

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

a journal of nineteenth-century visual culture

Katie Hanson

Jean-Baptiste Regnault's *Three Graces* and the Winckelmannian Female Nude

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide 11, no. 2 (Summer 2012)

Citation: Katie Hanson, "Jean-Baptiste Regnault's *Three Graces* and the Winckelmannian Female Nude," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2012), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/summer12/katie-hanson-jean-baptiste-regnault-three-graces-female-nude>.

Published by: [Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art](#)

Notes:

This PDF is provided for reference purposes only and may not contain all the functionality or features of the original, online publication.

License:

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#) [Creative Commons License](#).

Abstract:

The final decades of the eighteenth century are associated in art-historical scholarship with the flourishing of representations of the ephebic male nude and this article complements such studies by elucidating theories and paintings of the female form. Particular focus is given to Jean-Baptiste Regnault's *Three Graces* of 1793–94 as an embodiment of contemporaneous theoretical issues regarding the idealized female nude, grace, and the Graces found in Johann Joachim Winckelmann's writings as well as a variety of French treatises.

Jean-Baptiste Regnault's *Three Graces* and the Winckelmannian Female Nude

by Katie Hanson

In a 1786 letter to the comte d'Angiviller, Hubert Robert recorded an interaction he had had with Jacques-Louis David: "I fear that he will not take on the small painting after Bouchardon presumably for fear of not succeeding at it as he would wish to, since he told me that no one could do this better than Regnault."^[1] The female bather that Jean-Baptiste Regnault executed after a drawing by Edmé Bouchardon (as recorded in Angiviller's 1794 inventory) is now lost, but David's perceived insecurity in that area of representation vis-à-vis his peer confirms Regnault's apparent early pre-eminence.^[2] The excellence of Regnault's female nudes was routinely recognized by his contemporaries.

In an 1806 notice on Regnault in the *Pausanias français*, Pierre Chaussard declared: "The purity of drawing and the charm of the brush come together in Regnault in a grand vigor of execution: perhaps no artist better painted the torso."^[3] The critic was also a champion of David, but when it came to the nude Chaussard favored Regnault.^[4] This type of assessment continued throughout the artist's lifetime. Alexandre Lenoir, writing in 1830, drew attention to Regnault's facility and excellence in rendering the mythic female nude. He likened Regnault to famed ancient sculptor Praxiteles by imagining that the Venus Regnault depicted in his *Judgment of Paris* (Detroit Art Institute) would respond to this painting as she had to her sculpture at Knidos: "I appeared nude before only three mortals: Adonis, Anchises, and Paris; but Praxiteles, where did he see me?"^[5] He then praised Regnault's 1793–94 *Three Graces* (fig. 1), which he believed depicted "the perfection of the human form," and the artist's *Death of Adonis*, which he believed surpassed the work of Guido Reni in the beauty of its execution.^[6] Regarding the *Three Graces* and *Death of Adonis* (now known through an oil sketch in the Louvre), Lenoir reminded readers: "One can see with pleasure these two very classical paintings in the King's museum."^[7] Lenoir highlighted the perfection of the human form in Regnault's paintings of mythological female nudes, rather than in his *Education of Achilles*, *Descent*, or *Deluge* (all three are now in the Louvre), which were also mentioned and celebrated in Lenoir's article, but which feature the male body, now so closely associated with Neoclassicism in art-historical scholarship.^[8] Furthermore, Lenoir followed his praise of Regnault's "truly classical" paintings of the female nude by quoting the artist warning the younger generation that "if they do not promptly return to serious study of antique statues and of paintings by great masters, they are lost."^[9] Lenoir's inclusion of this warning in his article implicitly recommended Regnault's own classicizing female nudes for study in the museum. The "perfection of the human form" that Lenoir saw evidenced in Regnault's *Three Graces* embodies contemporaneous theoretical issues regarding the idealized female nude, grace, and the Graces found in Johann Joachim Winckelmann's work as well as a variety of French treatises.



Fig. 1, Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *Three Graces*, an II, 1793–94. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

While Lenoir's description of Regnault's *Three Graces* as "very classical" may seem obvious, such an assessment had been long overshadowed by Charles Blanc's estimation, in the 1860s era of Realism, that the combination of real and ideal elements gave the work the "character of a genre painting."^[10] Regnault's three idealized nudes present the female body in frontal, rear, and profile views (as is typical of depictions of the Graces) against a dark background with subtle indications of an outdoor setting; however, the distinctive faces and varied hair colors of the three women fueled later nineteenth-century speculation on Regnault's use of live studio models or even his own female pupils to pose for the Graces.^[11] More recent publications have proposed classical and Renaissance Graces (such as the ancient sculpture now in Siena Cathedral and Raphael's painting in the Condé collection at Chantilly) as further sources, but none, to my knowledge, has suggested a Venus model.^[12] Specifically, Regnault's two peripheral Graces appear to be rendered from two viewpoints of the *Medici Venus*, as reproduced in the engravings accompanying Gérard Audran's 1683 treatise on human bodily proportions (fig. 2), which was part of Regnault's library.^[13] Regnault's central figure may be based on the back view of the same sculpture or on the Callipygian Venus, famed for her ideal posterior, also included in Audran's treatise (figs. 3, 4). Basing the Graces on a Venus prototype harmonizes with the role of the Graces as companions of Venus; consulting Audran's seventeenth-century treatise reinforces a viewpoint on classicism popularized by Winckelmann in the eighteenth century, in that both authors espoused the superiority of Greek sculptures, even over nature, as models for modern artists and ascribed artistic beauty to ancient Greece's good climate and government.^[14]

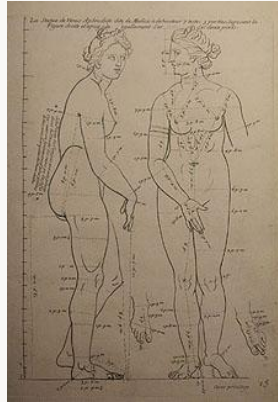


Fig. 2, Gérard Audran, *Medici Venus*. Published as plate 15 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683). [\[larger image\]](#)

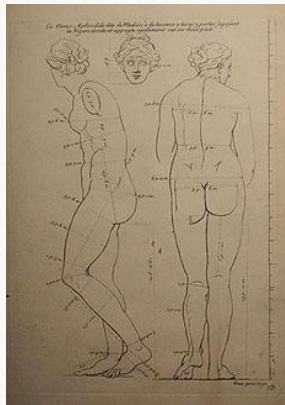


Fig. 3, Gérard Audran, *Medici Venus*. Published as plate 16 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683). [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 4, Gérard Audran, *Greek Shepherdess (Callipygian Venus)*. Published as plate 14 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683). [\[larger image\]](#)

