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GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE PRESENTS
A KINGDOM OF IMAGES: FRENCH PRINTS IN THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV, 1660–1715

300 years after the death of Louis XIV, the exhibition explores the rich variety of prints that came to define French power and style in the era of the Sun King

At the Getty Research Institute, Getty Center
June 16 through September 6, 2015

LOS ANGELES – Louis XIV's imperialist ambitions manifested themselves in every activity under his dominion, which included the production of etchings and engravings. Fully appreciating the beauty and utility of prints, he and his advisors transformed Paris into the single most important printmaking center in Europe, a position the city maintained until the 20th century. Fueled by official policies intended to elevate the arts and glorify the Sun King, printmakers and print publishers produced hundreds of thousands of works on paper to meet a demand for images that was as insatiable then as it is now.

On view at the Getty Research Institute (GRI) at the Getty Center June 16 through September 6, 2015, *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660–1715* was organized by the Getty Research Institute in special collaboration with the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

This major exhibition surveys printmaking in the era of Louis XIV and commemorates the 300th anniversary of his death.



Louis XIV, King of France and Navarre, 1676, Robert Nanteuil (French, 1623–1678), Engraving, The Getty Research Institute (2012.PR.70)

"In art history, too often certain media are neglected in favor of what is popular, such as painting and sculpture," said Thomas W. Gaehtgens, director of the Getty Research Institute. "However, the truth is that at a time when France was positioned as the cultural capital of Europe, printmaking asserted itself as a fine art while printmakers successfully inserted themselves into the official art academy that had previously been the stronghold of painters and sculptors. Indeed, our understanding of the history of art and culture in France is

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Mademoiselle d'Armagnac in a Dressing Gown, 1695, Antoine Trouvain (French, ca. 1652/53–1708), Etching and engraving with sections cut out and wool fabric pasted on the verso and showing through the recto, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie
Photo credit: BnF

a history told in French prints. *A Kingdom of Images* addresses a significant lacuna in scholarship and shows the rise of French printmaking to be richer and more complex than has been generally recognized.”

A Kingdom of Images features nearly 100 works produced during the golden age of French printmaking—from grand royal portraits to satiric views of everyday life, and from small-scale ornamental designs to unusually large, multi-sheet panoramas of royal buildings.

The exhibition was curated by Louis Marchesano, curator of prints and drawings at the GRI; Christina Aube, curatorial assistant at the GRI; prints specialist Peter Fuhring of the Fondation Custodia in Paris; and Vanessa Selbach and Rémi Mathis, curators of seventeenth-century prints at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

“No other medium served the Crown as well as prints,” said Marchesano. “Through prints, allies and enemies alike bore witness to the refinement of French technical skill, aesthetics, and taste. They not only learned about Louis XIV, they also saw that French

fashion, design, and inventiveness had outmatched the rest of Europe.”

“One of the reasons that this period has not been the subject of a large exhibition is that curators and scholars dismissed many of the prints as propaganda, the kind of over-the-top imagery in which the king appears, for example, as a mythological figure or a Roman emperor,” he added. “While I do not disagree with the “propaganda” label, I would urge viewers to consider the sophistication of both the message and the way that message is delivered. Also, I would argue that we need to think of propaganda in a wider sense. Remember, Louis XIV wanted to demonstrate to the world that France was the new cultural capital and in this respect it was under his reign that prints accomplished two goals. First, as works of art they attained unparalleled artistic sophistication and influence, which we can see for example in the portraits by Robert Nanteuil; and second, they carried a message that the rest of Europe came to envy: France was the center of fashion, design, and elegance.”

The works on display include fashion prints, portraits, religious and moralizing images, maps and views, and works depicting the fine and decorative arts, architecture, and lavish festivals. The first section of the exhibition, “Glory of the King,” contains one of the most exquisite portraits of Louis XIV ever created (Nanteuil’s engraving of 1676), along with huge illustrated calendars showing the king in various guises. In one he is a heroic warrior, and in another, an elegant dancer in exquisite garb.

The "Fashion" section contains marvelous works of the greatest rarity, including a pair of figures whose engraved clothing has been replaced with real fabric from the late 1600s. These are commonly referred to as "dressed prints." Images of design and style are not strictly limited to this section, but can be seen throughout the entire exhibition.

The section devoted to architecture highlights Louis XIV's greatest building programs: the Louvre, the church of the Invalides, and the palace and gardens of Versailles. The megalomaniacal impetus behind the construction of these buildings also informed the unusual monumentality of the prints that represented them; these works were produced by the best printmakers of the day: Etienne Baudet, Antoine Coquart, Pierre Lepautre, and Jean Marot.

For Louis XIV, festivals were one way in which to keep the aristocracy entertained and in line. Festivals had to impress and overwhelm audiences and those organized by the Crown were so costly that they sometimes threatened the budget of the government. The illustrated books designed to record those events, several of which are on display in the "Festivals and Events" section, were made with the highest production values. A notable example is *The Pleasures of the Enchanted Island*, a publication featuring the etchings of Jean Lepautre, whose work allowed the world to witness the perpetual entertainments of a mythological realm ruled by a benevolent king.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 332-page, fully illustrated catalog, *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715*, published by Getty Publications and edited by Peter Fuhring, Louis Marchesano, Rémi Mathis, and Vanessa Selbach.

