

La Repasseuse

Jean Antoine Pincon



1790's
Oil on Canvas
118 x 86cm

Perhaps the most beautiful painting in the Parish of St. Helier art collection is La Repasseuse in which a young girl, a servant perhaps, has just completed the ironing with the folded napkins stacked up behind and the iron still warm. Her costume is magnificently painted and the pose unusual but what is the reason for the cherries, other than that she has chosen them for a snack and some have fallen from her pocket? One interpretation is that they are a symbol of her virtuousness but their juice, if spilled on the linens, would undo all her hard work.

For many years it was thought that this painting was by the French master Jacques –Louis David (1748-1825) when experts at the National Gallery in London provided it with the official seal of approval in 1965.

However very recent research has indicated that the painting is almost certainly by a follower of David, Jean Antoine Pinchon. It was recently discovered that La Repasseuse was first exhibited in 1838, which for Pinchon who began his career in the 1790s, was certainly consistent with his style and training. Recently unearthed documents reveal that the painting was first exhibited in 1819 alongside another portrait by Pinchon and was entirely consistent with his earlier subjects.