Winckelmann wrote specifically about the *Medici Venus*; however, with so much scholarly attention focused on the male body in Neoclassical painting, his (admittedly less copious) studies and theories of the female form have been generally overlooked.^[15] In his 1764 *History of Ancient Art*, translated into French by 1766 and updated regularly thereafter, Winckelmann praised the *Medici Venus* as embodying the ideal female form. He wrote:

Among the goddesses, Venus is outstanding, not only as the goddess of beauty, but because she alone, with the Graces, and the Seasons or Hours, has the privilege of appearing undraped. She also is found represented more frequently than any other goddess, and in different ages. Now, I will give a brief description of the statue of this goddess located in Florence. The *Medici Venus* resembles a rose which appears, after a lovely dawn, and unfolds its leaves to the rising sun. She passes from an age which is hard and somewhat harsh—like fruits before their perfect ripeness—into another, in which all the vessels of the animal system are beginning to dilate, and the breasts to fill out. When I contemplate her attitude, it brings to mind Laïs who Apelles instructed in love: I imagine seeing her as she appeared when she saw herself obligated to remove her clothes for the first time and to present herself nude to the eyes of the ecstatic artist.^[16]

In depicting mythic female nudes, artists could self-position within this history of great artists as those granted access to perfection. Honoré Lacombe de Prezel, in his 1779 *Iconological Dictionary*, found the *Medici Venus* to improve upon nature in its idealism: “Everyone who saw it agrees that it is the most beautiful female body that one could imagine, and that art, in this point, seems to have surpassed nature.”^[17] To depict the goddess’s form was to outdo nature in achieving the perfection of art, and it is no surprise that artists of the nude would emulate the *Medici Venus*, which was also praised in French art theory of the 1760s by Charles-Henri Watelet and Michel-François Dandré-Bardon.^[18]

The classical female form departed considerably from the ideal type of earlier eighteenth-century France, as seen, for example, in François Boucher’s female figures. The typical Boucher nude (of the 1730s through 1760s) had small shoulders and a slim waist above full hips and thighs that tapered toward delicate feet. The whole was typically rosy and topped by an ovoid head with large eyes, jutting chin, and full cheeks.^[19] This sort of nude deviated markedly from the classical profile and diminished ratio of hip to waist to shoulder evidenced in the *Medici Venus*, which was not even mentioned in Lacombe de Prezel’s *Iconological Dictionary* of 1756, but received glowing praise in the second edition, published in 1779, perhaps attesting to a shift in French taste during this period.^[20]

When the female body type favored in earlier eighteenth-century painting began to be replaced by the classicizing Grecian model of antique sculptures, many critics objected. Jean-Hugues Taraval’s *Autumn: Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 5), the first eighteenth-century contribution to the completion of the Louvre’s Apollo Gallery’s ceiling, appeared at the 1769 Salon where Daudet de Jossac deemed the chariot’s female occupant “une grosse dondon” or a big fatty.^[21] Charles-Nicolas Cochin affirmed this assessment of the female figure in his rebuttal: “Haven’t you been told that drinkers have a fondness for big fat women?”^[22] These pejorative descriptions implicitly contrasted the hearty body with the delicate, doll-like type common to so much Rococo painting. Even Denis Diderot described Taraval’s figures as “low and ignoble,” reinforcing conceptual alignment of broader bodies with coarseness.^[23] Yet, a few years later,

when Louis-Jacques Durameau exhibited his *Summer: Ceres and her Companions Beseeching the Sun* (fig. 6) at the 1775 Salon, critics praised the classically proportioned female figures as “beautiful, noble, well-drawn”^[24] and specified that “Ceres’ pose and the composition of these reclining and orderly nymphs at the front are the most pleasing part.”^[25] By the time Antoine-François Callet’s Apollo Gallery contribution, *Spring: Zephyr and Flora Crowning Cybele with Flowers* (fig. 7), appeared at the 1781 Salon, the fuller female form (albeit fully clothed) of his Cybele was wholly approved. The ample body struck critics as appropriate for an allegorical figure of Spring, a season of plentiful regeneration. An anonymous critic in 1769 found the “striking” Cybele “a corpulent and robust woman, whose exuberant vitality foretells the effects of the season on nature when she revives all things to distribute and lavish her treasures upon them.”^[26] Critics found that the fuller female figure of Cybele embodied notions of vigor, strength, and health, as well as natural abundance and her classical facial type exuded nobility and grace. By contrast, within the same painting, Flora’s head was seen to lack beauty in comparison to the classical Zephyr or to Cybele’s “noble and graceful” visage.^[27]



Fig. 5, Jean-Hugues Taraval, *Autumn: Triumph of Bacchus*, Salon of 1769. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 6, Louis- Jacques Durameau, *Summer: Ceres and her Companions Imploring the Sun*, Salon of 1775. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 7, Antoine-François Callet, *Spring: Zephyr and Flora Crowning Cybele with Flowers*, Salon of 1781. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

This equation of the robust female body with abundance and nature also appeared in French medical and social treatises of the period. Indeed, the frail body came to be associated with the corset and infertility, while a more robust female body suggested the strength and health required to populate the nation.^[28] This viewpoint certainly aligned women with procreation and domestic tasks, divorced from urban and political activities, but it also broke with notions of a debauched and artificial femininity of the *ancien régime*.^[29] The revival of classical bodies has been ascribed to a Revolutionary desire to dissociate from national history, though the shift in artistic ideal also predated the Revolution, as did association of it with regeneration; robust people were even deemed one of the king's greatest riches as early as 1778.^[30] The hearty female body of ancient Greek sculptures evoked notions of the natural in its most perfected form.

The outdoor setting Regnault's *Three Graces* (fig. 1) inhabit underscores the congruence of these bodies with nature. The blossoms in the Graces' hair heighten this linkage and also recall Winckelmann's sensual language, evoking opening flowers and ripening fruit, used in discussing the perfection of the *Medici Venus*. Such language resembles his now better-known descriptions of male nudes and also identifies the female figure as youthful, just at the moment of transition from childhood toward maturity, thus comparable to the ephebic male bodies that were so thoroughly analyzed in art-historical studies of the 1990s.^[31] The youth of Regnault's figures and their antique model aligned them with eighteenth-century notions of the natural being, but also made them resolutely divine.^[32]

Winckelmann observed that "the youth of divinities of both sexes has its degrees and its different ages, in the representation of which art strives toward rendering all kinds of beauty."^[33] On the youth of Greek gods and goddesses, Winckelmann declared:

Could human perception, in creating living divinities, embody anything more dignified, anything more attractive for the imagination, than the state of eternal youth, than the spring of an unalterable life, of which the memory alone contrives to enchant us still in our more advanced age? This picture would be analogous to the idea of the immutability of a divine being: the beautiful stature of a young and brilliant divinity would give birth to love and tenderness, the sole affections that can ravish the soul in

sweet ecstasy. And is it not this ravishing of the senses that defines the human felicity that was sought in all religions, well or badly understood?[34]

