Chapter 2

CELEBRATING CELEBRITY

La Tour and Cochin at the Salon of 1753

As an institution, the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture struggled with the shift of friendship from a private to a public affair over the course of the eighteenth century. Individual artists, however, found that they had a lot to gain by publicizing relationships that could be construed as friendships in the public venue of the Salon through displaying portraits. The works exhibited by the pastellist Maurice Quentin de La Tour and the engraver Charles-Nicolas Cochin at the Salon of 1753 give insight into the use-value of the social practice of portraiture. While these portraits had currency in the personal lives of both La Tour and Cochin, representing the artistic and intellectual networks in which they participated, both men cleverly used them to depict their extra-Academic social lives to gain public recognition.

Born to a family of engravers in 1715, Charles-Nicolas Cochin fils was an ever-present figure in both Academic and intellectual life in eighteenth-century Paris. At various points in his career, he worked for the Menu plaisirs du roi, which organized royal ceremonies and festivals, was in charge of the Crown’s drawing collection as garde des dessins du Roi, served as the permanent secretary of the Royal Academy, and was an arts administrator. He was a prolific writer, penning obituaries, art theory, and art criticism. He also illustrated the frontispiece to Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie and participated in numerous salon circles, such as that of Marie-Thérèse Geoffrin. As Christian Michel has argued, Cochin connected himself to an “academic clan” that worked in the so-called “minor” genres and media—pastel, engraving, still life, portraiture, and the larger, poorly
defined category of genre painting. Although these artists had achieved a certain level of renown within the art world, they were restricted from attaining the highest offices of the Royal Academy, which were reserved for history painters.

La Tour, born in 1704, was also a member of this group. One of few artists accepted into the Royal Academy who worked exclusively in the medium of pastel, he took advantage of the popularity and legitimacy of the practice, which was cultivated by the visit of the Italian painter Rosalba Carriera to Paris in 1720–21. La Tour rode the vogue for having one’s portrait painted in pastel, and paired the fashionable new medium with depictions of famous faces. He launched his career with a portrait of Voltaire painted in the spring of 1735. Although the original was not exhibited publicly, the engraving of the portrait generated a demand for the artist’s services (Fig. 2.1). Over the course of his career, La Tour earned recognition by attaching his name to figures that were already well known to the public, displaying portraits of other artists as well as of prominent or up-and-coming intellectuals and musicians. Like Cochin, he met many of these individuals by attending salon gatherings, including those held by Madame Geoffrin and Alexandre-Jean-Joseph Le Riche de la Pouplinière.

While both artists consistently promoted their involvement in important intellectual networks over the course of their careers, the Salon of 1753 particularly stands out in the sheer number of portraits that these men presented to the public. The Salon of 1753 represented a boom year for portraits of all kinds: paintings, sculpted busts, and engraved and drawn portraits made up 39 percent of all the exhibited works, the highest percentage of such works displayed at any Salon between 1737 and 1789 (Table 2.1). Combined, Cochin and La Tour were responsible for sixty-four of the 118 portraits displayed that year, with Cochin contributing forty-six drawings, and La Tour eighteen pastels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Portraits Displayed as Percentage of Total Works Displayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'37</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'38</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'39</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'41</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'42</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'43</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'44</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'45</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'46</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'47</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'48</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'49</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'50</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'51</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'52</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'53</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'54</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'55</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'56</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'57</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'58</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'59</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'60</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'61</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'62</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'63</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'64</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'65</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'66</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'67</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'68</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'69</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'70</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'71</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'72</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'73</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'74</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'75</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'76</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'77</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'78</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'79</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'80</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'81</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'82</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'83</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'84</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'85</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'86</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'87</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'88</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'89</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Portraits displayed at the Salon as percentage of total works displayed, 1737–89.
The artists’ choice to display an exceptionally large number of portraits at the Salon of 1753 came on the heels of two significant developments: a critical attack on portraiture and a resurgent emphasis on history painting in the Academy. Both created intense discussion about the value of portraits in the Salon in the 1750s. Thus, the Salon of 1753 was in many ways exceptional, and brings to light how La Tour and Cochin used a public demonstration of their intense involvement with the sociable world of the eighteenth century as a defense of portraiture. La Tour and Cochin positioned themselves and the subjects of their portraits within a new concept of celebrity, and reoriented the discussion of their works at the Salon exhibition to highlight the social uses of portraiture. The particular formats and medium of each artist—La Tour’s bust-length pastels and Cochin’s drawn medallion portraits—created an intimate viewing experience for Salon visitors, giving the illusion of personal access to famous people, a cornerstone in the development of the modern idea of the celebrity, through their works. The idea of intimacy is apparent in the Salon critics’ repeated claims that La Tour and Cochin created their portraits for friends and, in doing so, neglected commissions from wealthy (and therefore paying) customers. Those portraits were praised for their value to the posterity of France and contributed to a growing interest in “great men” (grands hommes), individuals who were celebrated for their contribution to French culture and history. Finally, the emphasis on the male sitters, coupled with the relative dearth of commentary on the women Cochin and La Tour depicted, demonstrates the highly gendered conception of the value of portraits and the public role of friendship.

Portraiture at Midcentury

Over the course of the 1740s, portraiture was increasingly linked to greed and vanity. Economic gain was becoming part of the very definition of the genre. As early as 1723, lexicographer Pierre Richelet defined a portraitist as “someone who easily earns what he needs in order to bring home the bacon, because there is no lack of flirtatious and well-to-do women who want to have their portrait done.” With the appointment of Charles-François Le Normand de Tournehem to lead the king’s arts administration as the directeur-général des bâtiments du Roi in 1745, an overhaul of the Royal Academy was undertaken to revive history painting. In 1747, Tournehem lowered the price for portrait commissions and increased the fees for history paintings in an effort to encourage artists toward the more prestigious but less profitable history painting genre. Not coincidentally, this move followed the art critic Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne’s
description of portraiture as “the most lucrative” genre. In his discussion of the Salon of 1746, he listed the increasing number of portraits at the Salon as a reason for the decline of history painting in France.11

In response to these attacks, the promotion of a sociable side of portraiture became increasingly present in lectures on portraiture presented by artists in the Academy. In his discours on portraiture read at the assembly of the Royal Academy in 1750, the successful portraitist Louis Tocqué made the following recommendation to young artists: “Be gentle, read, speak little, listen a lot, seek out friendship with those who combine the great customs of society with the purity of morals. Acquire from them the noble tone so necessary to be admitted into good company. Only good company can put us in a position to express—nobly, vividly, and delicately—the passions of the soul so difficult to render adequately in painting.”12 For Tocqué, friendship was a way for artists to be socialized. It taught them the proper behavior that allowed them to enter into “good” company. Sociability was also a means for the betterment of an artist’s work, as it allowed them to get to know a sitter and thus to capture more skillfully the sitter’s individuality.

A decade later, the Lyonnais portraitist Donat Nonnotte saw other benefits to artists from participating in bonne compagnie (good company): profit and social elevation. In “Les avantages du portrait et la manière de le traiter,” a discours on portraiture that he gave at the Academy of Fine Arts in Lyon in 1760, he recognized the role of sociability in the career of Pierre Mignard, one of the most celebrated portraitists during the reign of Louis XIV: “I will go further and say that it is only because of his portraits that M. Mignard, first painter to the King, received such elevation. He painted them superbly, and it was for him a sure way to earn a living and to make friends.”13 Nonnotte argued that Mignard’s portraits were alone responsible for his promotion to the highest position an artist could achieve, that of First Painter to the King (Premier peintre du Roi). Portraiture was a way of earning a living and making friends, and these two aspects were intricately linked when the “friends” in question were the same individuals who provided the artist with his living. In fusing friendship, profit, and social elevation together in this passage, Nonnotte relied on an older rhetoric of friendship in the context of patronage. A patron and an artist could be “friends” on the basis of an equality of virtue, even if they were not equal in social status. Casting patronage in terms of friendship allowed the patron to seem generous and helped elevate the artist’s social position.14 Here, Nonnotte adapted this rhetoric to eighteenth-century sociability by tying portraiture to the social commerce of friendship. Equal exchange, not equal virtue, was the basis for
friendship between two individuals of differing social and economic positions. The social exchange inherent to friendship as it was defined by sociability was used to deemphasize the economic exchange of portraiture. In Nonnotte and Tocque’s descriptions alike, sociability, not profit, was both an impetus for and product of portraiture.

