

A GIRL AND HER DOG

Go to the South Pavilion, Upper Level, Gallery S206



Title: Maria Frederike
Artist: Jean-Étienne Liotard (Swiss)
Date: 1755–1756
Medium: Pastel on vellum

TEACHER/CHAPERONE READ ALOUD:

Ask your students to sit on the floor in front of this picture and to spend thirty seconds looking quietly at this painting of a little girl.

- Lead a group discussion by reading the following aloud. Ask your students to raise their hands and to speak one at a time.
- Have you ever had your picture taken at school? How long did it take?
- This girl lived before cameras were invented, so she had to sit still for a long time so that the artist could look at her and draw her picture.
- The person in a portrait is called a “sitter” because he or she had to sit while the artist drew or painted him or her.
- The sitter of this portrait is named Maria Frederike.
- This is a portrait of Maria when she was seven years old.
- What do you notice about her hair and clothes? What is she holding?
- Would you like to have her as a friend? Why or why not?
- Do you have a favorite animal? If you could hold an animal in your school picture, what would it be? Draw it below:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER/CHAPERONE:

- Changing attitudes towards children, closer parent-child interaction, and the emergence of a large middle class in 18th-century Europe increased the demand for portraits of children such as this one.
- Maria Frederike, the daughter of aristocratic Dutch parents, looks off to the side in a three quarter view. Lost in thought, she is composed yet somewhat shy in comparison to her dog, who stares out with unabashed curiosity.
- The artist created this picture using pastel on vellum. With startling naturalism, Jean-Étienne Liotard captured Maria Frederike's youth and beauty, setting off her eyebrows, lashes, and lustrous hair against her soft, fresh complexion. The delicacy of the girl's skin is contrasted with the fluffiness of her dog's fur.