Beauty and youth, according to Winckelmann, ravish the viewer's spirit and inspire love and contentment. Such ideas reverberate in Winckelmann's description of the *Medici Venus*, which he claimed to inspire love courtesy of the youthful perfection of its forms. Winckelmann's analysis of the ancient Greeks' equation of their deities with youth and beauty was common enough knowledge in France for the 1792 *Dictionary of Art* to include it, without further justification, in the entry on mythology.[35]

The youthful beauty of the *Three Graces* conveyed more than just their divine status, it also reinforced their conceptual association with innocence, charm, and good deeds. Regarding the demeanor of the Graces in ancient sculptures, Winckelmann found that "the physiognomy of these deities expresses neither gaiety nor gravity, it announces the sweet satisfaction, peculiar to the innocence of this age." [36] Antoine Mongez (whose wife was in Regnault's studio during 1793–94) borrowed this line from Winckelmann for his own assessment of the Graces in his 1786–94 *Dictionary of Antiquity* and ascribed further resonance to the youthfulness of the mythic Graces.[37] He elaborated that "they are painted young because charms are always regarded as the lot of youth . . . [and] because the memory of a good deed should never age; light and lively because one must oblige promptly and a good deed must never be kept waiting." [38] The youth of the Graces conveyed their essential divine association with gratitude and recognition.

Watelet's tract on grace, from his 1760 *Art of Painting*, which reappeared in the 1792 *Dictionary of Art*, specified that grace was the purview of youth and of women. He asserted: "Grace consists in the accord of these movements [of the body] with those of the soul. In childhood and youth, the soul moves freely and immediately on the springs of expression. . . . Consequently, childhood and youth are the ages of the graces. Suppleness and gentleness of the parts are so totally necessary to the graces, that the mature age is excluded." [39] He specified: "The gender that is the most supple in its motivations, the most sensitive in its affections, in which the desire to please is a sentiment to a certain degree independent of it, because it is necessary to the system of nature; this gender that makes beauty more interesting, when it escapes from artifice and affectation also offers the graces at their most seductive." [40] Winckelmann concurred, asserting in his *On Grace in Works of Art*, that the Graces should look "as one would want to see a young beauty that one loves exiting one's bed," again reinforcing an alignment of desirable concepts with desirable forms.[41] The casual stances and outdoor environs of Regnault's *Three Graces* resonate with these assessments of grace as natural, in its freedom from affectation, and as alluring.

Regarding female divinities and their youthful purity, Winckelmann assured readers: "Among goddesses, one attributed a perpetual virginity to Diana and to Pallas; the other goddesses who had lost it could recover it. This is the reason that the breast of goddesses and Amazons is always represented like that of young ladies who have not yet tasted the fruit of love: that is to say, that on these figures the nipple is not yet developed." [42] He elaborated: "In divine figures the breast always has a virginal form. The breasts are tight and similar to hillocks terminated in a point: this form of the breast seems to have been regarded as the most beautiful: for this is

the form of this part in the age of innocence.”^[43] Winckelmann singled out Andrea del Sarto’s depiction of breasts as an exemplary model in paint.^[44]

In Regnault’s *Three Graces* too, the nipples appear pale in comparison to the figures’ own flushed cheeks or lips and contrast those of lustful women depicted in his *Socrates Tearing Alcibiades from the Bosom of Voluptuousness* of 1791 (Louvre). Regnault was keenly engaged with narrative in his work and his home and studio housed extensive libraries.^[45] One of his volumes was Lacombe de Prezel’s (previously cited) *Iconological Dictionary*, which included this assessment of the Three Graces: “They are nude, because one must oblige one’s friends with sincerity and without affectation. They are young: the memory of a kind deed must never age. They are virgins: what virtue demands more prudence and more restraint than the generous inclination? Socrates seeing a man who gave lavishly of his kindnesses without distinction and to all who came: may the gods confound you, he cried: the Graces are virgins, and you make them courtesans.”^[46] Clearly, Regnault would have understood the need to insist on his *Graces*’ virginity.

Anne-Louis Girodet’s depictions of Danaë present another apt contrast in this regard. The standing *Danaë* (fig. 8), executed as part of an erudite decorative scheme and rife with intellectual content, as well as eroticism, displays nipples that, in hue, are barely discernable from the surrounding flesh.^[47] The seated figure in *Mademoiselle Lange as Danaë* (fig. 9) exhibits more prominent and roseate nipples (that match the flush of her own cheeks and lips) indicative of her lust and essential to the work’s satirical intent of mocking the actress Mlle Lange for her venality.^[48] The concept was clearly quite well known and understood in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France, as François Gérard and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, as well as Girodet and Regnault, also depicted their fabled females with modest hillocks topped by a delicate pale peak. Ingres even annotated his drawing *Venus with a Gesture of Modesty* (fig. 10) “virgin nipple not yet developed” at the upper left and elaborated that “among the ancients the nipples are not visible on goddesses because such is the form of this part in adolescence” near the lower left of the sheet, thereby affirming his intent to evoke youth and virginity in rendering this female form.^[49]



Fig. 8, Anne-Louis Girodet, *Danaë*, 1798. Oil on canvas. Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 9, Anne-Louis Girodet, *Mademoiselle Lange as Danaë*, 1799. Oil on canvas. Frame in gilded wood with, in the corners, four medallions in grisaille painted by the artist. Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis.

[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 10, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Venus with a Gesture of Modesty*, ca. 1806–20. Graphite on paper. Musée Ingres, Montauban. [\[larger image\]](#)

These mythological figures stand apart from the virtuous mothers painted by many artists of the period and often discussed by art historians.^[50] Women, excluded from political action by late 1793, have been associated with the body, sexuality, and reproduction, whether virtuous and nourishing, in the case of patriotic mothers, or debauched and unnatural, associated with aristocratic women of the *ancien régime*.^[51] The erotic charge of the idealized female nude could bring to mind the ideal spouse and future mother; as Joan Landes has demonstrated, the youthful female body used in Revolutionary allegorical prints connoted notions of nature and nurturing as opposed to the artificial or haggard appearance of female bodies associated with aristocracy.^[52] This Madonna/whore binary is rendered problematic by the youthful and virginal female nudes of myth, who are more akin to ephebes—like Girodet's *Endymion* (Louvre) and Jean Broc's *Apollo and Hyacinth* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Poitiers)—than to the mothers or aristocrats the binary posits. The youthful, virginal mythic female nudes, more analogous to the fantasy world of the mythic ephebes, than the maternal domain or aristocratic memory, also provide a third alternative. Indeed, the mythic female nude, like the

ephebe, could also be read as transcending immediate socio-political concerns and embodying an ideal of beauty that, as Winckelmann asserted, “may transport the spirit to a sweet ecstasy.”

