



Pierre Mignard; *The Children of the Duc de Bouillon*, 1647; oil on canvas; France

A portrait is an artistic representation of a person, and a group portrait is of more than one person. This group portrait was commissioned by the duc de Bouillon to depict his three children, which the artist did realistically and in great detail. The painting shows the duc's children in fashionable and elaborate clothing. The twelve-year-old girl holds fruits and flowers, which are attributes of femininity. The older boy has a protective gesture, while the younger one appears mischievous as he reaches for the dog. Today, instead of commissioning painters to make portraits, most people use a camera to capture a scene such as this.

On your tour, your students will complete an interactive activity related to this artwork that involves the five senses. This activity will address the following HCPS III Standards:

FINE ARTS: Standard 1: VISUAL ARTS

SCIENCE: Standard 1: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION.

Pierre Mignard (French, 1612–1695)

The Children of the Duc de Bouillon, 1647

Oil on canvas

Purchase, Robert Allerton Fund, 1975 (4293.1)

Pierre Mignard worked both in France and in Italy as a portraitist and painter for powerful patrons such as the Duc de Bouillon, who throughout his life oscillated between resolute support of and violent opposition to King Louis XIII and his chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu. The children depicted in this meticulously painted portrait are three of the Bouillon family's nine children. All wear fashionable and expensive clothing that indicates the family's wealth and prestige. The two boys play with a small dog, while the young girl, on the cusp of womanhood, presents the viewer with a satchel of flowers and cherries, symbols of femininity and fecundity.

Wall Label for the Pierre Mignard

Pierre Mignard worked in Rome from 1635 to 1657 as a highly respected portraitist. His fame rested on the elaborately detailed likenesses of sitters from the papal court and other important families, such as that of the Duc de Bouillon. Working in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the papal court, he practiced an ostentatious and stately mode preferred at the time. The three young children depicted here appear as miniature adults in fashionable and elaborate attire rich in brocades, lace, and jewelry. The twelve-year-old girl appears with the standard attributes of women, fruits and flowers, symbols of fecundity and femininity. However, the protective gesture of one boy as he leans over his dog, and the mischievousness of the second, establish a mood of intimacy, creating an image of innocence and charm that led to the informality dominant in portraiture of the following century.

North Italian School
Attributed to Pietro Francesco Cittadini, 1616-1681
PORTRAIT OF THREE CHILDREN, inscribed: Romae 1647 JUNII DIE V,
oil on canvas
Purchase, Robert Allerton Fund, 1975

The Children of the Duc de Bouillon
Pierre Mignard (4293.1)

