

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 Pater, *The Garden Party (Fête Champêtre)*, 1725–30, and *The Bathers*, 1728–30

Artist	Jean-Baptiste Pater, French, 1695–1736
Title	<i>The Garden Party (Fête Champêtre)</i>
Object Date	1725–30
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Le Gouter; Fête Champêtre; Rustic Pleasures; The Picnic; Afternoon Tea</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	22 11/16 x 25 13/16 in. (57.6 x 65.6 cm)
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: acquired through the bequest of Helen Foresman Spencer, F82-35/1

doi: 10.37764/78973.5.326

Artist	Jean-Baptiste Pater, French, 1695–1736
Title	<i>The Bathers</i>
Object Date	1728–30
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Les Baigneuses; Fête champêtre</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	22 3/4 x 26 in. (57.8 x 66 cm)
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: aquired through the generosity of Helen Foresman Spencer, F82-35/2

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Jean-Baptiste Pater is one of the more enigmatic painters of the early eighteenth century. Often overshadowed by his teacher Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), he has historically been dismissed as a painter whose work lacked originality and adhered too closely to his master’s example. Yet two paintings by Pater in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art—*The Garden Party* (*Fête Champêtre*) and *The Bathers*—invite a reassessment. Painted around 1725–30, these works capture a critical juncture in Pater’s brief career when he moved from Watteau’s visual lexicon of elegant leisure toward more erotically charged subjects. Although the two paintings are often considered pendants due to their nearly identical dimensions and shared provenance since at least 1889, they diverge sharply in subject, tone, and paint handling. Taken together, they offer a compelling window into the tension between civility and sensuality in Pater’s oeuvre, while exemplifying how his reuse of motifs and passages reflects a pragmatic, commercially savvy response to market demands—one that aligns with broader eighteenth-century practices of recombination and replication.¹

Pater was Watteau’s only documented pupil.² Both artists hailed from Valenciennes, and Pater likely first encountered Watteau around 1710. A short-lived apprenticeship ended in a falling out, prompting Pater to return to Valenciennes before reestablishing himself in Paris by 1718, where he worked for, among others, Watteau’s dealer Edme-François Gersaint. In the final months of Watteau’s life, the two reconciled, and Pater later acknowledged that the brief time spent with his mentor had a formative impact on his artistic development. After Watteau’s death in 1721, Pater devoted himself to supplying *fêtes galantes*—idealized visions of courtly leisure or amorous play—to meet a market eager for the genre. He was *agrée* (agreed, or admitted) by the Académie Royale in 1725 and *reçu* (received) in 1728 as a painter of *fêtes galantes* with his painting *Soldier’s Merrymaking* (Musée du Louvre), one of the few firmly datable works in his oeuvre.³ By 1729, he was living on the rue Quincampoix, where he remained until his death at age forty on July 25, 1736.

The Garden Party exemplifies Pater’s engagement with the *fête galante* tradition pioneered by Watteau. Set in a

clearing on the wooded edge of a park, the painting depicts elegantly dressed couples reclining, conversing, and exchanging flirtatious glances as they enjoy refreshments. Some lean toward one another and others feign resistance, while children play at their feet. The verdant setting, the rhythmic grouping of figures, and several specific motifs—including the African servant, the seated man with his knees apart, and the child viewed from behind—quote directly from Watteau’s visual vocabulary.⁴ The couple at far left, dressed in seventeenth-century Flemish attire, show that, like Watteau, Pater also drew inspiration from Flemish art, notably the work of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640).⁵ Here, Pater also calls on his own repertoire: the small dog at lower right and the woman in the green dress with a pink mantel are lifted directly from a version of his *L’Amour et le badinage* (*Love and Flirting*), their pose and placement nearly unchanged (Fig. 1). Here, such borrowings work not as static quotations but as flexible building blocks within a staged social performance.⁶



Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *L’Amour et le Badinage* (*Love and Flirting*), 1730s, oil on canvas, 16 5/16 x 21 7/8 in. (41.4 x 55.5 cm), private collection

Costume amplifies this theatricality. The women are clothed in fashionable silk gowns of the period, while the men wear pseudo-historical or masquerade garments evocative of the Comédie-Italienne. This shift between contemporary and theatrical dress, inherited from Watteau, heightens the sense of artifice and frames the scene as a carefully choreographed fantasy. The sculpture of a reclining female nude, presiding over the assembly from atop a monumental urn, could evoke the mythic presence of Venus, representing the idea of sensual love, in contrast to the more civilized amorous interactions taking place below.⁷ However, Christoph Vogtherr has suggested that this motif may belong more

squarely to the ornamental print tradition of early eighteenth-century France, where nymphs and urns symbolized natural abundance.⁸ Such figures appear frequently in the “arabesque” and “grotesque” designs of Jean Bérain the Elder (1640–1711) and Claude Audran III (1658–1734) (Fig. 2), which circulated widely among decorative artists and painters.



Fig. 2. Claude Audran III, *La Magnificence Royale*, 1729, oil on canvas, 84 5/8 x 84 5/8 in. (215 x 215 cm), Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, inv. no. MV8778. Photo: Christophe Fouin © RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin / Art Resource, NY

Pater’s link to this ornamental tradition was more than incidental. Like Watteau, Pater also worked in Audran’s workshop, supplying both arabesque decoration and figure designs.⁹ The younger artist absorbed a visual system in which motifs could migrate fluidly between fine and decorative arts, as seen in a recto/verso drawing featuring a design for a Rococo wall with a fountain, swans, and a male figure holding a staff (Fig. 3). Like Watteau, Pater used red chalk for his preparatory drawings, which often contained multiple figure types or ornamental elements awaiting placement: to be inserted, recombined, or altered as needed for a commission. David Pullins has argued that this modular approach allowed artists to build up or break down their compositions with ease.¹⁰ Figure studies functioned as visual currency—reentering compositions in different guises, whether destined for a decorative panel, a

cabinet picture, or an easel painting. In the case of *The Garden Party*, for instance, a drawing of two women seen from complementary vantage points (Fig. 4) finds visual echoes in the seated young girls facing opposite directions, underscoring the mobility and reuse of figural templates in Pater’s repertoire.¹¹



Fig. 3. Attributed to Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Rococo Wall Design with a Fountain and Swans* [verso], ca. 1729, red chalk and red chalk counterproof on two joined sheets of laid paper, sheet: 9 x 9 1/8 in. (22.9 x 23.2 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1996.25.1.b



Fig. 4. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Two Seated Ladies*, ca. 1720–30, red chalk, 5 5/8 x 9 in. (14.2 x 23 cm), Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands, inv. no. FI 151 (PK). On loan from the Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (former Koenigs collection) / Photo: Studio Tromp

