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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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FRICK COLLECTION CONTINUES ACQUISITION OF IMPORTANT DECORATIVE ARTS OBJECTS WITH GIFT OF A RARE PAIR OF CANDELABRA BY GILDER-CHASER PIERRE GOUTHIÈRE



Pair of candelabra, early eighteenth-century porcelain, gilt-bronze mounts by Pierre Gouthière after a design by François-Joseph Bélanger, France, 1782, hard-paste porcelain, marble, and gilt bronze, 43.5 x 17.5 x 17.5 cm, The Frick Collection, gift of Sidney R. Knafel, 2016; photo: Michael Bodycomb

The Frick Collection is renowned for its remarkable holdings of eighteenth-century French fine and decorative arts and for galleries such as the Fragonard and Boucher rooms. In recent years, acquisitions in this area have included sculptures by Jean-Antoine Houdon (active 1741–1828), Claude Michel Clodion (1738–1814), and Josef Chinard (1756–1813), as well as a rare vase from the Sèvres royal manufactory. Trustee **Sidney R. Knafel** has given the New York museum an extraordinary pair of candelabra by Pierre Gouthière, the great French chaser-gilder who worked in the second half of the eighteenth century for an elite clientele, including Madame Du Barry, the Duke of Aumont and the Duchess of Mazarin (the latter having commissioned from Gouthière the Frick’s iconic blue marble table with gilt-bronze mounts). The newly acquired candelabra will be presented in the

Frick’s groundbreaking monographic exhibition *Pierre Gouthière: Virtuoso Gilder at the French Court* (November 16, 2016, through February 19, 2017).

Comments Director Ian Wardropper, “At this time last year, with the help of Sidney R. Knafel, the Frick acquired a very important sixteenth-century Saint-Porchaire ewer by the famed French ceramicist Bernard Palissy. A fascinating object, it inspired closer study and fresh scholarship of a vase from the same region purchased one-hundred years earlier by founder Henry Clay Frick. We are deeply grateful to Mr. Knafel once again for supporting the institution’s desire to amplify and enrich its remarkable holdings in the decorative arts with the gift of this remarkable pair of candelabra.” Adds Charlotte Vignon, Curator of Decorative Arts: “These stunning objects exemplify the technical and artistic excellence reached in Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century. They also have a significant

lineage, as they were created for the Duke of Aumont, one of the greatest collectors of the time. They will certainly find a remarkably appropriate setting for display and study here at the Frick.”

Pierre Gouthière became a master chaser-gilder in 1758. Little is known of his early years, but by 1765 he was gilding a number of pieces in both bronze and silver for the silversmith to the king, François-Thomas Germain. In 1767, Gouthière was appointed *doreur seul ordinaire* (gilder to the king) of the *Menus-Plaisirs du Roi*, thus starting a long career at the service of the French court. The Menus-Plaisirs was an administrative body of the king’s household that managed the king’s personal effects and organized his entertainment, creating decors for theatrical productions and for significant occasions such as marriages and funerals. The artists employed by the Menus-Plaisirs were free to develop new ideas without constraint, and their workshops were the locus for the forging of new fashions. Gouthière’s works were so admired by Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette that in addition to commissioning works directly from him, they also acquired a few masterpieces at the auction organized in 1782 after the death of the Duke of Aumont.

The clientele of Gouthière also included the Count of Artois, Madame Du Barry, the Duke of Duras, the Duchess of Mazarin (the Duke of Aumont’s daughter-in-law), Princess Kinsky, the Marquis of Marigny, and the king of Poland. He also collaborated with some of the period’s most highly regarded sculptors, such as Louis-Simon Boizot. Gouthière’s wasteful expenditures and a series of financial setbacks— including a huge sum owed to him by Madame Du Barry and the death in the early 1780s of two of his most important clients, the Duke of Aumont and the Duchess of Mazarin—forced him to declare bankruptcy in 1787.

Soon after his death in 1813, Gouthière was lauded by collectors, critics, and art dealers alike as one of the most important French eighteenth-century artists, a fame that has not faded during the subsequent centuries. One consequence of the artist’s stellar reputation among France and Britain’s most important collectors was the appearance of copies and overly generous attributions to Gouthière (whose original work is rarely signed). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, French decorative arts pieces of great quality (and not only those featuring gilt bronze) were erroneously attributed to Gouthière, and many of these attributions remain today.

The Duke of Aumont was among the most important eighteenth-century French art collectors. This pair of candelabra, which he commissioned from Gouthière in 1782 was not quite finished when the Duke died that year. They remained at the workshop, to be completed just in time for the sale of the Duke’s estate in December of 1782.

Beginning later this fall, The Frick Collection will present *Pierre Gouthière: Virtuoso Gilder at the French Court*, the first exhibition to focus on him, which will be on view in New York from November 16, 2016, through February 19, 2017. The exhibition will shed new light on the artist’s production, life, and workshop with approximately thirty

works from public and private collections that are attributed with certainty to Gouthière, among them this unique pair of candelabra.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

Building project: www.frickfuture.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

App: frick.org/app

Museum entrance: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue

Library entrance: 10 East 71st Street

Museum Hours: Open six days a week: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day

Library Hours: frick.org/visit/library/hours

Museum Admission: \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; "pay what you wish" on Wednesdays from 2 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

First Fridays: Museum admission and gallery programs are free from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the first Friday evening of the month (except January and September)

Library: open to the public and free of charge

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection

Subway: #6 local to 68th Street station; #Q to 72nd 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 museum admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

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

Group Museum 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, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Associate Director of Media Relations & Marketing; Phone: 212.547.6866; E-mail: rosenau@frick.org