

Boucher

The Great Masters of European Art

Part 6: Rococo! Watteau, Boucher, Chardin and French painting under Louis XV

2 October – Gallery – Antoine Watteau.

9 October – Gallery – Boucher and Chardin.

16 October – Musée du Louvre – Watteau, Boucher and the masters of the fête galante.

Meet by information desk beneath Pyramid with ticket in hand at 10:15 am. Métro: Palais-Royal Louvre.

23 October – Musée du Louvre – Chardin and 18th century portraitists.

Meet by information desk beneath Pyramid with ticket in hand at 10:15 am. Métro: Palais-Royal Louvre.

Bibliography:

Levey, Michael Art and architecture in France 1700-1800, Pelican History of Art, Penguin.

Or: Levey, Michael Rococo to Revolution, Thames & Hudson.

Historical chronology: Reign of Louis XV - 1723-1774.

1723 - The King attains majority at 13. Death of the Regent.

1725 - Louis XV marries Marie-Lezczinska daughter of Stanislas dethroned King of Poland. First "Salon" at the Louvre.

1726 - the King's tutor, Fleury, is named Prime Minister. Opening of a prosperous and stable period.

1743 - Death of Fleury. Apogee of the popularity of Louis XV called by his subjects "Bien-Aimé".

1744 - Beginning of war with Austria.

1746 - The marquise de Pompadour becomes the King's official mistress.

1747 - Founding of Ecole d'Architecture.

1748 - Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Montesquieu publishes L'Esprit des Lois.

1751 - Beginning of publication of the Encyclopédie. Marigny, brother of Mme de Pompadour named Directeur des Bâtiments du Roi.

1753 - Beginning of contesting of royal authority by the French parlements (Paris and provincial high courts of justice).

1756 - Beginning of "Seven Year War" against England and Prussia.

1757 - The King is knifed by a maniac, Damiens. This is seen as a symbolic manifestation of the growing unpopularity of Louis XV.

1758 - Choiseul named Prime Minister, return of economic prosperity.

1762 - J. J. Rousseau publishes Le Contrat Social.

1763 - Treaty of Paris, end of Seven Year War.

1764 - Death of Madame de Pompadour. Voltaire publishes the Dictionnaire Philosophique.

1770 - Choiseul is fired. The Dauphin marries Marie-Antoinette daughter of Maria-Teresa, Empress of Austria.

1771 - Paris Parlement sent into exile.

1774 - Death of Louis XV.

François Boucher 1703 - 1770

1703 – Born in Paris, the son of a lace designer and painter of the academy of St Luke, Nicolas Boucher.

1720 – At 17, Boucher was apprenticed by his father to François Lemoyne, but after only three months he went to work for the engraver Jean-François Cars. Works on Julienne's publication of engravings of Watteau's paintings.

1724 – Wins the Grand Prix de Rome, but does not take up the opportunity to study in Italy until three years later.

1727 – Leaves for Italy in the company of painter Carle Vanloo.

1731 – On his return from Italy, he is admitted to the Académie de peinture et de sculpture as a historical painter, and becomes a professor in 1734.

1733 – Marries Jeanne Bucheau. Uses his wife as one of his principal models until old age.

1735 – Receives first commissions for Versailles. From now on he will be the principle painter to be involved in the new decorative schemes of the palace and other royal châteaux (Fontainebleau, Marly, Choisy, La Muette, Meudon and Bellevue for Mme de Pompadour). He will become the favorite master of the royal mistress, the marquise de Pompadour, and also design opera decors and tapestry cartoons for the manufacture of Beauvais (the suite of the "Loves of the Gods"). He will be seen as the principle representative of the new "style rocaille" (rococo).

1737 – Shows country scenes (divers scenes champêtres) in newly founded Salon in the Louvre.

1742 – Receives yearly royal pension.

1752 – Granted studio in the Louvre.

1755 – Is named, after the death of J. B. Oudry, head of the Royal Gobelins Manufactory in 1755 after becoming Rector of the Academy.

1765 – Named, after the death of Carle Vanloo, "first painter" (Premier Peintre du Roi) to King Louis XV.

At this point his art is attacked by the philosopher and critic Denis Diderot as corrupting morals and being of bad taste.

1770 – Dies in Paris on May 30.