

# JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM

## FINE ARTS

### JEAN-MARC NATTIER

Paris 1685 – id. 1766

French School

#### PORTRAITS OF THE ARTIST'S WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN

Black and red chalk on paper

H. 140 mm; W. 115 mm each

Label on the verso: *Copenhagen 1935 l'art français au XVIIIe siècle prêteur Madame Tuffier /Nattier/Famille Nattier/n°19*

DATE: 1730-1750

#### PROVENANCE:

Probably collection of Madeleine-Sophie Challe, Nattier's daughter

Sale of the collection of Comte Jacques de Bryas, Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, Me Chevallier, 4-6 April 1898, no. 126: "La Famille de l'artiste. Portraits en buste de Mme Nattier et de ses enfants: Mmes Tocqué, Brochier, Challe, Mlle Sophie et leur frère. Six charmants dessins à la sanguine et à la pierre d'Italie, de la plus remarquable finesse."

Acquired at this sale by [Henri] Haro for 7000 francs

P.[ion] Decourcelle

Dr. Théodore Tuffier (1857-1929) in 1909

Madame Tuffier in 1935

#### LITERATURE:

Gaston Brière, "Catalogue critique des œuvres d'artistes français réunies à l'Exposition de cent portraits de femmes du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ouverte à la salle du Jeu de Paume des Tuileries (avril-juillet 1909)", *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1909, p. 142, cat no 116.

#### EXHIBITED:

*Exposition de Cent portraits de femmes des Ecoles anglaise et française du XVIIIe siècle organisée sous le haut patronage de S. M. la Reine d'Angleterre par la Revue « L'Art et les Artistes »*, 23 April-1 July 1909, Salle du Jeu de Paume, Paris, p. 33, no. 116: "La Famille de Nattier", "Collection du Dr Tuffier".

*Exposition de l'Art français au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Charlottenborg Palace, Copenhagen, 25 August-6 October 1935, Paris, 1935, p. 135, no. 463 "La Famille de Nattier".

#### RELATED WORKS:

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jean-Marc Nattier and his Family*, 1730-1762, oil on canvas, H. 1,43 m; L. 1,63 m, Versailles, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

These six red and black chalk drawings show the artist's wife and children. Nattier began to work on them around 1730, when he was starting his large family portrait which is now at

Andlauer Hof, Münsterplatz 17, 4051 Basel, Switzerland

Phone +41 61 681 35 35 - Mobile +41 78 955 77 77

Fax +41 61 681 75 70 - jean.f.heim@galerieheim.ch - www.galerieheim.ch

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Versailles,<sup>1</sup> but which he only finished in 1762. In it he has shown himself beside his young wife and four children in a refined décor.



Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jean-Marc Nattier and his Family*, 1730-1762, oil on canvas, H. 1,43 m ; L. 1,63 m, Versailles, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

### **The artist's wife**

The portrait of his wife, Marie-Madeleine de La Roche is in the centre at the top. When they were married in 1724, she was only 16 years old, while Jean-Marc Nattier was 39. Marie-Madeleine was the daughter of Pierre de La Roche, a former musketeer of the king and of Marie-Anne Levasseur. The young wife “combined all there is of talent, beauty, youth and grace that can be seductive.”<sup>2</sup> She enjoyed adornment and happily dressed up in clothing made of silk, satin and printed cretonne. A musician, she played the harpsichord, as the family portrait in Versailles shows. If we are to believe Madame Tocqué, Nattier's first biographer, they had nine children,<sup>3</sup> four of whom reached adulthood. Madame Nattier died in 1742.

### **The Eldest daughter: Marie-Catherine-Pauline Nattier (Madame Toqué)**

The only one to be shown twice in this group, at the top right, and in the centre at the bottom, this is Marie-Catherine-Pauline Nattier, future Madame Toqué, Born on 27 July 1725, she is the couple's first child. She married the portrait painter and pupil of her father, Louis Tocqué on 7 February 1747.

The inscription at the centre bottom of the mount is incorrect: this is not Madeleine-Sophie future Madame Challe. In 1898, the auction catalogue of the collection of the Comte Jacques de Bryas shows this confusion: “the family of the artist. Bust length portraits of Mrs. Nattier

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jean-Marc Nattier et sa famille*, 1730-1762, oil on canvas, H. 1,43 m; L. 1,63 m, Versailles, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

<sup>2</sup> Philippe Renard, *Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766). Un artiste parisien à la cour de Louis XV*, Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau, 1999, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Xavier Salmon, exh. cat. *Jean-Marc Nattier*, 1685-1766, Versailles, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, 26 October 1999 - 30 January 2000, p. 302.

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and her children: Mmes Tocqué, Brochier, Challe, Mlle Sophie and their brother. (...)” Moreover this effigy is directly connected to the one Marie-Catherine-Pauline in the family portrait at Versailles. As the eldest daughter shared her mother’s musical tastes, Nattier has shown her holding a musical score in her hands. In addition, she inherited the instrument shown in Nattier’s painting, which was made by the famous Dumont.

Indulgent and tender, Marie-Catherine-Pauline admired her father enormously and this led her later to write a short biography of the painter. Cochin read this text at the general assembly of the Académie on 7 February 1767.<sup>4</sup> In addition, she seems to have assisted in the creation of some of her father’s portraits by painting accessories or the landscape in the background.

### **Charlotte-Claudine Nattier (Madame Brochier)**

At the top on the left we see the portrait of Charlotte-Claudine Nattier future Madame Brochier. Born in 1730, she married the lawyer and diplomat François-Philippe Brochier in 1754. This portrait should be connected to one painted by Nattier in 1758.<sup>5</sup>



Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait of Madame François-Philippe Brochier, née Charlotte-Claudine Nattier*, 1758, oil on canvas, H. 0,55 ; L. 0,45 m, Artcurial sale, 14 November 2017, lot 498.

### **Madeleine-Sophie - Mme Challe**

The portrait of the youngest sister, Madeleine-Sophie, future Madame Challe is at the bottom left of our group. Born in 1734, she married the painter Michel-Ange Challe and died in 1814.

### **Jean-Frédéric-Marc Nattier**

At the bottom right we see the portrait of the artist’s son, Jean-Frédéric-Marc Nattier who was born on 12 April 1734. The young man was the source of great hope in painting. But, after his father sent him to Rome to perfect his artistic education, he drowned in the Tiber in June 1754.

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<sup>4</sup> Xavier Salmon, exh. cat. *Jean-Marc Nattier*, 1685-1766, Versailles, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, 26 October 1999 - 30 January 2000, p. 312.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait de Madame François-Philippe Brochier, née Charlotte-Claudine Nattier*, 1758, oil on canvas, H. 0,55 ; L. 0,45 m, Artcurial sale, 14 November 2017, lot 498.

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### **Provenance**

This group of six drawings probably comes from the collection of the Nattiers' youngest daughter, Madeleine-Sophie Challe. In her will, she mentioned "(..) a little gold and black frame enclosing under glass six heads of the family drawn by my father (...), a large frame holding under glass eight heads of the family and friends."<sup>6</sup> It is highly likely that our group corresponds to the first reference in the inventory of Madeleine-Sophie Challe.<sup>7</sup> These drawings were then in the collection of the Comte Jacques de Bryas. At the sale of this collection, they were bought by Henri Haro a picture dealer and *expert* at auctions. They then belonged to Monsieur P.[ion] Decourcelle, before entering the collection of Dr. Théodore Tuffier (1857-1929), at the latest in 1909. A pioneer and specialist in pulmonary studies, he operated on Georges Clemenceau and Maréchal Maunoury. A town councillor at Louveciennes and then mayor there, his neighbour was Maréchal Joffre.

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<sup>6</sup> Philippe Renard, *Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766). Un artiste parisien à la cour de Louis XV*, Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau, 1999, p. 166.

<sup>7</sup> Des copies ou répliques de certaines d'entre elles sont passées en vente publique en 2004 (Me Aguttes, le 7 décembre 2004, n°11-12-14).