

LOUVRE - DNP
MUSEUM LAB

Seventh presentation of Louvre - DNP Museum Lab

Diplomacy and Sèvres Porcelain,
Prestige and the French art of living
in the 18th century

Seventh presentation of Louvre - DNP Museum Lab

Diplomacy and Sèvres Porcelain, Prestige and the French art of living in the 18th century

Organization

Musée du Louvre, DNP

With the cooperation of: JAL

Address

DNP-Gotanda Building, 1st floor

3-5-20, Nishi Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo.

Presentation period

From October 23, 2010 (Sat.) to May 15, 2011 (Sun.).

The first white porcelain was produced in Asia. When the Europeans discovered it, they were fascinated by its beauty, seeking to recreate it. After much trial and error, they managed to unravel the mystery of porcelain production in the 18th century.

France's Sèvres porcelain, in particular, with its luxurious painted decoration, became highly prized throughout Europe. As such, it was among the gifts exchanged in diplomatic relations between the French royal household and the courts of Europe.

In this presentation, visitors can admire items of Sèvres porcelain presented by 18th-century French dynasties to other European nations, while also learning about the techniques of their manufacture and the mores of court table etiquette.

Exhibited artworks



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

"Assiette à petites palmes" from the service presented by Louis XV to King Frederick V of Denmark in March 1758

The Vincennes Porcelain Manufactory
1756
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of Albert and Paul Pannier, 1918
Inv. OA 7197
H. 4 cm; Diam. 24.7 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

"Assiette à guirlandes" decorated with green ribbons from the service presented by Louis XV to Empress Maria Theresa of Austria on December 2, 1758

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1757
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of Albert and Paul Pannier, 1918
Inv. OA 7192
H. 3.5 cm; Diam. 24 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

"Compotier mosaïque" fruit dish from the service presented by Louis XV to the Elector Palatine Charles Theodore in April 1760

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1759
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Madame Adolphe Thiers, 1881
Inv. TH 1180
H. 5 cm; Diam. 22 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

Bottle cooler "ordinaire" from the service presented by Louis XV in 1773 to Queen Maria Carolina of Naples (Carlotta Luisa)

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1773
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of Mlle Marcelle Brunet, 1983
Inv. OA 10879
H. 17 cm; Diam. 18 cm; W. 23 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

Oval **"plat à contours"** (platter) delivered on March 1, 1776 as an addition to the service presented by Louis XV to Maria Luisa of Parma, Princess of Asturias, in 1773

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1775
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Hard-paste porcelain
Purchased in 1984
Inv. OA 11022
H. 4 cm; W. 38 cm; L. 27 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

"Pot à oille" (tureen) from the "service à frise riche en couleurs" delivered to Queen Marie Antoinette on August 26, 1784

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1784
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Purchased in 2001
Inv. OA 11979
H. 25 cm; W. 28.5 cm; Diam. (lid): 23 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

Tray from the **"service à frise riche en couleurs"** presented by Louis XVI to King Gustavus III of Sweden on June 22, 1784

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1784
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Purchased in 2001
Inv. OA 11980
H. 5.5 cm; W. 46.2 cm; L. 37.5 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

"Dolphin garden" vase presented by Louis XVI to Prince Henry of Prussia on October 22, 1784

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1781
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Messrs. Philippe, Laurent and Olivier Kraemer, 1997
Inv. OA 11854
H. 48 cm



© 2010 Musée du Louvre /
Martine Beck-Coppola

Soup plate from the service presented by Louis XVI to Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, Governor of Lombardy on June 12, 1786

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1785
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of the former Royal Manufactory of Limoges, 1999
Inv. OA 11916
H. 4 cm; Diam. 24 cm



© 2005 Musée du Louvre /
Peter Harholdt

**Bust of Marie Antoinette
After Louis-Simon Boizot,
commissioned by Prince Alexander Kurakin**

The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
1782
Musée du Louvre, Department of Decorative Arts
Hard-paste porcelain
Purchased in 2001
Inv. OA 10898
H. 40 cm

The visit

The prestige of France in the 18th century.



After the Bourbons came to power in the late 16th century, French influence extended far beyond the borders of the kingdom. France was a major political power in the 18th century. French became the diplomatic language of European courts. In 1756, a treaty was signed with the Austrian monarchy, bringing an end to centuries of conflict. The marriage of the future Louis XVI to Marie Antoinette of Austria sealed this alliance, establishing its preeminence. Its prestige was reinforced by the French culture and art of living, which prestigious diplomatic gifts helped to spread throughout Europe.

Diplomatic gifts



From the late 17th century, the kings of France presented gold and silver wares or tapestries produced in their most prestigious manufactories as diplomatic gifts. Beginning in 1758 Louis XV broke new ground by presenting particularly remarkable pieces from the new porcelain manufactory located in Sèvres.



Find out more from the DNP-Museum Lab website,
Genealogy of the House of Bourbon and the House of Habsburg
<http://www.museumlab.fr/pv/gifts>

Studying a piece of porcelain

By following the interplay of light on the works, the visitor can explore the material, shape, and decoration of the porcelain pieces. One can see, for example, that there are two types of porcelain: hard-paste porcelain and soft-paste porcelain. Soft-paste porcelain looks creamy and its painted decoration is slightly raised. Conversely, hard-paste porcelain has a slightly metallic surface and its painted decoration is not raised.