The turbaned African servant at right is a recurrent motif in art from the seventeenth century into the eighteenth.¹² Watteau’s *Three Studies of a Young Black Man* (Fig. 5) provide a prototype for several of Pater’s fête galante figures; Pater likely had access to the same

sitter or to Watteau's studies.¹³ Many scholars have argued that such figures signify the "global turn" of eighteenth-century French art, intersecting with chinoiserie, turquerie, and other exoticizing modes.¹⁴ In Pater's case, the turbaned figure's repetition is especially striking: Florence Ingersoll-Smousse's catalogue raisonné shows him appearing with remarkable frequency and formal consistency, sometimes rendered White in other versions.¹⁵ As Pullins notes, such figures were deployed as compositional elements as much as individuated subjects. Here, the servant's elaborate green and pink silk livery merges type and individuality, contributing to the scene's cosmopolitan surface while reinforcing its hierarchical structure. Recent scholarship, notably by Pullins and Adrienne L. Childs, has framed such ornamental Blackness within the decorative arts as part of a broader, racialized visual economy—a context that warrants further investigation in Pater's work.¹⁶



Fig. 5. Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Three Studies of a Young Black Man*, ca. 1717, black, red, and white chalk and wash, 9 5/8 x 10 5/8 in. (24.3 x 27 cm), Musée du Louvre, inv. no. RF 28721, Recto. Photo: Suzanne Nagy. © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Suzanne Nagy / Art Resource, NY

If *The Garden Party* engages with the theatrical decorum of the *fête galante*, *The Bathers* moves into more explicitly erotic territory. A group of women in various states of undress frolic around a shallow pool in a secluded glade. On the left, a sculptural group of two cupids riding a dolphin, an emblem of Venus, crowns the baroque fountain that feeds the pool; at right, a stone pavilion closes the space. At the composition's center, a bather with her back to the viewer climbs from the

water, her chemise soaked and clinging—a pose Pater reused in multiple bathing scenes, including versions in the Rosenberg Collection (Fig. 6) and others.¹⁷ Technical examination of the Kansas City painting shows that this figure's drapery was originally shorter and more revealing, likely lengthened in the early nineteenth century for reasons of modesty (Fig. 29).¹⁸ Just like the woman and the dog in *The Garden Party*, the repetition of this central bather within Pater's body of work exemplifies the artist's broader practice of reusing motifs. Yet the dog serves as a decorative anchor within a convivial, public tableau, while here the bather's backward glance and wet drapery create a charged sense of exposure—heightened by the male onlooker (and arguably also the male servant) at the back right, whose gaze intrudes on this otherwise secluded scene. In *The Garden Party*, multiple male figures appear, but their presence feels integrated into the orchestrated interplay of the *fête*, rather than suggestive of illicit trespass.



Fig. 6. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Female Bathers Near a Fountain (Nymphs Bathing in a Pool)*, ca. 1730–33, oil on canvas, 51 x 38 in. (129.5 x 96.5 cm), Lent by the Michael L. Rosenberg Foundation to the Dallas Museum of Art, 32.2019.6

This male spectator in *The Bathers* recalls the Greek myth of Diana and Actaeon—in which Actaeon spies on

Diana's nymphs as they bathe—reframed here as a secular, libertine fantasy where secluded female spaces become spectacles for male (and, by extension, the viewer's) gaze.¹⁹ Pater's approach is relatively restrained: only one woman is topless, while others reveal their bodies through wet drapery or partial undress. This contrasts with Watteau's *Diana at Her Bath* (Musée du Louvre), where the mythological context legitimizes full nudity, and the famously chaste goddess is alone.²⁰ Pater makes no attempt to disguise the contemporaneity of his scene, signaling it through both the title—absent any mythological illusion—and the dress of the figures: some wear or discard elegant silks suggestive of fashionable Parisiennes, while others are clad more plainly, evoking rural types who might possibly have strayed into this pastoral enclave. The eroticism resides in suggestion, in the play of wet fabric, sidelong glances, and voyeuristic interruption rather than overt display. Unlike Watteau, who rarely depicted nudes outside of mythological contexts, Pater repeatedly returned to such scenes, producing more than fifty variations.

Both *The Garden Party* and *The Bathers* reflect an ideal of elite leisure in the 1720s and early 1730s, projecting aristocratic pleasure onto a fictional countryside that stages the rituals of conversation, seduction, and repose. Although they are linked in ownership, format, and certain compositional devices—for example, the matching cylindrical plinths at right that serve as beverage stations—the two paintings differ markedly in mood and theme. *The Garden Party* is public, performative, and rooted in codes of elite sociability; *The Bathers*, by contrast, plays more overtly to erotic fantasy, with its secluded setting, voyeuristic premise, and subtle cues of social mixing. The presence of both refined and rustic dress hints at a licentious pastoral ideal; one that blurs class boundaries for sensual effect. Their juxtaposition reflects the breadth of Pater's range and the adaptability of his compositional vocabulary. As Martin Eidelberg has observed, eighteenth-century interiors often paired dissimilar subjects for visual and conversational variety, and it is plausible that the Kansas City pair was acquired with such a display in mind.²¹

The two paintings also diverge stylistically. The palette of *The Bathers* is cooler than that of *The Garden Party*, the brushwork sketchier, and the forms more atmospheric. While dating Pater's works is notoriously difficult, such handling supports a slightly later date for *The Bathers*. Unless one counts the overdoor at the Petit Trianon in Versailles (ca. 1720; Fig. 7), whose tone and treatment are markedly different from *The Bathers*, Pater seems not

to have engaged with bathing subjects until around 1728–29.²² This suggests a date for *The Bathers* between 1728 and 1730, likely following Pater's reception at the Académie Royale in 1728 and after he completed *The Garden Party*.



Fig. 7. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Bath*, ca. 1720, oil on canvas (overdoor), 39 5/16 x 59 in. (100 x 150 cm), Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, inv. no. MV 8382

In both works, Pater's reuse of motifs—whether drawn from Watteau, from his own earlier compositions, or from ornamental design—signals his participation in a broader eighteenth-century visual economy. As Pullins has recently argued, this “cut and paste modality” was not merely a workaround for productivity but a well-established mode of invention shaped by workshop practice, collector preference, and commercial demand.²³ Figures, poses, and groupings circulated freely among easel painting, decorative arts, and ornamental prints, with artists often extracting studies from albums for reuse. Rather than aiming for originality in the modern sense, painters like Pater calibrated familiarity and novelty to suit a market that valued variation within recognizable forms.

Pater's ability to recontextualize familiar motifs for new emotional registers—whether the composed elegance of *The Garden Party* or the sensual intimacy of *The Bathers*—demonstrates not only artistic dexterity but also commercial acumen. His prodigious output in these years was likely fueled as much by personal urgency as by external demand, and his strategic recycling of imagery reflects a studio practice attuned to the expectations of collectors and dealers. Positioned between civility and seduction, tradition and adaptation, Pater's paintings speak to a period culture that prized pleasure and recognition as much as innovation.

