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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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DIRECTOR ANNE L. POULET ANNOUNCES TWO NEW ADDITIONS TO THE FRICK COLLECTION



Claude Michel, called Clodion (1738-1814), *The Dance of Time: Three Nymphs Supporting a Clock* by Lepaute, 1788, terracotta, H of sculpture: 55.2 cm (22 in); H with base and clock: 103.5 cm (41 in), The Frick Collection, New York, purchased through the Winthrop Edey bequest, 2006

Director Anne L. Poulet announces that following a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, The Frick Collection made two significant additions to its holdings. This spring, the institution purchased an undisputed masterpiece both of sculpture and clockmaking, *The Dance of Time: Three Nymphs Supporting a Clock* by Lepaute. It features a timepiece by the firm of clockmakers working for Kings Louis XV and XVI as well as a remarkable sculpture by Claude Michel, called Clodion (1738-1814). In the eighteenth century, this object was recognized as one of the artist's masterpieces in the terracotta medium, and one of the Lepautes' greatest creations. Indeed, *The Dance of Time* is also the only known eighteenth-century clock that features terracotta not as a sketch medium but as finished sculpture. Created in 1788 for celebrated architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, the object was also the first such clock

designed by Lepaute for a glass globe (and the only one in which the original glass survives). At the same spring Board meeting, the gift of a rare plaster statuette of *Diana the Huntress* by Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741-1828) was accepted from the distinguished collector Frederick R. Koch. Both objects are undergoing study and conservation this summer and will be placed on public view in the galleries of the museum the fall of 2006.

Comments Poulet, "*The Dance of Time* is one of the most important acquisitions made by the institution in recent years, and it is with great pleasure that we bring this work, in fact, back to The Frick Collection. It was shown here for the first time in a public presentation in 1984, when, as guest curator, I organized an exhibition on Clodion that featured this work as a centerpiece. This remarkable object now finds a

permanent home in the perfect context, as the Frick presents other fine terracotta sculptures by Clodion and his contemporaries, while also serving as a significant repository for clocks and timepieces. Indeed, the museum's holdings were greatly strengthened by the 1999 bequest of the noted horologist Winthrop Edey, who gave the Frick his important collection of clocks and watches and an endowment for their care and conservation. The purchase of *The Dance of Time* was made possible, in part, through funds that Edey made available for the acquisition of clocks.

Just as this object amplifies beautifully an area of our holdings, so too does Fred Koch's generous gift of the Houdon statuette of *Diana the Huntress*, which offers us a reduced version of the Frick's prized life-size terracotta cast of Houdon's *Diana*. It is a rare opportunity to be able to present to visitors both versions of one of the most famous sculptures of the eighteenth century."

CLODION CREATES A SEMINAL WORK

Claude Michel, known as Clodion, executed this sculpture on the eve of the French Revolution when he was at the height of his maturity, popularity, and fame. A contemporary of Houdon and Fragonard, Clodion was one of the most inventive and technically gifted sculptors of the second half of the eighteenth century. At age twenty-one he won the prestigious Prix de Rome and spent nine years in the eternal city (1762–71), part of them in the company of Houdon. Clodion's Roman sojourn was crucial to his formation as an artist. There he studied antique statuary and modern art conceiving the inimitable blend of classical lyricism and baroque grace that would be the hallmark of his mature sculptures, like *The Dance of Time*. Clodion was largely responsible for introducing the terracotta statuette as an independent art form to eighteenth-century France. Terracottas by Clodion—along with other masterpieces in that quintessential eighteenth century medium by Pajou, Chinard, and Boizot—have been a traditional presence within The Frick Collection. *The Dance of Time* is one of Clodion's most seminal works, a creation that freed the artist to explore ever more spatially intricate compositions, such as The Frick Collection's beautiful *Zephyrus and Flora* of 1799.

COLLABORATIVE MASTERPIECE

Objects intended as the focus of a room, like Clodion's *Dance of Time*, were themselves often the result of a creative, collaborative effort. In this instance, Clodion must have worked closely with the family

firm of Jean-André (1720–89) and Jean-Baptiste Lepaute (1727–1802). The founder of the firm, Jean-André Lepaute, was among the most important clockmakers in eighteenth-century France. His clocks were noted for their mechanical reliability and scientific aptness. One of Jean-André's most significant contributions to the field of clock-making, however, was his ability to design mechanisms and dials that emphasized the clock's relatively recent role as the centerpiece of domestic interiors. His rather innovative use of the circular rotating dial, a signature element of this firm's production, was meant to produce a clock that could be designed to any scale, "for the pleasure of architects and others concerned with house design." *The Dance of Time* of 1788 marks a culmination of this type. It is the first known rotating annular dial clock that the Lepaute family designed for encasement within a glass globe. The transparent sphere dramatically reveals the clock's mechanism and the motion of its pendulum. Intended to stand on a mantelpiece in front of a mirror, the clock's gilded and silvered moving parts would have been sparkingly visible from every angle. With its installation in the Frick's Fragonard Room later this year, viewers can once more admire Jean-Baptiste Lepaute's and Clodion's inventive syncopation of the clock's structure and movement with the elegant permutations of the nymphs' dance.

The caryatid pendulum clock with rotating annular dial is the most characteristic and beautiful of the designs the Lepaute family created in collaboration with sculptors. Lepaute caryatid clocks were made from about 1770 to 1830, almost throughout the distinguished history of a firm that maintained its preeminent status as official clockmakers to kings, republicans, emperors, and kings again. A selection of the finest caryatid clocks produced by the firm encompasses changes in artistic style from cheerful rococo elegance to astringent neoclassical grace. The first such clock dates to around 1770, when Étienne-Maurice Falconet carved a marble group of *Three Graces* surrounding a column surmounted by an urn embellished with a Lepaute annular dial (in the holdings of the Louvre, Paris). With Clodion's *Dance of Time* of 1788, Jean-Baptiste Lepaute, who took over the firm in 1775, introduced the transparent glass globe to the clock's design. In 1790, the sculptor Jacques Philippe Lesueur carved a beautiful marble group of four caryatids supporting a blue enamel globe that encased a clock by the Lepaute firm. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the firm collaborated with sculptors at the Sèvres manufactory producing white biscuit porcelain caryatid groups surmounted by Lepaute glass-globed pendulum clocks. The best examples of these clocks (with modern transparent globes and restored mechanisms) are outside of Paris, at Malmaison and Fontainebleau. Clodion's *Dance of Time* marks the climax of this tradition, with its harmonization of clock design and sculpture.

HOUDON STUDY OF *DIANA THE HUNTRESS*: A GIFT FROM FRED KOCH

The Frick Collection is pleased to announce the gift of a plaster statuette of *Diana the Huntress* by Houdon. At two feet tall, this *Diana* is an exact reduction of the celebrated life-size composition Houdon designed in the 1770s for Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Gothe, a full-size terracotta version of which was acquired by The Frick Collection in 1939. Although many copies and reductions of *Diana the Huntress* were made well into the nineteenth century, only two small-scale plasters bear the wax seal of Houdon's atelier, an indication that they were produced in the studio during the artist's lifetime: one is in the Musée Lambinet, Versailles, and the other now enters the Frick's holdings as the generous gift of Frederick R. Koch.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: (212) 288-0700

Website: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

Hours: open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$15; senior citizens \$10; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection, and those under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult.

Subway: #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Museum Shop: the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Visits: Please call (212) 288-0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

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For further press information on The Frick Collection, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing

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