



**BOUNTIFUL INVENTION: Drawings by Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672-1742)
and Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (1695-1750)
8 June – 23 October 2016, Wed- Sun**

An exhibition exploring the work of two of the most innovative draughtsmen and designers of the 18th century, including: Spectacular presentation sheets, as well as drawings for workshop use; designs for interiors, fountains and grottoes, both real and fantastical, and an important group of designs for churches and ritual objects.

Born during the reign of Louis XIV, at a time of unprecedented interest in drawing and extraordinary artistic innovation, Oppenord and Meissonnier are two of the greatest names associated the development of the distinctively French style that reached its peak in the reign of Louis XV, now known as Rococo.

This exhibition of 45 drawings, mostly from Waddesdon's own collections acquired in Paris in the 19th century by Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1845-34), is complemented by two loans, a spectacular Meissonnier design for a projected church for the Order of the Holy Ghost from the V & A and a red chalk Oppenord from the Courtauld Gallery. The majority of these drawings have never previously been shown.

The drawings on display include experimental studies and highly finished presentation sheets, drawings for workshop use, others for student instruction, and copies made as part of the process of translating a design into print. There are designs for personal accessories such as gold boxes, furniture and interiors, for real and fantastical palaces, fountains and grottoes as well as an important group of ecclesiastical works. Many would go on to be realised in a variety of materials by builders, masons, carpenters, plasterers, goldsmiths, instrument makers and other craftsmen; others exist only on paper.

This exhibition demonstrates the breadth and variety of Oppenord's and Meissonnier's creativity, and skill, both valued by collectors and connoisseurs even during the artists' lifetimes. Prints of their drawings spread their ideas throughout Europe, and further afield, and were copied by other artists and designers long after their designs went out of fashion in France.

Curator: Juliet Carey

Exhibition page:

<http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/collection/exhibitions-waddesdon-manor/bountiful-invention-drawings-by-oppenord-and-meissonnier>

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Exhibition images to download:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ljepj1dwms5cpa5/AADj7bIBCFWMYueyTszjynK1a?dl=0>

Notes to editors:

1. **Free bus service from Aylesbury Vale Parkway station:** To encourage the use of public transport, Waddesdon is running a bus service open to all visitors to Waddesdon Manor. The bus will collect from Aylesbury Vale Parkway (AVP) train station at 11.03 each morning (Wed to Sun) to link up with the 09.57 train from London Marylebone. The bus will depart from the Welcome Pavilion in the Waddesdon car park at 4.15pm on Wed, Thurs and Fri in good time to connect with the 16.43 from AVP (which arrives at Marylebone at 17.48). On Sat, Sun and Bank Holiday Mons the departure time will be 4.45pm as the train from AVP leaves at 17.15 (arriving at Marylebone at 18.20).
2. **Waddesdon Manor** was built from 1874 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his outstanding collection of art treasures and to entertain the fashionable world. It combines the highest quality 18th-century French decorative arts, magnificent English portraits and Dutch Old Master paintings with one of the finest Victorian gardens in Britain, famous for its Parterre and ornate working Aviary. The house was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957 and is now managed by a family charitable trust, The Rothschild Foundation, under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild.
3. In recent years, Waddesdon has hosted a vibrant and varied exhibitions programme which both reflects and complements the collections, history of the house and the Rothschild family. The drawings collection is an important element which is not permanently on display for conservation reasons, but the Manor has developed a significant track record in curating exhibitions on works on paper, including drawings and exhibitions featuring books and bindings. Recent highlights include *Henry Moore: From Paper to Bronze* which showcased 100 drawings and sculpture in 2015, a partnership with the Henry Moore Foundation, and other exhibitions have included *Theatres of Life: Drawings from the Rothschild Collection* at Waddesdon Manor (which toured to the Wallace Collection and the Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham), and *Playing, Learning, Flirting: 18th-century printed board games at Waddesdon*.
4. Other subjects relating to the wider collections have included *Predators and Prey: A Roman mosaic from Lod, Israel* (in partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority and the British Museum) *Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac and the Portrait Bust in 18th-Century Britain* (in partnership with the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven) and *Taking Time: Chardin's Boy building a House of Cards and other paintings*. The developing programme of contemporary art at Waddesdon has encouraged artist responses to the historic collections and interiors as well as to the gardens.

Picture captions (overleaf): Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Design for the chimney-piece of the Galerie d'Enée, Palais-Royal, Paris; c 1714-c 1717, Photo: Mike Fear © The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor.

Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, Design for the façade of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, 1726. Photo: Mike Fear © The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor.

Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Design for a garden fountain; c 1720-c 1730; black ink on paper; 439 x 291mm; Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust); acc. no. 1857. Photo: Mike Fear © The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor.