

FAMILY TYPE 2 - THE PAINTER'S FAMILY

The family of painter Jacob Jordaens - Jacob Jordaens. Mid 17th century. Oil on canvas



The four people seem to be posing for a portrait, each one in a position that reveals their personality and their role in society.

Thus, the middle-aged woman on the left is sitting and seems to be paying careful attention to the girl she's holding. The little girl is depicted with a mischievous smile on her face. On the right, we see the man standing up and holding a lute, showing in this way his interest for this instrument. In the centre we can see a young girl with a different kind of attire and holding some grapes.

On a closer look, we can see a dog, a mastiff, under the chair the man has his foot on. We can also see an exotic bird on the upper left handside.

We can think that the two middle-aged people are the father and the mother, and the little girl, their daughter. But who is the woman in the middle? She could be someone belonging to the painter's household, someone who help the mother with the chores or taking care of the girl. That is why she is depicted with another type of clothes, not as elegant as the parents. The fact that she is in the portrait reveals that she was considered as another member of the family. The

pets would also be considered as such.

What type of family is this? They are all very elegant, dressed in the fashion of the time, and they are posing in their garden, surrounded by elegant furniture, which indicates that they were wealthy.

So the people in the picture are:

- The man: the painter, Jacob Jordaens, who was very keen on music.
- The woman: his wife, Catharina Van Noort
- The girl: their daughter, Elisabeth

It was not frequent to find rich painters in the 17th century, but Jordaens was one. He also enjoyed domestic bliss, which is symbolised by the fountain-sculpture behind the woman, with a cupid on a dolphin, representing life and fertility.

Source: www.museodelprado.es