Self-Promotion in Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's 1785 *Self-Portrait with Two Students*

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When Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803) submitted her monumental *Self-Portrait with Two Students* to the 1785 Salon exhibition sponsored by the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, she presented herself to a large and diverse Parisian audience as a protean figure, appearing not only as an ambitious portraitist but also in the guise of a fashionable sitter (Fig. 1).[1] Measuring more than six feet tall, the striking image depicts Labille-Guiard's elaborately attired full-length figure seated in a carefully articulated interior with two younger women standing behind her. Clearly describing the space as the studio of a professional artist, a large canvas rests on an unadorned wooden easel and dominates the left side of the composition. A utilitarian paint box on the left and a chalk holder and dusty rag on the right further indicate the material labor of painting. Yet incongruous signs of opulence abound in features such as the velvet-upholstered taboret, in the current *style Louis XVI,* and, most dramatically, Labille-Guiard's attire. Here, Labille-Guiard complicates her image as a hardworking artist by dressing as an elegant woman of means, whose revealing neckline, satin gown, and trimmings of feather and lace borrow directly from the latest fashion plates.

As we will see, this grandly multifaceted *Self-Portrait* necessitated considerable invention. Responding, in part, to the dearth of precedents for female self-portraiture in the history of French painting, Labille-Guiard drew on an uncommonly wide range of sources and genres in an effort to picture herself to best advantage.[2] Thus, even as it echoes old master traditions, the *Self-Portrait* taints these conventions with tinges of alluring sexuality and brash commerce. Moreover, its strategically enticing composition evokes the effect of a luxury boutique, as it calls out for both the admiration of spectators and the financial support of a paying clientele.

More specifically, the *Self-Portrait* played an important role in Labille-Guiard's lifelong attempt to make the most of her fraught position as a professional woman artist. In the 1780s, an extraordinary number of women were establishing reputations among the most accomplished, and most talked-about, contributors to Parisian art exhibitions, especially in the realm of portraiture. However, the increasing significance of public notice in advancing artists' careers placed these women in a particularly delicate position: on the one hand, an aspiring portraitist had to catch the attention of critics and audiences in order to attract potential sitters, but, on the other hand, reigning standards of bourgeois virtue prohibited women from soliciting such interest. With the *Self-Portrait,* Labille-Guiard opted not to avoid but rather to highlight the contradictions that riddled both her ambitions and her reception. In so doing, she capitalized on the era's celebration of calculated transgression and ultimately won the approbation of Salon-goers, critics, and clients alike.

Although the painting is now widely reproduced, having recently been featured on book covers and included in surveys of women artists as well as standard art history textbooks, its complex portrayal of Labille-Guiard and her students has only begun to be addressed.[3] Indeed, despite her many notable contributions to the art and politics of the ancien régime and the French Revolution, Labille-Guiard has received remarkably little scholarly attention.[4] While several authors have contributed to the literature by situating Labille-Guiard in the context of other women artists, examining the gendered rhetoric of her critical reception or individual paintings, none has focused primarily on the *Self-Portrait.*[5]

My study of this work builds on the resurgent interest in women as artists and patrons in eighteenth-century France and also suggests new directions for research in the field.[6] Notably, institutions and influences that are often overlooked in histories of eighteenth-century French art emerge as central to the careers of women artists. These include the commercial world of shops and fashion and the alternative exhibition spaces that welcomed female artists at a time when the academy limited women's membership. Just such a synthetic approach may allow us to recover the lost stories of women artists while also mapping some of the competing social and aesthetic interests that shaped the cultural geography of eighteenth-century Paris.[7] In fact, the peculiar situation of women artists sometimes engendered unexpected alliances among the artists, critics, and government administrators who vied for power in the turbulent final decades of the ancien régime. Caught up in the open contests, hidden intrigues, and subversive maneuvers that roiled the art institutions of the 1770s and 1780s, but backed by little institutional support, women artists seem to have relied particularly heavily on ad hoc affiliations with various warring factions to protect and advance their careers.[8] Labille-Guiard, for one, became an expert on such unconventional tactics.

1783: The Self-Portrait as *Drame Bourgeois*

In the summer of 1783, Labille-Guiard stood on the brink of professional triumph thanks, in part, to her ability to make the most of limited opportunities.[9] Though she had been barred from the rigorous education offered by the Royal Academy (which admitted female members but excluded women from studying or teaching in its schools), she had climbed the ranks of the Parisian art world by training with private masters and exhibiting at the less prestigious venues that lay beyond the academy's dominion. Her debut had come nearly ten years earlier when in 1774 she sent a miniature, *Self-Portrait,* and a pastel, *Portrait of a Magistrate,* to the final exhibition sponsored by the Academy of Saint Luke.[10] In 1782 and early 1783 she had displayed thirteen pastel portraits at the weekly gathering known as the Salon de la Correspondance, a commercial exhibition hosted by the controversial entrepreneur Mammès Claude-Cathérine Pahin de

1 Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils, Mademoiselle Marie Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818) and Mademoiselle Carreaux de Rosemond (died 1788),* 1785, oil on canvas, 83 × 59½ in. (210.8 × 151.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Julia A. Berwind, 1953 (53.225.5) (artwork in the public domain; photograph © 1980 The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Champlain la Blancherie.[11] Most notably, Labille-Guiard had exhibited six portraits of current academicians in Pahin's suite of rented rooms; her familiarity with these and other prominent artists could only have helped her bid for academic status, which succeeded on May 31, 1783.

Labille-Guiard's choices for her inaugural academy exhibition two months later suggest that she hoped to call attention to her accomplished technique and her discerning, not to mention powerful, clientele. Of the twelve identified pastels and "several portraits under the same number" that she sent to the Louvre's Salon Carré in August 1783, at least seven were bust-length portraits of male academy members, and an eighth was commissioned by the comtesse d'Angiviller, whose husband, the comte d'Angiviller, effectively governed the academy in his capacity as *directeur-général des bâtiments du roi.*[12] The largest of the identified portraits was the comtesse's *Portrait of M. Brizard in the Role of King Lear,* which depicts a pivotal moment in a recent Versailles production of Jean-François Ducis's *Le Roi Léar.*[13] Portraying one of the year's theatrical triumphs, *Brizard in the Role of Lear* offered a powerful rendering of the dispossessed Lear awakening to the tragedy of his plight, announcing Labille-Guiard's ability to evoke expression and to convey narrative action. As it circulated in an engraving by Jean-Jacques Avril, and later prints by others, *Brizard in the Role of Lear* carried Labille-Guiard's name, significantly linked to that of her influential patron, well beyond the walls of the Louvre (Fig. 2).

If Labille-Guiard had hoped that public opinion would celebrate the merits of her work, she must have been disappointed by its critical reception. While some reviewers praised *Brizard in the Role of Lear* and others commended the portraits of academicians, lively discussions of the Salon's newly prominent female artists generally overshadowed more dispassionate analyses of their skills. Contemporary reviews, which abound with quips about the trio of women artists with works on view (Labille-Guiard, Anne Vallayer-Coster, who had joined the academy in 1770, and Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, who, like Labille-Guiard, made her Salon debut in 1783) also issue varied assessments of their personal charms.[14] For instance, one typically jocular commentary refers to the mythological beauty pageant said to have precipitated the Trojan War: "Mesdames Vallayer and Guiard also display their graces at the Salon; but Paris awards the apple to Madame LeBrun."[15]

Breaking with this trend, one author crossed the line between banter and libel. The Salon's women artists, Labille-Guiard in particular, were the primary targets of a virulent tract that named the late Duke of Marlborough as the source of lewd gossip about their sexual and professional ethics.[16] The anonymous *Suite de Malborough au Salon 1783* alluded crassly to a rumor that Labille-Guiard was having an affair with the history painter François-André Vincent (who became her second husband in 1799) and implied that Vincent was "touching up" both Labille-Guiard and her paintings. The rumor itself was not new, for as early as 1776 Abbe' Lebrun had referred offhandedly to the allegation in his *Almanach historique et raisonné des architectes, peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs et ciseleurs.*[17] Yet Labille-Guiard's morals had never been so thoroughly denigrated. Asserting, "His love makes your talent, Love dies and the talent falls," the pamphlet further punned on Vincent's name to jest that Labille-Guiard had two thousand lovers, since "vingt cents, ou 2000, c'est la même chose."[18]

2 Jean-Jacques Avril after Labille-Guiard, *Portrait of M. Brizard in the Role of King Lear,* engraving, 1786, 15 × 11½ in. (38.1 × 29.1 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

This taunting wordplay exemplifies the coarse humor that peppers many of the independent, and often politically charged, texts that purported to review the Salons of the 1780s.[19] Unlike traditional criticism published in periodicals, which claimed to supply subscribers with unbiased assessments of Salon exhibitions and were subject to government oversight, independent pamphlets were onetime purchases that competed to entertain less sophisticated readers. Generally produced quickly and cheaply in small print runs, pamphlets could capitalize on topical events and promulgate short-lived rumors. And, since they required no ongoing relations among readers, writers, and publishers, they frequently eluded censors by claiming anonymous or fictional authors and foreign sites of production. Likening these pamphlets to the boulevard theaters that appropriated high culture in the name of parody, Bernadette Fort, in a well-known essay, has described as "carnivalesque" their inversions and hence "attack[s] on the hegemony of the old French school and the establishment that sustained it."[20] As Fort demonstrates, scores of bawdy Salon reviews enlisted historical and fictional characters ranging from Marlborough to Figaro as spokesmen for a host of political and cultural agendas.[21]

The *Malborough* pamphlet, however, did not challenge the authority of the Royal Academy or the state, but rather lam-

basted female academicians, whose increasing numbers had recently vexed the arts administration. With its induction of Labille-Guiard and Vigée-Lebrun on May 31, the academy had reached its official limit of four female members, rekindling an internal debate about the pitfalls of encouraging women to pursue careers in the fine arts.[22] Indeed, the vulgar pamphleteer and the academy's distinguished representatives agreed on this one matter—that female academicians raised the specter of impropriety. D'Angiviller had made this point two weeks before the women's admission, when he requested a royal decree formalizing the institution's traditional cap on women members.[23] Tellingly, his memo of May 14 emphasized the importance of decorum, citing women's inability "to be useful to the progress of the Arts, the propriety [*décence*] of their sex preventing them from being able to study from life and in the public School established and authorized by Your Majesty."[24]

Despite d'Angiviller's misgivings about female academicians, Labille-Guiard sought his help in suppressing the sale of *Suite de Malborough au Salon 1783.* On September 19, she penned a savvy letter to the comtesse d'Angiviller, asking her to intercede with her influential husband.[25] Leaving nothing to chance, Labille-Guiard enumerated in the opening paragraph precisely what she hoped to accomplish; she simply asked the comtesse to "please use your credit and the authority of Monsieur the comte to stop a horrible libel. . . ."[26] Demonstrating a sound understanding of the relevant bureaucracy, she went on to identify two officials who could preside over the matter and to spell out the charges on which they could prosecute the offending vendors: the pamphlet, she asserted, was "engraved and could not have been approved by any censor, which renders the sellers quite guilty."

