

Love and Courtship

Paris Art Studies – January 2013

Love, Courtship and the intellectual Salon in French art of the 18th C:

1715-1770 with Chris Boïcos

Course

Schedule. Coffee and tea are served at gallery sessions between 1:30 and 2pm.

Mo. 14

Jan. 2pm – 3:30 pm – Gallery slide lecture – Watteau and the Birth of the “Fête Galante” – Paris under the Regency.

Mo. 21

Jan. 12 noon – 1:30 pm – Visit to Musée du Louvre – Watteau, Boucher and Quentin Latour – Art in the Rococo period. Meet by information desk under Pyramid with ticket in hand at 10:15.

Mo. 28

Jan. 2pm – 3:30 pm – Gallery slide lecture – Women of the Court, women of Paris – Love, Marriage and the intellectual Salon in the Age of Enlightenment.

Mo.

4 Feb. 2pm – 3:30 pm – Visit to the Hôtel de Soubise – Apartments of the Princesse de Soubise - paintings by Boucher, Tremolières, and Natoire’s cycle of “Psyche and Love”.

Meet courtyard of the Archives Nationales, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois 75003 (Metros: Hôtel de Ville and Rambuteau)

- 1723.

1715 - At his great grandfather's death Louis XV is only five years old. Louis XIV's nephew Philippe Duke of Orléans is proclaimed Regent and takes over the government. The court moves from Versailles to the Tuileries palace in Paris close to the Regent's official residence at the Palais -Royal. The great noble families settle across the river in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

1716 - Founding of the first bank in France by the Scottish banker John Law.

1718 - Foundation of New Orleans in Louisiana named in honor of the Regent by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville. Law's bank becomes the official state bank, emits notes, credit and sells stocks in colonial trade. It meets with huge popular success and encourages a frenetic speculation at the newly founded stock market (Bourse).

1720 - Resounding stock market crash and bankruptcy of Law's bank.

1722 - Sacre of the young Louis XV. The court returns to Versailles.

1723 - Louis XV is declared majeur at 13. The Regent become Prime Minister but dies suddenly on 2 December.

The Arts: An immense relief results from the end of the very long (72 years) reign of the Sun King. The tolerant even dissolute lifestyle of the Regent and his entourage, and the new possibilities for quick enrichment offered by the stock market, mark this period as one devoted to the fast life, luxury and pleasure. The grand aristocratic portrait in a baroque style remains the province of Nicolas Largillière (1656-1746). Aristocratic hunt and still lives are the specialty of the animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755).

Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) is the first painter to break completely with the Grand Style of the previous period to create an intimate, decorative art mixing "vulgar" subjects drawn from street theatre with aristocratic scenes from château life. The "fête galante" is born, consecrating love and sentiment as the chief pre-occupations of a society increasingly drawn to the private side of life and its pleasures. Color and movement operate a great return in French painting. The "Rubénistes" overthrow the "Poussinistes" of the old academic tradition. After Watteau's death in 1721 the fête galante

continues to be very popular and becomes the key subject of his former assistants, Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743) and Jean Baptiste Pater (1695-1756). The older painter Jean François de Troy (1679-1752) who specializes in mythological and religious compositions also takes up the subject with success. Love, nature, courtship and femininity become the foundations of the style that will in the 1720's be labeled "le style rocaille" or the Rococo style.

Architecture and principally decoration become light and refined favoring undulating curves and floral motifs over the vocabulary of classicism and geometry. This is the great period of private and aristocratic rather than royal architecture and notably the *hôtels particuliers* of the Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris.