



Madame de Pompadour in the frame - a collaboration with Factum Foundation

25 May – 27 October 2019
Waddesdon Manor

A new exhibition at Waddesdon in 2019 will shine a spotlight on how technology is being used to enhance our understanding of art history, enabling masterpieces which have been victims of circumstance or history to be seen as they were once intended.

François Boucher's famous portrait of *Madame de Pompadour* (1756) is today one of the most prized paintings on display at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (on permanent loan from the HypoVereinsbank, Member of UniCredit). However, this monumental portrait was once owned by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. Ferdinand had acquired it at the sale of Lord Lonsdale's collection in 1887, and displayed it in his London house, 143 Piccadilly. Either before, or shortly after he acquired it, the portrait was re-framed.

When he died in 1898, Ferdinand bequeathed the portrait to his brother Nathaniel, but for reasons which remain unclear, although the canvas eventually found its way to Germany, the impressive 18th-century frame (complete with 19th-century cartouche and decorative elements matching the flowers in Madame de Pompadour's dress) was retained, and ended up at Waddesdon Manor, where it still is, presumably when the Piccadilly house was sold.

Now, thanks to a collaboration with Factum Foundation, specialists in high-resolution digital scanning technology, and with the support of the Alte Pinakothek, this new exhibition, designed by Skene Catling de la Peña, will recreate the masterpiece as it would have been known in the 19th century by Baron Ferdinand. In a marriage of traditional conservation and restoration techniques with the most advanced 3D digital

reproduction technology, it will place a facsimile of the portrait back in Baron Ferdinand's frame, which has been conserved especially for the show.

The Munich painting was not the only portrait of the famous sitter in Rothschild hands. Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1845-1943), of the French branch of the family, inherited an oil sketch of Madame de Pompadour, a study painted around 1750 for a now lost portrait. It shares many similarities with the Munich painting, including the Marquise's dress, and the presence of one of her favourite spaniels. The oil sketch descended to Baron Edmond's son, James (1878-1957), and is now on loan to Waddesdon from a Rothschild family trust.

Factum Foundation has made facsimiles of both these portraits by Boucher. The paintings have been recorded using two different methods, one to capture the exact texture of the painted surface, and one to capture the colours. The recording is done at the highest possible resolution. After using an innovative elevated printing technology designed by Océ the surface is moulded and cast to re-create the exact character of the brush marks and canvas. The skilled digital artisans at Factum then add colour – but using cutting-edge multi-layered printing of pigments instead of paint brushes. The frame of the oil sketch has also been recorded and is being printed in 3D before being gilded by hand.

In the exhibition the facsimile Boucher oil sketch in its facsimile frame will be displayed side-by-side with the original, while the facsimile Munich painting will be shown in its adapted Rothschild frame – providing visitors with a unique opportunity to explore original works of art and digital reproductions in juxtaposition and consider questions of connoisseurship, originality, display and interpretation.

This pairing will be the climax of an exhibition that will also lift the lid on exactly how this new technology works and how it is being more widely employed to support many types of art, culture and historical projects. Step-by-step, the various fascinating stages including making the facsimile ('fibreskins', print outs, colour sticks) and creating the frame (3D prints, gilding) will be revealed. Visitors will be able to explore for themselves other digital and 3D reproductions, and a film will illustrate Factum Foundation's process of re-creating *Madame de Pompadour*.

The exhibition will also explore the historical connection between the *Madame de Pompadour* painting and frame and Waddesdon and the Rothschild family. A particular highlight will be a 1757 Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin caricature from a unique book of satirical cartoons, titled *La vérité Surmonte l'Autorité* (which translates as *The truth Overcomes the Authority*), which is seldom on display. The image is one of over 400 in the Saint-Aubin *Livre de caricatures* purchased by Ferdinand de Rothschild as part of a collection of rare 18th-century French books, kept in the Morning Room at Waddesdon. It is probably after a drawing made by his brother, Gabriel de Saint Aubin (1724-1780) when the portrait was shown at the 1757 Paris Salon, to illustrate the copy of Du Perron's *Discours sur la peinture et sur l'architecture* made for presentation to Madame de Pompadour and bound with her arms, which will also be on display.