The transportative thrill of the idealized female body was to be paired also with an intellectually informative face. Winckelmann urged readers not to judge goddesses by body alone, but to consider carefully the face as well in order to appreciate character. Writing of the general similarity of female figures in antique sculptures, he noted: “My remark as to the similarity of the nude parts of female figures is to be understood only of the shape of the body, and does not exclude a distinctive character in their heads. This has been strongly expressed in each goddess as well as in the heroines, so that both superior and inferior goddesses can be distinguished, even when the emblems usually adjoined to them are wanting.”^[53] The particularized faces of Regnault's *Three Graces* may reflect just such consideration.

Whereas, as art historian Candace Clements has shown, earlier eighteenth-century artistic theory posited that the female form must be most idealized and generalized in its extremities (she specified “head, hands, and feet”), the Academy's expressive head competitions (founded in 1759), like Winckelmann's treatise, drew attention to the expressive and individual qualities of female faces.^[54] Unlike many depictions of the Graces, wherein the figures differ only in pose or in the vantage point from which they are presented, Regnault individualized his goddesses in feature and coloration. With regard to the differentiation of the Graces, Lacombe de Prezel wrote: “The names signify *brilliant, sweet, vivacious*, to teach us that in a discourse, a single pleasure will not suffice to maintain our attention for a long time. The brilliant alone tires us: the sweet alone becomes tasteless: the vivacious alone dizzies: the Three Graces must therefore hold each other.”^[55] In Regnault's composition, the differentiated heads remind the viewer of three distinct qualities unified by the figures' gestures and uniformity of body type.

While the face of Regnault's flaxen-haired central figure is obscured, the redhead at far left displays a classical profile and the raven-haired Grace at right presents a full frontal view of the face that allows for close consideration. Her pronounced lower lids correspond to a particular feature Winckelmann praised in the *Medici Venus*, on which Regnault's brunette Grace clearly is based. Winckelmann wrote: “All representations of Venus have in their softly opened eyes that expression of tenderness and love which the Greeks term 'liquid,' which I will elucidate in my later discussion of the beauty of eyes. This look is, however, entirely free from wantonness, by which certain modern sculptors claim to characterize their Venus, for Love was regarded by the ancient artists and intelligent philosophers as, in the words of Euripides, the associate of Wisdom.”^[56] Winckelmann clarified, in his discussion of eyes, that in depictions of Venus, “the elevated lower eyelid characterizes this grace and this languor that the Greeks call 'liquid.’”^[57] Regnault's serious Graces, with wise, “liquid” eyes, suggest to the viewer a deeper wisdom than the beauty of their graceful bodily forms. An erotic charge need not negate the intellectual and philosophical dimensions in a female form; as previously noted, Winckelmann himself opined that graceful Graces should look as though freshly out of bed. Moreover, a similar inflammation of the lower lid appears in Gérard's *Psyche* (Louvre) and Ingres's *Venus* (Musée Condé, Chantilly), suggesting the evident commonality and comprehensibility of this feature for mythic female nudes.

The notion of “wisdom,” indicated by the gaze, relates also to period concepts of grace itself as of the mind. Grace, according to Winckelmann, “is that which pleases the mind” and “is formed by education and reflection.”^[58] One should not be surprised to find a deeper meaning within the pleasing forms, as Lacombe de Prezel assured readers: A depiction of the Three Graces featured prominently at the ancient school in Athens “to show that they could form an alliance with philosophy and that the useful must appear only in the guise of pleasure.”^[59] Regnault's *Three Graces* aligns closely with contemporaneous scholarly interpretations of the theme and theories of the female form.

Regnault included a half-sized version of his *Three Graces* in his Parisian solo exhibition of 1800.^[60] In his exhibition pamphlet, Regnault described the *Three Graces* with a quotation of a verse from Jean de la Fontaine's poem “Adonis”: “Grace is more beautiful than beauty.”^[61] With this quotation, he encouraged attuned viewers to seek something more, something deeper than lovely forms. Charles-Paul Landon, in his review of the 1800 exhibition, remarked: “This captivating painting of the *Three Graces* collects universal praise. This exquisite group, by the delicacy and correctness of the forms, the sweet opposition of the movements and poses, corresponds perfectly to the idea of these amiable divinities given to us by poets.”^[62] He included analysis of Regnault's *Three Graces*, and Charles Normand's reproductive line engraving of the painting, in his 1801 *Annals of the Museum*, thereby giving Regnault's forms and content an even broader audience.^[63] Indeed, as noted at the outset of this article, Regnault's contemporaries continued to highlight his achievement in the *Three Graces* throughout his lifetime. Renewed consideration of Regnault's *Three Graces* allows for exploration of theory and criticism of mythic female nudity, which has been overshadowed by the ephebe in art history and which harkens new directions in nineteenth-century French painting, wherein the female nude would supersede the male.

Katie Hanson earned her master's degree at Williams College and her doctorate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; her dissertation, entitled “A Neoclassical Conundrum: Painting Greek Mythology in France, 1780–1825,” was advised by Dr. Patricia Mainardi. She is currently a curatorial fellow at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, where she is researching eighteenth-century French paintings for a new catalogue of the permanent collection. Her other upcoming publications include “An Uplifting Finale for Jacques-Louis David: Coming to Peace with *Mars Disarmed*,” which will be published this summer (2012) in the anthology *Gravity in Art*, eds. Mary Edwards and Elizabeth Bailey (McFarland), and “Jean-Baptiste Regnault's Solo Exhibition, Paris 1800,” which will appear within the anthology *Alternative Venues*, ed. Andrew Graciano, next year (2013).

Email the author at [khanson\[at\]gc.cuny.edu](mailto:khanson[at]gc.cuny.edu)

Notes

All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. Quotations in French retain the spelling of the original.

[1] "J'ay vu aussy David. Il m'a parru tres sensible au Refus de la permission pour fair mouler le gladiateur il espere vous flechir en allant vous expliquer luy meme ses raisons. Je crains qu'il ne se charge pas du petit tableau d'apres Bouchardon dans la crainte vraisemblablement de n'y pas reussir comme il le desirait car il m'a dit que personne ne pourrait faire cela mieux que Renaud." Hubert Robert to comte d'Angiviller dated as received February 7, 1786. Archives National (Paris) O/1/1919. The variant spelling "Renaud" appeared in the Salon livrets of the 1780s as well as in Robert's correspondence. See for example: *Explication des peintures, sculptures et gravures de Messieurs de l'Académie Royale* (Paris: Hérissant, 1785), 29. By the 1790s and for the remainder of the artist's career, as is also the case now, his name has more consistently been spelled "Regnault."

[2] "24. Un de Regnault, de forme ronde, d'après le dessin de Bouchardon de 18 pouces, représentant une femme au bain." L. Tuetey, ed., "Rapport des commissaires de la commission des monuments chargés par elle de se transporter dans la maison de l'émigré d'Angiviller, bis rue de l'Oratoire, des 10 et 12 avril, l'an 2e de la République," reprinted within the "Procès-verbaux de la Commission des Monuments," *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* 17 (Paris, Société de l'histoire de l'art français, 1901): 335.