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan
August 2025

Notes

1. In a recent publication, David Pullins redefines eighteenth-century French painting by showing how artists such as Watteau, Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755), and François Boucher (1703–1770) relied on a “cut-and-paste” approach, in which motifs circulated freely across media, contexts, and collaborative studios—a model that also illuminates Pater’s practice. See David Pullins, *The Mobile Image from Watteau to Boucher* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2024), esp. 95, in which the author discusses the idea of recycling and collaboration, positing that the redeployment of motifs and the imitation of extant passages originated by other artists constituted a practical solution to commercial demands rather than an erudite citation.
2. Pater initially studied with a local painter and then with his father, who was a sculptor, before working briefly under Watteau in Paris. The only catalogue raisonné and substantive account of Pater’s life remains Florence Ingersoll-Smouse, *Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater: Biographie et catalogue critiques, l’œuvre complète de l’artiste* (Paris: Les Beaux-arts, 1928).
3. For Pater’s *morceau de reception* (reception piece), see Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Une Fête Champêtre: Réjouissance de Soldats*, 1728, oil on canvas, 44 7/8 x 60 5/8 in. (114 x 154 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 7137, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010061409>.
4. Richard Rand noted this in his catalogue entry for this pair of paintings in *Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France*, exh. cat. (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1997), 101–3.
5. See, in particular, Peter Paul Rubens, *Rubens, Helena Fourment (1614–1673), and Their Son Frans (1633–1678)*, ca. 1635, oil on wood, 80 1/4 x 62 1/4 in. (203.8 x 158.1 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1981.238, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437532>.
6. Christoph Vogtherr has observed: “A pattern emerged that, for Pater, almost exclusively drawings of individual figures, mostly from the immediate foreground of his compositions, can be identified, but so far no composition drawings.” Vogtherr suggests that Pater would take a single motif here and there and insert it into a composition, thus creating something new. See Christoph Vogtherr et al., *Französische Gemälde I: Watteau, Pater, Lancret, Lajoüe* (Berlin: Akademie, 2011), 245–47.
7. I am grateful to Yuriko Jackall, who offered this suggestion via email on July 18, 2024. Jackall suggested it reminded her of the reclining stone statue in the background of Antoine Watteau, *Les Champs Elisées*, ca. 1720–21, oil on walnut panel, 12 1/4 x 16 1/8 in. (31.2 x 41 cm), Wallace Collection, London, P389, <https://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org:443/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=65323&viewType=detailView>.
8. I am grateful to Christoph Martin Vogtherr, who offered this suggestion via email on August 18, 2024. For examples of this type of ornamental design, see Jean Berain, engraved by Gérard Jean-Baptiste Scotin (1698–after 1755) and others, *Ornament Designs Invented by J. Berain*, 1711 or after, engraving, 20 5/16 x 16 in. (51.6 x 40.6 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 21.36.141, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/345898>.
9. Pullins, *Mobile Image*, 51, 56.
10. Pullins, *Mobile Image*, 99.
11. There is no definitive catalogue raisonnée of Pater’s drawings.
12. The motif of the exoticized Black figure in art has many seventeenth-century precedents, deftly unpacked in Judy Sund, “Middleman: Antoine Watteau and ‘Les Charmes de La Vie,’” *Art Bulletin* 91, no. 1 (2009): 59–82.
13. See, in particular, Jean Antoine Watteau, *La Conversation*, 1712–13, oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 24 in. (50.2 x 61 cm), Toledo Museum of Art, 1971.152, <https://emuseum.toledomuseum.org/objects/55384/la-conversation>.

14. See Sund, "Middleman," 66–76. See also David Pullins, "Watteau's Black Models," in *Univers de Watteau: Réseaux et influence autour d'Antoine Watteau (1684–1721)*, ed. Alex Mounier (Paris: L'Échelle de Jacob, 2022), 183–89.
15. See Ingersoll-Smouse, *Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater*, nos. 29, 30, 40, 41, 51, 200bis, pp. 241, 474, 506, 558, 561, 604. Pullins also makes this observation in "Watteau's Black Models," 189.
16. See Adrienne L. Childs, "Sugarboxes and Blackamoors: Ornamental Blackness in Early Meissen Porcelain," in Michael E. Yonan and Alden Cavanagh, eds., *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 159–77; and Childs, "A Blackamoor's Progress: The Ornamental Black Body in European Furniture," in Awam Amkpa, ed., *ReSignifications: European Blackamoors, Africana Readings* (Rome: Postcard SRL, 2017), 116–26, cited in Pullins, "Watteau's Black Models," 189n40.
17. See Ingersoll-Smouse, *Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater*, figs. 83, 86, 88, 89, 97–98, and 102, pp. 44–46, 144, 146–48, 153, 157.
18. See accompanying technical entry by paintings conservator Diana M. Jaskierny, "Jean-Baptiste Pater, The Bathers, 1728–30," <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.327.2088>.
19. Ingersoll-Smouse has proposed that Pater's bath scenes may have been commissioned by members of libertine societies or *cénacles galants* (gallant gatherings), aristocratic circles devoted to wit, sensuality, and unorthodox pleasures. See Ingersoll-Smouse, *Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater*, 14.
20. See Antoine Watteau, *Diana at Her Bath*, 1715/16, oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 39 3/4 in. (80 x 101 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010066605>.
21. In an email exchange with the author (August 8, 2024), Martin Eidelberg explained that the pairing of two dissimilar themes was not at all unusual for the period.

22. This overdoor painting from the dining room of the Petit Trianon, commissioned by Louis XV, is one of Pater's earliest known works. It had previously been attributed to Watteau on stylistic grounds. See the object entry in the collections database, "Le Bain," POP: la plateforme ouverte du patrimoine, Ministère de la Culture, updated February 8, 2024, <https://pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/joconde/000PE006535>.

23. Pullins, *Mobile Image*, 1.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Garden Party*, 1725–30

Technical Entry

Citation

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Diana M. Jaskierny, "Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Garden Party* (*Fête Champêtre*), 1725–30," 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, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.326.2088>.

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The Garden Party (*Fête Champêtre*), painted by Jean-Baptiste Pater, demonstrates the artist's combination of fine detail and active brushwork. In the painting, groups of figures interact dynamically. They wear rich fabric, both in color and texture, which contrasts with the soft, diffuse background.

Attached to a five-member stretcher, the painting appears to have been executed on a twill-weave canvas; however, weave interference from an early lining has complicated positively identifying the canvas weave. Although the tacking margins are no longer extant, likely removed during the lining process, cusping along the top, left, and right sides indicates that the painting retains approximately its original dimensions.¹

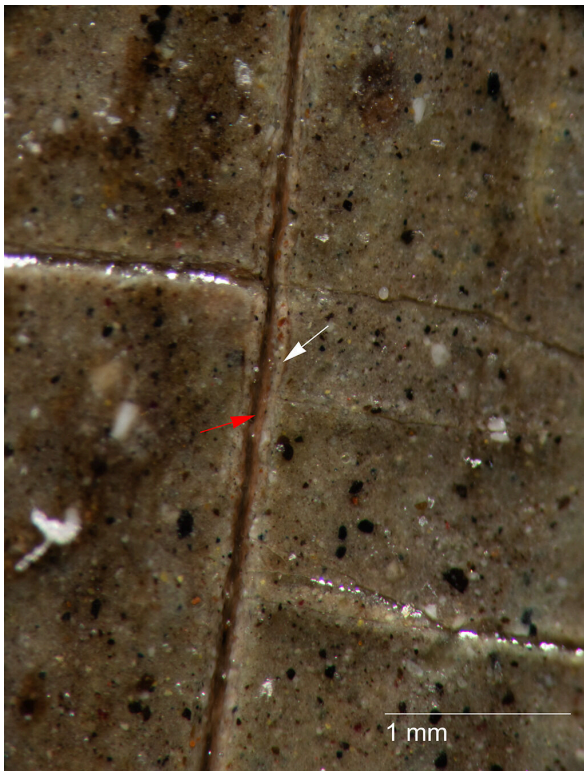


Fig. 8. Photomicrograph of a crack in the proper right background revealing the peach ground layer (red arrow) and off-white ground layer (white arrow), *The Garden Party* (1725-30)