Nonnotte’s discours addressed at length how the most famous history painters—Titian, Rubens, and Van Dyck, among others—had produced a number of important portraits of significant people. The list of works emphasized that portraiture had an important role to play in history, promoting the usefulness of the genre. In his explanation of the history of portraiture, he pointed to friendship as one of the primary motivating factors in the production of portraits:

From its beginning this art excited a universal enthusiasm. Gradually achieving its perfection, one employs it to represent all that can touch the heart and please the mind. Friendship, respect, recognition erected monuments to the memory of parents, friends, great men. The sublime talent of making lively and spiritual likenesses generated astonishing feats. The great princes, philosophers, heads of families, virtuous men, beauty and the graces, became models whose images we believed we needed to leave for posterity.15

Friendship remained intricately linked to fame. La Tour tapped into the genre’s relationship to friendship and fame early in his career. In 1747, he exhibited a portrait of the sculptor Jean-Baptiste II Lemoyne (Fig. 2.2). It is a closely cropped bust-length portrait. Lemoyne is shown without a wig, in an unbuttoned grey coat, with a blue cravat casually tied around his neck. The portrait differs greatly from the portraits of artists La Tour had previously sent to the Salon, such as those of Jean Restout (Fig. 2.3), Claude Dupouch (Fig. 2.4), and René Frémin (Fig. 2.5), which were substantially larger, half-length portraits that referenced their sitters’ occupations. Devoid of any reference to Lemoyne’s artistic practice, even his hands, it is a portrait of the man, not the famous sculptor. The simplicity of this portrait is perhaps one reason why the work did not receive any known critical commentary until the following year, when Louis-Guillaume Baillet de Saint-Julien, in his discussion of Lemoyne’s reciprocal portrait of La Tour (Fig. 2.6), noted: “By [this portrait of] M. La Tour, M. Le Moine wanted to pay back the debt of his pastel portrait, exhibited at the preceding Salon and received with applause by all the Public. How M. Le Moine has paid it in full and oh how few in the world have such good credit!”16
Fig. 2.2. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of the Sculptor Jean-Baptiste II Lemoyne*, 1763.
Fig. 2.3. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, Portrait of the Painter Jean Restout, 1746.
Fig. 2.4. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of the Painter Claude Dupouch*, 1739.
Fig. 2.5. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of the Sculptor René Frémin*, salon of 1743.
Fig. 2.6. Jean-Baptiste II Lemoyne, *Bust of Maurice Quentin de la Tour*, salons of 1748 and 1763.
Fig. 2.7. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of the Painter Charles Parrocel*, 1743.
Although La Tour’s portrait of Lemoyne was greeted with appreciation by the public in 1747, it appears not to have been worth mentioning in published criticism until it was recognized as part of a reciprocal exchange. La Tour’s only other portrait of a fellow artist with such a simple format from the 1740s, his 1743 portrait of Charles Parrocel (Fig. 2.7), was similarly exhibited without comment, not even mentioned by name in the Salon livret.17

The exchange between La Tour and Lemoyne was between two unequal Academicians, as Hannah Williams notes. The pastellist had recently been accepted into the Royal Academy; the sculptor had been an Academician for ten years. Salon viewers were accustomed to seeing portraits of established artists painted by newly accepted artists as morceaux de réception, the works they submitted to gain admission to the Academy, but it was highly unusual for an established artist to return the favor and paint a portrait of the new Academician that painted them.18 The unusual inequality of the exchange may indicate that a close and voluntary relationship existed between the two artists, a conclusion further supported by the fact that the exchange was repeated at the Salon of 1763, where the artists re-exhibited their portraits.19

Baillet de Saint-Julien described Lemoyne’s portrait of La Tour and its display in terms of commerce between two men (“M. le Moine a voulu acquitter la dette de son portrait”). Particularly striking is the fact that a discussion of a portrait exchange in these terms happened in 1748, when criticism of portraiture as the most profitable genre was coming to the forefront. While commerce is largely associated today with systems of market exchange, in the eighteenth century, any form of exchange was considered a form of commerce, including social exchanges such as letter writing, conversation, and friendship. The Encyclopédie defined commerce rather broadly, as “that reciprocal dependency of men, by way of the variety of commodities they may provide, extending to actual needs or those one believes one has.”20 Dena Goodman has demonstrated, for example, the serious nature of correspondence in the eighteenth century, when the agreement to correspond implied reciprocal responsibilities.21 Letter writing necessitated replies in order for a relationship to be maintained.

Social commerce was key to eighteenth-century understandings of sociable practice. As the definition of société shifted in the eighteenth century from the notion of pleasurable company to that of a large-scale, basic unit of human organization, sociabilité became an abstract philosophical idea that tried to explain mankind’s desire to participate in société.22 The adjective sociable underwent a similar shift, from describing a personal quality of someone who was polite and pleasant company to, as Daniel Gordon states,
an anthropological fact, an element of national character, and an individual psychological trait.”

The separation of sociable commerce from economic commerce rested largely on the principle of disinterestedness. A belief in equal exchange was crucial to sociable practice. One’s ability to reciprocate signaled their civility. As noted by Gordon, the Marquis de Mirabeau, one of the pioneers of liberal economics, insisted on there being a difference between cupidité (greed) and sociabilité, and “[b]y employing commerce to denote the entire field of sociable relations, [Mirabeau] made commerce synonymous with société. In this way, he suggested that economic production and trade were not acquisitive activities but civilized activities based on the rational quest for happiness within a field of human interdependence.”

The allusion to a transaction is clear in Baillet de Saint-Julien’s comment: La Tour’s pastel portrait created a debt that Lemoyne felt obliged to pay. But between two artists, such a debt could only be paid in the form of another portrait, not with currency as in a typical transaction with a patron. The author also emphasized that the reciprocal public display of the portraits was part of the payment of the debt. Baillet de Saint-Julien showed that the reciprocity of Lemoyne and La Tour’s portrait transaction made it an equal exchange, a form of sociable and friendly commerce rather than an economic exchange driven by greed.

Celebrity at the Salon: The Salon of 1753

Following his successful display of friendship in 1747 and 1748, La Tour exhibited portraits of other men and women with whom he engaged in sociable commerce, and simultaneously took advantage of a new interest that grew among Salon audiences in the 1750s: portraits of celebrities. In 1753, he exhibited eighteen pastels at the Salon, the largest number of works the artist had ever shown at one exhibition. This group included portraits of the director of the Royal Academy, Louis de Silvestre; three associés-libres of the Royal Academy—the Marquis de Voyer, Claude-Henri Watelet, and the Marquis de Montalembert; two members of the French Academy—dramatist Pierre-Claude Nivelle de la Chaussée and author Charles Pinot Duclos; three members of the Royal Academy of Sciences—the abbé Nollet, the Marquis de la Condamine, and Jean le Rond d’Alembert; and portraits of writer Louis Petit de Bachaumont, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Italian singer Pietro Manelli. La Tour also included portraits of six women: Marguerite Lecomte, Madame de Geli, Madame de Mondonville, Madame Huet, Mademoiselle Ferrand, and Mademoiselle Gabriel. He had encountered these sitters
through his regular participation in salon gatherings, including those held by Madame Geoffrin and Madame Le Riche de la Pouplinière. Clearly, as Rena Hoisington notes, La Tour’s involvement in private salons where he could mingle with famous clients was a ploy to fashion himself as the artist of the philosophes.27

The same year La Tour displayed this large group of portraits, La Font de Saint-Yenne reiterated his problems with their proliferation, claiming that the Salon was once more plagued by “the mass of obscure men, without name, without talent, without reputation, even without physiognomy.”28 Portraiture was still a distraction for France’s best painters, but he allowed that it had become a “necessary” part of the spectacle of the Salon, because the French were a proud people.29 Unlike in his 1747 commentary, in 1753, La Font de Saint-Yenne distinguished between portraits made out of vanity and those he saw as acceptable for display, which included those of “good Kings, virtuous Queens, and all our kind and generous Rulers,” ministers who “have zeal for the honor of the nation, and even more for the tranquility, abundance and ease of the people,” “heroes of valor and humanity,” “irreproachable magistrates with integrity,” ambassadors (both foreign and French), and, finally, “our excellent authors whose morals, genius, vast and useful knowledge illuminate their country either in the sciences, Literature or the Fine Arts.”30

La Font’s distinction was tied to the increasing emphasis on the Salon as a place of edification for the public, but he also acknowledged these portraits’ public appeal. The public’s desire to see representations of the sitters went beyond learning from the sitters’ deeds. It was also part of the development of the modern idea of celebrity that began to emerge in the eighteenth century. As Antoine Lilit has argued, celebrity is a form of renown that exists on a spectrum: reputation is situated at the local level, while glory is elevated to the universal.31 And while, in the eighteenth century, glory was linked to being posthumous, celebrity was about contemporaneity—it was based on a person’s ability to captivate the public and required interest in that person’s private life.32 The eighteenth-century French writer Nicolas Chamfort, for example, defined celebrity as “the privilege of being known by people who do not know you.”33 As the status of an individual began to depend more on achievements than on birth, celebrity emerged as a new form of social recognition. In France, the appearance of the word célebrité in writings reached a peak between the 1760s and 1780s.34 To be célèbre was to be famous, and this word, as well as its synonyms fameux and illustre, was sprinkled liberally throughout the salon criticism that discussed portraits.35
As many scholars have noted, the rise of the celebrity was directly tied to important social and cultural shifts brought about by the growth of publishing, the rise of literacy, and the development of newspapers. These provided new forums for the dissemination and consumption of portraits, both written and visual, and new ways for the public to learn about people of note and to possess images of them, thanks to developments in engraving and other forms of intaglio prints. The proliferation of imagery of famous or notorious individuals was a driving force behind the increasing importance of these individuals in the public consciousness. Viewers or collectors of images of famous individuals no longer wanted stereotyped, interchangeable portraits but “real” ones, as Lilti has demonstrated in the case of Voltaire.

The new category of celebrity emerged not only because of the rise of politicized conversation in the public sphere, as described by Jürgen Habermas, but also because of the development of public consumption and commercialized leisure, which led to a public interest in famous figures. The eighteenth century offered unprecedented opportunities for the visual consumption of celebrity portraits at public exhibitions. As historians of British art have noted, commissioning a portrait from a famous artist to be shown to the public in London’s Royal Academy exhibitions was an important means of self-construction and self-presentation, particularly for actresses. A successful portrait could act as an advertisement for the artist’s services and for the actress’s talents. La Font’s description of the Paris Salon as a “spectacle,” which forced him to acquiesce to the number of portraits on display, demonstrates that Salon exhibitions served a similar purpose in the formation of the French celebrity.

The role of the Salon in displaying celebrity is clear in the discussion of the eighteen portraits La Tour displayed in 1753. The livret of 1753 identified every one of La Tour’s sitters, listing their titles and professional affiliations. The numerous commentaries on this notable group of portraits focused both on their value for posterity and on La Tour’s selflessness in creating them. These commentaries, however, primarily focused on the male sitters. The Comte de Caylus declared that, “[La Tour] prefers the consolation of making portraits of illustrious men over those of wealthy people.” The claim is an exaggerated one. Increasingly in demand as a portraitist over the course of the 1750s, La Tour became notorious for charging outrageous sums for his portraits, primarily because he could afford to do so. His normal fee was twelve hundred livres, but in some cases, he charged as much as five thousand livres. Wealthy individuals were willing to pay high prices to be
depicted by an artist known for his paintings of the royal family and nobility, because it was a display of personal wealth to be able to pay such prices.\textsuperscript{42} The impressive number of portraits of important people that La Tour exhibited at the Salon of 1753 successfully distracted critics from the pecuniary aspect of the artist’s practice. They discussed these portraits as if the subjects had been chosen by La Tour himself and were not commissioned, as if, in other words, they were unpaid works. The abbé Leblanc, for example, claimed that La Tour had painted the portraits displayed in the 1753 Salon purely for his own “pleasure.”\textsuperscript{43} Even La Font de Saint-Yenne claimed, “to the immortality of our illustrious authors’ writings, he adds the immortality of their portraits, brought about by his love and zeal for the nation’s honor. These portraits will transmit to posterity both the spirit of their physiognomies and the life of their features which he has engraved to preface their works.”\textsuperscript{44}

Jacques La Combe, like other critics, claimed that La Tour’s portraits possessed significance because of the importance of the sitters. But he also acknowledged the fact that La Tour’s choice to represent these figures was equally important: “This celebrated artist exhibited at the Salon several of these masterpieces of Art which we cannot stop admiring. He seems to have wanted to give double value to his works; the curious . . . will seek [the portraits] out one day, because they are by M. La Tour and because they represent the Illustrious Men of our century.”\textsuperscript{45} La Tour had much to gain from his works being discussed as selfless contributions to the recording of France’s celebrated men; a certain generational split in the group, however, suggests that La Tour’s use of the new category of celebrity also profited his sitters.

Half of the men he painted were born around 1700 and were well established in society. Louis de Silvestre (b. 1675) was the recently appointed director of the Royal Academy and painter to the king of Poland. Writers Pierre-Claude Nivelle de la Chaussée (b. 1692), Charles Pinot Duclos (b. 1704), and Bauchaumont (b. 1690), and the physicist the abbé Nollet (b. 1700), had produced a number of well-known works; the Marquis de la Condamine (b. 1704) was a famed explorer. The remaining six men, however, were of a slightly later generation, and had only recently completed, or were just about to complete, the projects that would garner them the most attention. The collector the Marquis de Voyer (b. 1722) had his chateau, designed by Hardoïun-Mansart, completed in 1752. Watelet (b. 1718) had published his \textit{Vies des premiers peintres du roi, depuis M. Le Brun jusqu’à présent} in 1753. The Marquis de Montalembert (b. 1714) had successfully petitioned to create a
canon foundry in 1750, which was founded in 1753. The Italian singer Manelli had arrived in Paris in 1752 with a comic troop of actors known as the bouffons.46

The inclusion of d’Alembert (b. 1717) (Fig. 2.8) and Rousseau (b. 1712) (Fig. 2.9), in particular, suggests La Tour’s strategy was not one-sided: of all the men on display, these two had the most to gain from publicity at the Salon. Watelet was a wealthy tax-farmer (fermier général) and well-known amateur, the Marquis de Voyer was an ennobled military hero, and Manelli was a performer at the center of a musical debate about the superiority of Italian opera. D’Alembert and Rousseau, however, had more on the line. D’Alembert was a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, but in the early 1750s was concentrating on the Encyclopédie. In February 1752, the first two volumes of the Encyclopédie were suppressed by royal decree after several articles in it were denounced as heretical.47 The third volume of the Encyclopédie was published in October 1753, only a few months after the Salon opened. The publication of this third volume was thus an important renewal of the project after its forced hiatus, and the display of d’Alembert’s portrait at the Salon would have been welcome publicity for it. Indeed, in December of 1753, the Correspondance littéraire described La Tour’s portraits and the Encyclopédie as “immortal” works.48 D’Alembert would be elected to the Académie française the following year, a victory for the encyclopédistes.49 Rousseau had attracted public attention for his Discours sur les sciences et les arts in 1750. The Discours sur l’inégalité, published in 1755, would appear shortly after the Salon of 1753, but he would not reach the height of his fame until 1761 with the publication of Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse.

Both d’Alembert and Rousseau were on the cusp of fame, and the young philosophes were undoubtedly enthusiastic to have an artist who could promote their importance in the public venue of the Salon, and to be included among the portraits of well-established men with whom they mingled. The Salon of 1753 offered them an opportunity to present their faces to the public through La Tour’s talents, on the heels of having published works that established their places in the Republic of Letters. Jacques Lacombe’s and other critics’ inclusion of these young philosophes in a group of “illustrious men” validated and endorsed their work.50

Friendship was central to this practice of mutual self-promotion. Author Jean-François Marmontel wrote verses on the portrait of Rousseau that firmly fixed the portrait’s creation in friendship: “At these features traced by zeal and friendship / Stop, wise men; move on, fashionable people.” Salon critics did not fail to notice this inscription.51 The idea that Rousseau’s features
Fig. 2.8. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Jean Le Rond d’Alembert*, 1753.
Fig. 2.9. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 1753.
had been “traced by friendship” was perhaps not entirely an exaggeration. La Tour intended his portrait to be a gift when he painted it. Writing about the events of 1759 in the Confessions, Rousseau described his portrait by La Tour:

Sometime after my return to Mont-Louis, La Tour, the painter, came to see me and brought my portrait in pastel, which had been exhibited at the Salon a few years before. He wanted to give me the portrait, but I did not accept it. But madame d'Épinay, who had given me her portrait and wanted to have La Tour’s portrait of me, requested that I ask him for it again. He took sometime to retouch it. In the interval came my break with madame d'Épinay. I gave her portrait back; with no reason to give her mine, I put it in my room at the petit château. Eventually, Rousseau gave the portrait to the Maréchal de Luxembourg.

La Tour, in turn, created a second portrait of Rousseau, which Rousseau also tried to refuse at first, but finally accepted. He wrote to La Tour in 1764 on the subject of this new work:

Yes, sir, I accept my second portrait. You know that I gave the first one a purpose as honorable to you as to me, and very dear to my heart. Monsieur le Maréchal de Luxembourg deigned to accept it: Madame la Maréchale deignèd to keep it. This monument of your friendship, your generosity, your rare talents, occupies a place worthy of the hand from whence it came... it shall remain before me each day of my life; it speaks ceaselessly to my heart. It will be passed down in my family, and what flatters me the most about that is that it will allow our friendship to be remembered forever.

Beyond the Salon, the portrait took on an important role: Rousseau offered it to his patron, most likely as a gesture of appreciation. In Rousseau’s description of these events to La Tour, he insisted that giving the portrait to the Maréchal was just as much an honor for La Tour, as the artist, as it was for Rousseau, as the subject. By extending the gift to the Maréchal, Rousseau paid forward La Tour’s initial gift of showing his portrait at the Salon, which presented Rousseau’s face to the public, and placed him among a group of hommes illustres, free of charge. It is ironic, then, as Leo Braudy and Lilti have demonstrated, that Rousseau had an incredibly hard time reconciling himself with his own celebrity. His understanding of the difference between his “natural” self and that seen by the public ultimately caused a sort of paranoid breakdown, made evident in Rousseau, juge de Jean-Jacques and the Confessions.
The Celebrity Artist Undressed

Critics were impressed by the ambitious number of La Tour’s portraits at the Salon of 1753 and by the cultural importance of the men and women depicted. They noted, however, a distinct shift in La Tour’s style: “We count in this Salon up to eighteen portraits by M. de La Tour. Among this great number, there is only that of M. Bachaumont which is done in the taste that you have already seen from this artist. All the other portraits are in a new manner. The colors are less blended, and one should not look at them up close. Despite this criticism, we cannot help but recognize in the pastels of this master a freshness that erases all that is done in oil.” Within this stylistic shift, critics also noted that not all of La Tour’s sitters were painted the same way. His portraits of artists differed from his portraits of military men, aristocrats, and the royal family. The abbé Leblanc observed the following: “Those of the Marquis de Voyer [Fig. 2.10] and M Silvestre [Fig. 2.11] are no less perfect each in their own way. As the latter is a portrait of a painter, we could say that M. de La Tour has made it for painters, and in effect those who know best the difficulties of art are those who will admire it the most. In this portrait there are imperceptible passages of light in the shadows, and shadows in the light, which give it all the relief and fullness of nature.” In this discussion of La Tour’s style, Leblanc intriguingly suggests that there was a distinction between works created for painters and those directed at the general public, which was tied to the changing status of artists. By the 1750s, artists, both as creators of and sitters for portraits, were increasingly included in the category of celebrity. As noted earlier, La Font included in his list of acceptable portrait subjects “our excellent authors whose morals, genius, vast and useful knowledge illuminate their country either in the sciences, Literature or the Fine Arts.” Salon critics identified the artists depicted in portraits in their pamphlets, even when these artists were not named in the Salon livret, suggesting that these men were identifiable and that their identity was viewed as worth sharing with the larger public.