[3] "La pureté du dessin et le charme du pinceau, s'unissent chez lui à une grande vigueur d'exécution : aucun Artiste n'a peut-être mieux peint un Torse." Pierre Chaussard, "Notice historique et inédite sur M. Regnault," in *Pausanias français; l'état des arts du dessin en France, à l'ouverture du XIXe siècle: Salon de 1806* (Paris: Buisson, 1806), 257.

[4] On Chaussard's championing of David, see: Ewa Lajer-Burchard, "David's *Sabine Women*: Body, Gender, and Republican Culture under the Directory," *Art History* 14, no. 3 (September 1991): 397–430.

[5] "Les vers adressés à la Vénus de Cnide, qui se lisent dans l'Anthologie, expriment mieux que je ne puis le faire le mérite de l'ouvrage de Regnault. Cypris passait à Cnide, elle y trouva Cypris. . . . O ciel! dit la déesse émue, Quel objet se présente à mes regards surpris! Aux yeux de trois mortels j'ai paru toute nue: Adonis, Anchise et Pâris; Mais Praxitèle, où m'a-t-il vue?" Alexandre Lenoir, "Cabinet de feu Regnault," *Journal des artistes*, 4th yr. 1, no. 2 (January 10, 1830): 31.

[6] "Regnault a peint aussi les trois *Grâces*, tableau dont le dessin peut être considéré comme la perfection des formes humaines." Ibid.

[7] "On verrait avec plaisir ces deux tableaux, vraiment classiques, au Musée du roi." Ibid., 32.

[8] On the male body: Thomas Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997); and Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994). In Neoclassical painting the female body has largely been associated with maternal, domestic issues: Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in French Art," *Art Bulletin* 55 (December 1973): 570–83; Robert Rosenblum, "Caritas Romana after 1760: Some Roman Lactations," in *Woman as SexObject: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730–1970*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (New York: Newsweek Books, 1972), 42–63; and Ewa Lajer-Burchard, "David's *Sabine Women*," 397–430. The female body has been discussed extensively in scholarship on Revolutionary prints; see Joan Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001); Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au combat: L'Imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979); Madelyn Gutwirth, *Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); and Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985).

[9] "Mon ami, s'ils ne retournent promptement à l'étude sérieuse des statues antiques et des peintures de nos grands maîtres, ils sont perdus." Lenoir, "Cabinet de feu Regnault," 32.

[10] Charles Blanc, "Jean-Baptiste Regnault," in *Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles: Ecole française* (Paris: Renouard, 1865), 2.

[11] Writing during the heyday of French Realism, Blanc insisted upon Regnault's commitment to live models. Ibid. Christopher Sells, "Jean-Baptiste Regnault (1754–1829) Biography and Catalogue Raisonné" (PhD. diss., University of London, Courtauld Institute, 1980), 451–52, repeats this speculation of the late nineteenth century that the *Graces* were based on Regnault's pupils. A.Y., "Mademoiselle Hémerly," *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* 25, no. 574, February 29, 1892, 222–23, references two previous discussions in the same publication regarding speculations of Regnault's having posed his female students in the nude for his *Three Graces* and clarified that Regnault used his students' faces, but not their bodies. Albertine Clément-Hémerly,

Souvenirs de 1793 et 1794 (Cambrai: Lesne-Daloin, 1832), 22, 49n11 asserts that Regnault employed studio models and borrowed his pupils' faces for certain "tableaux de chevalet" including *Diana and Callisto* and *Mars Disarmed by the Graces*; she makes no mention of the *Three Graces*.

[12] On classical and Renaissance Graces as sources see Documentation de peinture, MI 1101, Musée du Louvre; Guillaume Faroult, "Jean-Baptiste Regnault: Les Trois Grâces," in *Catalogue de la collection La Caze* (Paris: Hazan and Musée du Louvre Éditions, 2007), 631–32.

[13] Gérard Audran, *Les Proportions du corps humain* (Paris: Audran, 1683), plate 15. On Regnault's library, see Milovan Stanic, "La Bibliothèque de Jean-Baptiste Regnault," in *Curiosité: Etudes d'histoire de l'art en honneur d'Antoine Schnapper*, ed. Olivier Bonfait, Véronique Gerard-Powell, and Philippe Sénéchal (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 211, 216n83.

[14] Audran, *Les Proportions*, preface.

[15] Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 69–70 described Jean-Baptiste Regnault as "producing (somewhat exceptionally for the period) icons of eroticized femininity." Parentheses per the original. She also observed that a "withdrawal of the eroticized male body from visual culture and its replacement by an eroticized female one can be traced in the careers of many of the period's artists, such as Regnault as well as David's own students," though the eroticized female body was not the focus of her study. *Ibid.*, 60–61. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, chapter four includes a subsection on "The Sublime Fetish" wherein he employs Freudian fetish analysis to assess Winckelmann's description of the antique *Niobe* group.

[16] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art chez les anciens*, trans. Gottfried Sellius, ed. Jean-Baptiste-René Robinet (Paris: Saillant, 1766). I have used the more comprehensive 1789 translation, since it is more contemporaneous with the paintings under consideration. "Parmi les divinités, Vénus comme la déesse de la beauté, occupe à juste titre le premier rang. Elle seule avec les Graces et les déités des saisons ou les Heures, a le privilège de paroître sans vêtement. Elle se trouve aussi représentée plus souvent que les autres déesses, et cela dans différens âges. Je ferai ici une courte description de la statue de cette déesse, conservée à Florence. La Vénus de Médicis est semblable à une rose qui paroît à la suite d'une belle aurore, et qui s'épanouit au lever du soleil. Elle entre dans cet âge où les vaisseaux commencent à s'étendre, où le sein prend de la consistance. Quand je la contemple dans son attitude, je me représente cette Laïs qu'Apelle instruisoit dans les mystères de l'amour : je me figure la voir comme elle parut, lorsqu'elle se vit obligée la première fois d'ôter ses vêtemens et de se présenter nue aux yeux de l'artiste extasié." Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art chez les anciens*, trans. M. Huber (Paris: Barrois; Savoye, 1789), 2:76.

[17] "Tous ceux qui l'ont vue conviennent que c'est le plus beau corps de femme que l'on puisse se figurer, et que l'art en ce point semble avoir surpassé la nature." Honoré Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique, ou Introduction de la connoissance des peintures, sculptures, estampes. Nouvelle édition, revue et considérablement augmentée* (Paris: Hardouin, 1779), 2:277–78.

[18] Claude-Henri Watelet, *L'Art de peindre. Poëme, avec des réflexions sur les différentes parties de la peinture. Nouvelle édition* (Amsterdam, 1761), 81 and plate following page 86; Michel François Dandré-Bardon, *Traité de peinture suivi d'un essai sur la sculpture pour servir d'introduction à une histoire universelle, relative à ces beaux-arts* (Paris: Saillant, 1765), 55.

[19] Philippe Perrot, *Le Travail des apparences: Le Corps féminin XVIIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 69–70.

