschild, First Baronet (1810–1876), London, and Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, England, by 1842–January 3, 1876 [6];

Inherited by his daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Eliot Constantine Yorke (née Annie de Rothschild, 1844–1926), London, and Hamble Cliff, Netley, Southampton, by 1876–November 21, 1926 [7];

Purchased from her posthumous sale, *Pictures by Old Masters and some Water Colour Drawings, The Property of The Hon. Mrs. Yorke, deceased, Late of 17 Curzon Street, W. 1, and Hamble Cliff, Netley, Southampton, Most of the Old Pictures were Inherited from her Father, the Late Sir Anthony Rothschild, Bt.; Also Choice Pictures of the French School, the Property of the Rt. Hon. Viscountess Harcourt and Old Pictures and Drawings From Other Sources*, Christie, Manson, and Woods, London, May 6, 1927, no. 28, as *Les Sevreuses*, by Thomas Agnew and Sons, Inc., New York, stock no. 6685, 1927–February 10, 1931 [8];

Purchased from Thomas Agnew and Sons, Inc., through Count Antoine Frederic Adolphe Sala and Harold Woodbury Parsons, by The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1931 [9].

Notes

[1] See the inscription under the engraving after the painting, “Gravées d’après le Tableau Original de même grandeur, de Jean Baptiste Greuze Peintre du Roy/ Tiré du cabinet de Monsieur de la Reyniere; Commencé par Mr. Tilliard,/ et fini par Pierre Charles Ingouf en 1769.” Jean-Baptiste Tilliard and P.-C. Ingouf, after Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, 1769, engraving, 12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (32 x 40 cm), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, BN, Dc-8-Fol. Reynière must have had the painting by 1769, when the engraving was announced in *L’Avant-Coureur*, no. 44 (October 30, 1769): 689–90. John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters* (London: Smith and Son, 1837), 8:411, says that the painting was “Engraved by P.C. Ingouf, 1769, from a picture then in the cabinet of M. Tilliard.” This is probably an erroneous translation of the engraving inscription.

[2] The collector was possibly Jean Dubois, a jeweler, goldsmith and art dealer, who was received by the guild on August 22, 1781. See Colin B. Bailey, *Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris* (New

Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 28, 252n148, and Henry Nocq, *Le Poinçon de Paris: Répertoire des Maîtres-Orfèvres de la Juridiction de Paris depuis le Moyen-Âge jusqu’à la fin du XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: H. Floury, 1927), 2:103.

[3] The painting also appears in this sale, where dealer Saubert was both the seller and the buyer: *Une Collection de Tableaux des Trois Écoles, Dessins, Estampes montées et en feuilles, Bibliothèques, Secrétaires, Commodes en bois d’Acajou, Bronze, Porcelaine, Bijoux, Montres à répétitions, et autres objets curieux, provenant en partie de l’Etranger* (Paris: Lebrun, February 13, 1793), no. 85, as a work after Greuze, *Un petit Tableau, d’après ce Maître, représentant les Sevreuses*.

[4] The constituent’s name is listed as “Bondon” in the 1831 sales catalogue, but it has also been written as “Bondon père,” “Bonbon père,” or “Boudonpère.” Frits Lugt, *Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques Intéressant, l’Art ou la Curiosité*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1953), gives the name as “Bonbon père” and says the constituent died in Germany. Bondon is also cited as “une amateur du Midi de la France” in a May 30–June 1, 1839, sale (Lugt 15471). Louis François Bondon, a likely option for this constituent, was a goldsmith and jeweler who was born in Avignon in the south of France (called the Midi) and died in 1825 in Darmstadt, Germany.

[5] Sometimes the constituent’s name is erroneously written as “Berthaud.” We defer here to the sales catalogue from 1840 for his spelling. This constituent might be Nicolas Gilles Berthault (ca. 1751–ca. 1840), an attorney living in Versailles from 1785 until at least 1824. See marriage bans of Nicolas Gilles Berthault and Catherine Bonté, *Registre de la Paroisse de Bièvre*, no. 11, dated May 9, 1785. Nicolas Gilles Berthault’s residence in Versailles was documented on May 7, 1824 in *Bulletin des lois de la République Française*, no. 691 bis (1824): 13.

[6] John Smith, *Supplement to the Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters; In which is included a short Biographical Notice of the Artists, with a Copious Description of Nearly The Whole of Their Pictures; A Statement of the Prices at which Such Pictures Have Been Sold at Public Sales on the Continent and in England; A Reference to the Galleries and Private Collections, in which a Large Portion are at Present; And the Names of the Artists by whom They Have Been Engraved to which is added, A Brief Notice of the Scholars and Imitators of the Great Masters of the Above Schools* (London: Messrs. Smith, 1842), 9:812.