Fig. 9. Photomicrograph in raking light of incised lines in the sky, *The Garden Party* (1725-30)

The canvas appears to have been prepared with a double ground of pale earth red or peach, followed by an off-white layer.² The lower peach layer is visible in few areas, such as along the original edges and in isolated cracks and small losses (Fig. 8). The luminosity of the upper ground layer remains visible throughout the composition. Across the majority of the composition, a thin semitransparent brown wash provides a warm tone beneath the foreground and trees.³ Underlying, sweeping marks near the left edge of sky (Fig. 9) appear to be the result of the ground application with a broad spatula, although which ground layer cannot be determined.



Fig. 10. Detail of the unfinished foot of the proper left attendant, exposing the painted underdrawing, *The Garden Party* (1725-30)

Infrared reflectography reveals a faint underdrawing, with a fluid medium used in the background and exterior figures, and a thin, dry medium used within the central figures. In the right-side foreground, the attendant's proper left foot was left unpainted, revealing Pater's sketching process (Fig. 10). Similarly, near the center of the composition, the initial sketch

for the kneeling figure's leg can be discerned beneath glazes of brown paint applied to develop the folds and translucent shadows of the clothing (Fig. 11). The underdrawing is difficult to see in areas that are more thickly or opaquely painted, but glimpses can be found, such as in the hand of the central female figure and the fold of fabric where she pinches her gown (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11. Photomicrograph of the central kneeling figure, illustrating the layering structure of the brown wash underpainting, *The Garden Party* (1725–30)



Fig. 12. Photomicrograph of the underdrawing in the central female figure's hand and gown, *The Garden Party* (1725–30)

With the underdrawing in place, Pater laid in brown washes to roughly block in the scene. He then developed the figures with opaque layers. Brown washes remain visible in many of the faces, possibly an intentional technique used to create shadows.

However, some of this may also be due to abrasion of the upper paint layer. Dashes of an opaque red earth pigment were used to create deeper shadows, such as for creases in the neck, while a translucent red lake pigment was used to enhance the facial features. The eye and lashes of the foreground girl were created with two flicks of red lake (Fig. 13).⁴ Similarly, opaque red paint was added to emphasize the contours of the figures, as is seen in the fingers of Figure 12. Each of these details in the uppermost paint layer appear to be final touches to the composition. The background was likely painted concurrently with the figures or after the figures. In much of the composition, the background paint was brought close to but does not touch the figures, while in a few locations, there is a slight overlap onto the figures as the background was refined.



Fig. 13. Photomicrograph of the foreground girl's face, illustrating the use of translucent red lake and opaque red earth pigments, *The Garden Party* (1725–30)

A wide variety of brushwork is found throughout the composition. Many fabric textures were formed with painterly strokes, as, for example, in the white ruffles around the male figure's neck (Fig. 14), while structured garments have a draftsman-like quality, such as in the boning in the bodice of the foreground

girl (Fig. 15). Though most figures are fully rendered, in some instances Pater economically utilized the lower washes as both shadows and middle tones, while highlights were added to help define the shapes. An obvious example of this can be seen in the central woman's shoe, where apart from the brown wash of the foreground, only a few lines of yellow form the structure and design (Fig. 16).



Fig. 14. Photomicrograph of the proper left male figure and the painterly ruffles of his shirt, *The Garden Party* (1725-30)

The majority of the painting was completed with wet-over-dry or wet-over-wet paint application. The flowers in the female figures' hair and in the foreground basket, however, appear to be more intentionally blended with wet-into-wet application, as Pater dragged colors together. This is especially noticeable when comparing the difference in paint applications between the loosely painted flowers and the structured basket in the foreground (Fig. 17). Here the artist pulled the highlights of the flowers over and through the lower saturated colors. In contrast, the weave of the basket does not appear to have intentional blending, as it was developed with pale yellow and muted orange lines, each under one millimeter wide.

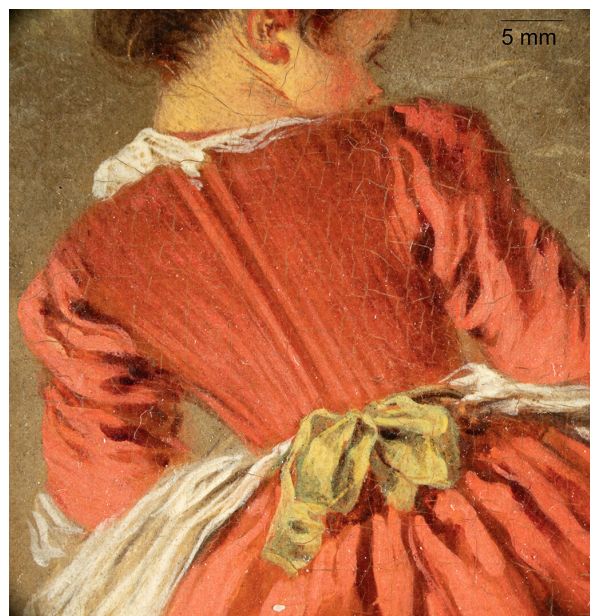


Fig. 15. Photomicrograph of the foreground girl's bodice, *The Garden Party* (1725-30)



Fig. 16. Photomicrograph of the central female figure, illustrating the use of the brown underpainting and opaque yellow highlights to render her shoe, *The Garden Party* (1725-30)

Pater used atmospheric perspective to create a hazy appearance for the distant foliage by means of pale colors and less defined forms. He gradually added greater detail and color saturation for elements approaching the foreground.⁵ Leaves of the trees range from greens to oranges, with red lake used sparingly to intensify the richness in the shadows. However, the overall color profile of the foliage may have shifted with age or damage. Many of the leaves in the final layer appear granular, with coarse white, black, and orange pigment particles, indicating that a sensitive pigment in the foliage is no longer present (Fig. 18). Whether the altered appearance was caused

through abrasion or fading, it is difficult to speculate how the foliage appeared when it was freshly painted.



