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Richard, Fleury-François

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Fleury Richard (Lyon 1777 – Écully 1852) received his training at the Lyon École des Beaux-Arts under Alexis Grognard and in 1796 joined the workshop of Jacques-Louis David. Rather than following David's example, Richard specialized in medieval and early-modern interiors, inspired by Alexandre Lenoir's *Musée des Monuments Français* and the deserted castles, churches and cloisters he explored with his friends François-Marius Granet, Pierre Révoil and Auguste de Forbin.

Populating these old monuments with imagined period characters, Richard debuted at the Salon of 1801 with a gloomy catacomb interior showing the burial of Saint Blandina of Lyon, which struck a sensitive chord with the post-Revolutionary public. The following year, his *Valentina of Milan mourning the death of her husband Louis of Orléans* received general acclaim; this established his international reputation as one of the pioneers of a new genre known nowadays as "troubadour painting".

By increasing the importance of the figures in his compositions, Richard shifted from interior painting towards a new kind of historical representation, which combined the literary and antiquarian memory of the Middle Ages with a moralist sentimentality à la Greuze, while applying the intimate and meticulous aesthetic of Dutch 17th-century genre painting. It proved to be a successful and much-imitated formula for the representation of intimate and anecdotal visions of the past; examples include *Francis I shows Margaret of Navarre, his sister, the verses he wrote on a window* (1804), *St Louis IX honours his mother* (1807) and *Henry IV visits Gabrielle d'Estrées* (1809). These met with popular success and the Empress Josephine became Richard's most assiduous collector.

Between 1818 and 1823, Richard took over Révoil's position as professor of painting at the Fine Arts Academy of Lyon, where Claudius Jacquand was one of his students. Forced to leave his position upon Révoil's return, and suffering from a nervous condition that largely kept him from painting, Richard retired to his estate at Écully, where he dedicated himself to his collection of Renaissance furniture and finished only one more work (*Comminges and Adelaide in the Trappist Monastery*) before his death in 1852.

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