The stylistic shift perceived in La Tour’s 1753 submissions was described as moins fondues—a looser use of pastels than in his earlier work that was less dependent on the blending of pigment. This style emphasized strong individual strokes of pastels so that “one should not look at them up close.” It also emphasized the physical traces of the artist’s own hand. The tactility of pastel was seen as one of its defining traits. Watelet, in his poem L’Art de peindre, emphasized the tactile nature of the medium: “Without [the] brush,
Fig. 2.10. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Marquis Marc-René de Voyer d'Argenson*, 1753.
Fig. 2.11. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Louis de Silvestre, 1753.*
the finger alone places and starts each shade." After placing and blending large areas of color, often with the use of fingers, small details—contours, reflections of light, embroidered lace—would be formed by leaving heavy lines of unblended color on top of smooth areas, producing a layered surface.

The expressive display of touche, the artist’s touch, was loaded with meaning in the eighteenth century, as many art historians have noted. According to Watelet, touch was a tool for both representation and expression. The artist used it to make an image as well as to display how he felt at the moment of its creation. Over the course of the eighteenth century, touche was increasingly seen as a mark of an artist’s individuality. Amateurs’ and theorists’ interest in touch was a product of the recognition of the connection between paint—or in this case, pastel—and the artist.

The looser style La Tour developed in the 1750s brought his viewers closer to his portraits’ sitters and to himself as the artist who created the portraits. Joseph Roach has described what he calls the rise of a “publicly intimate genre of personal effigy-making” as an important part of the development of the modern concept of celebrity. He notes that the production and distribution of personal images, begun in the seventeenth century, underwent a continuous, growing expansion over the course of the eighteenth century, and soon became part and parcel of celebrity culture. This provided everyone, not just heads of state or men of the Church, with the opportunity to publicize themselves by making their faces public. As Roach has stated, “along with such premeditated appearances came a concomitant desire to appear spontaneous. This required readiness on the part of the performers to adopt an air of ‘life-like’ informality, which actors call public intimacy and portraitists déshabille.”

Public intimacy and déshabille are separate but equivalent ideas in Roach’s assessment; both suggest a sort of personal closeness between the actor-sitter and the viewer. Their relationship to a notion of lifelike informality became increasingly important to La Tour, who critics frequently claimed was an artist who captured his sitters’ souls (âmes). In La Tour’s portraits, artists do not appear in déshabille in the traditional sense that was associated with portraits of ladies at their toilette, such as Louis-Michel Vanloo’s portrait of Madame de Marigny and her husband (Fig. 2.12), or with those of collector-amateurs, such as Jean-Baptiste Greuze’s portrait of Watelet (Fig. 2.13). But they have as their goal the representation of their sitters in the frame of life-like informality. They abandon much of the pomp and circumstance of portraits of artists from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a tradition that was integral to the Royal Academy’s public identity.
As the Academy became a fixed institution in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the image of its members, created through the *morceaux de réception* portraits, became standardized. Artists who sought acceptance to the Academy were required to paint two portraits, the subjects of which were usually assigned by the Academy. By the middle of the eighteenth century, these portraits were always of high-ranking members of the institution. The vast majority of the artists depicted their sitters in an elaborate, three-dimensionally conceived space, either at work or holding artistic attributes such as brushes, palettes, and chisels. This sort of painting is exemplified by one of Jean Valade’s 1754 *morceau de réception*, a portrait of Louis de Silvestre (Fig. 2.14). Silvestre is represented at work. He wears a luxurious blue velvet coat and a rose-colored silk *gilet* that is elegantly embroidered with gold, appropriate to a man of his position. He is seated next to a blank canvas with a loaded palette and brushes, a maulstick in his left hand; in his right hand, he holds a brush, as if he is about to dab the paint on his palette and make the first stroke on his canvas.

La Tour, by contrast, eschewed the full-length format in his portrait of Silvestre, preferring a barely half-length format (Fig. 2.11). Frequently, his portraits of artists disregarded the standard inclusion of the tools of the trade, such as palettes, brushes, or chisels. Even if tools were included, as in his portrait of Silvestre, the sitters were shown in an indeterminate space, rather than in an elaborately depicted studio. La Tour presented Silvestre in a traditional form of artistic *déshabille*: rather than wearing his wig and powder, the painter wears a kerchief on his head, seemingly more appropriate dress for painting than the finery he wears in Valade’s portrait.

La Tour’s use of *déshabille* is reflected in more than just the dress and pose we find in the representation of Silvestre. La Tour made little or no attempt to smooth the powdery medium in a way that mimicked the sheen of silk or satin to mask the lines he drew. In Silvestre’s face, the obvious lines of pastel are even more striking. Strokes of pink, yellow, white, and black build up the curves and crevices of Silvestre’s face. The colors lie on top of each other and side-by-side, unblended. In the lower right section of the canvas, the painter holds an empty palette rendered so roughly that it would be indistinguishable were it not for the flesh-toned blob that is his thumb. Looking at the pastel as a whole, we see that La Tour’s technique lends a certain softness to the portrait. Far from being a fixed image, Silvestre seems to quiver with life.

Among La Tour’s different styles, the one used here emphasized the trace of his hand on the paper, and best expressed an idea of a firsthand encounter between artist and sitter. His *touche* appears to have been used most commonly
Fig. 2.12. Louis-Michel Vanloo, *Portrait of the Marquis de Marigny and His Wife*, 1769.
Fig. 2.13. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Portrait of Claude-Henri Watelet, 1765.
Fig. 2.14. Jean Valade, *Portrait of the Painter Louis de Silvestre*, 1754.
Fig. 2.15. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of the Painter Jean Baptiste Chardin*, 1760.
on those men who were counted among his closest allies, and particularly his professional colleagues. La Tour would continue this looser painting style throughout the 1760s, when he depicted artists in an increasingly informal manner. The appearance of this touche is strikingly evident in his portraits of Jean-Siméon Chardin (Salon of 1761; Fig. 2.15) and Jean Baptiste II Lemoyne (Salon of 1747 and 1763; Fig. 2.2). Unlike the half-length format La Tour used for his portraits of René Frémin and Silvestre, he shows Chardin and Lemoyne bust length, in tightly cropped frames. La Tour’s handling in both these pastels is startlingly loose. The works lack the finish of the artist’s earlier portraits of the royal family and members of the court. Broad areas of color, such as those on the sitters’ clothing, lack the heightened definition of fabric texture so often praised in La Tour’s early work. Lemoyne’s coat comes across as surprisingly flat, the buttons not so much clearly defined as suggested. La Tour’s attention to detail increases, however, as the portraits focus on the sitters’ faces, and it is precisely in this area where his handling of the pastel is most evident. When viewed closely, we can see that both Lemoyne’s and Chardin’s faces are made up of easily distinguished strokes of the pastel crayon. Heavy strokes of red create the ruddiness of Lemoyne’s cheeks, and his brushy eyebrows are formed by individual strokes of black. The corner of Chardin’s right eye is delineated by sepia pastel, and thick patches of black create the effect of wrinkles and bags under the aging painter’s eyes. It is impossible to view the faces of these artists without thinking of the hand that painted them. La Tour extended the idea of déshabille from the sitters’ dress and attitude to the physical nature of the portrait: his portraits of artists constantly display his particular touche to signify that they are his. The works’ style is as informal as the attitude of their subjects is.

Charles-Nicolas Cochin: From Salon to the Salon

La Tour alone was not responsible for the extraordinary number of portraits at the Salon of 1753. That same year, Charles-Nicolas Cochin exhibited forty-six portrait drawings, described in the Salon livret as “small portraits in medalion form.” An earlier version of the livret, in the Collection Deloynes, mentions only twenty-five portraits, implying that Cochin added more portraits to the group than he originally intended to show, possibly because the original twenty-five were well received. The official catalogue of the Salon does not give us a precise list of the people represented in these portraits. There are at least twenty-five portraits in Cochin’s oeuvre that likely existed before 1754, and there is overlap between the subjects of the...
portraits La Tour and Cochin displayed, including the Marquis de Voyer, Watelet, d’Alembert, Marguerite Lecomte, and Silvestre.69 A few critics give us a sense of the personalities Cochin included. The abbé Garrigues described the international nature of the people depicted: “enclosed in two large frames are portraits of many of our most famous masters and several illustrious men of Italy.””70 According to Jacques-Gabriel Huquier, the drawings represented “the illustrious modern men among whom are with good reason almost all artists whose works we see at the Salon.”71 The abbé Leblanc gave some precise names, including “Doctor Lami, Doctor Cocchi, M. le Baron Stoch, M. Bouchardon, De Troy and le Père Jacquier,” as well as describing “men of letters, painters, sculptors and amateurs.”72

The forty-six drawings displayed at the Salon of 1753 represent a small fraction of the number of portraits Cochin produced over the course of his career. A complete inventory of these drawings has yet to be made, but at least 150 of his portrait drawings were engraved over the course of the century.73 Each sitter is represented at bust length, in profile (Figs. 2.16 and 2.17). The shape and the profile view in each are based on the tradition of antique medals, a point that will be addressed later in this chapter. At first glance, the formulaic and classical approach to these drawings might seem the opposite of the very personal, and literal, touch present in La Tour’s pastels. But their small size—about ten centimeters in diameter—and conventional format made these portraits easy to produce quickly, suggesting brief but intense encounters between the artist and his sitters, which were, in turn, passed on to the viewer.