Fig. 17. Photomicrograph of basket and flowers, illustrating varying paint applications, *The Garden Party* (1725–30)

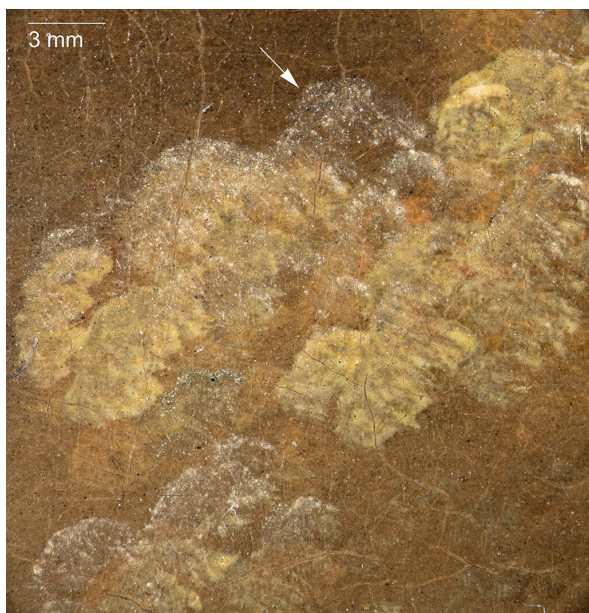


Fig. 18. Photomicrograph of abraded leaves, *The Garden Party* (1725–30)

The painting is overall in good condition after having undergone multiple conservation campaigns throughout its history. Prior to entering the Nelson-Atkins collection, the painting was glue-paste lined, a structural treatment that continues to support the original canvas. In 1982, after entering the collection, a discolored varnish layer was removed and fills at the

turnover edges were adjusted, and in some areas, the original canvas edges were revealed.⁶ Despite widespread abrasion in the figures' faces and in the background foliage, there is limited retouching present, with most from the 1982 campaign along the turnover edges and in isolated losses within the picture plane.

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Notes

1. The picture plane was increased between three and five millimeters on the top, bottom, and right edges during the lining process and approximately ten centimeters on the left edge near the top. Muted pink fill material and retouching covers the expanded space.
2. A similar double ground was found on *Fête Galante* (ca. 1721–25; National Gallery, London), with an “orange-red followed by a warm buff colour.” Humphrey Wine, *The Eighteenth Century French Paintings* (London: National Gallery, 2018), 364.
3. This wash layer appears to be present in all areas except beneath the upper left sky. Within the sky, there do not appear to be any washes between the off-white ground and the final paint layer.
4. No elemental analysis has been completed to identify the pigments.
5. Similar descriptions of haziness or “foggy” backgrounds have been noted in other Pater paintings dated to the late 1720s. Christoph Martin Vogtherr, *Watteau at the Wallace Collection* (London: Wallace Collection, 2011), 133.
6. Forrest R. Bailey, October 22, 1982, treatment report, NAMA conservation file, no. F82-35/1.

Documentation

Citation

Chicago:

Glynnis Napier Stevenson, “Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Garden Party* (*Fête Champêtre*), 1725–30,”

documentation 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, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.326.4033>.

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Stevenson, Glynnis Napier. "Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Garden Party (Fête Champêtre)*, 1725–30" 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, 2025. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.326.4033.

Provenance

Eugène Secrétan (1836–1899), Paris, by March–July 13, 1889 [1];

Purchased along with its pendant at his sale, *Seventeen Ancient and Modern Pictures of the Highest Importance, Until Recently Forming Part of the Celebrated Secrétan Collection*, Christie, Manson, and Woods, London, July 13, 1889, no. 3, as *A Fete Champetre [sic]*, by Boussod, Valadon et Cie., Paris, stock no. 19985 or 19986, as *Fête champêtre*, July 15–December 3, 1889 [2];

Purchased from Boussod, Valadon, et Cie., by Lacroix, Paris, December 3, 1889 [3];

Marcel Bernstein (1840–1896), Paris, by June 8, 1892–1896;

Inherited by his wife Ida Bernstein (née Seligman, 1854–1921), or by descent to his son, Henry (1876–1953) Bernstein, Paris, 1896–1899;

Purchased from Ida Bernstein or Henry Bernstein by Ernest Gimpel, Paris, January 27, 1899–1901 [4];

Purchased from Gimpel by François "Ernest" Cronier (1840–1905), Paris, March 22, 1901–before August 27, 1905 [5];

Returned by Cronier to Ernest Gimpel and Wildenstein, as *Rustic Pleasures*, before August 27, 1905–March 1906 [6];

Purchased from Ernest Gimpel and Wildenstein by John Woodruff (1850–1920) and Kate (née Seney, 1868–1943) Simpson, New York, March 1906–May 16, 1920 [7];

Purchased from the estate of John Woodruff Simpson by Wildenstein and Co., New York, stock no. 1008d, 1921–September 14, 1982 [8];

Purchased from Wildenstein by The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1982.

Notes

[1] Secrétan's copper syndicate collapsed in March 1889. See email from Dr. Diana Kostyrko, Australian National University, to Meghan Gray, NAMA, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files. Secrétan made his first acquisitions around 1876 but only began collecting old master paintings in 1880. Due to the generalized painting titles (like *Fête champêtre*) used in auction catalogues at the time, it is impossible to identify the museum's painting prior to 1889. See email from Pamela Guerdat, PhD candidate at University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, to Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, August 11, 2021, NAMA curatorial files.

[2] The paintings were both titled *A Fete Champetre* in the 1889 Secrétan sales catalogue. See "Goupil et Cie/Boussod, Valadon and Co. Stock Books, Series II. Galerie Boussod, Valadon Stock Books, 1875–1919, Livre no. 12, 1887–1891," p. 115, stock no. 19985 or 19986, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. The pair was purchased together, and it is not clear from the stock books which painting was assigned which stock number. They were reserved for the July 13, 1889, London sale of the collection by Secrétan's English creditors. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[3] Several possibilities for "Lacroix" are French painter Tristán Lacroix (1849–1914), active in Argentina from the end of the nineteenth century [See María Isabel Baldasarre, "Buenos Aires: An Art Metropolis in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2017): <https://doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2017.16.1.2>]; Gaston Lacroix (1862–1909), an industrialist who lived at 104, avenue des Champs Elysées; or Gaston Lacroix, who earned his law degree in Toulouse in 1895. All three bought pictures from Boussod, Valadon, et Cie.

[4] Henry Bernstein's biographers note that on January 27, 1899, either Henry or his mother Ida sold the Pater pendants to Gimpel. By this time, Henry and Ida were selling parts of the collection developed by Marcel Bernstein. Georges Bernstein Gruber and Gilbert Maurin, *Bernstein, le magnifique: cinquante ans*

de théâtre, de passions et de vie parisienne (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1988), 18.

[5] See René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966), 305–06. Cronier returned the Pater pendants to Gimpel sometime before his suicide and estate sale in 1905. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[6] Gimpel went into business with Nathan and Ernest Wildenstein, and they opened their New York branch in 1902. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[7] See email from Joseph Baillio, Senior Vice President, Wildenstein and Company, to Meghan Gray, NAMA, November 9, 2016, NAMA curatorial files.