It is significant that Labille-Guiard chose to write to the comtesse, with whom she had already established a professional relationship, instead of to the comte, who did not share his wife's sympathy for female artists. Besides, selecting the comtesse as her interlocutor enabled Labille-Guiard to appeal to the empathy of another woman, as she did in her opening lines by calling on the comtesse to act on behalf of "the interest that you take in Mme Coster and in your sex in general." Continuing, Labille-Guiard underscored the differences that distinguish criticism leveled at an artist's work from aspersions cast on a woman's honor: "One must expect to have one's talent ripped apart . . . it's the fate of all who expose themselves to public judgment, but their works, their paintings are there to defend them, if they are good they plead their cause. Who can plead on behalf of women's morals?"

Embellishing the facts of Labille-Guiard's life, the letter transforms the libel into a moving third-person narrative. It tells the touching tale of a country priest visiting Paris who hoped to do a good turn for an elderly parishioner. Knowing that the old man's daughter was a member of the Royal Academy, the well-intentioned cleric had acquired every review of the current Salon in order to apprise the octogenarian of his daughter's achievements. Labille-Guiard indulged in a bit of sentimental *ekphrasis* when she asked her reader to picture the pamphlet's heart-wrenching effect on the venerable widower:

> Consider, Madame, the sorrow of an eighty-year-old man, who has only one daughter remaining of his eight children, and who consoles himself for all his losses with the bit of reputation that she has and, therefore, with the esteem that she enjoys. Picture him reading avidly, waiting to see her works criticized or praised, and seeing a horrible libel. Great people expect this, but for an ordinary individual to see that his daughter, in seeking a bit of glory, has lost her reputation, that she is insulted, how cruel that is!

This scene, replete with *sensibilité,* could have appeared on the canvas of Jean-Baptiste Greuze or the stage of Denis Diderot.[27] Observing the classical law of unities, Labille-Guiard conjured a single, pregnant moment in a true-to-life tableau, of the sort that Diderot had lauded in his writings on theater as "an arrangement of characters . . . so natural and so true that, faithfully rendered by a painter, it would please me on canvas."[28] Each player has been typecast. Her father, Claude-Edmé Labille, appears as a *père de famille,* the troubled patriarch of Diderot's eponymous 1758 *drame bourgeois* (a type of domestic morality play) and focus of so many of Greuze's paintings.[29] In fact, Diderot had famously praised Greuze's depiction of fatherhood—a "beautiful subject" that represents "the general vocation of all men. . . ." and demonstrates that "our children are the source of our greatest pleasures and our greatest pains."[30] Labille-Guiard herself plays just such a complicated, Greuzian daughter, who hopes to spare her father the pain of her sullied reputation. Ultimately, her filial piety elicits our compassion, as she insisted, "I am desperate when I think of my father, at the effect that this will have on him."[31]

The letter apparently succeeded in prompting official action. Although we have no direct proof that the comtesse intervened, we know that legal proceedings commenced immediately.[32] At eight o'clock in the evening on September 20, the bookseller Pierre Cousin was placed under arrest and brought before the magistrate Pierre Chénon for interrogation. After thirty-nine copies of the defamatory pamphlet were seized from Cousin's boutique in the Louvre's Cour du Jardin de l'Infante, just downstairs from the Salon exhibition, the merchant was released. He had cooperated with investigators, supplying them with leads, but ultimately neither author nor publisher was identified.

This was the first of several instances in which Labille-Guiard calibrated her self-presentation to maximum effect. In her handling of this episode, she turned a libel to her advantage, using it to strengthen ties with an influential patron and to win the support of a powerful administrator who seemed an unlikely ally. The social position of a professional woman artist was surely a delicate one, but Labille-Guiard was able to convert base notoriety into a more welcome variety of notice.

1785: The *Self-Portrait* as Self-Promotion

Given Labille-Guiard's efforts to defend her honor in 1783, the extent to which she courted attention—an unseemly desire for a virtuous woman—in 1785 may seem surprising. The monumental *Self-Portrait* that Labille-Guiard exhibited at the Salon that year foregrounds desirable physical features

and bold professional ambitions. It mixes attributes of feminine virtue with hints of sexual possibility, at the same time that it contaminates high art traditions with blatantly commercial imagery. In a skillful balance, the resulting image, rife with playful impropriety, does not yield a carnivalesque critique. Rather, it draws attention by toying with the boundaries of acceptability. To borrow Jeremy Popkin's assessment of the contemporaneous *Mémoires Secrets,* an underground publication that disseminated news and opinions of the Parisian republic of letters among Europe's political and cultural elite, the Salon pamphleteers of the 1780s "often reserved [their] most prominent pages for individuals who in one way or another had transgressed the rules of their milieu."[33]

In courting mild controversy at the 1785 Salon, Labille-Guiard was taking advantage of a rare opportunity to generate publicity and, hence, commissions. Even as market forces were coming to dominate the art world in the late eighteenth century, exhibiting venues were dwindling, leaving the Royal Academy's biennial exhibitions among the few sanctioned forums where academicians could attract customers.[34] Ironically, the academy had historically sought to distance itself from commerce by adopting regulations that barred members from putting works on view in their studio windows and from dealing in art.[35] But in the 1770s and 1780s, as the royal arts administration moved to close down alternative exhibitions like those sponsored by the trade-oriented Academy of Saint Luke or by profit-seeking entrepreneurs, its own Salons became increasingly transformed into sites of commercial competition.[36] In the venerable halls of the Palais du Louvre, academicians had little choice but to vie for the income-producing commissions they needed in order to subsist.

Labille-Guiard may have been in particular need of calculated publicity in 1785, when her career evidently stagnated. Although her 1785 Salon portraits reveal heightened ambitions, featuring more intricate compositions, more fully articulated details, and more lifelike figures than she had exhibited to date, most were fairly small—three-quarter or bust-length—portraits of artists and well-born women who traveled in the circles of her previous patrons.[37] Moreover, a memo written by the arts ministry in the same year underscores her need for income and describes Labille-Guiard as "very little occupied."[38]

How could she win more rewarding commissions without destroying her barely salvaged reputation? Labille-Guiard responded to this predicament by forging a new and original mode of self-representation that could engender discussion while also appealing to prospective patrons. To attract the highest ranks of society, she might have wanted to announce that she was capable of producing a full-length portrait.[39] If it were also a group portrait, and if it related a moral or historical narrative, then it would be still more desirable. In the minds of many critics, such a "historiated portrait" would rank between portraiture and history painting, near the top of the hierarchy of genres, as it was understood to require skills associated with both types of painting.[40] Like a portrait, it should not only capture likeness but also express the salient traits of its sitters' characters. And like a history painting, it should tell a story through a complex composition depicting a single moment. A historiated group portrait also promised significant financial rewards, for it could be more lucrative than either a history painting or a portrait of an individual.[41] This plan, though, rests on a paradox: Labille-Guiard sought to present herself as a painter of grand portraits before she had received a commission for such a work. She resolved this dilemma by turning to her studio and her mirror as sources for the 1785 *Self-Portrait,* which one critic termed a "portrait, composed like a history painting."[42]

The iconographic complexity of the resulting *Self-Portrait* could well have appealed to a wide range of potential sitters. One viewer might see it as a suitable template for a domestic family portrait centered on the elegant lady of the house, whose daughters bear witness to her maternal virtue. Another might read the two hovering women as allegorical figures who bespeak erudition by representing the Muses or branches of the arts. The roll of parchment that rests on the taboret furthers the painting's appeal to a patron of either sex, for a partially revealed document that tells of the sitter's achievements was a common trope in eighteenth-century portraiture.[43] By revealing nothing of its contents, Labille-Guiard's document allows all viewers to imagine it as a record of their own proudest moments.

The conspicuously placed, but resolutely hidden, work in progress exemplifies the narrative ambiguity that renders the *Self-Portrait* so compellingly versatile.[44] The back of a very large canvas resting on an easel dominates the left side of the composition, presenting a tremendous amount of information concerning its materials and structure; stretchers, tacks, and the curling edges of canvas are all carefully rendered. While these details whet our appetite for knowledge about the painting on the other side, Labille-Guiard gives no indication of the subject or appearance of the unseen work. Instead, she piques our interest through the combined expressions of the two attendants, Marie-Marguerite Carreaux de Rosemond and Marie-Gabrielle Capet.[45] With her gaze focused and her lips parted, Capet, on the right, appears engrossed in the emerging painting. Rosemond, on the left, peers out of the picture plane at the object whose image is being captured. Together, the students compare original to painted copy—an experience we cannot share unless we heed the *Self-Portrait*'s call to enter Labille-Guiard's studio.

