

HARVARD'S FOGG ART MUSEUM SHOWS DRAWINGS & PAINTINGS FROM 18TH-CENTURY FRANCE

“To Delight the Eye” on display December 17, 2005–March 12, 2006



Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777), *Bacchanal*. Watercolor, brown, black, and gray wash, with white and colored gouache, over black chalk and brown ink, squared in black chalk, on light tan antique laid paper, laid down on a decorated mount, 377 x 527 mm. Fogg Art Museum, Gift of Charles E. Dunlap, 1957.51. Photo: Allan Macintyre, HUAM © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

CAMBRIDGE, MA (November 9, 2005)— French paintings and drawings from the collection of Harvard alumnus Charles E. Dunlap, including an exquisite portrait of Madame de Pompadour by François Boucher, will be on view at the Fogg Art Museum December 17, 2005 through March 12, 2006.

“To Delight the Eye”: French Drawings and Paintings from the Collection of Charles E. Dunlap captures a period in French history

primarily during the reign of Louis XV (1715-74) when collectors fancied charming, graceful pictures of pretty subjects. Many of the works in the Dunlap collection, for example, depict nobles dressing, chatting, playing cards, and otherwise going about their elegant lives.

Artists represented in this exhibition of 30 works include Boucher (1703-1770), Marguerite Gérard (1761-1837), Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777), and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867).

“The images in Mr. Dunlap’s collection show little sadness, no hard labor, and no hint of death or religion,” said Alvin L. Clark, Jr., Jeffrey E. Horvitz Research Curator in the Department of Drawings at the Fogg. “Today his taste would be decried as frivolous, but these exquisitely produced scenes were some of the most innovative works produced in 18th-century Europe.

Scholars have only just begun to assess the visual and social significance of these seemingly lighthearted images.”

“This exhibition is significant beyond the works of art represented here,” said Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard University Art Museums.

“Many of our most notable holdings have come to us through the generosity of friends and alumni who were themselves passionate collectors. But none of us really knew very much about Mr. Dunlap and how he had come to possess such treasures until Alvin Clark began his research.”

Who was Charles Dunlap?

Charles Edward Dunlap (born in 1889, Harvard Class of 1911) was a wealthy Philadelphian who developed his taste for French art from his uncle and mentor, the coal-mining magnate Edward Berwind, and a family friend, the collector Forsyth Wickes.

From his teenage years, Dunlap spent a great deal of time at The Elms, the grand Newport mansion that his uncle built in the style of a French chateau and furnished with elegant 18th-century French paintings and furniture. In Newport, Dunlap often came into contact with Wickes, a successful New York lawyer who ardently collected fine and decorative arts from 18th-century France. Eventually, Dunlap and Wickes became friendly rivals for the same works of art.

By the late 1930s, Dunlap had built a substantial collection of English and French art and became a generous donor to Harvard. This led to his 1940 appointment to the Visiting Committee overseeing the University’s fine-arts department and the Fogg. Through the efforts of various museum officials, including Agnes Mongan (then curator of drawings), Dunlap’s relationship with the Fogg grew. In 1956, he helped the Fogg acquire *Bacchanal*, the splendid Natoire drawing featured in the upcoming exhibition. During his association with the Fogg, and upon his death in 1966, he gave the museum 10 paintings and 44 drawings—all but four of which were French.

Boucher portrait of Mme. Pompadour a highlight

A highlight of the exhibition will be the portrait of *Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour* painted in 1758 by Boucher, who became first painter to King Louis XV around 1765. Pompadour was the king's powerful mistress and confidante, and an avid patron of the arts who also studied drawing and printmaking with Boucher. This portrait is among several she commissioned around 1750.

Boucher's painting apparently began its life as a small, rectangular, head-and-shoulders portrait, according to research performed at the Harvard University Art Museums' Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies by Teri Hensick and Eugene Farrell with Alden Gordon of Trinity College. Pompadour apparently gave the original portrait to her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, who may have damaged it while traveling in Europe.

Perhaps because of this damage, Boucher took it back and expanded it—adding several strips of canvas and then painting in narrative details depicting its subject at a dressing table, applying her makeup for the day. In this version, Mme de Pompadour wears a dressing gown over her elegant court costume as she pauses in the application of her rouge. On her wrist is a jewel-encrusted cameo bracelet bearing the profile of her beloved, the king of France.

Important Fragonard study also on display

Jean-Honoré Fragonard, along with Watteau and Boucher, was one of the three greatest artists of 18th-century France and in his later years, director of the Louvre. His most important commission, often referred to as *The Progress of Love*, now at the Frick Collection, is a masterpiece of the rococo. However, it was rejected by the countess who had commissioned it, perhaps because it no longer seemed stylish at a time when neoclassicism was ascendant.

Dunlap acquired Fragonard's *Young Girl Abandoned*, the only known composition study related to this commission. This black-chalk and charcoal drawing with brown and gray wash of circa 1790 depicts a young girl swooning at the base of an ornamental pillar in a garden. Five other works by Fragonard are also on view.

***Bacchanal*, by Natoire**

Charles-Joseph Natoire was an exquisite draftsman, the director of the French Academy in Rome (1751-75), a colleague of Boucher, and an enormous influence on many of France's most promising artists. The Fogg's *Bacchanal*—done in watercolor, black chalk, brown ink, and a variety of washes and gouache—is one of his masterpieces. Its classical theme was an unusual choice for Dunlap, but he purchased this one work directly for the Fogg at the urging of Mongan.

Works by Ingres

Dunlap's gifts to the Fogg included three 19th-century works by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, including an 1855 drawing of his second wife, *Madame Delphine Ingres*, who kept it close to her until the end of her life.

Exhibition Programming

Gallery Talk:

Fogg Art Museum

Free with the price of admission.

Saturday, January 14, 2006, 2:00 p.m.

Alvin L. Clark, Jr., Jeffrey E. Horvitz Research Curator, Department of Drawings

The Harvard University Art Museums

The Harvard University Art Museums are one of the world’s leading arts institutions, with the Arthur M. Sackler, Busch-Reisinger, and Fogg art museums, the Straus Center for Conservation, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the HUAM Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, in Turkey.

The Harvard University Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. As an integral part of the Harvard community, the three art museums and four research centers serve as resources for all students, adding a special dimension to their areas of study. The public is welcome to experience the collections and exhibitions as well as to enjoy lectures, symposia, and other programs.

For more than a century, the Harvard University Art Museums have been the nation’s premier training ground for museum professionals and scholars and are renowned for their role in the development of the discipline of art history in this country.

Location and Hours

The Fogg Art Museum and the Busch-Reisinger Museums are located at 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge. The Arthur M. Sackler Museum is located next door at 485 Broadway. Each museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.

Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00–5:00 p.m.; closed on national holidays. Admission is \$7.50; \$6 for seniors; \$6 for students; and free for those under 18 years of age. The Art Museums are free to everyone on Saturday mornings, 10:00 a.m.–noon. The Harvard University Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. More detailed information is available at 617-495-9400 or on the Internet at www.artmuseums.harvard.edu.

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