[8] See email from Baillio to Gray, November 9, 2016, NAMA curatorial files. In the Pater catalogue raisonné by Ingersoll-Smouse, the paintings are listed as in the collection Mrs. John Woodruff Simpson (née Katherine “Kate” Seney, 1868–1943), New York. See Florence Ingersoll-Smouse, *Pater* (Paris: Les beaux-arts, Édition d’études et de documents, 1928), no. 51, pp. 42, 120. Simpson often lent the paintings to exhibitions in New York, including in 1915 at the Benjamin Altman Gallery. Katherine Seney Simpson and her daughter, Jean Walker Simpson (1897–1980), inherited the bulk of the Woodruff estate and likely facilitated the sale of art to Wildenstein.

Related Works

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Gathering in a Park*, 1719–20, oil on canvas, 25 9/16 x 31 7/8 in. (65 x 81 cm), Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil, MASP.00052.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Dance* and *The Swing*, ca. 1720s, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 39 3/8 in. (76.8 x 100 cm), sold at *Collection Louis Grandchamp des Raux: Le choix de l’élégance En association avec Artcurial*, Sotheby’s, Paris, March 26, 2015, lot 10.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Rest in the Park*, ca. 1728, oil on canvas, 21 7/8 x 25 1/4 in. (55.6 x 64.1 cm), Frick Pittsburgh Museums and Gardens, 1970.44.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Fête Galante*, ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 24 x 33 in. (61 x 83.8 cm), English Heritage, Kenwood House, London, IBK 954.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Fête Galante*, ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 24 x 33 in. (61 x 83.8 cm), English Heritage, Kenwood House, London, IBK 955.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Fête in a Park*, ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 20 3/4 x 25 3/8 in. (52.7 x 64.4 cm), Wallace Collection, London, P424.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Fête Galante with Figures in a Park: “Amour et Badinage”*, 1730s, oil on canvas, 27 1/2 x 35 1/2 in. (69.9 x 90.2 cm), sold at *Important Old Master Paintings*, Sotheby’s, New York, January 26, 2007, lot 98.

Exhibitions

Cents Chefs-d’œuvre des collections françaises et étrangères, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, June 8–July 29, 1892, no. 31, as *Le Goûter*.

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A Bountiful Decade: Selected Acquisitions 1977–1987, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1987, no. 51, as *Le Goûter*.

Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, October 4, 1997–January 4, 1998; The Toledo Museum of Art, OH, February 15–May 10, 1998; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, May 31–August 23, 1998, no. 7, as *The Picnic*.

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Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Bathers*, 1728–30

Technical Entry

Citation

Chicago:

Diana M. Jaskierny, "Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Bathers*, 1728–30," 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, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.327.2088>.

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Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2025. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.327.2088.

The Bathers, by Jean-Baptiste Pater, reveals much of the artist's planning process through an elaborate underdrawing that he modified as he worked through wash-like layers and lively brushwork. The painting was executed on a plain-weave canvas and is attached to a five-member stretcher. Though the tacking margins were removed, likely during an early lining process, pronounced cusping is visible throughout the perimeter of the picture plane, indicating that the painting was not significantly altered in format or dimensions.¹

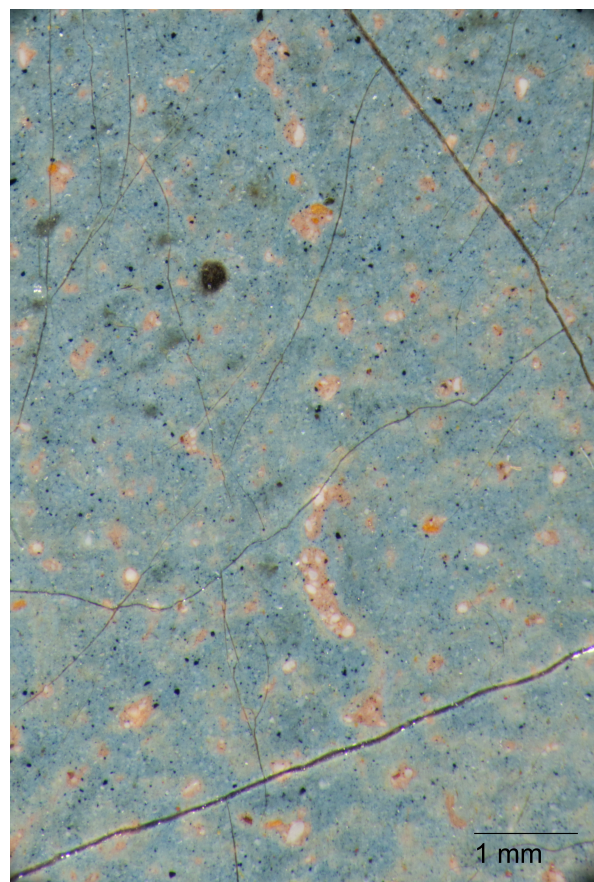


Fig. 19. Photomicrograph of the red-earth ground layer visible through abrasion in the sky, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

It is not entirely clear how the ground layer was applied or what the layer structure is. In many areas where the ground is visible, throughout much of the sky and some of the foreground, it appears to be a pale red-earth tone (Fig. 19). However, in the architecture and in many figures, there appears to be

an off-white layer on top of the red-earth ground. It is possible that Pater applied a red-earth ground across the entirety of the canvas, while the off-white layer was used to block in the active parts of the composition.



Fig. 20. Infrared reflectograph captured at 1950 nanometers, with a white arrow indicating the fluid medium and a black arrow indicating the dry medium, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

Infrared reflectography reveals that two methods were used when developing the underlying drawing. Within the background, both the trees and the tall arch were sketched using a fluid medium, likely applied by brush based on the variation of line thickness. In contrast, the drawing of the figures and much of the foreground was formed with fine lines of a dry medium such as charcoal (Fig. 20). Throughout the painting, due to the thin application of paint, some of these fine lines remain visible in standard light, such as around the central figure's feet (Fig. 21).

The underdrawing reveals that multiple changes were made by the artist using both types of media. The fluid underdrawing of the background confirms that the original location of the arch's opening was shifted slightly to the left of where Pater ultimately painted it (Fig. 22). Within the figures, more adjustments were made, specifically with the orientation of some heads. The central figure who rises the tallest among the cluster of figures was shifted, as indicated by the oval that once marked the position of her head, with a horizontal line designating the brow placement. Additionally, the second figure from the left edge was also adjusted, with her head turning toward the water as opposed to the lower left corner (Fig. 23). It is

possible that Pater made this latter modification to avoid repetitive poses in relation to the right-most figure and the seated central figure, each with their heads positioned in a similar manner.



Fig. 21. Photomicrograph of the underdrawing visible in standard light of the original foot placement for the female figure in the yellow skirt, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

While these changes demonstrate that Pater continued to work out his composition into the painting stage, the artist was also known for his formulaic approach to figures and architecture. Frequently reusing figures between paintings, his work has been described as “a theme with few variations.”² An example of this can be found in the Nelson-Atkins paintings. In *The Bathers*, the head of the figure closest to the foreground is also present in *The Garden Party* (1725–30), though in the latter, she is portrayed as a young girl, while in the former she appears to be an adult (Fig. 24). In the painting *Bathing Party in a Park* (Fig. 25), a similar group of figures in the lower right corner mimics the group found in the lower right corner of the Nelson-Atkins version, *The Bathers*. In this instance, however, the figure previously

in question has light hair and a slightly different face (Fig. 26).