Until then, we can only speculate about what the work in progress might portray. One possibility is that the hidden painting is the *Self-Portrait* itself, and that Labille-Guiard and Rosemond are gazing in a mirror. Certainly, the large size of the pictured canvas would suit a group portrait of this scale. Alternatively, Labille-Guiard may be painting one or both of the students who stand behind her. The *Self-Portrait* that Jean-Laurent Mosnier exhibited at the Royal Academy's 1787 Salon develops this reading (Fig. 3).[46] This painting, which contemporaries interpreted as Mosnier's attempt to capitalize on Labille-Guiard's success, is closely modeled after the 1785 work. Like Labille-Guiard, Mosnier depicted himself in elegant attire, seated before a large easel and in front of an open paint box. Holding a palette and brushes, he faces the viewer, as two women stand behind his chair with their heads bent toward each other. Here, though, the work in progress faces the picture plane to reveal the image of one of the standing women. A third, and more provocative, interpretation would suggest that we are watching Labille-Guiard as she

3 Jean-Laurent Mosnier, *Portrait of Mosnier in His Study,* 1787, oil on canvas, 90½ × 68⅞ in. (230 × 175 cm). Hermitage, St. Petersburg, inv. no. GE-3699 (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Erich Lessing, provided by Art Resource, NY)

paints an unseen person or group in front of her.[47] Whether at the 1785 Salon in Paris or at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, we, the assembled viewers, are always among those invisible sitters. We were not the artist's original models, but we take up their positions when we approach the painting. With this move, the *Self-Portrait* accomplishes its goal of generating clients: merely viewing the painting transforms us into Labille-Guiard's patrons.

Fashioning Artifice

Bidding for commissions in a forum whose structure reproduces the persuasive display of a shopwindow, Labille-Guiard was perhaps following in the footsteps of her haberdasher father, whose fashionable women's clothing store was marked by the sign "à la Toilette" and had, in the early 1760s, employed the future Madame du Barry.[48] In the *Self-Portrait,* an appealing central figure is physically elevated above the viewer and surrounded by a plethora of carefully arranged props in a space that delimits a complete world unto itself. Peering through our window on that world, we might covet the enticing goods spread out before us.[49] An abundance of artistic skills encourages us to admire the artist's many abilities. We see that Labille-Guiard can imitate a dizzying array of materials and compile a veritable catalog of stuffs. Her painting replicates the shine of satin, the intricacy of lace, the delicacy of feathers, the rough grain of wood, the deep shadows of plush velvet, the glint of metal, the dull sheen of chalk, the porcelain texture of flawless skin, the worn folds of parchment, and the smooth surface of sculpted marble. As our gaze moves from these luxurious details to the work as a whole, we observe that the artist is equally skilled at creating illusions of depth, grouping multiple figures, painting portraits in varied lengths and poses, composing still lifes, and ennobling portraiture with classical allusions.[50] All in all, the painting conjures a cornucopia of visual treats whose overabundance calls attention to the very notion of display.

In fact, Louis-Sebastien Mercier describes a scene quite like this one in his 1783 *Tableau de Paris,* which reports that many

proprietors used their windows not only to promote their wares but also to put their shopgirls on view.[51] Mercier writes that in the windows of boutiques throughout Paris, one could find saleswomen dressed in the fashions being marketed that season. Seated in rows, with the prettiest closest to the glass, they simultaneously embellished and advertised the goods for sale: "You see them through the windows. . . . You look at them freely, and they look at you in the same way . . . needle in hand, constantly casting their eyes on the street. No passerby escapes them."[52] To the men lured into boutiques by such appealing visions, "Shopping is only a pretext; they look at the salesgirls and not the merchandise."[53]

In the *Self-Portrait,* the elaborately clothed but voluptuously revealed body of Labille-Guiard engages in a similar kind of flirtatiously engaging display. The sweep of her luxurious silk dress catches the eye, and her prominently displayed breasts dominate the center of the composition, presenting themselves for visual delectation. Her ample décolletage does not simply contribute to the surfeit of objects on view but stands out from it, framed in creamy lace and bathed in soft light. The judicious use of shadow between her torso and left arm creates the illusion of a dramatic hourglass figure, as her generous bosom seems to tower over a remarkably narrow waist. This self-conscious exhibition of Labille-Guiard's physical attractions appears all the more striking when seen against the more demurely rendered figures of the two students. For, while Capet wears a fashionable *robe à l'anglaise,* and Rosemond the *chemise* that had recently become popular for day wear, neither dress features the shimmering satin finish or the low-cut neckline that makes Labille-Guiard so visually enticing.

In fact, her appearance allies Labille-Guiard even more directly with another form of commercial imagery associated with women—the fashion plate.[54] Two specific inspirations for her pose and costume, which have not been previously identified, are to be found among the hand-colored engravings published in *Galerie des Modes et des Costumes* in 1784, one year before the *Self-Portrait* was first exhibited (Figs. 4, 5). Although such a mercantile source may seem to be at odds with the elevated aspirations of a historiated portrait, Labille-Guiard might have been shrewd to reference *Galeries des Modes* in her *Self-Portrait.* This periodical, which was published regularly from 1778 to 1787 and ultimately included more than four hundred prints, reached an elite audience of fashionable women who were also desirable patrons.[55] Moreover, by evoking such images, Labille-Guiard was able to couch her indecorous self-display in the justifying motivation of a preexisting template.

Like the models depicted in these two plates, Labille-Guiard is pictured going about her daily life wearing a wide, half-balloon hat, decorated with plumes and ribbons, and a *robe à l'anglaise*—the dress of choice for noble women and *haute bourgeoises* alike from the late 1770s into the 1780s.[56] The style featured a form-fitting bodice and eschewed the wide side hoops, or panniers, of the more formal *robe à la française.* Labille-Guiard sports a bosom-baring neckline similar to that of the model playing with a dog (Fig. 5); named for the mistress of Henri IV, this neck *à Gabrielle d'Estrées* had been brought back into fashion by Marie-Antoinette in 1782.[57] Although its sensual potential seems self-evident, the innuendo-laden vernacular of the day nonetheless underscored its teasing allure by terming the bow on the bottom ruffle a "love knot" and referring to its placement at the center of the bosom as "perfect contentment."[58]

But Labille-Guiard shares more than just the latest styles with these fashion plates; the arrangement of her body also echoes their modified contrapposto poses, which present several views of each figure to disclose as much information as possible about the depicted attire. All three sit with their lower bodies facing left and their heads and torsos rotating toward the picture plane. However, Labille-Guiard has selected the most revealing features from each source. Seemingly modeled after the more exposed bosom of the woman with the dog, Labille-Guiard's chest faces the viewer almost directly. The positions of her left arm and leg, though, echo those of the musician: the arm rests lightly on the lap; the hand loosely holds an item between thumb and exaggerated forefinger; and the slipper peeks out from beneath the dress to perch on the bottom of a large prop. Each of these small gestures increases the visual information given about the dress and the body. For instance, the arrangement of the arm parallel to the picture plane displays the sleeve quite clearly, while the pressure of its weight on the lap delineates the thigh. Similarly, the raised foot draws the skirt more tautly against the leg, illustrating the side placement of the seam coursing from waist to hem. In fact, Labille-Guiard provides still more detail than the fashion plates by flipping the edge of her powder blue overskirt to showcase a white lining within.

By referencing such recognizable, recently published fashion plates in her *Self-Portrait,* Labille-Guiard simultaneously demonstrated that she possessed the skills required of a portraitist and distanced herself from the academic norm. Certainly, a Parisian society portraitist had to be familiar with the latest styles. Yet by adopting the visual language of commercial display so directly, Labille-Guiard declared an affinity with the world of trade that was forbidden to academicians and to well-bred women alike. Although *Galerie des Modes* catered to the highest echelons of consumers, its images were essentially advertisements. In addition, Labille-Guiard was evidently willing to associate her *Self-Portrait* with the coy texts that originally accompanied the printed images:[59] the description of a "Lady in the role of sincere and faithful friend" (Fig. 5) explained that she is "playing with her dog while waiting for something better,"[60] while the "sensitive virtuoso" (Fig. 4) was said to be "entertaining herself with a solo only while waiting for a charming duet."[61]

In affiliating her self-presentation with such immodest pictures and flirtatious texts, Labille-Guiard perhaps distinguished between allure, which she invited, and scandal, which she had sought to suppress in 1783. In the late eighteenth century, fashion was increasingly understood to be an acceptable arena for female display, intimately linked to women's desire to appeal to men.[62] Contemporary reviewers of Labille-Guiard's *Self-Portrait* responded in kind, invoking playful verses rather than denigrating libels. One of the more poetic critics rhapsodized:

4 "La Virtuose sensible en robe à l'Anglaise bordée à la Marlbrough et chapeau au demi-Ballon, ne s'occupant du solo qu'elle exécute que dans l'attente d'un charmant duo," 1784, *Galerie des Modes et des Costumes,* pl. 280 (artwork in the public domain)

> I have blown kisses to the two mischievous little faces on
> Which the eye deliciously rests, and to the mouth
> From which one could have such pleasure in hearing
> spoken the pretty
> Word that you breathe, and that you have spoken
> Sometimes with emotion, isn't it true, beautiful
> Guyard? . . . But . . . I feel myself moved, ah Guyard!
> Guyard! I must flee your eyes, I must. . . .[63]

