



WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections

## PERSUADING THE KING: A MANUSCRIPT PETITION

BY GABRIEL DE SAINT-AUBIN (1724-1780)

Wednesday 23 March – Sunday 23 October 2016



*Image: Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, Petition to Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI by the Officer Desbans, 1775-1776; Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trusts). Photo Mike Fear © The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor.*

This display highlights a new addition to the collection at Waddesdon- Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's volume - *Placets de l'officier Desbans* (1775). This elaborate manuscript petition (*placet*) was submitted to Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette by a soldier, Edme Louis Desbans, asking for a long-promised promotion. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin was one of the greatest draughtsmen of 18<sup>th</sup>-century France and the drawings with which he brought this document to life were designed to glorify the royal couple while appealing to their artistic tastes and sensibilities. This unique work offers a glimpse into the politics of promotion and favour at the French court near the end of the Old Regime -in which the fortune of an individual depended upon the arts of persuasion. It has all sorts of resonances today, from patronage to the mysterious world of the political lobbyist.

Images available here

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gezfw291ccstskd/AAAZEqAt3I4dxvUZs9dF1aYUa?dl=0>



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**Study Sessions and Tours:**

**Persuading the King: Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's Placets de l'officier Desbans and other books by the Saint-Aubin brothers  
Friday 24 June 2016**

This is a rare opportunity to study Waddesdon's newly acquired royal petition by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin alongside other manuscript volumes, drawings and prints by the artist and his brothers Charles-Germain and Augustin. Senior Curator Dr Juliet Carey and Curator Rachel Jacobs will offer a glimpse into the politics of promotion and favour near the end of the Old Regime. Works will include Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's Memoire sur la reformation de la police de France (1749) and a special copy of Du Perron's Discours sur la peinture et sur l'architecture (1757) made for the book's dedicatee Madame de Pompadour. Charles-Germain de Aubin's famous Livre de caricatures will provide a subversive counterpoint to the arts of flattery and persuasion that lay at the heart of court culture.

Price is £15, plus grounds entry for non-National Trust members

For details, times prices and booking see [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk) or call 01296 653226

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**Visitor information and opening times:** [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)

Waddesdon Manor, Waddesdon, Near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH

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**Free bus service from Aylesbury Vale Parkway station**

To encourage the use of public transport, Waddesdon will start a free daily 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 (Wednesdays to Sundays) 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 Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in good time to connect with the 16.43 from AVP (which arrives at Marylebone at 17.48). On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays the departure time is 4.45pm from the Welcome Pavilion as the train from AVP leaves at 17.15 (arriving at Marylebone at 18.20).



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## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. 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 18<sup>th</sup>-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.
2. Waddesdon is one of the most visited historic houses among England's National Trust properties. The collections are a reflection of the passions of the Rothschilds who created and have cared for Waddesdon, from Ferdinand de Rothschild, who built the Manor in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to Jacob, the present 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. Recent highlights include *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 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Britain* (in partnership with the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), and *Waddesdon at War* (all 2014); *Sacred Stitches: Ecclesiastical Textiles in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor* (2013); *Taking Time: Chardin's Boy Building a House of Cards and Other Paintings* (2012); *Playing, Learning, Flirting: French 18th-Century Board Games* (2012) and *Fantasy from the Fire: Sixteenth-Century Maiolica in the Waddesdon Collection* (2011-2013). The developing programme of contemporary art has encouraged artist responses to the historic collections and interiors as well as to the gardens at Waddesdon. In 2012, **Edmund de Waal** made new works for the historic ground floor rooms, including two large-scale vitrines, which have been acquired by The Rothschild Foundation for Windmill Hill. In 2013, Catalan artist **Joan Sallas** created *Folded Beauty: Masterpieces in Linen*, reviving designs for magnificent Baroque table centrepieces, but including his own contemporary versions. The 2013 carpet bedding and a contemporary wild flower planting scheme were designed by artist **Philippa Lawrence**, inspired by

the collection of historic lace and textiles at Waddesdon, and in 2014 we worked with artist **Jan Dunning** on a trail inspired by the experiences of evacuee children and a collaboration with contemporary lace-makers, *Imagine...Lace at Waddesdon*.