[20] Honoré Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique, ou Introduction de la connoissance des peintures, sculptures, estampes* (Paris: Hansy, 1756), 289–93 for the entry on Venus; Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique . . . Nouvelle édition* (1779), 2:277–78.

[21] [Daudet de Jossac,] *Lettre sur les peintures, gravures et sculptures qui ont été exposées cette année au Louvre; par M. Raphael, peintre, de l'Académie de S. Luc, Entrepreneur Général des Enseignes de la ville, fauxbourgs et banlieue de Paris; à M. Jérôme, son ami, Raveur de Tabac et Riboteur* (Paris: Delalain, 1769), 30. For more on this painting and the criticism surrounding it, see Brigitte Gallini, "Jean-Hugues Taraval, *Autumn* or *The Triumph of Bacchus*," trans. Michael Gibson in *The Apollo Gallery in the Louvre*, ed. Geneviève Bresc-Bautier (Paris: Gallimard and Musée du Louvre, 2004), 130. On the term "dondon," see Louis-Antoine Caraccioli, *Dictionnaire critique, pittoresque et sentieux* (Lyon: Benoît Duplain, 1768), 1:113. "DONDON. Cela ne se dit que d'une fille du commun, et cela signifie une personne grosse et grasse, et de taille un peu ramassée."

[22] "De plus, est-ce que tu ne sçais pas que les Buveurs aiment les grosses Dondons." [Charles-Nicolas Cochin,] *Réponse de M. Jérôme, raveur de tabac, à M. Raphael, Peintre de l'Académie de S. Luc, Entrepreneur général des Enseignes de la ville, fauxbourgs et banlieue de Paris* (Paris: Jombert, 1769), 26.

[23] "Des caractères bas et ignobles." Denis Diderot, "Salon de 1769," in his *Salons*, ed. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 4:102.

[24] “Belles, nobles, bien dessinées.” [Charles-Nicolas Cochin?], *Observations sur les ouvrages exposés au Sallon [sic] du Louvres, ou Lettre à M. le comte de **** (Paris, 1775), as included in *Collection Deloynes* 10, no. 160, at 563.

[25] Diderot, “Salon de 1775,” in Seznec and Adhémar, *Salons*, 4:289 repeats the wording of the *Observations*. *Lettre première sur les peintures, sculptures et gravures de Meisieurs de l'Académie Française, exposée au Sallon [sic] du Louvre le 25 Août 1775* (Paris: September 7, 1775), reprinted in *Lettres sur les peintures, sculptures et gravures de Mrs. de l'Académie Royale, exposée au Sallon [sic] du Louvre depuis 1767 jusqu'en 1779* (London: Adamson, 1780), 180. “L’attitude de Cérès, l’ordonnance de ces Nymphes, couchées et rangées sur le devant du Tableau, sont ce que l’on aime le mieux.”

[26] “Le plus saillant est celui de Cybelle, sous la forme d’une femme corpulente et robuste, dont la surabondance de vie annonce l’effet de la saison sur la nature, à ces instants où elle se ranime de toutes parts pour épancher et prodiguer ses trésors.” “Lettre première sur les peintures, sculptures et gravures exposées au Salon du Louvre le 25 août 1781,” *Mémoires secrets* (London: Adamson, 1784), 19:298. Neil McWilliams, ed., *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1699–1827* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 74–75 tentatively identifies the 1781 *Mémoires secrets* author as Moufle d’Angerville.

[27] Brigitte Gallini, “Antoine-François Callet, *Spring or Zephyr and Flora Crowning Cybele with Flowers*,” trans. Michael Gibson in Bresc-Bautier, *Apollo Gallery in the Louvre*, 145 summarizes critical responses comparing the figures’ faces. The quoted description comes from the anonymous, *Panard au Sallon [sic]* (1781), as transcribed in *Collection Deloynes* 12, no. 259, 146. “Beau tableau dont le plus grand défaut est de n’être pas vu à la place qui lui est destinée. Composition riche, riante et vigoureuse. Le groupe de la Terre traînée par ses lions, est admirable, le caractère de tête de Cibèle est noble et gracieux ; mais Flore est d’un ton de craie.”

[28] Perrot, *Le Travail des apparences*, 80. See Jacques Bonnaud, *Dégradation de l’espèce humaine par l’usage des corps à baleine : Ouvrage dans lequel on démontre que c’est aller contre les lois de la nature, augmenter la dépopulation et abâtardir pour ainsi dire l’homme de la mettre à la torture dès les premiers moments de son existence, sous prétexte de le former* (Paris: Hérisant fils, 1770), 168–69 regarding the more robust female body as embodying the strength and health required to populate the nation.

[29] Erica Rand, “Depoliticizing Women: Female Agency, the French Revolution, and the Art of Boucher and David,” in *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2005), 143–57 on the exclusion of women from political activities.

[30] Landes, *Visualizing the Nation*; Perrot, *Le Travail des apparences*, 76; and Jean-Baptiste Moheau, *Recherches et considérations sur la population de la France* (Paris: Moutard, 1778), 11 describes robust people as the king’s greatest riches.

[31] See for example: Crow, *Emulation*; Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*; and Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*.

[32] D. G. Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), chapter 7 addresses eighteenth-century understandings of children as natural as compared to adults; chapter 8 outlines the eighteenth-century alignment of nature with benevolence and goodness and demonstrates contemporaneous understanding of women as closer to nature than men and as always remaining child-like (see especially 165 in that regard).

[33] “La jeunesse des divinités de l’un et de l’autre sexe avoit ses degrés et ses âges différens, dans la représentation desquels l’Art s’attacha à rendre toutes les beautés.” Winckelmann, *Histoire*, 2:52.

[34] “La conception humaine, en créant des divinités sensibles, pouvoit-elle se figurer rien de plus digne, rien de plus attrayant pour l’imagination, que l’état d’une jeunesse éternelle, que le printemps d’une vie inaltérable, dont le souvenir seul nous enchante encore dans un âge plus avancé ? Ce tableau étoit analogue à l’idée de l’immuitabilité d’un être divin : la belle stature d’une divinité jeune et brillante faisoit naître l’amour et la tendresse, les seules affections qui puissent ravir l’ame en une douce extase. Et n’est-ce pas dans ce ravissement des sens, que consiste la félicité humaine qui a été recherchée dans toutes les religions, bien ou mal entendues ?” *Ibid.*, 2:50–51.

[35] Claude-Henri Watelet and Pierre-Charles Lévesque, eds., *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (Paris: Prault, 1792), 3:531. “Winckelmann a observé, que, dans la représentation des divinités, les artistes de la Grèce, ont toujours eu soin d’exprimer la beauté et de l’associer a la jeunesse.”

[36] “La physionomie de ces déités n’exprime ni gaieté ni gravité : elle annonce cette douce satisfaction, propre à l’innocence de cet âge.” Winckelmann, *Histoire*, 2:83.