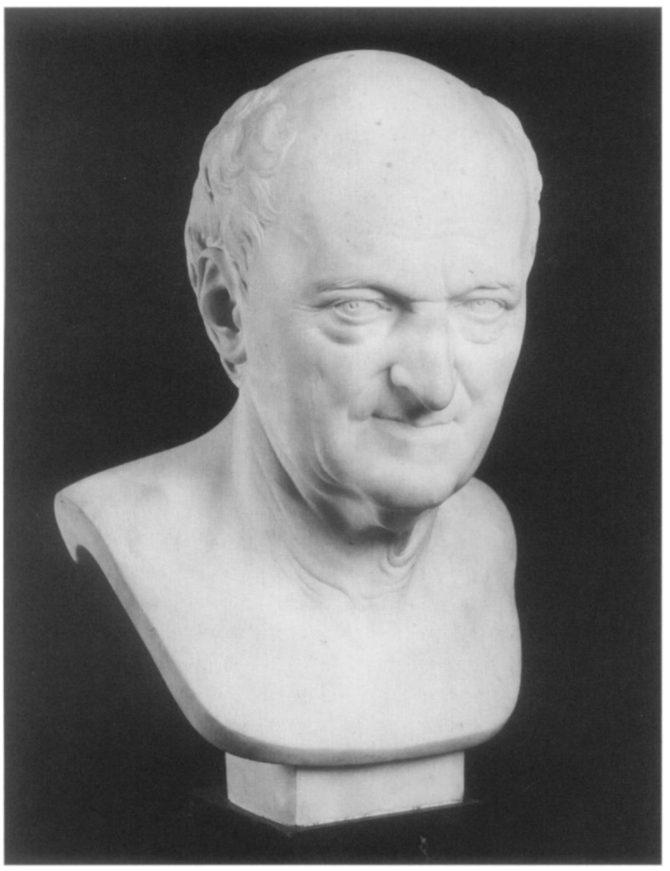
More broadly, her embrace of fashion placed Labille-Guiard on the side of artifice in the heated discourse on clothing and appearance that flourished, along with the French fashion industry, in the second half of the eighteenth century.[64] In fact, the illustrated fashion periodical, as distinct from assembled collections of captioned plates, was born with *Le Cabinet des Modes* in 1785, the year Labille-Guiard exhibited her *Self-Portrait.*[65] While images of the latest styles proliferated in Paris and throughout the provinces, intellectuals and writers ranging from the Encyclopedists to moralists addressed the matter with increasing urgency. Daniel Roche has neatly summarized the high stakes of the fashion debate: "Here, individuals could play on appearance and reality, while society pondered the dilemma of truth and disguise."[66] Perhaps the protean *Self-Portrait* could be said to embody such an impishly playful spirit of fashion.

5 "Dame en sincère et fidelle amie avec Robe et Jupon à l'Anglo-Américaine, bordée élegament d'une Etoffe différente, les manches ajustées, le noeud de Rubans et le tour de gorge à la Gabrielle d Etrées jouant avec son Chien en attendant mieux," 1784, *Galerie des Modes et de Costumes,* pl. 254 (artwork in the public domain)

Artistic Ambition and Feminine Virtue

Just as the *Self-Portrait*'s affiliation with commerce and fashion engages with contentious debates of the day, so does its portrayal of ambitious female artists touch on current arguments regarding gendered virtue. Although prevailing codes of conduct admitted certain types of art making as beneficial for well-bred girls and women, deriving publicity from painting violated rules of propriety. Pierre-Joseph Boudier de Villemert's conduct book *Le nouvel ami des femmes,* designed for "all young Ladies who wish to please with sound qualities," spells out some of the issues at stake when a woman advertises her artistic skills as Labille-Guiard does here.[67] Summarizing ideal bourgeois mores, Villemert recommends that young women possess some knowledge of painting, music, and poetry; in his vision of domestic bliss, painting could be a valuable female hobby, "a resource against boredom."[68] However, he also issues a stern warning against women's misuse of the fine arts, noting that as silence and modesty rank among the greatest feminine virtues, women who seek publicity for their art court dishonor for themselves. In Villemert's words, "The glory of women is to be little talked about; quite different from men who play, unmasked, all the roles that the passions assign them on the great theater of the world, women must only play . . . behind the scenes. . . . ."[69]

Continuing the ambivalence that permeates the *Self-Portrait,* Labille-Guiard acknowledges this ideal even as she flouts it, as she balances bold professional claims, deemed masculine at the time, against signs of virtuous femininity.[70] Consider, for example, the two painted sculptures in the background shadows at the left. On the one hand, their evo-



6 Augustin Pajou, *Claude-Edmé Labille,* 1785, marble, h. 23⅞ in. (62.5 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux, provided by Art Resource, NY)

7 Jean-Antoine Houdon, *Figure of a Vestal Virgin,* late 18th century, plaster, h. 25½ in. (64.8 cm). Frick Art and Historical Center, Pittsburgh (artwork in the public domain; photograph © the Frick Art and Historical Center, Pittsburgh)

cations of antiquity combine with the painting's clear and crisp lines to identify Labille-Guiard as a Neoclassical painter embracing a style increasingly associated not only with seriousness of purpose and strength of character but also with masculinity.[71] The renderings of the sculptures further participate in the age-old *paragone* by presenting Labille-Guiard as a painter whose oils rival sculpture.[72] Asserting that her painting can replicate stone, the artist argues for the superiority of her medium, demonstrates mastery of her skills, and, perhaps most important, places herself in a lineage of renowned painters who have sought to prove their worth by engaging in this type of rivalry. On the other hand, the sculptures' iconography mitigates this immodesty by invoking signs of filial piety and feminine chastity. The bust that peers out from a perch above the open box is Augustin Pajou's portrait of Claude-Edmé Labille, Labille-Guiard's father (Fig. 6). We can be certain that 1785 Salon-goers would not have mistaken the work for the Roman portrait type it evokes because Pajou's bust of Labille was on view in the same exhibition. Surely this severe paternal visage would quash any amorous desires inspired by Labille-Guiard's enticing body. In addition, the taller sculpture is recognizable as one of Jean-Antoine Houdon's *Vestal Virgins,* which may underscore the theme of sexual purity, since Rome's vestal virgins committed themselves to decades of virginity (Fig. 7).[73]

Of course, in this age of double entendres, contemporary viewers might have perceived both virtue and vice even in the seemingly clear iconography of the vestal. Commonly employed as a sign of chastity in eighteenth-century female portraiture, vestal imagery, referring as it does to women sharing living quarters after swearing off relations with men, conveyed a more salacious layer of meanings in the underground literature of the day.[74] For instance, Mathieu François Pidansat de Mairobert's *The English Spy, or Secret Correspondence between Milord All'Eye and Milord All'Ear* (1778) imagines contemporary women engaging in same-sex orgies inspired by the Roman vestals. Pidansat de Mairobert describes passionate scenes of lesbian lovemaking in a modern-day "temple to Vesta, considered the foundress of the anandrine sect or tribades. . . ."[75] His tribades lament that their troupe is "Nothing so fine, nothing so great as the establishment of the vestal virgins in Rome."[76] For readers unfamiliar with the term, the pornographer furnishes several definitions of "tribade," including "a young virgin who, not having had any relations with men and convinced of the excellence of her sex, finds in it true pleasure. . . ." or a woman who "devotes herself to training pupils for the goddess."[77]

Even without such sexual connotations, though, Labille-

Guiard's rendering of her pupils might have raised other questions about the propriety of the pictured women. Pointing toward feminine virtue, the *Self-Portrait* references the contemporary popularity of maternity as a subject of French paintings, as the images of Capet and Rosemond endow the childless Labille-Guiard with the equivalent of daughters.[78] Salon-goers recognized the women (although the work was displayed with the generic title *Portrait of a Lady with Two Students*) and many knew that Labille-Guiard's relationship with her students verged on the familial; Capet was a member of Labille-Guiard's household at the time the work was exhibited and continued to live with her teacher until Labille-Guiard's death.[79] But the images of Capet and Rosemond reminded at least one viewer of a more sordid situation. As the reviewer for *Mémoires Secrets* noted in his discussion of the *Self-Portrait,* a "heated debate" had raged that summer concerning these very students, who had elicited professional approbation and moral condemnation by exhibiting portraits at the Place Dauphine in June.[80]

That an exhibition at the Place Dauphine would merit such notice points to a renewed interest in this annual event, which had declined significantly in the middle of the eighteenth century.[81] The Place Dauphine, a triangular court near the Pont-Neuf on the Île de la Cité, had for decades hosted an annual exhibition as part of the celebrations for the feast of Corpus Christi. Each year, an elaborate procession would accompany the consecrated Host through the streets of Paris. Festive decorations created a grand spectacle, with rugs and tapestries hung from high windows and temporary altars set up along the route. At the Place Dauphine, artists and collectors adorned decorative hangings with paintings to be viewed, discussed, and sold. In the early part of the eighteenth century, when exhibiting opportunities were limited, works by academicians regularly appeared alongside paintings by aspiring artists. After the Royal Academy began sponsoring biennial Salons in 1747, though, few of its members chose to participate in a display often referred to as the "Exposition de la Jeunesse" (Exhibition of Youth). In fact, academicians hoping to define themselves as virtuous liberal artists may have had good reason to shun a site associated with low forms of popular culture. They may have had little to gain and much to lose by mingling with the carnival performers, vendors of scandalous songs, and tradesmen of questionable integrity who made the nearby Pont-Neuf their place of business.