Marie Antoinette and the arts

Early on, Marie Antoinette showed a refined taste in most artistic fields and called on the finest artists of her time. She was particularly fond of Sèvres porcelain, as evidenced by her regular purchases from the Royal Manufactory. One of the last items she commissioned was the service "rich in color and rich in gold" for her apartment in the Palais des Tuileries, of which the tureen was a part.

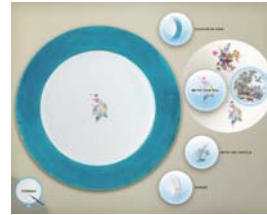
Richness and variety of form and decoration



By exploring the forms and decorations of 18th-century Sèvres porcelain pieces, we can gain an insight into the aesthetic code of the time. We have chosen to describe one of the works exhibited, the tureen. Round and almost quadrilobed, it stands on four scrolled feet—a typically rocaille motif. The tureen and lid, whose handle is composed of an artichoke and a leek, are decorated with cartouches linked by laurel wreaths, rows of pearls, and floral friezes, in a regular arrangement as befits Neo-classicism.

Several marks can be seen on the object's underside: the two intertwined Ls (L for the initial of Louis XV) denoting the Royal Manufactory; the marks of the gilder and painter; and the letter-date corresponding to the year 1784.

Design your own decoration



Visitors can learn how the decorative effects work by freely combining various motifs from the pieces on display to design their own virtual plate decoration.

Manufacturing technique of soft-paste porcelain

Soft-paste porcelain was developed to imitate the whiteness and transparency of Chinese porcelain, formed mainly of kaolin paste known as "hard-paste" in Europe. With the discovery of kaolin deposits in the Limousin area in 1769, the Sèvres Manufactory was able to produce pieces using hard-paste the following year.



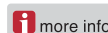
Manufacturing process for soft-paste porcelain

- Preparing the paste: a mix of finely-crushed glass, calcareous earth, and other white minerals. The mixture is left to decant in barrels for 8-10 months.
 - Shaping the piece: firstly, the vase is thrown on the wheel. The handles, base, and decorative raised elements are cast or molded separately. The piece is assembled and fired first at 1200°C.
 - Polishing and enameling: after being polished, the piece is dipped into an enamel glaze and then refired to give it its sheen.
 - Applying the decoration: each additional gold or color element, obtained through the calcination of metal oxides, requires special firing depending on the degree of heat resistance of these materials.
- The finest pieces sometimes required the intervention of around ten craftsmen, each specialized in one of the stages of manufacture.

The multimedia display related to the manufacturing process of the Duplessis vase is to be reinstalled at the Musée du Louvre in Paris.



Find out more from the DNP-Museum Lab website.
Sèvres porcelain marks
<http://www.museumlab.fr/pv/marks>



Find out more from the DNP-Museum Lab website.
The Sèvres manufactory today
<http://www.museumlab.fr/pv/marks>

French-style service



French-style service consists of placing several series of dishes on the table in a very precise order. Each course would comprise a choice of dishes, served at the same time. A meal was made up of between 3 and 8 courses, thus requiring a considerable range of tableware. The guests helped themselves each time from the serving dishes that were placed in front of them. Between each course, the table was cleared of plates. This system, which first became popular in the 16th century, became fixed during the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715). Spurred on by Napoleon I in the early 19th century, French-style service was replaced by Russian-style service, still in use today. Since then, the various dishes are presented separately and served one after the other to the guests.

The multimedia display that illustrates this art de vivre based on a royal supper held at the Château de Choisy on April 21, 1757 in the presence of Louis XV, is subsequently to be reinstalled at the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

Porcelain stories: from East to West



In China, porcelain was already being produced in the 6th century; in Europe, it was not until the early 16th century, when trade with the Far East developed, that porcelain spread through European courts. The famous "blue and white" porcelain of China soon became so fashionable that entire rooms were devoted to it. When trade between Europe and China was interrupted, Japan began to supply porcelain pieces. Europeans, fascinated by this mysterious product, soon attempted to imitate it. The Germans succeeded in the early years of the 18th century. In France, artificial porcelain known as "soft-paste", whose glaze was more fragile, was invented in the 17th century. In 1769 a deposit of kaolin, the element that had thus far been missing, was discovered near Limoges. It allowed new forms and techniques to be developed.

Born of the collaboration between Dai Nippon Printing (DNP) and the Musée du Louvre, the Louvre - DNP Museum Lab joint project seeks to explore new approaches to artworks, particularly through the use of multimedia tools.

The Louvre develops the scholarly content, hypothesis for mediation, and multimedia concepts, in collaboration with DNP. The DNP team, working closely with the Louvre, develops and produces multimedia devices using DNP's proprietary technical expertise, skills, and know-how.

Edited and published by Louvre - DNP Museum Lab
Academic direction: Marie-Laure de Rochebrune

©2010 Louvre - DNP Museum Lab

All right reserved. No part of this pamphlet may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from Louvre - DNP Museum Lab