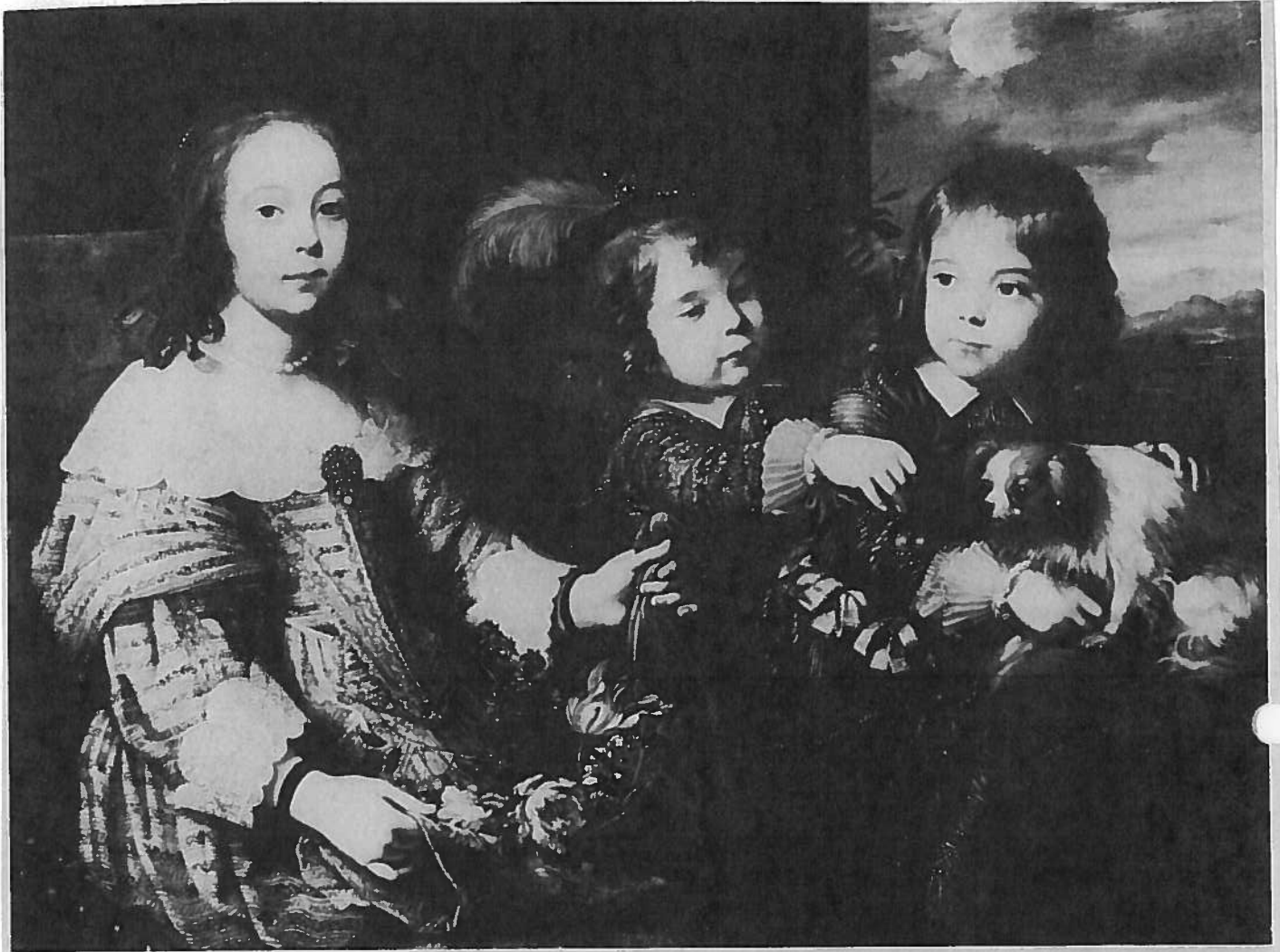


17TH CENTURY PAINTING ACQUIRED

An engaging North Italian School painting (see cover reproduction), attributed to Pietro Francesco Cittadini (1616-1681), was recently acquired by the Academy and now hangs in Gallery 6 with other works of the period. The portrayal of three children and their dog has a charm and presence that reflects the artist's sensitive feeling about the personalities of his elegantly attired but youthfully innocent subjects. The lively but controlled baroque composition, the effective red-blue-sienna-umber color scheme, the pattern of light and dark areas, and the rendering of textures all indicate the hand of a master.

The history of this painting, which is dated Rome 1647, can be traced back to a nineteenth century French collection; its attribution has been a matter of speculation over the past seventy-five years. Since its March acquisition, the Academy's Consultant for Western Art, Dr. Gertrude Rosenthal, has engaged in extensive research on this intriguing problem, discussing opinions with many seventeenth century European painting specialists in Europe and America, including noted scholars Dr. W. F. Rappard of the prestigious Netherland Institute for Art History at the Hague, Holland and Professor Seymour Slive of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University. Ideas about its origin have ranged from French, Flemish, Dutch and German to, finally, Italian. The place and date shown in the inscription and the stylistic evidence, which strongly suggests Flemish influence, favor the attribution to Cittadini in accordance with our present knowledge of this Lombard artist. NOV 75

PIERRE MIGNARD
4293.1



Pierre Mignard, 1612–95, France
Portrait of Three Children, 1647
 oil on canvas; h. 35", w. 46¾" (88.8 x 119 cm.)
 Purchase, Robert Allerton Fund, 1975 (4293.1)
 On view in gallery 6

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One of the most fascinating and challenging aspects of working with old master paintings is identifying or attributing which artists painted the many works which have come down to us without signatures or known histories. The process is both a science and an art and involves, too, a fair measure of luck or serendipity.

A good example is the Academy's 17th-century portrait of three noble children. The work is particularly interesting because it bears an inscription in Latin telling specifically when and where it was painted: "Roma 1647 Junii Die V"—Rome, June 5, 1647, but no signature. The intention of the inscription is clear. The painting was meant to serve as a visual record of the children at their attained ages and to commemorate a stay or residence in a specific place — a souvenir, perhaps, as a photograph

functions today. The identity of the artist was of lesser consequence. It was not until the later 18th century that artists began signing their works with any regularity.

As collections have been broken up and ownership of art works has changed hands, often the knowledge of who did them was lost or mistakenly recorded. The Academy's painting was once attributed to the Dutch artist Jan Baptist Weenix (1621–60), and when acquired by the Academy at auction in 1975, it carried an attribution to the French painter Pierre Mignard (1612–95). In the same year, after careful research and study Dutch art historian Dr. W. F. Rappard attributed the portrait to the Italian artist Pier Francesco Cittadini (1616–81), and this designation was accepted by many other scholars.

However, recent research and the discovery of new information by Pierre Rosenberg, Curator of the Paintings Department at the Louvre, has provided convincing information as to the identity of not only the artist but

of the children as well. Rosenberg found a drawing in the collection of the Musée d'Orléans corresponding exactly to the Academy painting which is labeled "after Mignard" and bears an inscription identifying the subjects as the children of the Duc de Bouillon. Further research showed that Frederic Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, was in Italy from 1644 to 1650. Stylistically the Academy's painting is consistent with other portraits by Mignard, who worked in Italy from 1636 to 1657.

Thus, once again the attribution of the Academy's painting returns to Mignard and now appears secure. While the authorship of the work has been uncertain, its quality has not. The painting, with its new attribution, has been requested by the Louvre for a major exhibition of French 17th-century paintings from American collections to premiere at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in spring 1982 and which will be shown at the Grand Palais in Paris in early summer. — James Jensen