



Portrait of the Marquise de Miramon, née Thérèse Feuillant, Jacques Joseph Tissot

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Jacques Joseph Tissot
French, 1866
Oil on canvas
50 9/16 x 291 5/16 in.
2007.7

Questions for Teaching

Take time to look closely at the work of art.
What do you see?

What do you notice about the woman?
What does her clothing tell us about her?
(Her dress is made of expensive-looking fabric. She is of high social standing, wealthy, and fashionable.)

Where do you think the woman is? What does the setting tell us about her?
(The sculpture, folding screen, fireplace, curtains, and other furnishings reveal that she and her family are wealthy. The Japanese objects show their interest in Asian art.)

Mimic the pose of the woman. What does the pose tell us about what she is doing?
(She looks relaxed, emphasizing the fact that she is a woman of leisure.)

What does her facial expression reveal about her thoughts or feelings?
(She seems distracted. She is staring off to the side but is not expressing any particular emotion, as if she is thinking of something mundane.)

Which color do you see first? Where do you see this color in the painting?

What mood does the painting evoke?

If this person could speak, what do you think she would say?



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Background Information

Costumed in the latest style and surrounded by fashionable decorative objects, the Marquise de Miramon wears a rose-colored, ruffled peignoir, or dressing gown. Around her neck are a black lace scarf and a silver cross. Reflecting the new European fascination with Japanese art, behind her is a Japanese screen depicting cranes on a gold ground, and on the mantelpiece are several pieces of Japanese **ceramics**. The needlework on the **Louis XVI** stool indicates that the subject is a noblewoman of leisure, and the eighteenth-century **bust** made of **terracotta** suggests her husband's aristocratic heritage.

Thérèse-Stephanie-Sophie Feuillant (1836–1912) was from a wealthy **bourgeois** family. She inherited a fortune from her father and in 1860 married René de Cassagnes de Beaufort, Marquis de Miramon. She stands in the Château de Paulhac, Auvergne, the residence of her husband's family.

Tissot painted many fashionable women during his career, but he held this work in particularly high regard. In 1866, he wrote to the Marquis de Miramon to request, and received, permission to borrow the painting and submit it to the Paris World Fair, where it was seen in public for the first time. The family kept this letter from Tissot, along with a swatch of the Marquise's pink velvet gown. Today, both are in the collection of the Getty Trust.

About the Artist

Jacques Joseph Tissot (French, 1836–1902)

Jacques Joseph Tissot was born in Nantes, a port city located where the Loire River flows into the Atlantic Ocean. He moved to Paris in 1856. Although he was French, Tissot's **caricature** drawings frequently appeared in the popular English magazine *Vanity Fair*. After France's devastating defeat in the **Franco-Prussian War** and equally devastating civil war known as the Commune, Tissot relocated to London, where his established ties with *Vanity Fair* and its influential publisher served him well. There, Tissot painted scenes of leisure and fashionable social occasions, such as couples strolling and fancydress balls, which were regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy.

After his wife's death in 1882, Tissot returned to Paris, where he experimented with **pastels** and became popular as a **portrait** painter. The focus of Tissot's artwork shifted dramatically three years later, after he supposedly saw his dead wife at a séance. From then on, he devoted himself to religious subjects, making several trips to the Holy Land to do research. Before dying in 1902, Tissot completed 365 illustrations for the Life of Christ. Though he was initially remembered for his Bible illustrations, Tissot's depictions of fashionable life in the Victorian era are now regarded as his most significant work.