While the creation of the portraits may have been brief, Cochin would have seen his sitters fairly regularly. That there were repeated personal encounters between the artist and his sitters is supported by the history of these portraits. The idea for them originated in the Monday salons held at the home of Madame Geoffrin in the 1740s.74 Hugues-Adrien Joly, the curator of prints for the king’s library, wrote of their creation:

*Cochin, during the time that the amateurs and artists assembled at Mad. Geoffrin’s one day a week, drew them in profile in the form of a medallion. He promised to engrave them all and to give them to us to be placed in front of this Collection of M. le Comte de Caylus. Cochin drew many of the amateurs and artists who were received and very well hosted every Monday. Madame Geoffrin held at her place a dinner called the dinner of the Arts and while they conversed, Cochin amused himself by drawing either his colleagues or the amateurs, with the intention of having them all engraved to make a suite of portraits.*75
Fig. 2.16. Charles-Nicolas Cochin fils, *Portrait de Chardin*, n.d.
Fig. 2.17. Laurent Cars, after Cochin, *Portrait of Jean-Siméon Chardin*, ca. 1755.
Joly’s description of these drawings as a form of personal amusement (se recrée) belies their importance. What Joly recounted was the act of recording a social network in visual form. That these drawings were intended to function this way was made apparent in their use: Geoffrin had at least forty-three medallion portraits in her collection, several of which dated to after 1753, including portraits of François Boucher, Chardin, Jean-Baptiste Pierre, Joseph-Marie Vien, Claude-Joseph Vernet, and Étienne Charles Le Guay, who attended her Monday salon, which was dedicated to the discussion of the visual arts. We have no direct record of where exactly in Geoffrin’s home they were displayed, but one imagines that they would have been shown together, at least in small groups. Hubert Robert’s paintings of the inside of Geoffrin’s home in the 1770s (Figs. 2.18 and 2.19) support this idea: in the background, several clusters of medallion frames decorating the walls are visible.

Viewed as a group, the medallion portraits operate as a galerie de grands hommes. The idea that these objects may have been intended to do just that is suggested by their format: they are two-dimensional versions of the medals that had long been used to disseminate the images of rulers and other great men, and were collected by numismatists. This was noted by the abbé Leblanc, who described them as “heads dignified enough to be cast as medals, either because of the celebrity of the people they represent or because of the art in which their resemblance is rendered.”

Leblanc’s connection of Cochin’s works to the older tradition of collecting “great men” in medal form took on new significance, however, with his and other critics’ use of the word “celebrity.” As Lilti has argued, there is a distinct difference between the grand homme and the celebrity: the former was traditionally dead, the latter living. Yet, critics’ discussion of Cochin’s portraits emphasized the fact that the men presented were alive, that one could compare their likenesses, and that Cochin’s project was a sort of monument. Lacombe described the works as “pencil portraits of many celebrated men, the majority very good likenesses, all perfectly drawn.” As noted earlier, the abbé Garrigues claimed they represented “our most famous masters,” and Baillet de Saint-Julien wrote:

This clever artist has never shined more than in these works . . . Posterity cannot fail to applaud his noble and generous enterprise that gives us the portraits of our most illustrious artists and fellow citizens in medallion form. [Posterity] will one day be able to contemplate these celebrated monuments which will make them immortal, when they might not have already been so by their works, and be assured to find them as real, as similar as if they were actually in front of its eyes.
Compiling collections of *grands hommes* was not a new phenomenon. Prior to Cochin’s display of portraits, the most famous compendium of them was Charles Perrault’s *Les Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle*, first published in 1697 (Fig. 2.20). About a dozen collections of engravings of great men of France were produced in the eighteenth century, many inspired by Perrault’s book. At least one of these projects was tied to Geoffrin’s salon: Ange-Laurent La Live de Jully began his own compendium of *grands hommes* with the intent of updating Perrault’s work in 1752. At the Salon of 1753, Cochin’s works were the largest group of *grands hommes* portraits to have been shown at the Salon to date, and they appear to have started something of a vogue for these types of portraits in the public venue of the Salon. After Cochin’s portraits were exhibited, the number of medallion formats at the Salon, including engravings and medals, increased substantially and began to be categorized differently in the Salon *livret*. In the first years of the Salons, prints and medals were listed in the catalogue interspersed among the paintings and sculptures, but not numbered. After 1753, engravings were separated into their own category and numbered. In the 1760s, artists began to be listed specifically as graveurs des médaillles. Commemorating *grands hommes* reached a pinnacle in the late 1770s and 1780s, when the surintendant des bâtiments, the Comte d’Angiviller, commissioned a series of large-scale, full-length sculptures of the great men of France.

The use of the word “celebrity” in reference to Cochin’s portraits signals an important shift in the public consideration of these men, and the broader appreciation for collections of great men in the eighteenth century, as discussed by David Bell. Perrault’s *Hommes illustres* and the establishment of the reading of eulogies at the Académie française were offshoots of the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns. These collections, and others like them, tried to highlight the greatness of modern men. They made a distinction, however, between “illustrious” men and “great” men; the former were tied to heroic deeds, while the latter were seen as having noble qualities in every aspect of their lives. As Bell notes, by the end of the eighteenth century, greatness was to be found not in public life, but in private actions, and biographers “prefer[red] to capture the great man in the bosom of his family instead of on the battlefield, in the courtroom, or any other public arena.” Furthermore, newer compilations of great men moved away from the court and disregarded social hierarchy, often including men of low birth (painters, playwrights, doctors, jurists, novelists, architects, and astronomers) and not organizing them by social class. In short, new standards of fame...
Fig. 2.18. Hubert Robert, *Le déjeuner de Madame Geoffrin*, ca. 1770–72.
Fig. 2.19. Hubert Robert, *Présentation d’un tableau à Madame Geoffrin*, ca. 1770–72.
were created as the orders of society became less fixed. Merit, not rank, became the basis for greatness, an idea that would have been emphasized in the mixed social environment of Geoffrin’s salon from which Cochin’s portrait project developed. Bell’s analysis of these changes has similarly been addressed in the recent work of Lilti: the idea of the grand homme was one that shifted the idea of the “hero”—defined as an exemplary person, an incarnation of society’s values, and someone to imitate—from emphasizing military prowess to focusing on an individual’s intellectual talent. It is perhaps not coincidental that a number of men that Cochin depicted and encountered during his lifetime, including Rousseau, David Hume, Denis Diderot, and Étienne Falconet, were involved in public discussions about what it meant to be famous.

The men whom Cochin represented were worth depicting because of the significance of their publications, their artworks, or other notable public displays of their greatness. But Cochin also knew a substantial number of them personally, and he could attest to displays of greatness that took place in the private realm that Enlightenment thinking emphasized. Cochin’s personal connection to his sitters is apparent in the intimate format of his works, which was made possible by the fact that they were drawn from life. Perrault’s illustrations, La Live de Jullý’s engravings, and those commissioned later by d’Angiviller were not the product of a close encounter with a sitter, as Cochin’s drawings were; rather, they were copies of extant portraits of dead men. Cochin’s use of pencil brought a sense of personal contact and immediacy to his portraits in a way that the burin could not. In Cochin’s portrait of Chardin, for example, the artist did not shy away from capturing the sitter’s prominent double chin and bulbous nose, similarly emphasized in La Tour’s pastel. The copious shading of the subject’s caterpillar-like eyebrows contrasts the arabesque line work used to delineate the curls of his powdered wig. Laurent Cars’s engraving after Cochin’s drawing changed the fluid pencil strokes into the strict cross-hatching inherent to intaglio work. Carefully rendered folds of flesh and fabric were reduced to a series of intersecting lines, giving the sitter’s physiognomy a sculptural, frozen quality.

The acts of recording the participants in Geoffrin’s salon in a visual form and displaying their portraits at the Salon, and critics’ consistent use of the word célèbre or célèbrité to describe these portraits, indicate a self-consciousness about the social importance and the historical interest of Geoffrin’s circle. In other words, Cochin’s medallion portraits created a visual and lasting record of Geoffrin’s salon by representing its participants, who were some of the greatest intellectual talents of the day, and presenting them to the public.
One imagines that the sitters, with whom Cochin and Geoffrin were personally acquainted, hoped to attain the status of grand homme one day.

Critics claimed that Cochin had undertaken some sort of self-sacrifice when completing these drawings. Like the critics who claimed that La Tour was sacrificing earnings in order to depict France’s illustrious men, La Font de Saint-Yenne suggested that Cochin sacrificed something else in order to present such an ambitious number of portraits at the Salon—in this case, time, which he could have been spending on his commissions from the court instead. While Joly described the drawn portraits as a form of “amusement,” Salon critics were quick to point out that the man who worked for the Menu plaisirs du roi had displayed no engravings of royal festivals at the Salon. Notably, Cochin’s inclusion of artists and amateurs in his series greatly pleased La Font de Saint-Yenne, who wrote:

_I return to Sr. Cochin who has given us with his drawings exhibited at the Salon a public view not only of his singular esteem of all illustrious men, but also for the amateurs of the arts in forty-six small medallion portraits drawn in the best lines. I wish with all my heart and with the passion that I have for all those who can merit honor, that, despite the great works with which he is commissioned by the court with such distinction, he can steal some hours to incessantly execute a project that will immortalize the artist and the originals [sitters] and which will delight all who love to see the spirit and true physiognomy of the men whose works they admire.₈⁸_

As a supposedly not-for-profit enterprise, Cochin demonstrated his appreciation for the important men of his time, and provided an opportunity for artists and amateurs to be immortalized as hommes illustres.

