

**Help the Société des Amis de Versailles to offer this splendid  
portrait of Alexandrine Jeanne Le Normant d'Étiolles,  
to the Château of Versailles**



**François Boucher (1703-1770)**

*Portrait of Alexandrine Jeanne Le Normant d'Étiolles (1744-1754)*

Oil on canvas

Signed et dated on the cage: *f. Boucher 1749*

H. 53 ; L. 45 cm

Paris, Gallery Alexis Bordes

***A rare image of Alexandrine***

We only know of very few portraits of this little girl. The Inventory of Madame de Pompadour's property following her death in 1764 notes a pastel of Alexandrine, painted by François Boucher and bequeathed to Madame de Pompadour's brother, the Marquis de Marigny.

This pastel is further mentioned in the sale of Pierre Louis Eveillard de Livois, July 23, 1799, under the name of "François Boucher. The portrait of a pretty lady holding a goldfinch".

We have lost all trace of the pastel, but it appears to have been a copy in pastel of our painting.

Our portrait does not appear in the inventory of 1764. Was it offered to a close friend or a relative of the Marquise de Pompadour?

The history of our painting begins again in May 1899 when it appeared in a sale in Galerie Georges Petit in Paris.

It's authenticity and artistic value for Versailles have been confirmed by two separate commissions.

The portrait of Alexandrine Jeanne Le Normant d'Étiolles was painted by François Boucher in 1749. This painting of the second child of Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson - future Madame de Pompadour - and her husband Charles-Guillaume Le Normant d'Étiolles, may well be the only portrait painted during the lifetime of Alexandrine, brutally taken by illness at the age of nine. It will join the portrait gallery of Madame de Pompadour's family, presented in the apartments she lived in from 1745 to 1751, in the central part of the Château.

***Alexandrine, a little girl with a tragic destiny***

On March 9, 1741, Jeanne Antoinette Poisson (1721-1764), the future Madame de Pompadour, married the financier Charles Guillaume Le Normant. The couple received the lordship of Étiolles, in the forest of Sénart, as a wedding present.

Their first child did not survive its first year and died in 1741. Three years were to pass before Alexandrine Jeanne was born in 1744. During her pregnancy, Jeanne Antoinette had been presented to the King Louis XV. It was a meeting which changed the course of her life. Alexandrine was not yet one year old when her mother separated from her husband and became the King's new official mistress. After her formal presentation to the court, the King gave her the Estate of Pompadour and the title of Marchioness of Pompadour.

Once installed in the Château of Versailles, Madame de Pompadour decided to bring Alexandrine to live with her. The child remained with her mother until the age of five before being placed in 1749 in the convent of the Ladies of the Assumption, rue Saint-Honoré in Paris. However the marchioness of Pompadour frequently had Alexandrine return to Versailles for visits.

As early as 1752, Madame de Pompadour was planning the future of her beloved daughter. The duke of Chaulnes promised that his son would marry Alexandrine. In return, the duke was to become the governor of the young duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin, heir to the Throne. The duchess was to become the governess of the King's Children.

This future was not to be, for Alexandrine suddenly died in June 1754, almost certainly of a peritonitis. She is buried in the chapel of the Capucines Convent, Place Vendôme.

The Marquise never really recovered from the loss of this beloved child that she had raised like a royal princess.

## **A painting for the apartment of Madame de Pompadour in the Château of Versailles.**

The future Marquise de Pompadour was invited to the great masked ball held in 1745 to celebrate the marriage of the Dauphin Louis Ferdinand. The king was smitten with her and brought her to the Palace of Versailles that same year, providing her with an apartment just above his own. A secret staircase allowed the monarch to access his mistress's apartment without being seen.

In 1749, she obtained the royal privilege of occupying an apartment located on the ground floor of the central body of the Palace (known today as Louis XV's daughters' Apartments).

Unfortunately there is no known inventory of the first apartment in which she lived until early in the year 1751. This apartment was restored and refurnished in 2002, for the exhibition "Madame de Pompadour and the Arts" in the Château of Versailles.

Today the apartment contains paintings, furniture and works of art evoking the original decoration and the elegant and refined taste in vogue at the court of Louis XV.

In this apartment, the well-known portrait by Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766) shows the 27 years old Marquise as Diane the huntress.

Our portrait of Alexandrine will complete the vision of the King's mistress, giving a more intimate aspect of her life as a mother who lost her beloved child.



Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766)  
Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour in the guise of Diana the huntress, acquired with the help of the Société des Amis de Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais /EPV Gérard Blot

## **The Société des Amis de Versailles and the apartment of Madame de Pompadour**



« Lit de travers » by Louis Delanois, menuisier, around 1765. Donation of doctor Marcel Durand through the Société des Amis de Versailles.

The apartment was in no shape to be shown and in 2002 the Société des Amis de Versailles decided to contribute to its restoration and refurbishing.

Thanks to the efforts of the Amis, many individual donors and companies joined to support this project, so important to bring this aspect of the life of the Château to the attention of the visitors.

Several examples of our efforts are: the embroidered silks for the bed, decorative trimmings, a small library by Migeon which allows the presentation of books with the Arms of the Marquise, which illustrate her taste for history.



Gustaf Lundberg (1695-1786)  
Portrait of François Boucher (1741)  
Pastel, Paris - ©LouvreMuseum

## **François Boucher, the favourite painter of Madame de Pompadour.**

With the help of her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, superintendent of the King's Buildings, the Marquise commissioned the painter to decorate several chateaux and create decorative designs for the porcelains and tapestry of the Royal Manufactures.

His works can still be admired in the "grisailles" that he painted on the ceiling of Queen Marie Leszczynska's chamber of ceremonies in 1735, presenting the allegories of Fidelity, Liberality, Prudence and Charity.

Another work of the artist: *The Arrival of the Messenger*, is presented in the apartment of Madame de Pompadour.

## **Please help the Société des Amis de Versailles to offer the portrait of Alexandrine to the Palace of Versailles!**

Founded in 1907 to address the alarming deterioration of the Château of Versailles and the two Trianons, the Société des Amis de Versailles is a non-profit organization with more than 5000 members worldwide today.

It works with passion for the preservation and the enhancement of the Palace of Versailles and its Estate, recognized as a World Heritage site by UNESCO since 1979.

Individuals or companies wishing to provide support can contact us for practical terms and opportunities for a tax reduction:

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