



Jean Antoine Pinchon
La Repasseuse
19th century French,
school of David
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), whose signature is visible at the bottom left, and indeed experts at the National Gallery in London provided it with their official seal of approval in 1965.

However, recent research has indicated that the painting is almost certainly by a follower of David, Jean Antoine Pinchon. Recently unearthed documents reveal that it was first exhibited in 1819 alongside another portrait by Pinchon and was entirely consistent with his earlier subjects.

Perhaps it was sold as an original David to Pierre Le Sueur when he was studying law in Paris at the start of his illustrious though tragically short career.