[7] The painting was possibly inherited by his wife, Louisa (née Montefiore, 1821–1910), Lady de Rothschild, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, England, 1876, but the catalogue of Hon. Mrs. Eliot Constantine Yorke's (née Annie de Rothschild) posthumous sale in 1927 says "Most of the Old Pictures were Inherited from her Father, the Late Sir Anthony Rothschild, Bt." in the title. See *Catalogue of Pictures by Old Masters and some Water Colour Drawings, The Property of The Hon. Mrs. Yorke, deceased, Late of 17 Curzon Street, W. 1, and Hamble Cliff, Netley, Southampton, Most of the Old Pictures were Inherited from her Father, the Late Sir Anthony Rothschild, Bt.; Also Choice Pictures of the French School, the Property of the Rt. Hon. Viscountess Harcourt and Old Pictures and Drawings From Other Sources* (London: Christie, Manson, and Woods, May 6, 1927).

[8] The painting was sold from Yorke's estate by direction of her niece, Hon. Marie Constance (née Adeane, 1862–1934), Lady Mallet. See Yorke's sales catalogue, page 5. Genealogical research on Lady Mallet conducted by Ann Friedman, NAMA volunteer, fall 2018. For the purchaser, see The National Gallery, London, Thomas Agnew and Sons Ltd. Archive, NGA27/1/1, Picture Stock Books. Also an annotated catalogue from the Art Institute of Chicago for Yorke's 1927 sale indicates that "Agnew" purchased the painting from the sale. Many newspapers reported that Agnew purchased the painting from the 1927 Yorke sale.

[9] Count Antoine Sala (1876–1946) was an art dealer and the representative of Thomas Agnew and Sons, Inc. in Paris; see René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966), 255. Harold Woodbury Parsons, art advisor to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in the 1930s, was in discussion with Count Sala about purchasing the painting on behalf of the museum as early as July 8, 1930; see letter from Harold Woodbury Parsons to J. C. Nichols, NAMA trustee, July 8, 1930, NAMA curatorial files. See letter from February 4, 1931, Ernest E. Brown, secretary to Thomas Agnew and Sons, London, which says the painting was "purchased through Count Antoine Sala" (emphasis added; see letter in NAMA curatorial files).

Reproductions

Jean-Baptiste Tilliard and Pierre Charles Ingouf, after Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, 1769, engraving, image: 12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (32 x 40.2 cm), plate: 15 1/16 x 16 5/8 in. (38.3 x 42.2 cm), sheet: 15 13/16 x 20 11/16 in. (40.2 x 52.6 cm), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, BN, Dc-8-Fol.

Preparatory Works

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Figure of a little girl, sitting facing forward, square neckline and wearing a hat*, ca. 1765, red chalk on white laid paper, 11 x 8 7/8 in. (28 x 22.5 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Figure of little girl, in cap, laced bodice and long skirt; seen from the back, she raises her arms to the left*, ca. 1765, red chalk on white laid paper, 12 1/8 x 7 15/16 in. (30.7 x 20 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Figure of little boy, seen from back and 3/4; his pants are attached to his corset; his right hand holds an object (not drawn)*, ca. 1765, red chalk on white laid paper, 11 7/16 x 7 1/2 in. (29 x 19.1 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Figure of young boy, standing, facing front; he raises his left arm and advances with a happy air*, ca. 1765, red chalk on white laid paper, 15 3/4 x 10 13/16 in. (40 x 27.5 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Woman with a Child on Her Knees*, 1765, red chalk on yellowish laid paper, 15 x 10 5/8 in. (38 x 27 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia, OP-14803.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Study of a Boy Walking*, 1765–1769, red chalk, 11 7/16 x 7 1/2 in. (29.1 x 19 cm), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia, OP-14978.

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *A Cradle*, ca. 1765, drawing, Hôtel-Dieu-Musée Greuze, Tournus, France.

Known Copies

Louis Joseph Donvé (1760–1802), after Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, ca. 1785, oil on canvas, 18 x 22 1/3 in. (45.7 x 56.7 cm), location unknown, cited in Gaëtane Maës, *Les Salons de Lille de l'Ancien Régime à la Restauration (1773–1820)* (Dijon: L'Échelle de Jacob, 2004), 228, 463.

After Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, 18th century, oil on panel, 11 1/2 x 14 1/4 in. (29.2 x 36.5 cm), cited in *Catalogue de tableaux originaux . . . gouaches et dessins encadrés et en feuilles; nombreuse collection d'estampes Françaises et étrangères . . . du cabinet du Citoyen **** (Paris: Maison de Bullion, September 3–7, 1795), no. 22.

After Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Les Sevreuses*, oil on canvas, 12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in. (32 x 40 cm), private collection, Saint-

Cloud, France.

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