[37] See Clément-Hémery, *Souvenirs*, 7 on Mme Mongez’s presence in Regnault’s studio during the 1790s.

[38] “On les peignoit jeunes, parce qu’on a toujours regardé les agréments comme le partage de la jeunesse.” Antoine Mongez, *Encyclopédie méthodique. Dictionnaire d’Antiquités, Mythologie, Diplomatique des chartes et chronologie* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1790), 3:56. “Elles sont jeunes parce que la mémoire d’un bienfait ne doit jamais vieillir; vives et légers, parce qu’il faut obliger promptement, et qu’un bienfait ne doit point se faire attendre, Ibid., 3:57.

[39] “La *grace* consiste dans l’accord de ces mouvements avec ceux de l’âme. Dans l’enfance et dans la jeunesse, l’âme agit d’une manière libre et immédiate sur les ressorts de l’expression. . . . Conséquemment, l’enfance et la jeunesse sont les âges des *graces*. La souplesse et la docilité des membres sont tellement nécessaires aux *graces*, que l’âge mûr s’y refuse.” Watelet, “Grace,” in *Dictionnaire*, ed. Watelet and Lévesque, 2:452. Italics per the original.

[40] “Le sexe le plus souple dans ses ressorts, le plus sensible dans ses affections, dans lequel le désir de plaire est un sentiment en quelque façon indépendant de lui, parce qu’il est nécessaire au système de la nature ; ce sexe qui rend la beauté plus intéressante, offre aussi, lorsqu’il échappe à l’artifice et à l’affectation, les *graces* sous l’aspect le plus séduisant.” Ibid.

[41] “Ainsi qu’on voudroit voir sortir de son lit une jeune beauté qu’on aime.” Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “De la grâce dans les ouvrages de l’art,” in *Recueil de différentes pièces sur les arts par M. Winckelmann. Traduit de l’allemand*, trans. H. Jansen (Paris: Barrois l’aîné, 1786), 292. Winckelmann’s statement that “grace in works of art concerns principally the figure of man” has been taken, in some art-historical studies, from the French translation—in which the final word in the sentence is “l’homme”—to indicate only the male body. See, Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 43. However, Winckelmann’s original German formulation is “die menschliche figure” and refers to the human body generally, as opposed to animal bodies or inanimate objects, and he references male and female sculptures as examples of grace. On this, see Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “De la grâce dans,” 287, which states: “La grace dans les ouvrages de l’art, regarde principalement la figure de l’homme.” Winckelmann, *Werke. Einzig rechtmäßige Original-Ausgabe* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1847), 2:65 transcribes the original German. Winckelmann’s close associate and his emulators also identified grace across gender. For example, Robin noted in the 1792 *Dictionary of Art*: “La Vénus de Médicis, la Vénus accroupie, l’Apollino, l’Hermaphrodite, sont, comme indique fort bien Mengs, de vrais modèles de grace que nous avons dans l’antique.” [A footnote citing Mengs is also provided.] Italics per the original. Jean-Baptiste-Claude Robin, “Grace,” in Watelet and Lévesque, *Dictionnaire*, 2:459.

[42] Winckelmann, *Histoire*, 2:51. “Parmi les divinités du sexe, on attribuoit à Diane et à Pallas une virginité perpétuelle; les autres déesses qui l’avoient perdue pouvoient la recouvrer . . . C’est par cette raison que la gorge des déesses et des amazones est toujours représentée comme celle des jeunes filles . . . qui n’ont pas encore goûté le fruit de l’amour : c’est-à-dire, qu’à ces figures le bout du sein n’est pas encore développé.”

[43] “Dans les figures divines le sein a toujours une forme virginale . . . Les mamelles sont resserrées et semblables à des éminences terminées en pointe: cette forme du sein paroît avoir été regardée comme la plus belle . . . : car telle est la forme de cette partie dans l’innocence de l’âge.” Ibid., 2:150–51.

[44] Ibid., 2:152. He cites an untraceable drawing by Andrea del Sarto, but, based on his criteria for praise, the *Leda* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Belgique would be a worthy substitute. He contrasts this type of depiction with the full breasts and prominent nipples depicted on the figure of Truth in Domenichino’s frescoes in Rome’s Villa Costaguti.

[45] Stanic, “La Bibliothèque de Jean-Baptiste Regnault,” 210–11 for an itemized list of the contents of Regnault’s libraries.

[46] Ibid., 211 and 216n75 regarding the presence of Lacombe de Prezel’s work in Regnault’s studio library. Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique . . . Nouvelle édition*, 1:264. “Elles sont nues, parce qu’il faut obliger ses amis avec sincérité et sans affectation. Elles sont jeunes: la mémoire d’un bienfait ne doit jamais vieillir. Elles sont vierges: quelle vertu demande plus de prudence et de retenue que l’inclination bienfaisante ? Socrate voyant un homme qui prodiguoit ses bienfaits sans distinction et à tout venant: *que les Dieux te confondent*, s’écria-t-il : *les Gracesont vierges, et tu en fais des courtisanes.*” Italics per the original.

[47] Sylvain Bellenger, ed., *Girodet, 1767–1824* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2006), 256–60.

[48] Ibid., 272–81; and George Levitine, “Girodet’s *New Danaë*: The Iconography of a Scandal,” *Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin* 58 (1969): 69–77.

[49] Georges Vigne, *Dessins d’Ingres: Catalogue raisonné des dessins du musée de Montauban* (Paris: Gallimard/RMN, 1995), 157, no. 849 includes a full transcription of the autograph annotation. “Le bout du sein vierge. non encore développé. . . . chez les anciens le bout . . . seins ne se sont pas visibles aux [illegible word] et deesses car telle est la forme de cette partie dans l’âge de l’adolescence.”

[50] Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 206, asserts that "French artists of the Revolutionary period preferred to depict virtuous mothers when they undertook to create patriotic subjects." On this topic, see also Duncan, "Happy Mothers," 570–83; and Rosenblum, "Caritas," 42–63.

[51] Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 205 on the *ancien régime*; 207 on Jacobins' exclusion of women from politics after a bloody riot between market women and female Jacobins in October of 1793; and 214 on alignment of women with body, sex, and reproduction.

[52] Landes, *Visualizing the Nation*, 120.

[53] "Il faut remarquer pourtant, que quand je parle de la ressemblance du nu dans les figures de femmes, j'entends alors la taille, et que je n'exclus pas par-là le caractère de tête, imprimé particulièrement à chaque déesse ainsi qu'à chaque héroïne : caractère qui fait connoître non-seulement les déesses supérieures, mais aussi les déités inférieures, quand même elles seroient privées des attributs qu'on leur donne ordinairement." Winckelmann, *Histoire*, 2:75–76 as translated in Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art*, in *Essay on the Philosophy and History of Art*, ed. and trans. Curtis Bowman (London: Continuum, 2005), 841–42.

[54] Candace Clements, "Academy and the Other: *Les Grâces* and *Le Genre Galant*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 486.