Fig. 22. Detail of arch in the infrared reflectogram, captured at 1950 nanometers (left) and in standard light (right), illustrating the changed position, with the black arrows indicating the original drawn placement and the white arrows indicating the final painted placement, *The Bathers* (1728–30)



Fig. 23. Details of figures in the infrared reflectogram, captured at 1950 nanometers (left) and in standard light (right), illustrating the changed positions of heads, with arrows indicating the original drawn placements, *The Bathers* (1728–30)



Fig. 24. Details of the girl in *The Garden Party* (left; 1725–30) and the woman in *The Bathers* (right; 1728–30), illustrating the similarities in figures



Fig. 25. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Bathing Party in a Park*, ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 25 1/4 x 33 7/16 in. (64.2 x 85 cm), The Wallace Collection, London, P426. Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0. The dotted lines surround a group of figures which is similar to that in *The Bathers* in the Nelson-Atkins collection.



Fig. 26. Comparison of the foreground woman in *Bathing Party in a Park* (left; The Wallace Collection, London; ca. 1730) and of the foreground woman in *The Bathers* (right; the Nelson-Atkins; 1728–30)

One change to the Nelson-Atkins composition that was not made by the artist involves the central, kneeling woman in white, who turns backwards to look toward the viewer. As with other figures, she has also been repeated in other paintings and can be found in *The Bathing Party* (Fig. 27). However, a notable difference

exists in the depiction of the lower portion of clothing, with the version in the Toledo Museum of Art being slightly more revealing in its length (Fig. 28).³ Through microscopy, a slight variation to the paint application of the Nelson-Atkins figure's drapery was observed.⁴ Further investigation through infrared reflectography confirms that much of the drapery covering the Nelson-Atkins figure's lower half is a later addition, indicated by the overpaint's darker appearance in the infrared reflectogram (Fig. 29). In comparison to his teacher, Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), Pater often painted playful scenes of figures with exposed bodies and more suggestive poses.⁵ The paint of this added fabric is slightly discolored in comparison to the original paint, and therefore it is unlikely that it was a change made by Pater himself. Rather, it is presumed that an early restoration was completed to create a more modest figure. Interestingly, the other suggestive bathers appear to have been left unaltered.



Fig. 27. Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Bathing Party*, early 18th century, oil on canvas, 26 1/4 x 32 1/4 in. (66.8 x 81.9 cm), Toledo Museum of Art, 1954.28

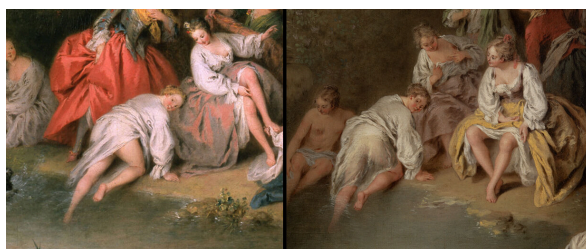


Fig. 28. Comparison of the central figure in *The Bathing Party* (left; Toledo Museum of Art, T1954.28) and the central figure in *The Bathers* (right; the Nelson-Atkins; 1728–30)

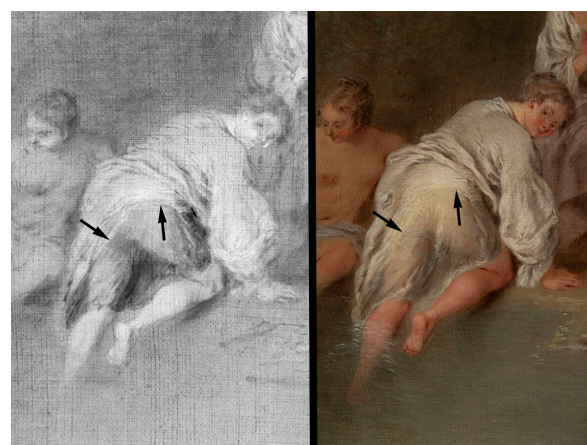


Fig. 29. Detail of central kneeling figure in the infrared reflectogram, captured at 1950 nanometers (left) and in standard light (right), revealing overpaint, with the black arrows indicating where the original paint likely ended, *The Bathers* (1728–30)



Fig. 30. Photomicrograph of the foreground woman's red skirt, showing the thin red wash, deeper red shadows, and opaque red highlights, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

With active, loose brushwork and overall thin passages, the application of paint in *The Bathers* often resembles that of a painted sketch⁶ in comparison to the brushwork found on *The Garden Party*. The fabric, specifically that of the women's skirts, was first blocked in with a thin wash, as is found in the figure nearest to the viewer. Here, the thin red wash remains clearly visible, and the texture of the canvas weave is prominent beneath it. Pater then added some deeper reds for shadows before adding an opaque red admixture to create folds and volume in the fabric (Fig. 30). To create the rich blue fabric for the skirt on the figure just right of center, a gray-brown wash was applied first, and then the folds were developed with black shadows and green-blue highlights (Fig. 31).



Fig. 31. Photomicrograph of the center-right woman's blue skirt, showing the thin gray-brown wash, deeper black shadows, and green-blue highlights, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

In contrast to the animated brushwork of the clothing, the figures' heads were delicately painted with small brushes, sometimes producing lines as thin as one tenth of a millimeter. The features of the faces were formed with fine lines of brown and red paint, as is seen in the central kneeling figure (Fig. 32). Here the hair was constructed with short, thin brushstrokes, alternating highlights and shadows while allowing a lower brown wash to remain visible. Through the thinly painted hair, glimpses of underdrawing peek around the temple and ear, adding to the depth of the form.



Fig. 32. Photomicrograph of the face of the central kneeling woman, illustrating the fine brushwork, *The Bathers* (1728–30)

The painting is in fair condition and has undergone multiple conservation campaigns. Likely early in its history, the painting was glue-paste lined, which appears to have extended the overall picture plane size by a few millimeters on each side. Though much of the translucency of the bathing scene is a result of the artist's technique, abrasion is widespread across the painting. A few areas with small losses have been retouched, with the majority of the restoration occurring along the edges and within the architecture in the proper left background.⁷

Diana M. Jaskierny
June 2025

Notes

1. Former conservator Forrest Bailey speculated that portions of the original tacking margins may now extend onto the picture plane due to the slight increase in size; however, this is difficult to confirm due to the extensive fill material and retouching around the edges. In the radiograph, there are no clear tack holes visible to indicate that the tacking margins are present. Forrest R. Bailey, August 25, 1982, examination report, NAMA conservation file, no. F82-35/2.
2. David Wakefield, *French Eighteenth-Century Painting* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1984), 36.
3. Another similar variation of this figure more closely resembling that of the Toledo Museum of Art can be found in the collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art: *Les Baigneuses (Female Bathers in a Landscape)*, ca. 1735, <https://www.artsbma.org/collection/les-baigneuses-female-bathers-in-a-landscape/>.
4. Though the garment appears to be somewhat transparent, when comparing the painting today to the image reproduced in the 1928 catalogue raisonné, it appears this restoration has increased in transparency with age. Likely, it appeared more opaque and cohesive with the figure when it was first added. Florence Ingersoll-Smouse, *Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater: Biographie et catalogue critiques, l'œuvre complète de l'artiste* (Paris: Les Beaux-arts, 1928), 121.
5. Pierre Schneider, *The World of Watteau: 1684–1721* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1967), 76, 79–80.
6. Pater's works are sometimes described as being "executed in the manner of a sketch," partially because of the speed in which he was creating the repetitious imagery, as found in *The Bathers*. Patrick Ramade and Martin Eidelberg, *Watteau et la fête galante*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004), 186.
7. Forrest R. Bailey, October 20, 1982, treatment report, NAMA conservation file, no. F82-35/2.