_From the Salon to the Academy: A Failed Gift_

Cochin’s project, however, was not an act of self-sacrifice. He began creating engravings of his drawings in earnest in 1763, or had them engraved by amateurs who attended Geoffrin’s salon. These print reproductions primarily depicted individuals who were of interest to the public so that Cochin could profit from the reproductions’ sale, and often included men with whom he did not have personal contact.₈⁹ Cochin was aware of how his portraits fit in with a growing desire for biographies and images of great men: prints after his own original drawings, made by other engravers, appeared in subsequent Salons, further extending and assuring their impact. The portrait project had...
begun as a form of documenting the illustrious members of Geoffrin’s circle and had value for her in serving in that function, but Cochin appropriated the production of his portraits for his own professional gain. Importantly, his plans for these portraits extended beyond both the private confines of Geoffrin’s home and their public viewing at the Salon. The initial series of drawn portraits appears to have had value in a third arena: the Royal Academy.

We learn from a letter written by Cochin to the genre painter Jean-Baptiste Descamps that the portraits were supposed to have been left to Cochin in Geoffrin’s will:

I have retrieved your portrait from Madame de la Ferté-Imbault, daughter of Madame Geoffrin. I believe that I told you about the plan I had of bartering with her for the return of the portraits of our artists. Madame Geoffrin had promised to leave them to me in her last will and testament, but she forgot or did not manage to do it. Whatever the matter, I’ve gotten yours back. Perhaps you would like me to send it to you, but how do we settle this with my desire to give all these portraits to the Academy.

Cochin’s letter gives us a sense of the personal nature of these objects. That Geoffrin had allegedly promised to leave them to Cochin suggests that these works were not commissioned, bought, and paid for by Geoffrin herself. The gesture of return situates the portrait drawings in a larger eighteenth-century tradition, in which it was customary to return evidence of personal relationships that had been exchanged between two parties—letters, portraits, gifts—at the end of their friendship or amorous affair, whether the end resulted from a rupture or death. Geoffrin followed this rule in her own life; she returned letters from the King of Poland after a rupture between them, explaining, “I could have burned [the letters], but I didn’t have the strength: it seemed to me less cruel to put them back in the hands that wrote me these sacred letters.” Geoffrin’s similar promise to return Cochin’s portraits suggests that these works of art were treated much like other eighteenth-century documents of intimate relationships.

Geoffrin’s prolonged illness at the end of her life left this promise unfulfilled. Cochin had to find another means to get his portraits back: bartering (des trocs), although with what or in what manner we do not know. Cochin’s letter to Descamps points to a different and, in this case, conflicting destination for the works. Cochin claims that Descamps wanted his own portrait back, but Cochin informed him that he hoped to give the original
drawings to the Academy. This donation, however, seems to have never been made, as there is no record of Cochin’s drawings in the Academy’s inventory, nor do we find a significant body of Cochin’s medallion portraits in the collections of the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts or the Louvre, where the majority of the Royal Academy’s collection is held today.

Cochin’s desire to donate his portraits to the Academy marks a shift in the role of those portraits, from being gifts offered to a patron responsible for a major site of extra-Academic and unofficial socializing to documenting artists’ status in the official institution of artistic production of the period. In one sense, Cochin’s intended gesture was not out of the ordinary. Artists often donated portraits to the Academy, and the Academy depended on such donations in order to increase its collection. Over the course of the eighteenth century, members of the Academy collectively donated twenty-six portraits. Sometimes the portraits were representations of long-dead artists that were owned by members of the Academy. In other cases, the portraits were donated in memory of the artists who painted them. Alexandre Roslin offered a portrait of Jacques Dumont le Romain by his wife, Marie-Susanne Roslin (née Giroust), to the Academy after her death in 1772. Jean-Baptiste II Lemoyne donated his portrait of Charles Parrocel to the Academy in 1752. Lemoyne had given this portrait to Parrocel, who, in return, left the portrait to Lemoyne in his will after his death in 1752. Chardin donated his portrait by Maurice Quentin de La Tour to the Academy in 1775.

The donated portraits supplemented the official pictorial record created by the Academy’s morceaux de réception portraits. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, artists seeking entry into the Academy as portraitists were required to complete two portraits, the subjects of which were assigned to them by the Academy. While not all the reception pieces created over the course of the Academy’s history depicted artists, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the sitters were always chosen from among the Academy’s members. As Hannah Williams has demonstrated, the reception portraits served to visualize the Academy and its history, focusing on artists who had achieved the highest ranks of the Academy. But, as she notes, portraitists, genre painters, and still-life painters were not allowed to be promoted to those positions, as the statutes of the Academy restricted promotion to history painters and sculptors. Thus, artists working in the “minor” genres were excluded from the visual history of the Academy created by the morceaux de réception portraits, and had to find other ways to be included in the Academy’s self-fashioned galerie de grands hommes. Cochin’s desire to donate portraits of artists to the Academy can be read to correct the absence of non-history
painters in the institution’s visual record. Of the fifty-four artists drawn by Cochin and subsequently engraved by him or amateurs, only fourteen had been the subject of a *morceau de réception* portrait.\(^{100}\)

The donated portraits also run counter to the *morceaux de réception* portraits in the types of relationships they display. Because the subjects of the reception portraits were in most cases assigned by the Academy, the artist and sitter were cast in relation to one another in a way that displayed the institution’s internal hierarchy.\(^{101}\) By being required to paint older, more established history painters, younger portraitists displayed their lower rank vis-à-vis the artist they represented.\(^{102}\) Cochin’s portraits, in contrast, bore witness to how artists socialized outside the Academy, in Geoffrin’s salon and other spaces, where such hierarchies may have been downplayed.

*Where are the Grandes Femmes?*

The sheer number of portraits that Cochin and La Tour exhibited at the Salon of 1753 is anomalous in the history of the display of portraits at the Salon, and the reason that particular Salon included an unprecedented number of portraits. In the midst of a direct attack on the value of portraits in the context of a public exhibition, Cochin’s elaborate portrait project was a means of representing extra-Academic associations that functioned in the semi-private sphere of Geoffrin’s salon, and displaying them in the very public realm of the Salon. La Tour similarly displayed his engagement with Enlightenment culture at the Salon, which added to his own reputation as well as to that of his sitters. He also appears to have been involved in a wide network of portrait exchange with his fellow artists. At his death in 1788, La Tour bequeathed to an astounding number of artists “leurs portraits et miniatures” (their portraits and miniatures).\(^{103}\) The vague description makes it difficult to determine who the authors of these portraits were. Were they portraits by La Tour? Were they self-portraits or perhaps even done by a third party? That the list of sitters includes people who were not artists suggests that the portraits were images of those people rather than works by them, but of course in the case of artists, those two categories might not be mutually exclusive. Even without the knowledge of the authors of these works, the list is a remarkable record of the most important artists of the period (Cochin, Vien, and Jean-Baptiste Pigalle), up-and-coming artists of the 1780s (François-André Vincent, Jacques-Louis David, and Jean-Simon Berthélemy), and two women artists, “Mme Guiart” (Adélaïde Labille-Guiard) and “Mme Lebrun” (Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun).\(^{104}\)
The appearance of two women artists in this list is noteworthy. The number of portraits of male artists at the Salon far outnumbered those of women artists, in part because women were in the minority in the official realm of artistic production. Even with this discrepancy taken into account, however, there were far more portraits of male artists by women artists than portraits of women artists by men. While Vigée-Lebrun, Labille-Guiard, and other women regularly represented their male colleagues, the favor was rarely returned. Similarly, it is striking that the vast majority of commentary on Cochin’s and La Tour’s portraits at the Salon of 1753 focused on depictions of men. We have no way of knowing if Cochin included any women in the forty-six drawings he displayed, although there may have been portraits of at least three. In Salon criticism, the six portraits of women that La Tour displayed received far less discussion than those of the men. One of the rare comments on the women’s portraits was a decidedly backhanded compliment from La Font de Saint-Yenne, who praised La Tour’s ability to please women, who were “rarely satisfied with their portraits.”

La Tour’s portraits of women were also listed in a very different way in the Salon livret than the others. In the information about the portraits, the men’s names were all followed by their titles and academic associations. (Even the least decorated of the men, Rousseau, was listed with his self-styled title, “Citizen of Geneva.”) With the exception of Silvestre, shown at his easel, and the Marquis de Voyer, depicted in armor, the men are shown without the attributes that speak to the roles listed for them in the livret. Their physiognomies, paired with their names and associations, were enough to demonstrate their celebrity; the viewing public did not need any more visual proof of their talent. The women, though, are not shown “being” but “doing”: Madame Lecomte holds a piece of music; Mademoiselle Ferrand ponders Newton. The actions of these women are reflected in the descriptions of their portraits. Yet, we are given no other identifying information about them, not even the names of their husbands. The reversal of the relationship between text and image for the female sitters is notable in light of both the emphatic description of their male counterparts as illustrious men, and the dearth of criticism about these portraits.

The social and intellectual networks that Cochin and La Tour depicted were frequently formed within spaces run by women such as Madame Geoffrin and did not lack female participants. Indeed, it is likely that La Tour and Cochin met their female sitters in the same circles in which they were introduced to their male sitters. Yet, in the context of the Salon of 1753—and Cochin’s and La Tour’s engagement with changing categories of fame as a
means of taking a stand against the growing antagonism against portrai-
ture—the vastly different treatment of women has a certain logic to it. For
eexample, one of La Font de Saint-Yenne’s most quoted criticisms about the
corrupting influence of portraiture was linked explicitly to the vanity of
corrupting influence of portraiture was linked explicitly to the vanity of
women. With the emphasis placed on the importance of male sitters
through the inclusion of their professional titles and affiliations, rather than
through visible attributes or a public performance of achievement, celebrity
as a form of greatness was the purview of the masculine: an inherent, intan-
gible quality distinct from the superficial beauty that was emphasized in
portraits driven by female vanity. The absence of discussion of women as
famous or illustrious, and the relative scarcity of portraits of women artists at
the Salon, raises important questions about the homosocial nature of the
institutions of artistic production in eighteenth-century France, which will be
addressed in the next chapter.