The exhibition's midcentury loss of interest and attendance has been well documented, yet its continued significance for female artists and its resurgence in the 1780s remain little known. A review of the 1761 exhibition acknowledged its particular role in advancing women's careers, noting that "feminine talents are almost never admitted" at the Royal Academy, with the result that "women artists look elsewhere to enjoy the acclaim of which they strive to render themselves worthy."[82] The numbers of artists and viewers at the Place Dauphine increased in the 1780s, thanks in part to the efforts of Labille-Guiard's students. In 1783, the *Journal de Paris* reported that more works were shown than in recent years.[83] By 1784, the turnaround was complete, for a critic complained about excessive crowds blocking his view.[84] The same author singled out three of Labille-Guiard's students as the best portraitists on view, writing, "In this genre, the Dlles Capet, Alexandre, Rosemond . . . are the most distinguished artists. . . . all of these *Demoiselles* deserve to be encouraged by just praise."[85] Indeed, the women who studied with Labille-Guiard were often named the most accomplished painters at the Place Dauphine exhibitions in this period.[86]

The exhibition's resurgence did not diminish the site's questionable character, which permeates a 1784 watercolor entitled *Exposition de tableaux sur la Place Dauphine* (Fig. 8).[87] Here, a woman at the far left lifts a piece of protective cloth to reveal an easel painting hidden beneath it. At the same time, her male companion displays a visually enticing object, as he pulls at the woman's bodice to sneak a peek at her exposed left breast. In another act of open voyeurism, a bewigged man at the right ogles two women through the magnifying lens of a lorgnette. Although we can just discern rows of barely visible paintings lining the facades in the background, the atmosphere seems closer to low fairground conviviality than to high art appreciation.

That young female artists contributed to such a vulgar scene irked at least one cultural critic. In the *Journal Général de France* of June 14, 1785, an anonymous writer set off a lengthy debate when he objected to participation of young women in this unseemly public square.[88] Although acknowledging that the best works at the Place Dauphine were by women artists, he castigated parents who "cruelly" encouraged their daughters to become professional artists. Women artists, he argued, would lack adequate time to care for their husbands, children, and households while "the attention of connoisseurs, that is to say, flatterers," would jeopardize the "taste for simplicity and retreat" that befits a mother and encourages conjugal fidelity. More specifically, he took pains to distinguish the class-specific concerns of bourgeois girls. Citing one danger, he warned that a daughter equipped with commercial skills might conjure the specter of lower-status women who exhibit themselves in the public marketplace. Noting a different error, he chastised parents who equipped their bourgeois daughters with skills proper to elite hobbyists. A wife in the middle classes needs an eye to economy, he opined, not lofty airs.

Defenders of the disparaged young women advanced their position in letters to the editor published in the following weeks.[89] One of the most striking opinions was issued by Antoine Renou, *secrétaire adjoint* of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, who proposed that a woman's artistic skills could actually be a boon to conjugal happiness.[90] According to Renou, a wife's painting abilities might flatter her husband's vanity and thereby serve as "a vehicle for Amor who sometimes sleeps in the arms of Hymen." Moreover, he played fast and loose with the customs of the day, which barred women from studying the male nude in the academy's life-drawing classes, when he asserted that a woman who had studied male anatomy would be less likely to stray because such familiarity would remove all mystery and "extinguish the flame of great passions." The final letter on the subject was published just a few weeks before the *Self-Portrait* appeared in the Salon, providing the immediate context for its reception. While Labille-Guiard could not have foreseen this particular debate when she conceived the *Self-Portrait,* her painting

8 A. Maucert, *Exposition de tableaux sur la Place Dauphine,* 1784, sepia wash over watercolor and gouache. Location unknown (artwork in the public domain, reproduced from *Chronique des Arts,* no. 17 [April 25, 1914], 135)

clearly engages with its central dispute concerning the propriety of ambitious female artists.

The boldness of Labille-Guiard's self-presentation must have appeared all the more striking at the 1785 Salon, where viewers could compare the *Self-Portrait* with Antoine Vestier's *Portrait of Marie-Nicole Vestier,* whose iconography portrays the artist's daughter as a well-bred hobbyist who has developed impressive skills but employs them in a virtuous manner (Fig. 9).[91] Each painting depicts a full-length image of a female artist seated at an easel in the center of a composition accompanied by an effigy of a family member. Just as Pajou's sculpture of Monsieur Labille watches over Labille-Guiard's studio, a portrait bust of Madame Vestier stands behind Marie-Nicole. Like Labille-Guiard, Vestier seems to have been inspired by contemporary fashion plates, as he likewise depicts his subject in a silk *robe à l'anglaise* and a half-balloon hat decorated with ribbons and feathers. However, he has taken pains to rein in untoward implications. Marie-Nicole appears decidedly more demure than Labille-Guiard, her breast covered with a fichu and turned sideways, away from the viewer. An analogous modesty characterizes her artistic endeavors. She works not in a studio but at home, with her small easel standing on a carpeted floor. Other furnishings, such as a harpsichord adorned with sheet music and a violin resting on the easel, intimate that this well-rounded young woman practices painting as one gracious hobby among many.

Finally, the image emerging in the painting-within-the-painting places Marie-Nicole's honor beyond reproach, for it assures us that this young woman has put her considerable skills to work in the service of portraying her father's face. Furthermore, the implied narrative situates Vestier in the positions of artist, model, and viewer, indicating that he painted the portrait of his daughter while she recorded his image on canvas. Extant portraits testify that Marie-Nicole, in fact, painted men other than her father, but this work ensures that no male viewer will imagine himself in a potentially amorous sitting with the attractive young artist.[92] Standing in front of his painting, we are transformed into Vestier, with our image reflecting back as his. With no hint of commercial ambitions, no sexual immodesty, and no structural tensions to pique or sustain desire, Vestier's rendering of his daughter maps the boundaries of acceptable feminine art making, as codified by Villemert and other guardians of etiquette. In contrast, Labille-Guiard's *Self-Portrait* evokes these borders only to blur them.

1787: Ennobling the *Self-Portrait*

Labille-Guiard's carefully calibrated self-presentation evidently succeeded in attracting desirable notice, for the *livret* (catalog) published in conjunction with the next Salon, held in 1787, indicated that Labille-Guiard had become "Premier peintre de Mesdames" and listed three portraits of royal women under her name. Her new patrons, Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, were the unmarried daughters of Louis XV, aunts of Louis XVI, who presided over their own, tradition-bound court at the Château de Bellevue.[93] Two pieces of evidence point to the 1785 *Self-Portrait* as the key to Mesdames' selection of Labille-Guiard as court painter. First, we have a report published in the *Année Littéraire* of 1785 indicating that Madame Adélaïde had sought to purchase the *Self-Portrait* from the artist, who would not part with it despite the large sum—ten thousand livres—it would fetch.[94] Second, we have visual evidence. For although Labille-Guiard never sold her masterpiece, she provided Madame Adélaïde with the next best thing—a portrait of Madame *à pied* clearly based on the coveted *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 10).[95]

A point-by-point comparison of the 1785 *Self-Portrait* and the 1787 portrait, *Adélaïde de France, Daughter of Louis XV, Known as "Madame Adélaïde,"* reveals striking similarities and telling differences. Both center on the full-length image of a luxuriously attired woman next to a painting presented on an easel. Both feature detailed interiors whose linear floor patterns contribute to an illusion of dramatic recession. An upholstered chair and a stool with a roll of paper resting on its seat accompany both figures. Where two students stand behind Labille-Guiard, two columns with Corinthian capitals

9 Antoine Vestier, *Portrait of Marie-Nicole Vestier,* 1785, oil on canvas, 67¾ × 50¼ in. (172 × 127.5 cm). Private collection, Buenos Aires (artwork in the public domain)

tower over Madame Adélaïde. Carved representations of the sitter's father appear in both backgrounds. And, in the most direct transposition of all, a small statue depicting a vestal bearing a lighted torch is just visible in the shadowy areas at the left of both pictures.

At every turn, though, *Adélaïde de France* ennobles the *Self-Portrait,* remaking the 1785 interior in opulent materials and replacing bourgeois furnishings with those appropriate for court life. The floor that was covered with uneven wooden boards now gleams with richly variegated marble. The base of Labille-Guiard's rough-hewn easel now boasts a foliate garland and ormolu sabots in the shape of winged claws. Labille-Guiard sits on an armless chair, whereas Madame stands before a fauteuil whose back features semidetached colonnettes. The artist's four-legged taboret has been replaced by the still more elevated *pliant,* whose X-shaped form derives from the *sella curulis* that Romans reserved for senators who had held a curule magistracy.[96] More broadly, Labille-Guiard aggrandized the depicted space by suggesting that the room continues an untold distance to the left. If the clustered arrangement of secondary figures in the *Self-Portrait* focuses our eyes on the artist at the center, the relief above Madame Adélaïde features two figures at the leftmost edge who gaze past the border of the canvas, expanding our attention to something beyond our view.[97]

Madame Adélaïde's attire is similarly well suited to her noble and chaste persona. Whereas Labille-Guiard had taken pains to dress herself in the revealing clothes of a stylish *Parisienne,* she presents Madame Adélaïde in a manner that is no less ornate but that pointedly rejects both bourgeois fashion trends and sexualized display.[98] The conservative Madame Adélaïde appears here in the supremely formal sack dress—suitable only at court—featuring a gray silk skirt and a red velvet robe, with ornamented borders of silver and gold

10 Labille-Guiard, *Adélaïde of France, Daughter of Louis XV, Known as "Madame Adélaïde,"* 1787, oil on canvas. Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France, MV3958 (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Gérard Blot / Jean Schormans, provided by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY)

embroidery unifying the ensemble.[99] These heavy garments hang loosely over Madame's standing figure, communicating little about the body hidden beneath. Her neckline is entirely decorous, with an *échelle*, or ladder of bows, providing the area's primary visual interest. Labille-Guiard's handling of fabric in general moves away from the specific depiction of an item of clothing toward the general evocation of drapery.[100] Freed from the task of describing the appearance of a particular garment, a cascade of black velvet tumbles from the top of the easel to the floor, echoed majestically by the luxurious train of Madame's red velvet robe and in miniature by the cloth in her hand.