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Provenance

Eugène Secrétan (1836–1899), Paris, by March 1889–July 13, 1889 [1];

Purchased along with its pendant at his sale, *Seventeen Ancient and Modern Pictures of the Highest Importance, Until Recently Forming Part of the Celebrated Secrétan Collection*, Christie, Manson, and Woods, London, July 13, 1889, no. 4, erroneously as *A Fete Champetre* [sic], by Boussod, Valadon, et Cie., Paris, stock no. 19985 or 19986, as *Fête champêtre*, July 15–December 3, 1889 [2];

Purchased from Boussod, Valadon, et Cie., by Lacroix, Paris, December 3, 1889 [3];

Marcel Bernstein (1840–1896), Paris, by June 8, 1892–1896;

Inherited by his wife Ida Bernstein (née Seligman, 1854–1921), or by descent to his son, Henry Bernstein (1876–1953), Paris, 1896–1899;

Purchased from Ida Bernstein or Henry Bernstein by Ernest Gimpel, Paris, January 27, 1899–1901 [4];

Purchased from Gimpel by François "Ernest" Cronier (ca. 1840–1905), Paris, March 22, 1901–before August 27, 1905 [5];

Returned by Cronier to Ernest Gimpel and Wildenstein, as *The Bath*, before August 27, 1905–March 1906 [6];

Purchased from Ernest Gimpel and Wildenstein by John Woodruff (1850–1920) and Kate (née Seney, 1868–

1943) Simpson, New York, March 1906–May 16, 1920 [7];

Purchased from the estate of John Woodruff Simpson by Wildenstein and Co., New York, stock no. 1007, 1921–September 14, 1982 [8];

Purchased from Wildenstein by The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1982.

Notes

[1] Secrétan's copper syndicate collapsed in March 1889. See email from Dr. Diana Kostyrko, Australian National University, to Meghan Gray, NAMA, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files. Secrétan made his first acquisitions around 1876 but only began collecting old master paintings in 1880. Due to the generalized painting titles (like *Fête champêtre*) used in auction catalogues at the time, it is impossible to identify the museum's painting prior to 1889. See email from Pamella Guerdat, PhD candidate at University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, to Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, August 11, 2021, NAMA curatorial files.

[2] The paintings were both titled *A Fete Champetre* in the 1889 Secrétan sales catalogue. See "Goupil et Cie/Boussod, Valadon, and Co. Stock Books, Series II. Galerie Boussod, Valadon Stock Books, 1875–1919, Livre no. 12, 1887–1891," p. 115, stock no. 19985 or 19986, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. The pair was purchased together, and it is not clear from the stock books which painting was assigned which stock number. They were reserved for the July 13, 1889, London sale of the collection by Secrétan's English creditors. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[3] Several possibilities for "Lacroix" are French painter Tristán Lacroix (1849–1914), active in Argentina from the end of the nineteenth century [See María Isabel Baldasarre, "Buenos Aires: An Art Metropolis in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2017): <https://doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2017.16.1.2>]; Gaston Lacroix (1862–1909), an industrialist who lived at 104, avenue des Champs Élysées; or Gaston Lacroix, who earned his law degree in Toulouse in 1895. All three bought pictures from Boussod, Valadon, et Cie.

[4] Henry Bernstein's biographers note that on January 27, 1899, either Henry or his mother Ida sold the Pater pendants to Gimpel. By this time, Henry and Ida were selling of parts of the collection created by Marcel Bernstein. Georges Bernstein Gruber and

Gilbert Maurin, *Bernstein, le magnifique: cinquante ans de théâtre, de passions et de vie parisienne* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1988), 18.

[5] See René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966), 305–06. Cronier returned the Pater pendants to Gimpel sometime before his suicide and estate sale in 1905. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[6] Gimpel went into business with Nathan and Ernest Wildenstein, and they opened their New York branch in 1902. See email from Kostyrko to Gray, April 6, 2017, NAMA curatorial files.

[7] See email from Joseph Baillio, Senior Vice President, Wildenstein and Company, to Meghan Gray, NAMA, November 9, 2016, NAMA curatorial files.

[8] See email from Baillio to Gray, November 9, 2016, NAMA curatorial files. In the Pater catalogue raisonné by Ingersoll-Smouse, the paintings are listed as in the collection Mrs. John Woodruff Simpson (née Katherine "Kate" Seney, 1868–1943), New York. See Florence Ingersoll-Smouse, *Pater* (Paris: Les beaux-arts, Édition d'études et de documents, 1928), no. 51, pp. 42, 120. Simpson often lent the paintings to exhibitions in New York, including in 1915 at the Benjamin Altman Gallery. Katherine Seney Simpson and her daughter, Jean Walker Simpson (1897–1980), inherited the bulk of the Woodruff estate and likely facilitated the sale of art to Wildenstein.

Related Works

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Ladies Bathing*, about 1728/29, oil on canvas, 23 x 28 in. (58.6 x 71 cm), National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, NG 441.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Bathing Party in a Park*, ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 25 1/4 x 33 1/2 in. (64.2 x 85 cm), The Wallace Collection, London, P426.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Female Bathers in a Landscape*, about 1735, oil on canvas, 51 1/4 x 38 1/4 in. (130.2 x 97.2 cm), Birmingham Museum of Art, Eugenia Woodward Hitt Collection, 1991.248.

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *The Bathing Party*, early 18th Century, oil on canvas, 26 1/4 x 32 1/4 in. (66.8 x 81.9 cm), Toledo Museum of Art, Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1954.28.

Exhibitions

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Loan Exhibition of Fifty-nine Masterpieces of Ancient and Modern Schools, Benjamin Altman Gallery, New York, March 24–April 4, 1915, no. 39, as *Le Bain*.

Exposition Rococo: poésie et rêve de la peinture française au XVIIIe siècle, Otani Museum, Nishinomiya, Japan, January 14–February 12, 1978, no. 4, as *Les Baigneuses*.

Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, October 4, 1997–January 4, 1998; The Toledo Museum of Art, OH, February 15–May 10, 1998; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, May 31–August 23, 1998, no. 8, as *The Bathers*.

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F. G., "La Vente Secrétan a [sic] Londres," *Le Gaulois*, no. 2503 (July 14, 1889): 2, as *Fête champêtre près d'une pièce d'eau*.

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