



The Frick Collection

DECORATIVE ARTS HANDBOOK





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Director's Foreword

The unique atmosphere of The Frick Collection has as much to do with the decorative arts as with the old master paintings that line our walls. Indeed the enamels, clocks and watches, furniture, gilt bronzes, porcelain, ceramics, silver, and textiles far exceed in number, and are the equal in quality of, the works on canvas and panel. Long overdue, this handbook—the first devoted to the decorative arts in our collection—will help convey the balance among the various art forms represented at the Frick and provide a valuable introduction to this area.

Acquiring paintings had preoccupied Henry Clay Frick many years before he moved to New York in the first years of the twentieth century. While renting William H. Vanderbilt's mansion at Fifth Avenue and 51st Street, he devoted his attention to collecting masterpieces by Rembrandt, Velázquez, and other masters, but as the sumptuous house he was building on 70th Street took shape between 1912 and 1914, he recognized the need for furnishings of a caliber that matched his painting collection. Interestingly, most of his purchases in this area were made just before or after he began to occupy the house and in a very concentrated period of time.

A trip to London and Paris in the spring of 1914 inspired many of the choices Frick would make for his New York mansion. After meeting Victor Cavendish, ninth Duke of Devonshire, at Landsdowne House in London and his country house at Chatsworth, Frick acquired from him a suite of tapestry furniture thought to be eighteenth-century Gobelins. Impressed by the Wallace Collection and wishing to emulate it, he set out to acquire high-quality decorative arts of different periods and materials,

Triptych: The Crucifixion with The Way to Calvary and The Deposition

WORKSHOP OF THE MASTER OF THE LARGE FOREHEADS

French, Limoges, ca. 1510

Painted enamel on copper, partly gilded

Central plaque: 9¼ × 8½ in. (23.5 × 20.6 cm)

Wings: 9¼ × 3½ in. (23.4 × 8.9 cm)

Henry Clay Frick Bequest (1916.4.05)

Enamellers in the workshops in Limoges are known to have copied each other's compositions and also to have worked together. For example, the three crosses, the view of Jerusalem, and the detachment of soldiers in the central panel are seen, with only slight variations, in several enamels by the Master of the Orléans Triptych, including *The Crucifixion* in The Frick Collection (p. 2). The body of Christ closely follows a composition by Nardon Pénicaut, who had himself adapted a scene by the Master of the Orléans Triptych. Also typical of the period is the extensive use of cabochons, recalling the work of contemporary silversmiths. Such "gems" were created by applying raised drops of colored translucent enamels over small pieces of silver foil.





Pair of Mounted Vases

Chinese porcelain, first half of the eighteenth century

French gilt-bronze mounts, ca. 1755–60

Hard-paste porcelain and gilt bronze

18½ × 14¼ × 8½ in. (46 × 36.2 × 21.6 cm)

Henry Clay Frick Bequest (1915.8.43–44)

The French gilt-bronze mounts were almost certainly designed specially for the base and handles of these Chinese porcelain vases and not adapted from a pre-existing repertoire of decora-

tive elements, as was often the case. The heavy asymmetrical scrolls are related to work done around 1755–60 by Jean-Claude Duplessis, an Italian sculptor, designer, goldsmith, ceramics modeler, and bronze maker working in France. Duplessis served as artistic director of the Vincennes-Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory from 1748 until his death in 1774 and became *orfèvre du roi* (royal goldsmith) in 1758. He was also directly involved in creating bronze mounts for Chinese porcelain for Lazare Duvaux, the most prominent *marchand-mercier* in Paris in the 1740s and 1750s.



Pair of Mounted Covered Vases

Chinese porcelain, mid-eighteenth century

French gilt-bronze mounts, ca. 1770

Hard-paste porcelain and gilt bronze

Each, 18¼ × 10½ × 7⅞ in. (46.3 × 26.7 × 18.8 cm)

Henry Clay Frick Bequest (1918.8.45-46)

Each of these vases was originally the lower section of a beaker or *tsun*-shaped vase that was severed below its bulging central section. The original piece was cut inside the foot rim to make a new opening, which is now the top of the vase. The lids originally belonged to *kuan*-shaped jars that were cut, altered, and also probably inverted to suit a new purpose. The gilt-bronze mounts are attributed to the Parisian bronze caster Jean Godille, who is mentioned in the 1773 *Almanach du Dauphin* as “famous for his porcelain and other precious mounted vases.”



Arrival of the Shepherdesses at the Wedding of Camacho; Sancho Departs for the Isle of Barataria

WORKSHOP OF PETER VAN DEN HECKE AFTER PHILIPPE DE HONDT

Flemish, Brussels, ca. 1730–45 (before 1748)

Wool and silk

1965.10.20: 10 ft. 3 in. × 18 ft. 3 in. (313 × 555.2 cm)

1965.10.21: 10 ft. 4 in. × 19 ft. 5 in. (314.6 × 591.2 cm)

Bequest of Childs Frick, 1965 (1965.10.20–21)



Around 1730–40, the Brussels workshop of Peter Van den Hecke produced a series of eight tapestries illustrating Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Six of them—including these two panels—were inspired by engravings made between 1723 and 1734 after twenty-seven cartoons, or preparatory works, painted by the French painter Charles Coypel to serve as models for tapestries produced at the Gobelins manufactory in Paris. *Arrival of the Shepherdesses at the Wedding of Camacho* depicts the festivities taking place before the arrival of the groom, Camacho, and his bride, Quiteria, at their country wedding. Don Quixote, the armored knight, sits on a rock at right while his companion, Sancho Panza, at left, reclines under a tree enjoying the generous provisions of the host. In *Sancho Departs for the Isle of Barataria*, the composition is organized around Don Quixote embracing Sancho, dressed in a red overcoat and holding a white turban. Rather than faithfully copying Coypel's scenes, the painter who provided cartoons for Van den Hecke borrowed elements from the celebrated engravings and set them into landscapes reminiscent of seventeenth-century northern Dutch paintings. Soon after they were made, these two panels were acquired by the French Royal Collection. In 1749, they were displayed at the Château de Compiègne in the study of the eldest son of King Louis XV, Louis, Dauphin of France.