Chapter 2
CELEBRATING CELEBRITY

2 Per Michel, this group’s central figure was Charles Parrocel. Also included were French and foreign artists, such as John-Martin Preisler, Jean Restout, Jean-Siméon Chardin, Jacques-Philippe Le Bas, Étienne Jeaurat, François Boucher, Jean-Baptiste Massé, Michel-Ange Slodtz, and George-Frederick Schmidt. Ibid., 48–51.
3 Ibid., 51.
4 Christine Debrie and Xavier Salmon, Maurice-Quentin de La Tour: prince des pastellistes (Paris: Somogy, 2001), 44.
6 It is difficult to get an exact count of the number of portraits displayed, as the salon livret frequently describes an artist’s offerings as “several portraits under the same number.” In all likelihood, the number of portraits is higher than the table demonstrates. Whenever possible, I have used annotated versions of the Salon catalogue and mentions of unlisted portraits in Salon criticism to take into account the number of actual portraits displayed. Along with the “several works” issues, until midcentury, engravings and drawings were not included in the numbered count in the catalogue. The total number of works in this table reflects my own incorporation of these unnumbered works.
7 Michel, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, 50.
9 “[Q]ui y gagne de quoi bien faire bouillir son pot, parce qu’il n’y point de bourgeoise un peu coquette et un peu à son aise qui ne veuille avoir son portrait.” Pierre Richelet, “Portrait,” in Pierre Richelet, Dictionnaire de la langue française ancienne et moderne. Tome 2, I–Z, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1732), 453. For more on


13 “Je vais encore plus loin, et je dis, que ce n’est qu’a ses portraits que M. Mignard premier peintre du Roy fut redevable de son élévation. Il les traitoit superieurement, et c’est etoit pour lui un moien sûr de gagne de bien et des se faire des amis.” Donat Nonnotte, *6e discours de M. Nonnotte les avantages du portrait et la manière de le traiter*, Ms 193, folio 59–69, Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Lyon.


15 “Cet art de sa naissance excita un empressement universelle. Parvenu peu à peu à sa perfection, on l’emploi a représenter tout ce qui pouvoit toucher le coeur et plaire à l’esprit. L’amitié, le respect, la reconnaissance élèvent des monuments à la mémoire des parens, des amis, des grands hommes. Le sublme talent de faire des ressemblances vives et spirituelles, fit éclore des prodiges qui étonnèrent. Les grands Princes, les Philosophes, les chefs de familles, les hommes vertueux, la Beauté et les Grâces, devinrent des modèles, dont on cru devoir laisser des images à la postérité.” Nonnotte, *6e discours*.
Endnotes


17 As Paul Albert Besnard notes, the display of Parrocel’s portrait was mentioned in a handwritten annotation in the livret in the Collection Deloyes. Besnard, La Tour: La Vie et l’œuvre de l’artiste (Paris: Les Beaux-arts, 1928), 35.

18 A further analysis of the significance of the inequality of this exchange is found in Hannah Williams, Académie Royale: A History in Portraits (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 209–14.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 72.

25 On May 27, 1751, La Tour achieved the rank of conseiller in the Royal Academy, the highest office a portraitist could attain. He also received lodgings at the Louvre, an annual pension of one thousand livres, and he benefited from commissions from the royal family. Besnard, La Tour, 52.


These are almost the exact same words he used in 1747: “des êtres obscurs sans caractère, sans nom, sans places, et sans mérite.” La Font de Saint-Yenne, Reflexions, 22.

“... portraits have become a necessary spectacle to each Frenchman ...” ("... les Portraits sont devenus un spectacle nécessaire à chaque François ...") La Font de Saint-Yenne, Sentimens, 233.


Ibid., 13–14.

“La célébrité est l’avantage d’être connu de ceux que vous ne connaissez pas.” Quoted in ibid., 148.

By the 1780s, the Dictionnaire de l’Académie française had added an important set of distinctions to the definition of célébre in order to delineate it from its synonyms famous-ness (fameux) or illustriousness (illustre): “It says less than illustrious, and is more noble that famous.” (“Il dit moins qu’illustre, et il est plus noble que fameux.”) “Célèbre,” Jean-François Féraud, Dictionnaire critique de la langue française (1787–88) in Dictionnaires d’autrefois, University of Chicago, The Project for American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL), http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/.


Lilti, Figures publiques, 31.


“[I]l préfère la consolation de faire le portrait des homme illustres, à l’avantage de faire celui des gens opulens.” Mercure de France (October 1753), 162.
As Hoisington notes, Manelli’s inclusion was perhaps La Tour’s attempt to demonstrate his participation in the querelle des Bouffons. Hoisington, “Maurice-Quentin de La Tour,” 191–96.


I thank Dena Goodman for this insight.

“Quelque temps après mon retour à Mont-Louis, La Tour, le peintre, vint m’y voir, et m’apporta mon portrait en pastel, qu’il avait exposé au salon, il y avait quelques années. Il avait voulu me donner ce portrait, que je n’avais pas accepté. Mais madame d’Épinay, qui m’avait donné le sien et qui voulait avoir celui-là, m’avait engage à le lui demander. Il avait pris du temps pour le retoucher. Dans cet intervalle vint ma rupture avec madame d’Épinay; je lui rendis son portrait; et n’étant plus question de lui donner le mien, je le mis dans ma chambre au petit château.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les confessions de J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, vol. 4 (Lyon: Chez J. S. Grabit, 1793), 128.

His hesitation to accept the portrait is found in a letter dated January 9, 1763, to Tous-saint-Pierre Lenieps. See Besnard, La Tour, 63.
“Oui Monsieur, j’accepte encore mon second portrait. Vous savez que j’ai fait du premier un usage aussi honorable à vous qu’à moi, et bien précieux à mon cœur. Monsieur le Maréchal de Luxembourg daigna l’accepter: Madame la Maréchal a daigné le recueillir. Ce monument de votre amitié, de votre générosité, de vos rares talents, occupe une place digne de la main dont il est sorti... il sera sous mes yeux chaque jour de ma vie; il parlera sans cesse à mon cœur; il sera transmis à ma famille, et ce qui me flatte le plus dans cette idée est qu’on s’y souviendra toujours de notre amitié.” Rousseau to La Tour, 14 October 1764, quoted in Besnard, *La Tour*, 68–69.


“Ceux de M. le Marquis de Voyer et de M. Silvestre ne sont pas moins parfaits chacun dans son genre. Comme ce dernier est un Portrait de Peintre, on pourroit dire que M. de La Tour l’a fait pour les Peintres, et qu’en effet ce sont ceux qui connoissent le mieux les difficultés de l’Art qui l’admireront le plus. Il y a dans cette tête des têtes des passages imperceptibles, des clairs dans les ombres, et des ombres dans les clairs, qui lui donnent tout le relief et toute la rondeur de la nature.” Leblanc, *Observations*, 35.


“Nos excellens auteurs, dont les mœurs, le genie, les vastes et utiles connoissances illustrent leur patrie soit dans les sciences, les Belle-lettres, ou les Beaux arts.” La Font de Saint-Yenne, *Sentimens*, 139.

Portraits were often listed together in the *livret* as “several portraits under the same number” (“plusieurs portraits sous le même numéro”).

Estève, *Lettre a un ami*, 15. For a full analysis of critical discussions of La Tour’s multiple styles, see Hoisington, “Maurice-Quentin de La Tour,” 145–70.


67 On the development of the *morceau de réception* portrait, see Williams, *Académie Royale*, 27–42.

68 “Quarante-six petits Portraits en Médailons dessinés par M. Cochin le fils,” listed under number 179 in the *Explication des peintures, sculptures, et autres ouvrages*.

69 Using Michel’s appendix, one can identify drawings that date to 1753 or earlier, and works that were engraved by 1754. Possible inclusions are: the Marquis de Marigny (engraved by Watelet, 1752); Bouchardon (listed in critics’ commentary); Boucher (engraved by Cars, 1754); Jean-François de Troy, 1750 (listed in critics’ commentary); Parrocel (engraved by Cochin, 1753); Pierre (engraved by Watelet, 1754); Silvestre, 1753; Vanloo (engraved by Daullé, 1754); Breteuil, 1752; Caylus (engraved by Cochin, 1752); La Live (engraved by La Live de Jully, 1754); Marquis de Voyer (engraved by Watelet, 1754); Watelet (engraved by Watelet, 1753); d’Alembert (engraved by Watelet, 1754); Leblanc, 1750, Marguerite Lecomte (engraved by Watelet, 1753); Benaglio, 1750; Cochin (engraved by Daullé, 1754); Jacquier, 1750 (mentioned by critics); Le Seur, 1750; Copette, 1753; Boutin (engraved by Watelet, 1752); Regny, 1751; Lady Hervey, 1752; and Mme Favart, 1753. See Michel, *Charles-Nicolas Cochin*, 617–26.


73 Michel notes, “It is impossible today to indentify the models of a larger number of the non-engraved portraits, without doubt often little known friends or relations.” (“Il est aujourd’hui impossible d’identifier les modèles d’une large partie des portraits non-gravés, sans doute souvent ceux des amis ou de relations de Cochin peu connus.”) He limits his list of models, therefore, to those whose drawings were engraved. See Michel, *Charles-Nicolas Cochin*, 617. It is worth noting that Jombert explained it was necessary to separate the portrait medallions from the rest of Cochin’s work in his introduction to them in his catalogue of Cochin’s work. Jombert listed only 121 engravings; however, his catalogue is not complete, as Cochin lived and was quite productive after 1770. Jombert, *Catalogue de l’oeuvre de Ch. Nic. Cochin fils; écuyer, chevalier de l’Ordre du Roy* (Paris: Prault, 1770), 122–31.