[55] "Les noms signifient *brillant, douceur, vivacité*, pour nous apprendre que dans un discours, un seul agrément ne suffit pas pour soutenir long-temps notre attention. Le brillant tout seul nous fatigue : la douceur toute seule affadit : la vivacité toute seule étourdit : les trois Graces doivent donc se tenir . . . ; c'est-à-dire, que le brillant doit être doux, la douceur vive, et la vivacité douce et lumineuse." Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique . . . Nouvelle édition*, 1: 265. Italics per the original.

[56] "Mais l'une et l'autre Vénus ont des yeux pleins de douceur, avec un regard languissant et amoureux que les Grecs nomment $\Upsilon\text{P}\Omega\text{N}$, comme je le ferai voir ci-après dans mes remarques sur la beauté des yeux. Ce regard toutefois est bien éloigné des traits lascifs, par lesquels certains sculpteurs modernes ont prétendu caractériser leur Vénus : car dans l'antiquité l'Amour a été regardé par les artistes, ainsi que par les philosophes sensés, comme le collègue de la sagesse." [A footnote to Euripides is then provided.] Winckelmann, *Histoire*, 2:78.

[57] "La paupière inférieure tirée en haut caractérise cette grace et cette langueur que les Grecs nomment $\Upsilon\text{P}\Omega\text{N}$." Ibid., 2:133.

[58] Winckelmann, "De la grâce," *Recueil de différentes pièces*, 285. "La grace est ce qui plaît à l'esprit. . . La grace se forme par l'éducation et par la réflexion."

[59] Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique . . . Nouvelle édition*, 1:266. "Les trois Graces étoient représentées . . . dans l'endroit le plus apparent du Lycée à Athènes, pour montrer qu'elles peuvent s'allier à la Philosophie, et que l'utile ne doit paroître que sous les dehors de l'agrément."

[60] I analyze Regnault's solo exhibition of 1800 at length in a forthcoming anthology, tentatively entitled *Alternative Venues*, edited by Andrew Graciano. Regarding the size of the *Three Graces* exhibited in 1800, Charles-Paul Landon lamented that they were not life-size. Landon, "Réflexions sur les tableaux de Regnault exposés dans une des salles du palais national des sciences et des arts le 30 pluvoise an 8. 19 février 1800," *Collection Deloynes* 21, no. 604, 843. In his *Annales du musée et l'école moderne des beaux-arts* (Paris: Didot jeune, 1801), 146, Landon specified that Normand's engraving reproduced the painting formerly exhibited "in the studio of the artist in the Louvre" and which was "a bit under half life-size" ("de proportion un peu au dessous de demi-nature").

[61] Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *Exposition de trois tableaux dans une des salles du Palais National des Sciences et des Arts, Pavillon du Midi, sous le vestibule qui conduit au Quai, par Le Cen. Regnault, membre de l'Institut National* (Paris: Delance, An 8), 9. "Et la Grace plus belle encor que la beauté." Jean de la Fontaine, "Adonis," in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1799), 239. The verse was included in the entry on Venus in Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique* (1756), 290; Lacombe de Prezel, *Dictionnaire iconologique . . . Nouvelle édition*, 2:275.

[62] "Tableau séduisant des trois graces reunit tous les suffrages. Ce groupe délicieux, par la délicatesse et la correction des formes, la douce opposition des mouvemens et des attitudes répond parfaitement à l'idée que nous ont donné les poètes de ces aimables divinités." Landon, "Réflexions," 843.

[63] Landon, *Annales du musée* (1801), 145–46 and plate 71.

Illustrations



Fig. 1, Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *Three Graces*, an II, 1793–94. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)

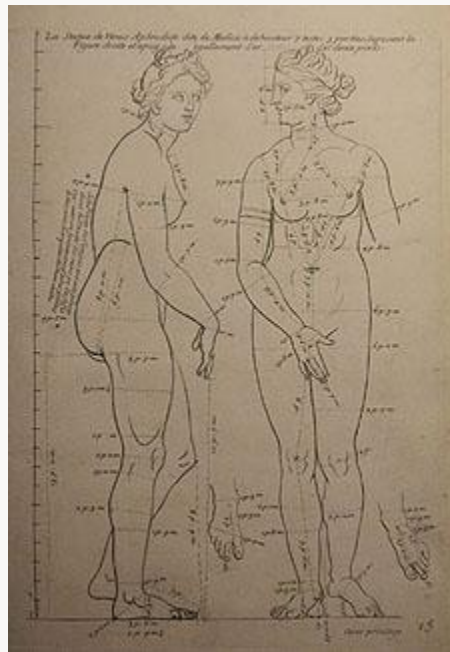


Fig. 2, Gérard Audran, *Medici Venus*. Published as plate 15 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683).

[\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 3, Gérard Audran, *Medici Venus*. Published as plate 16 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683). [\[return to text\]](#)

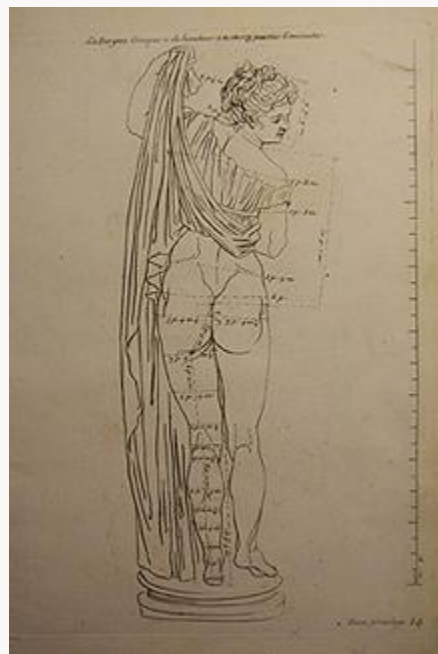


Fig. 4, Gérard Audran, *Greek Shepherdess (Callipygian Venus)*. Published as plate 14 in his *Les Proportions du corps humain: Mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris: Audran, 1683). [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 5, Jean-Hugues Taraval, *Autumn: Triumph of Bacchus*, Salon of 1769. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 6, Louis-Jacques Durameau, *Summer: Ceres and her Companions Imploring the Sun*, Salon of 1775. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 7, Antoine-François Callet, *Spring: Zephyr and Flora Crowning Cybele with Flowers*, Salon of 1781. Oil on canvas. Apollo Gallery ceiling, Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 8, Anne-Louis Girodet, *Danaë*, 1798. Oil on canvas. Museum der Bildenden K nst, Leipzig. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 9, Anne-Louis Girodet, *Mademoiselle Lange as Danaë*, 1799. Oil on canvas. Frame in gilded wood with, in the corners, four medallions in grisaille painted by the artist. Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 10, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Venus with a Gesture of Modesty*, ca. 1806–20. Graphite on paper. Musée Ingres, Montauban. [\[return to text\]](#)