Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, French (1780–1867)

**Amédée-David, Marquis de Pastoret, 1823–26**

Oil on canvas

Estate of Dorothy Eckhart Williams; Robert Allerton, Bertha E. Brown
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The turbulent, emotional **Romantic** spirit and the art that it inspired held no fascination for artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (ăng̩). Forever devoted to the **Neoclassical** ideals instilled in him by his teacher, artist Jacques-Louis David, (1748–1825), Ingres strove for order and restraint in every drawing and painting he produced. The precise lines and exquisite attention to detail in his portrait of the Marquis de Pastoret are typical of his measured and serious approach to painting.

At age 19, after studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris for two years, the diligent French painter won a prize allowing him to attend school in Rome. He remained there until 1824. The works he produced at that time would later distinguish him as a superb portraitist, although he was always much more interested in depicting scenes of history and mythology.

The marquis de Pastoret helped Ingres become a full member of the **French Academy** in 1823, the same year the young nobleman commissioned this portrait. The 32-year-old marquis was the son of the Chancellor of France and would soon receive the **Legion of Honor** for his dedication to his country. Besides being an auditor for the Council of State, the marquis enjoyed writing about history and poetry. Ingres held favorable impressions of the aristocrat as a result of their first meeting, after which he said, "He seemed to me a young man with promise. He had an expression and a candor that pleased me."
Known as pleasant and good-natured, the marquis wished to be remembered for his good taste. The resulting portrait is a brilliant study of a complex man. Subtle brushstrokes reveal a meticulous attempt to capture his character on canvas. The subject seems at ease amidst luxury and wealth as he poses in front of a stunning deep green wall covering. His beautifully fitted, black brocaded coat and trousers create an elegant silhouette enhanced by touches of red, white, and gold at his neck and hands, while his gilded sword and dangling watch fob gleam with grandeur.

Beneath this exterior, however, Ingres seemed to sense the man’s slight inclination toward arrogance and dandyism. These traits were not omitted in the portrait. The marquis’ posture, erect and formal, and the placement of his hands suggest self-satisfaction and pride. Ingres decided to include the pair of yellow gloves to add a note of color and suggest the young aristocrat’s interest in fashion and being up-to-date.

The refinement of this painting epitomized Neoclassicism and earned Ingres wide regard for his talent. One devotee was none other than Impressionist artist Edgar Degas, who amassed a large collection of Ingres’s work and purchased the portrait of the marquis in 1897.
CLASSROOM SUGGESTIONS

[1] Ask students what they can determine about this man from his portrait. Questions to consider include: When do you think this man lived? How old do you think he is in the portrait? What is he wearing? What does his dress tell us about him? What do you think his personality is like? Is he shy or confident? silly or serious? kind or mean? How did the artist show us the sitter's personality?

Talk with students about gesture and expression. Suggest they stand as the marquis stands. Have students identify various expressions in art reproductions or magazine pictures and have them create expressions to match moods and personalities that you describe.

[2] Props in a portrait that tell us something about the sitter's lifestyle or occupation are called “attributes.” The rich fabric of his costume, the gloves, and finely manicured hand reveals the indulged character of this young aristocrat. The rolled parchment, an official document, the government seal near his right hand, the cross of the Legion of Honor, and his sword tell us that Amédée-David was highly respected by the French government. Have students determine what attributes the following individuals would display in their portraits: Michael Jordan, the president of the United States, their school principal and/or teacher, a doctor, etc. Have them draw self-portraits with attributes that reveal their interests, skills, and lifestyle.

[3] Have students imagine that they are Amédée-David. What can they experience in this setting with their sense of touch (velvet, leather, metal, paper, etc.)? Bring in a grab bag that includes examples of these and other textures. Can students guess the texture that they select and describe its feel to other students? Have students create portraits using swatches of various materials.

[4] Another painting in the Art Institute depicts Amédée-David as a baby with his mother (Jacques-Louis David’s Madame de Pastoret and Her Son, 1791/92). Have students bring in photographs of themselves at different stages of their lives. Create a bulletin board and see if students can guess who is in each photograph. Have students draw pictures of how they might look as adults.