The portrait's abundant iconography, explicated by extensive narratives published in the accompanying *livret*, further establishes Madame Adélaïde's devotion to God and to family.[101] Expressing both filial and religious piety, the unfurled parchment hanging over the edge of the *pliant* in the left foreground reveals "the plan of the convent founded at Versailles by the late Queen [Marie-Leszcinska, mother of Mesdames] and of which Madame Adélaïde is the *directrice*."[102] In addition, images of family members surround the subject. On her easel rests a framed, oval painting featuring three overlapping, classicized silhouettes representing the "late King, the late Queen, and the late Dauphin, reunited in a bas-relief that imitates bronze; the princess, who is supposed to have painted them herself, has just traced these words: 'Their image remains the charm of my life.'"[103] Like a royal incarnation of Marie-Nicole Vestier, Madame Adélaïde employs artistic skills only for the most honorable purposes.

The deathbed scene featured prominently in the frieze at the top of the painting crystallizes Madame's selfless devotion to her father and her sound grasp of gendered principles.[104] At the right, King Louis XV lies in a simple bed, his head and chest propped up with pillows. Two figures standing behind the headboard bow their heads in prayer or mourning for the monarch dying of smallpox. Adélaïde and her sister Victoire seem to have just entered from the left, where two attendants stride forward, raising their arms as if to intercept the approaching women. The *livret* elucidates the action. The king had "just sent away the Princes due to the danger of the malady," when Mesdames "entered, despite all oppositions, saying 'We are happily only princesses.'"[105] Male heirs had to be spared potential contagion, because of the infectious and potentially fatal nature of smallpox, and also because the disease was believed to cause sterility in men. But the sisters, who did not have to fear loss of fecundity and whose lives were more expendable, understood their duty to their dying father.

Just as the contents of these painted and printed narratives clarify and celebrate the character of the sitter, their form and extent also enhance the status of both painting and painter.[106] More than a historiated portrait, with its depiction of the death of Louis XV in its trompe l'oeil frieze, *Adélaïde de France* actually encompasses a Neoclassical history painting. The *livret*'s inclusion of extensive explanatory texts speaks to the painting's claim to an elevated rank. As a rule, lengthy explanations accompanied only history paintings, whose close ties to discourse had justified the Royal Academy's claims for the liberal arts status of painting. In fact, *Adélaïde de France* is the only portrait granted this kind of discursive supplement in the 1787 *livret*. It is unlikely that this treatment simply reflects the royal stature of Madame Adélaïde, for Vigée-Lebrun's contemporaneous *Portrait of Marie-Antoinette and Her Children* enjoyed no such distinction. Perhaps Labille-Guiard's portrait had earned the prerogatives of history painting by including the kind of didactic morality tale that was widely seen to argue for the supremacy and utility of painting's highest genre.[107] At least one reviewer pronounced Labille-Guiard's exhibited works "irresistible proof of the strength and breadth" of women's "moral faculties" and singled out *Adélaïde de France* as meriting "the most worthy of praises."[108]

Ultimately, the narrative and pictorial clarity of Madame Adélaïde's portrait constitutes its greatest difference from the 1785 *Self-Portrait*. Gone is the penumbra that lurks behind Labille-Guiard and her students. Instead, the rich red velvet of Madame Adélaïde's robe contrasts sharply with the pale stone background, and light ricochets around lustrous surroundings. Gone, too, is the ambiguity that envelops Labille-Guiard's work in progress, as Madame Adélaïde's completed painting faces the picture plane to reveal its virtuous contents. Every detail is twice explicated—in paint and in print. The royal portrait seeks to display, to instruct, and to impress, while the *Self-Portrait* aims to engage and to intrigue.

In fact, the ambivalence that courses through the *Self-Portrait* surely helped to render it an uncommonly effective vehicle for self-promotion, for the tensions that troubled Labille-Guiard's professional position serve here to animate the painting and to engross the viewer. With this work, Labille-Guiard reveled in the kind of self-display that a bourgeois woman was supposed to avoid, engaged blatantly with the realm of commerce that was anathema to the Royal Academy, and highlighted her female gender by surrounding herself with the trappings of fashion. At every step, though, she simultaneously nodded at respectability, with recognizable references to fashion plates justifying her immodest pose and attire and a Neoclassical bust of her father overseeing the entire composition. Like any woman who exhibited her art in late-eighteenth-century Paris, Labille-Guiard walked a fine line between propriety and indecency. By toying with this seemingly intractable dilemma, perhaps Labille-Guiard was finally able to triumph over it.

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Notes

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especially to Melissa Hyde and Maria Ruvoldt, who generously read and commented on a late draft of this article.

All translations from the French are my own, unless otherwise noted.

1. The full title as given by the Metropolitan Museum is *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils, Mademoiselle Marie Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818) and Mademoiselle Carreaux de Rosemond (died 1788).* On the museum's acquisition of the painting, see Elizabeth E. Gardner, "Four French Paintings from the Berwind Collection," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* n.s., 20, no. 9 (May 1962): 265–71.

2. On the surge in self-portraits of French women artists pictured at the easel in the late eighteenth century, see Marie-Jo Bonnet, "Femmes peintres à leur travail: De l'autoportrait comme manifeste politique (XVIIIe–XIXe siècles)," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 49, no. 3 (July–September 2002): 140–67.

3. See, for instance, the covers of Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750–1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); and Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2005).

4. Anne-Marie Passez's 1973 catalogue raisonné remains the most recent book on the artist, and my own dissertation, completed in 2000, offers the only English-language monograph. In addition to Anne-Marie Passez, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, 1749–1803* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1973); and Laura Auricchio, "Portraits of Impropriety: Adélaïde Labille-Guiard and the Careers of Professional Women Artists in Late Eighteenth-Century Paris" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000); see also Roger Portalis, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, 1749–1803* (Paris: Georges Rapilly, 1902).

5. The present essay is the first to give the *Self-Portrait* a concerted study. However, the *Self-Portrait* has been discussed in recent work, including Liana De Girolami Cheney, Alicia Craig Faxon, and Kathleen Lucey Russo, *Self-Portraits by Women Painters* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000), 123–24; Melissa Hyde, "Under the Sign of Minerva," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe,* ed. Hyde and Jennifer Milam (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003), 139–63; and Mary D. Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 187–89.

6. I am particularly indebted to Mary D. Sheriff's influential account of Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (whom contemporary critics termed Labille-Guiard's rival), especially Sheriff's argument that the category of the "woman artist" was hotly contested in the waning years of the ancien régime, such that deft self-presentation became a prerequisite for women's artistic achievement. In addition to Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* see also Mary D. Sheriff, "Woman? Hermaphrodite? History Painter? On the Self-Imaging of Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun," *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 3–27; and idem, "The Im /modesty of Her Sex: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Salon of 1783," in *The Consumption of Culture, 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text,* ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London: Routledge, 1995), 455–88.

7. For a similar argument about the need to seek women's stories in alternative sites and marginal sources, see Melissa Hyde, "Women and the Visual Arts in the Age of Marie-Antoinette," in *Anne Vallayer-Coster: Painter to the Court of Marie-Antoinette,* ed. Eik Kahng and Marianne Roland Michel (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2002), 75–93, esp. 81.

8. My understanding of the volatile politics of the Parisian art world has been particularly influenced by Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Bernadette Fort, "Voice of the Public: The Carnivalization of Salon Art in Prerevolutionary Pamphlets," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 368–94; and Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

9. Unlike many women artists of her period, Labille-Guiard was not born into a family of artists or artisans but rather came from a family of merchants. For Labille-Guiard's early history, see Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 7–15.

10. Complete catalog entries for all of Labille-Guiard's works discussed here may be found in Passez, *Labille-Guiard.*

11. On the Salon de la Correspondance in the context of the intellectual project of the Enlightenment, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 242–80. For a catalog of the works of art exhibited at the Salon de la Correspondance, see Émile Bellier de la Chavignerie, "Artistes oubliés et dédaignés: Pahin de la Blancherie et le Salon de la Correspondance," *Revue Universelle des Arts* 19 (1864): 203–24, 239–67, 354–67; 20 (1865): 46–58, 116–27, 189–95, 253–62, 320–29, 402–27; 21 (1866): 34–48, 87–112, 175–90. See also Laura Auricchio, "Pahin de la Blancherie's Commercial Cabinet of Curiosity (1779–87)," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 1 (2002): 47–61.

12. My summary of works exhibited at the 1783 Salon is based on *Explication des Peintures, Sculptures et Gravures, de Messieurs de l'Académie Royale* (Paris, 1783), *Collection de pièces sur les beaux-arts (1673–1808), dite Collection Deloynes,* 516 microfiches (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980), no. 284.

13. Reviews and discussions of *Le Roi Léar* appear in sources including *Journal de Paris,* no. 43 (February 12, 1783): 177; no. 47 (February 16, 1783): 193; no. 54 (February 23, 1783): 221; no. 59 (February 28, 1783): 245; no. 64 (March 5, 1783): 267–69; no. 65 (March 6, 1783): 271–74; no. 71 (March 12, 1783): 297; *Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers,* no. 5 (January 29, 1783): 20; no. 18 (April 30, 1783): 70–72; *Mémoires Secrets pour Servir à l'Histoire de la République des Lettres en France depuis MDCCLXII jusqu'à Nos Jours* 22 (January 16, 1783): 39, (January 20): 47–49, (March 2): 127–34.

14. On Anne Vallayer-Coster, see Kahng and Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster*; and Marianne Roland Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744–1818)* (Paris: CIL, 1970).

15. *Les Peintres Volants, ou Dialogue entre un françois et un anglois sur les Tableaux exposés au Sallon du Louvre en 1783, Collection Deloynes,* no. 297, 13.

16. *Suite de Malborough au Salon 1783, Collection Deloynes,* no. 302. Selections, with some errors, may be found in Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 24–25; and Portalis, *Labille-Guiard,* 97–98.