“Le Sr. Cochin pendant que les amateurs et les artistes s’assemblent chez Mad. Geoffrin un jour de la semaine les a dessinés de profil dans une forme de médaillon. Il s’est promis de les graver tous et de nous les donner pour mettre à la tête de ce Recueil de M. le Comte de Caylus. Le S. Cochin a dessiné plusieurs amateurs et plusieurs artistes qui sont reçus et très bien accueillis tous les Lundi. Madame Geoffrin donne chez elle un dîné appelé le dîné des Arts, et tandis que les uns sont à la conversation, le S. Cochin se recrée à dessiner ou ses confrères ou des amateurs, en sorte que son intention serait de les faire graver tous pour en faire une suite de portraits.” Quoted in Charlotte Guichard, Les amateurs d’art à Paris au XVIIIe siècle (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2008), 220.

A list of the portraits owned by Geoffrin is found in the sale catalogue, R. Claude Catroux, Catalogue de huit tableaux par Hubert Robert; quarante-trois dessins par Cochin, portraits du XVIIIe siècle provenant du salon de Madame Geoffrin et appartenant au comte de la Bedoyère (Paris: Henri Baudoin et Jules Féral, 1921).

“[A]utant de têtes dignes en effet d’être frappées en Médailles, soit à cause de la célébrité des personnes qu’elles représentent, soit à cause de l’art avec lequel leur ressemblance y est rendu.” Leblanc, Observations, 45–46.

Lilti, Figures publiques, 126.

“[P]ortraits au crayon de plusieurs hommes célèbres, la plupart très-ressemblans, tous parfaitement dessinés.” Lacombe, Le salon, 29.

“Cet habile Artiste ne brillera jamais mieux que dans ses Ouvrages . . . La postérité ne peut manquer d’applaudir à l’entreprise noble et généreuse qu’il a formée de nous donner en Médailon les Portraits de nos plus illustres Artistes ou Concitoyens. Elle pourra les contempler un jour dans ces monumens célèbres qui les rendront immortels, quand ils ne le seroient pas déjà par leurs Ouvrages, et s’assurer de les y trouver aussi vrais, aussi ressemblans que s’ils se montroient eux-mêmes à ses yeux.” Guillaume Baillet de Saint-Julien, “Lettre de M. des R. à M. le Comte de ***,” in Lettre à Mr Chardin sur les caractères en peinture (Geneva: n.p., 1753), 22, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30047451w.

For a list of these works, see Bell, The Cult of the Nation in France, 113.

La Live’s portraits for this project can be found in Rés Ef 34 no. 51–101, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des estampes et de la photographie, Paris. He was assisted by Augustin de Saint-Aubin.


Ibid., 124.


See Chapter 4 of Lilti, Figures publiques.

Diderot and Falconet debated at length in the correspondence about whether it was better to be famous when alive or dead. Hume and Rousseau’s falling out was greatly publicized, and Rousseau commented on his own issues with celebrity in the Confessions. Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown, 371–80.

“Je reviens au Sr. Cochin qui nous a donné dans ses crayons exposés au salon une prèvue publique non seulement de son estime singulière pour tous hommes illustres, mais encore pour les amateurs des beaux arts dans quarante-six petits portraits en médaillons dessinés au premier trait. Je souhaite de tout mon cœur, et avec passion que j’ai pour tout ce qui peut honorer le mérite, que, malgré les grands ouvrages dont il est
charged by the Court with such distinction, it may perhaps steal a few hours to execute incessantly a project that will immortalize the painter and the originals, and which will delight all who aim to see the spirit and the true physiognomy of the men they admire the works.” La Font de Saint-Yenne, Sentiments, 176.

89 Michel, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, 617.

90 Twenty of the forty-three portraits Geoffrin owned were engraved. Ibid.

91 “J’ai retiré votre portrait de chez Mme de la Ferté-Imbault, fille de Mme Geoffrin. Je crois que je vous avais communiqué le projet que j’avais de lui proposer des trocs pour ravoir ces portraits de nos artistes. Mme Geoffrin m’avait promis de me les laisser par son testament, mais elle l’a oublié ou on le lui a fait obtenir. Quoi qu’il en soit, j’ai retiré le vôtre. Vous auriez peut-être envie que je vous le renvoyasse, mais comment arranger cela avec le désir que j’ai de donner tous ces portraits à l’Académie.” Cochin to Descamps, 9 March 1778. Quoted in ibid., 121. According to Michel, forty-three of Cochin’s medallion portraits were in Geoffrin’s collection, including the portraits of Boucher, Chardin, Pierre, Vien, and Guay.

92 “J’aurais pu brûler [les lettres], mais je n’en ai pas eu la force: il m’est moins cruel de les remettre entre les mains qui m’ont tracé ces sacrés caractères.” Mme Geoffrin to the King of Poland, 1768. Published in Stanislas Auguste Poniotowski and Marie-Thérèse Rodet Geoffrin, Correspondance inédite du roi Stanislas-Auguste Poniatowski et de Madame Geoffrin (1764–1777), ed. Charles Moüy (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 347. Geoffrin and Stanislas had a close relationship that seems to have been broken during her visit to see him in Poland, perhaps because she was meddling in court affairs. Maurice Hamon, Madame Geoffrin: femme d’influence, femme d’affaires au temps des Lumières (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 442–88.

93 Geoffrin suffered an attack of erysipelas on August 28, 1776, that left her paralyzed for the final year of her life.

94 André Fontaine noted that these types of gifts were the driving force behind the growth of the Academy’s collection. Over the course the eighteenth century, fewer artists were accepted to the Academy—and therefore there were fewer reception pieces—but donations grew. See Fontaine, Les collections de l’Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture (Paris: H. Laurens, 1910), 55–85.

95 Ibid., 70. In the same séance, Michel-François Dandré-Bardon offered his portrait by Alexandre Roslin (Salon of 1756).

96 Ibid.

97 See Williams, Académie Royale, appendix 1.

98 Ibid., Chapter 1.

99 Ibid., 103. For a visualization of the Academic hierarchy, see Table 2.1 in Williams’s work.

100 As an engraver, Cochin was himself never the subject of a reception portrait, despite his relatively high position in the Royal Academy as secrétaire perpetuel, a position he attained in 1755. See Michel, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, 81–91.

101 Exceptions to this process were made for artists who were agréé and reçu on the same day, as in the example of Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. In these cases, the reception piece was chosen from among the works the applicant had brought to the assembly.
Endnotes

102 On the morceaux de réception as a rite of passage, see Williams, Académie Royale, 92–112.

103 “[À] Messieurs et dames: Houdon; Casanova; Berthélémy; Callet, Dureux; Rigaud; Bailly; Faujas de Saint-Fond; Soulavie; Baral; Mongoldier; Charles et Robert, frères; l’abbé Regley; Monjoie, peintre; Cochin; Pierre, premier peintre; Vien; Demours, sa femme et son fils; Vincent; Boizot; Nelson; Brérion, au Louvre; Gois; Brenet; Bachelier; Tardieu; Lépicie; Pajou; Belle; Monot, architecte; Doyen; Bridan; Pasquier; Greuze; Mme Guiart; Mme Lebrun; David; M. Piscatory; Voiriot; Wille; Lagrenée; Lagrenée le jeune, Renou, ——part; Guérin; Robert; Pigalle et son épouse; Sorbie; Fayol; Boulanger; Mouchy; Durameau; Roslin; Duplessis; Loir; Beaufort; Rouillé de l’Étang; Marigny; leurs portraits et miniatures.” La Tour also left portraits to the actress Mlle Clairon and the economist and encyclopédiste François Véron Duverger de Forbonnais. Besnard, La Tour, 117.


105 Likely candidates include: Lady Hervey, 1752; Mme Favart, 1753; and Marguerite Lecomte (engraved by Watelet, 1753); see Michel, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, 617–26.

106 “[R]arement satisfaites d’elles dans leurs portraits,” La Font de Saint-Yenne, Sensimens, 161. This was the portrait of Mme de Geli, who wrote to La Tour in September of 1753: “Receive, I ask, my very dear Monsieur, the most sincere compliment that has ever been given to you, about the beauty and success of your works . . . you have raised my portrait to the height of perfection, it is the admiration and pleasure of Paris; the noise reverberates to my mountain. I will leave it one of these days, to go to the Louvre and appear, in public, to join my acclaim to theirs, and convince them that they have never been so right in their life.” (“Recevez, je vous prie, mon très cher Monsieur, le plus sincère compliment qui vous ait jamais été [sic] fait, sur la beauté et les succès de vos ouvrages . . . vous avez élevés [sic] mon portrait au comble de la perfection, c’est l’admiration et le plaisir de tout Paris; le bruit en a retentit jusque sur ma montagne, aussy vai-je la quitter un de ses jours, pour aller au Louvre montrer ma figure, au public, joindre mes acclamation au leurs, et les convaincre, que de leur vie, ils ont jamais eut tant de raison.”) Quoted in Charles Desmaze, Le Reliquaire de M. Q. de La Tour, peintre du roy Louis XV, sa correspondance et son oeuvre (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1874), 22–23. Given the lack of discussion of her portrait in Salon criticism, she may have felt obligated to demonstrate her personal appreciation of the work.

107 La Font de Saint-Yenne, Reflexions, 23–24.