Pippa Shirley, Head of Collections at Waddesdon, says *"Our collaboration with Factum Foundation, supported by the Alte Pinakothek, illustrates how embracing new technology allows us engage with and present historic collections in entirely contemporary ways and for new audiences. The key to these projects is not so much the production of the facsimile, but the recording process which adds such depth, literally, to our understanding of the physical geography of the paintings and how they were made. That said, the imaging also allows us to see a rendering of one of Baron Ferdinand's most treasured paintings as he would have known it, which is in itself immensely exciting"*

Adam Lowe, director of Factum Arte and the founder of Factum Foundation, says *"The new recording technologies that are being developed at Factum Arte, and new output technologies like Océ's remarkable elevated printing system, are leading to an emerging digital connoisseurship. An important aspect of cultural*

heritage lies in the material evidence that gives form to each object. New imaging technologies, similar to those used in medicine, are allowing us to understand artefacts in different ways – craftsmanship and technology are merging and the relationship between the original and the authentic is being redefined. We hope that visitors will leave the exhibition infused by the potential of this way of making and displaying art and inspired by Boucher’s painting and the influence of his sitter, Madame de Pompadour.”

www.waddesdon.org.uk/mme-pompadour-digital

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Born **Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson** in 1721, the illegitimate daughter of a financier exiled for fraud, **Madame de Pompadour** was groomed from childhood to become a royal favourite. She more than fulfilled her destiny, becoming Louis XV’s acknowledged mistress, the “maitresse en titre”, and one of the most powerful women in 18th century France, being made Marquise de Pompadour in 1745. She was a dedicated patron of the arts and a leader of fashion who also exercised considerable political influence. Attractive, educated, and highly intelligent, Pompadour spent several fortunes on her collecting. She died in 1764.

François Boucher (1703-1770) was one of the most celebrated artists of the 18th century. He was a prolific, highly skilled and varied draughtsman, who also designed for a wide range of media. Perhaps more than any other, his name is associated with the invention and popularisation of the French Rococo style. Born in Paris, he probably trained with his father, and then worked briefly with François Le Moyne. He studied the work of Watteau and won the Prix de Rome at the Academy in 1723. He visited Italy in 1728-31, where he became familiar with Baroque art. On the death of Carle van Loo in 1765, Boucher became First Painter to the King and Director of the Academy – the two most prestigious posts in the French art establishment. He was a prolific painter in all genres - best known for his erotic pastoral and mythological scenes - as well as a designer for the theatre, and for tapestries – he was head of the Gobelins Manufactory from 1755 - book illustrations and porcelain figures. His first commission for Louis XV was in 1735. Madame de Pompadour was Boucher's chief patron from 1750 until her death in 1764, and he painted her on several occasions.

Waddesdon Manor was built from 1874 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the style of a French early 16th-century château. Ferdinand was an inspired collector and the house was designed to showcase his exceptional collection of English portraits, French 18th-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, and other decorative arts. When he died in 1898, he left Waddesdon to his sister, Alice. Upon her death the house passed to her great-nephew, James de Rothschild, who inherited a substantial part of his father Baron Edmond’s great collection. In 1957, in order to ensure its future in perpetuity, Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust. The Rothschild family continues to run the property through a family charitable trust under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild. More at www.waddesdon.org.uk/about-us/press/notes-for-editors/.

Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation is a not-for profit organisation founded in 2009 in Madrid by Adam Lowe. It works alongside its sister company, Factum Arte, a multi-disciplinary workshop in Madrid dedicated to digital mediation and physical transformation in contemporary art and the production of facsimiles. The Foundation was established to demonstrate the importance of documenting, monitoring, studying, recreating and disseminating the world’s cultural heritage through the rigorous development of high-resolution recording and rematerialisation techniques. The Foundation’s activities include: building digital archives for preservation and further study, creating and organising touring exhibitions, setting up training centres for locals to learn the different technologies developed by the Foundation to record their own cultural heritage, and producing exact facsimiles as part of a new approach to conservation and restoration. More at www.factumfoundation.org

Skene Catling de la Peña architects is an award winning practice based in London formed by Charlotte Skene Catling and Jaime de la Peña in 2003. Their work addresses a wide variety of typologies with a particular interest in the borders between architecture and other disciplines. The practice follows an approach they call Geoarcheology, a process that excavates meaning from context as a way of developing architecture. Where geology is focused on the study of the earth and the rocks from which it is formed, archeology concentrates on the ‘biofacts’, artifacts, architectures and cultural landscapes within a given place. Early stage research leads to innovative solutions that have an inherent integrity, but that can also produce economies. They are experienced in the design and integration of contemporary projects into Grade I and II listed buildings, and in creating interventions within sensitive historic contexts such as Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, and the Perm World Heritage Site, Russia. Skene Catling de la Peña has won numerous awards including the RIBA House of the Year 2015, and has been extensively published internationally. More at <http://www.scdlp.net/>

For more information on Waddesdon and its exhibitions, visit www.waddesdon.org.uk, like Waddesdon Manor on Facebook, follow @WaddesdonManor on Twitter and waddesdonmanor_nt on Instagram.

[IMAGES – High resolution images for press use can be downloaded here](#)

The Lucida 3D Scanner recording the surface of the painting. Photo © Óscar Parasiego for Factum Foundation.
Sketch for a Portrait of Madame de Pompadour. Photo © Waddesdon Image Library, Public Catalogue Foundation
La verité Surmonte l'Autorité. Photo © Waddesdon Image Library, Bodleian Imaging Services

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