Related Events

Storytelling and Book Signing: **An Afternoon Adventure with Cornelia Funke**

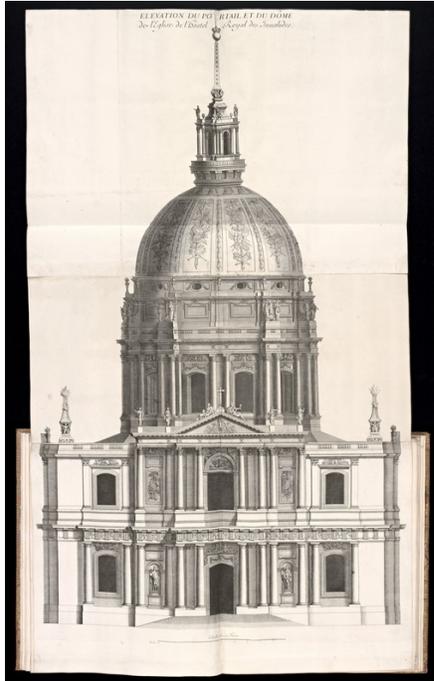
Sunday, June 21, 2014, 2 p.m. at the Getty Center, FREE Admission

Award winning children's author Cornelia Funke will read her latest Getty story, featuring William Dampier, a pirate, adventurer, explorer, and ghost tasked with keeping other ghosts and spirits haunting the Getty Center at bay. This afternoon storytelling adventure is followed by a book signing with Cornelia Funke and a special children's tour of the *A Kingdom of Images*. Funke's most popular novels will be for sale and personal copies will be signed.

Ms. Funke is the author of *The Thief Lord*, *Dragon Rider*, the *Inkworld* trilogy, and, most recently, the *MirrorWorld* novels. A celebrated fantasy and adventure writer, her stories have been translated into 30 languages.



Almanac for the Year 1682 (Le bal à la française), 1681, Unknown printmaker, Publisher: Pierre Landry (French, ca. 1630–1701), Engraving and etching with letterpress calendar, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie
Photo credit: BnF.



Facade of the Church of the Invalides, 1687, Pierre Lepautre (French, 1652–1716) after Jules Hardouin-Mansart (French, 1646–1708), Etching and engraving, From a bound volume of 14 prints (Paris, 1687). The Getty Research Institute (1392-604)

This event is recommended for families and kids ages 8 and up. Reservations can be made online: http://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/events/funke_storytelling/index2.html

Lecture: **Fit for a King: Louis XIV and the Art of Fashion**

Sunday, August 23, 2015, 2 p.m. at the Getty Center, FREE Admission

Louis XIV was deeply invested in establishing the technical and aesthetic superiority of France's clothing and textile industries. Through prints, fashion plates, and his own oft-reproduced image, he set the standard of elegant dress and deportment throughout Europe. Art historian Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell examines the Sun King's lasting contributions to French fashion as well as his own exquisite (and extravagant) taste.

Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell is an independent art historian specializing in fashion and textiles. She has worked as a curator, consultant, and educator for museums and universities around the world, and is the author of *Fashion Victims: Dress at the Court of Louis*

XVI and Marie-Antoinette (Yale University Press, 2015).

Reservations can be made online:

http://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/events/fit_for_a_king.html

Other Louis XIV Exhibitions at the Getty

A Kingdom of Images is one four exhibitions across the Getty that mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Louis XIV.

Coinciding with *A Kingdom of Images*, the exhibition *Louis XIV at the Getty* at the J. Paul Getty Museum **June 9, 2015 to July 31, 2016** is a special installation in the Museum's South Pavilion that will focus attention on a variety of extraordinary pieces in the Getty's collection made during Louis's lifetime when France became the leading producer of the luxury arts in Europe.

Louis Style: French Frames, 1610-1792 on view at the Getty Museum **September 15, 2015 – January 3, 2016** will draw on the Museum's large collection of French frames, Louis Style presents a survey of the exquisite carved and gilded frames produced during the reigns of four French kings.

Woven Gold: Tapestries of Louis XIV, exclusively on view at the Getty Museum **December 15, 2015 through May 1, 2016**, will be the first major museum exhibition of tapestries in the Western United States in four decades. The exhibition will feature 15 larger-

than-life tapestries ranging in date from about 1540 to 1715 and created in weaving workshops across northern Europe. In an exclusive loan from the French nation, most of the tapestries are from the collection of the Mobilier National, which preserves the former royal collection.

Louis XIV Online

Starting May 30, curators and other experts will be blogging regularly about the exhibition and related themes on *The Getty Iris* under the series title *Louis XIV at the Getty*. Audiences can join the conversation about the Sun King and his artistic legacy on @thegetty Twitter with the weekly series #SunKingSunday.

For more information on the exhibition, the public may visit www.getty.edu/kingdom



Second Day: The Performance of Molière's Princess of Elide, 1673, Jean Lepautre (French, 1618–1682) after Israël Silvestre (French, 1621–1691), Etching and engraving, *Les plaisirs de l'Isle enchantée* . . . (Paris: 1673), pl. between pp. 20–21. The Getty Research Institute (84-B21384)

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

The Getty Research Institute is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. It serves education in the broadest sense by increasing knowledge and understanding about art and its history through advanced research. The Research Institute provides intellectual leadership through its research, exhibition, and publication programs and provides service to a wide range of scholars worldwide through residencies, fellowships, online resources, and a Research Library. The Research Library—

housed in the 201,000-square-foot Research Institute building designed by Richard Meier—is one of the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library's special collections include rare books, artists' journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m, with special extended Friday hours until 9:00 pm May 30–August 29. It is closed Monday and most major holidays, open on July 4. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

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