17. Jean-Baptiste Lebrun, *Almanach historique et raisonné des architectes, peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs et ciseleurs* (Paris, 1776), 140. Formerly believed to have been written by the art dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun, the *Almanach* is now attributed to Abbé Lebrun. See Andrew McClellan, "Lebrun's 'Almanach historique et raisonné' Reattributed," *Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1076 (November 1992): 726; and Fabienne Camus, "The Abbé Le Brun and His 'Almanach des Artistes,'" *Burlington Magazine* 135, no. 1087 (October 1993): 692–93.

18. *Suite de Malborough.*

19. On the proliferation of these pamphlets in the 1780s, see Wrigley, *Origins of French Art Criticism,* app. 3, 358–59. My summary of pamphlet criticism is based on ibid., 147–64. See also Neil McWilliam, ed., *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1699–1827* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

20. Fort, "Carnivalization of Salon Art," 384.

21. On the satirical popularity of the Duke of Marlborough, who had soundly defeated the forces of Louis XIV in the War of the Spanish Succession, see Louis-Sebastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris,* 7 vols. (1783; Paris: Mercure de France, 1994), vol. 1, 74.

22. The Royal Academy's fourth female member in these years, Marie-Thérèse Réboul (Madame Vien), did not exhibit in the Salons discussed here. Because Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 73–104, thoroughly discusses the history of women's contested place within the Royal Academy, I do not delve into the matter here. On women's troubling role in the academy, see also Octave Fidière, *Les femmes artistes à l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français, 1885); Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists: 1550–1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 36–38; and Charles Oulmont, *Les femmes peintres du XVIIIe siècle* (1928; reprint, Strasbourg: Istra, 1970).

23. Centre Historique des Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter AN), O^1 1073/357, published in Anatole de Montaiglon, ed., *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture (1648–1793),* 10 vols. (Paris, 1890), vol. 9, 156–57; excerpted and discussed extensively in Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 78–142.

24. In translating *décence* as "propriety," I differ from Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 105–20, who prefers the term "modesty." In choosing "propriety," I want to emphasize the role of social convention, in keeping with Denis Diderot's definition in the *Encyclopédie*: "it is the conformity of external actions with the laws, customs, usages, spirit, morals, religion, points of honor, and prejudices of the society of which one is a member. . . . [*c'est la conformité des actions extérieures avec les lois, les coutumes, les usages, l'esprit, les mœurs, la religion, le point d'honneur, et les préjugés de la société dont on est membre. . . .*]." Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers, par une Societé des gens de lettres* (Paris, 1756), vol. 4, 664.

25. Labille-Guiard to Comtesse d'Angiviller, September 19, 1783, AN O^1 1917/302, reproduced in Portalis, *Labille-Guiard,* 97–98, excerpted in Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 25. On the comtesse, who wielded considerable clout in her own right as a member of the La Borde family of *fermiers généraux,* the king's regional tax collectors, and as hostess of a renowned *salon,* see Théophile Lhuiller, *Une actrice du Théâtre de Madame de Pompadour, Madame Binet de Marchais* (Paris: Noel Charavay, 1903); and Jacques Silvestre de Sacy, *Le comte d'Angiviller, dernier directeur général des Batiments du Roi* (Paris: Plon, 1953), 22–32, 157–68. For a different interpretation of the letter, stressing its rhetorical appeal to the comte, rather than the comtesse, see Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 101–3.

26. I have translated this and all other selections from the letter directly from the original document, Labille-Guiard to Comtesse d'Angiviller.

27. On affinities between Greuze and Diderot, see Bernadette Fort, "Framing the Wife: Jean-Baptiste Greuze's Sexual Contract," in *Framing Women: Changing Frames of Representation from the Enlightenment to Postmodernism,* ed. Sandra Carroll, Birgit Pretzsch, and Peter Wagner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003), 89–124. See also Anita Brookner, *Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1972), esp. 1–53; and *Greuze et Diderot: Vie familiale et éducation dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIème siècle* (Clermont-Ferrand: Conservation des Musées d'Art de la Ville de Clermont-Ferrand, 1984).

28. Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien précédé des Entretiens sur le fils naturel* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), 37.

29. In borrowing from theatrical conventions to further her cause, Labille-Guiard adopted a strategy that Sarah Maza has observed in fictionalized and widely read eighteenth-century legal memoirs that cast their protagonists as recognizable characters from contemporary *drames bourgeois.* Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 19–67.

30. Denis Diderot, *Diderot on Art,* vol. 1, *The Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting,* trans. and ed. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 115.

31. Labille-Guiard to Comtesse d'Angiviller.

32. The following summary is based on "Procès de Capture et Interrogatoire du Monsieur Cousin Marchand de Livres," AN, Cartons du Châtelet, Y 11423, September 20, 1783. Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 25, guided me to this source.

33. Jeremy D. Popkin, "The '*Mémoires Secrets*' and the Reading of the Enlightenment," in *The Mémoires Secrets and the Culture of Publicity in Eighteenth-Century France,* ed. Popkin and Bernadette Fort (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), 9–35, esp. 29.

34. See Annie Becq, "Exposition, peintres et critiques: Vers l'image moderne de l'artiste," *Dix-Huitième Siècle* 14 (1982): 131–49.

35. See, for instance, *Déclaration du Roy concernant les Arts de Peinture et Sculpture, et portant nouveaux Statuts et Règlement pour l'Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture, donnée à Versailles le 15 Mars 1777, enregistrée au Parlement le 2 7bre 1777,* in Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie royale,* vol. 8, 283–90, at 284–85. This prohibition was, in effect, a means of asserting the nobility of the academy by analogy to contemporary distinctions between social classes. As William H. Sewell Jr. has noted, "In principle, a noble could suffer *dérogeance* (deprivation of nobility) for becoming a merchant as well as for apprenticing himself to a shoemaker." Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 21.

36. On the Academy of Saint Luke, a group within the guild, see J. J. Guiffrey, "Histoire de l'Académie de Saint-Luc," *Archives de l'Art Français,* n.s., 9 (1915). See also John A. Goodman, "A History of Artistic Practice and the Monarchy's Crisis of Representation at the End of the Old Regime" (PhD diss., New York University, 1990), esp. chap. 2, "The Battle of the Paris Academies—D'Argenson, the Ideal of Democratic Monarchy, and the Rise and Fall of the Académie de Saint Luc," 215–73.

37. In addition to the *Self-Portrait,* Labille-Guiard displayed *Portrait of Charles-Amédée Van Loo, Portrait of Charles-Nicolas Cochin, Portrait of Joseph Vernet, Portrait of Madame Dupin de Saint Julien, Portrait of the Comtesse of Clermont-Tonnerre,* and *Portrait of the Comtesse de Flahaut and Her Son.* See *Explication des Peintures, Sculptures, et autres Ouvrages de Messieurs de l'Académie Royale, qui sont exposés dans le Sallon du Louvre* (Paris, 1785). As Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 142–44, 146–47, observes, these last two commissions appear to have grown out of connections that Labille-Guiard had formed prior to her academy admission.

38. AN, O^1 1073/435; discussed in Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 27–28.

39. Cheney et al., *Self-Portraits by Women Painters,* 124, also interpret the work as a bid for noble patronage. See also Wendy Slatkin, *The Voices of Women Artists* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1992); and Susan Fisher Sterling, *Women Artists: The National Museum of Women in the Arts* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995).

40. See Marie H. Trope-Podell, "'Portraits historiés' et portraits collectifs dans la critique française du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue de l'Art* 109 (1995): 40–45.

41. For instance, Vigée-Lebrun's 1787 *Portrait of the Queen and Her Children* cost 18,000 livres, three times more than the next highest-priced works commissioned by the Direction des Bâtiments du Roi in that year. Fernand Engerand, *Inventaire des tableaux commandés et achetés par la Direction des Bâtiments du Roi (1709–1792)* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1900), lxiii.

42. *Observations critiques sur les Tableaux du Sallon, de l'Année 1785; Pour servir de suite au Discours sur la Peinture* (Paris, 1785), 19.

43. For example, the roll of paper in Antoine Vestier's 1787 portrait of Eugène-Joseph Foullon d'Écotier, *intendant* of Guadeloupe, functions in exactly this way, as it is unfurled just enough to reveal that it is a map of the Caribbean archipelago, where he served as a colonial administrator. Anne-Marie Passez, *Antoine Vestier, 1740–1824* (Paris: Fondation Wildenstein, 1989), 144–45.

44. For functions of the reversed canvas in painters' visual reflections on themselves, see Victor I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting,* trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 238–67, 276–79.

45. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's preparatory drawing depicting the faces of the two students is published in Perrin Stein, *Eighteenth-Century French Drawings in New York Collections* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 188–90, no. 82.

46. Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 82, first called my attention to parallels between the Labille-Guiard and the Mosnier canvases. I have since learned that contemporary critics observed similarities as well. Pierre Rosenberg published a piece of 1787 Salon criticism advising Mosnier "not to make too just a counterpart to Mme Guiard's painting. . . ." *La Plume du Coq de Micille, ou Aventures de Critès au Salon* (Paris, 1787), quoted in Rosenberg, *French Painting 1774–1830: The Age of Revolution* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1975), 558.

47. In this respect, the painting's composition suggests that Labille-Guiard might have been familiar with a drawing or print after Diego Velázquez's *Las meninas,* 1656, although I cannot at this time demonstrate her knowledge of the work.

48. Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 7–8. See also Joachim Lebreton, *Notice nécrologique sur Madame Vincent née Labille* (Paris, 1803), 1.

49. On the birth of shopwindows and luxurious shop interiors in the 1680s, see Joan de Jean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 12–14.

50. My argument that Labille-Guiard uses her *Self-Portrait* to demonstrate proficiency as a portraitist is similar to the discussion of Rembrandt's self-portraits in Perry Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 11.

51. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris,* vol. 5, 308–15.

52. Ibid., 308–9.

53. Ibid., 311.

54. On the gendered implications of the French fashion press of the 1780s, see Jennifer M. Jones, *Sexing la Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 183–204.

55. Stella Blum, ed., *Eighteenth-Century French Fashion Plates in Full Color: 64 Engravings from the "Galerie des Modes," 1778–1787* (New York: Dover, 1982), offers a brief history and selected images from the series. Émile Lévy, *Galerie des modes et costumes français: Dessinés d'après nature, 1778–1787; Réimpression accompagnée d'une preface par M. Paul Cornu,* 8 vols. (Paris: Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, 1911–12) is the seminal work on the subject.

56. Ribeiro, *Art of Dress,* 14, identifies Labille-Guiard's dress as a *robe à l'anglaise.* On the popularity of the *robe à l'anglaise,* see Blum, *Engravings from the "Galerie des Modes,"* viii, xv.

57. Ribeiro, *Art of Dress,* 169.

58. Definitions given in Blum, *Engravings from the "Galerie des Modes,"* viii.

59. On the texts, which were becoming increasingly racy, see ibid., ix.

60. Ibid., pl. 38; and Lévy, *Galerie des modes,* vol. 3, 172.

61. Blum, *Engravings from the "Galeries des Modes,"* xi, pl. 43; and Lévy, *Galerie des modes,* vol. 3, 197.

62. On the shift from an understanding of fashion as a means for both sexes to display wealth and power to a view of fashion as a way for women to highlight their physical appearances and thus attract men, see Jones, *Sexing la Mode,* 185.

63. *Deuxième Promenade de Critès au Sallon* (London? 1785), *Collection Deloynes,* no. 334, 36–37.

64. Daniel Roche offers the most comprehensive study of the industry's rise, noting that whereas 229 fashion plates were engraved between 1700 and 1749, 1,275 were published between 1750 and 1799. Roche, *The Culture of Clothing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 477. On the seventeenth-century origins of both fashion journalism and fashion plates, see de Jean, *The Essence of Style,* 46–71.

65. Roche, *The Culture of Clothing,* 478.

66. Ibid., 399.

67. Pierre-Joseph Boudier de Villemert, *Le nouvel ami des femmes* (Amsterdam, 1779).

68. Ibid., 45.

69. Ibid., 188.

70. My analysis of Labille-Guiard's *Self-Portrait* as both a demonstration of femininity and an assertion of elevated artistic lineage is analogous to Mary Sheriff's discussion of Vigée-Lebrun's *Self-Portrait* (1783) modeled after Peter Paul Rubens's *Chapeau de Paille,* in Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 197–220; and to Angela Rosenthal's observations regarding Angelica Kauffman's carefully calibrated self-presentations in "Angelica Kauffman Ma(s)king Claims," *Art History* 15, no. 1 (1992): 38–59.

71. Contemporary reviewers frequently described Labille-Guiard's handling as "male," "firm," and "truthful," as discussed in Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman,* 185–89.

72. On the *paragone,* see Luba Freedman, "'The Schiavona': Titian's Response to the Paragone between Painting and Sculpture," *Arte Veneta* 41 (1987): 31–40; and Leatrice Mendelsohn, *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi's Due Lezzioni and Cinquecento Art Theory* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1982).

73. The Houdon sculpture is identified in John Walsh Jr., *Portrait of the Artist* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 12. On Houdon's vestal virgins, see Michael Hall, *Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828)* (New York: Salander-O'Reilly, 1998), 8–11.

74. On vestal iconography, see Kathleen Nicholson, "The Ideology of Feminine 'Virtue': The Vestal Virgin in French Eighteenth-Century Allegorical Portraiture," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject,* ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1997), 52–67.

75. Mathieu François Pidansat de Mairobert, *L'espion anglais, ou Correspondance secrète entre Milord All'Eye et Milord All'Ear,* 10 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1784–86), excerpted and translated in Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan Jr., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137–51, esp. 139.

76. Ibid., 147.

77. Ibid., 139. Possibly alluding to Vesta herself, the author of *Vers à Madame Guyard sur le Sallon de 1785* (*Collection Deloynes,* no. 362, 899) described the *Self-Portrait* as resembling "the goddess in her temple."

78. On the popularity of maternal imagery, see Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in Eighteenth-Century French Art," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany,* ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 201–19.

79. Legal documents produced between 1792 and 1818 attest to the familial nature of the relationships among Labille-Guiard, her students, and François-André Vincent. See Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 37–40; and Daniel Wildenstein, *Documents inédits sur les artistes français du XVIIIe siècle conservés au Minutier Central des Notaires de la Seine aux Archives Nationales et publiés avec le concours de la Fondation Wildenstein de New York* (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1966), 79–80.

80. Bernadette Fort, ed., *Les Salons des "Mémoires secrets" 1767–1787* (Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1999), 297.

81. My summary of the Place Dauphine's history is based on Crow, *Painters and Public Life,* 82–88. See also Robert W. Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris: A Documentary History from the Middle Ages to 1800* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999), 149–56; Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3–21; and Wrigley, *Origins of French Art Criticism,* 29–32.

82. "Observations sur l'exposition à la place Dauphine tirées de *l'Observateur Littéraire* 1761," *Collection Deloynes,* no. 1280.

83. "Arts: Exposition de la Place Dauphine," *Journal de Paris,* June 27, 1783, 741.

84. "Arts," *Journal de Paris,* June 18, 1784, 733.

85. Ibid.

86. See, for instance, "Arts: Aux Auteurs du Journal," *Journal de Paris,* June 28, 1783, 746.

87. Benézit offers a brief discussion of A. Maucert, a little-known painter who practiced in the 1780s. Benézit makes no mention of Maucert's *Place Dauphine* watercolor but cites two genre scenes and one landscape from this period. E. Benézit, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs* (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1976), vol. 6, 271.

88. All citations in this paragraph may be found in "Arts: Peinture; Exposition de tableaux à la Place Dauphine," *Journal Général de France,* June 14, 1785, 283.

89. "Arts: Peinture," *Journal Général de France,* July 16, 1785, 338–39; "Arts: Peinture; À l'Auteur du Journal," *Journal Général de France,* July 28, 1785, 363.

90. Antoine Renou, "Arts: Peinture," *Journal Général de France,* July 16, 1785, 338–39.

91. The similarities between the two works encouraged one critic to compare them, to the disadvantage of Labille-Guiard. *Observations de M. le marquis de S. . . . Capitaine de cavalerie, sur quelques tableaux exposés cette année au Salon, Collection Deloynes,* no. 1345, 293–94.

92. It is not, however, clear that she practiced portraiture professionally. See Passez, *Antoine Vestier,* 134–36.

93. Unfortunately, many biographies of Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire are uncritically hagiographic. The most useful sources include Bruno Cartequisse, *Mesdames de France, les filles de Louis XV* (Paris: France Loisirs, 1990); and Casimir Stryienski, *Mesdames de France, Filles de Louis XV: Documents inédits* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1910).

94. *Année Littéraire,* 1785, *Collection Deloynes,* no. 349, 796. I was directed to this source by Hyde, "Sign of Minerva," 150, 162 n. 29.

95. Hyde, "Sign of Minerva," offers an illuminating discussion of Labille-Guiard's *Portrait of Madame Adélaïde* in relation to the *Self-Portrait.* See also Jean Cailleux, "Portrait of Madame Adélaïde of France, Daughter of Louis XV," *Burlington Magazine* 22 (March 1969): i–vi; and Jennifer Milam, "Matronage and the Direction of Sisterhood: Portraits of Madame Adélaïde," in Hyde and Milam, *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity,* 115–38.

96. In the 1780s, the *pliant* generally appeared at court, in areas where visitors were expected to follow the most elaborate forms of etiquette, as described in Pierre Verlet, *French Furniture of the Eighteenth Century,* trans. Penelope Hunter-Stiebel (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 64–65.

97. "We see here another bas-relief, where Louis XV shows the Dauphin, his son, the field of the battle of Fontenoy saying: Look at what a victory costs." *Explication des Peintures, Sculptures, et autres Ouvrages de Messieurs de l'Académie Royale, qui sont exposés dans le Sallon du Louvre* (Paris, 1787), 21.

98. Hyde, "Sign of Minerva," 145, points out that the painting's insistence on Madame Adélaïde's chastity might have aimed to contradict rumors that she had borne her father's child.

99. Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715–1789* (New York: Homes and Meier, 1984), 149. On the respectability accorded this style in the 1780s, see idem, *Dress and Morality* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 113.

100. I borrow this distinction from Gen Doy, *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 18; and Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 64.

101. Religious piety was a virtue widely attributed to Madame Adélaïde. See, for instance, the dedication of M. l'Abbé Pichenot, *Poésies sacrées, dédiées à Madame Adélaïde de France* (Paris, 1787), iii–iv, which claims, "The Public . . . knows your piety, MADAME. . . ."

102. *Explication des Peintures* (1787), 21, reprinted in Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 182.

103. The excerpt published in Passez, *Labille-Guiard,* 182, differs from this version, which is taken directly from *Explication des Peintures* (1787), 21.

104. On the deathbed in the eighteenth-century cultural imagination, see John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

105. *Explication des Peintures* (1787), 21.

106. Labille-Guiard might be engaging in a contest of emulation with Andrea Mantegna here, as the marble interior, prominent Corinthian columns, and narrative friezes are all elements found in Mantegna's *Circumcision of Christ* (ca. 1460). I thank Maria Ruvoldt for this observation.

107. Robert Rosenblum has coined the term "exemplum virtutis" to describe the late-eighteenth-century "re-examination of Greco-Roman antiquity [which] was gradually combined with the new demand for stoical sobriety of form and emotion." Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), chap. 2, "The Exemplum Virtutis," at 50.

108. *Lanlaire au Salon Académique de Peintures* (Gattiers, 1787), *Collection Deloynes,* no. 375, 26.