

New Exhibition Announcement

Gilded Interiors: French Masterpieces of Gilt Bronze

4 May - 30 July 2017

Free Exhibition

wallacecollection.org / [@WallaceMuseum](https://twitter.com/WallaceMuseum) / [#GildedInteriors](https://twitter.com/GildedInteriors)

In May 2017 the Wallace Collection will present *Gilded Interiors: French Masterpieces of Gilt Bronze*, a special exhibition that brings together outstanding objects from the late eighteenth century, and introduces a significant art form that is frequently overlooked.

Often designed by leading architects and modeled by important sculptors, gilt bronze was used to create beautiful yet functional objects such as clocks, candelabras and fire dogs and to decorate and embellish highly refined furniture and porcelain. This exhibition showcases luxurious artworks commissioned and owned by the wealthiest patrons and collectors, including leading figures of pre-revolutionary France like Marie-Antoinette, the duc d'Aumont and the comte d'Artois as well international patrons such as the Prince of Wales (later George IV). Artists such as Pierre Gouthière, François Rémond and Claude Pition, who ran the finest chasing and gilding workshops, created beautiful works, equal in expense and craftsmanship to some of the greatest paintings and sculpture of the period.

Largely drawn from the Wallace Collection, home to one of the world's most important collections of French eighteenth-century gilt bronze, these exceptional objects include the exquisite perfume burner by Gouthière once owned by Marie-Antoinette, and a pair of candlesticks made for the French Queen to celebrate the birth of her son. The Wallace Collection works will be shown alongside loans from other world-class collections including drawings from the Bibliothèque Municipale in Besançon.

The exhibition will feature drawings by Pierre-Adrien Pâris, one of the foremost architects and interior designers of the period. His highly-detailed works, never before seen in the UK, illustrate how buildings from Ancient Rome were used as a fertile source of design for gilt-

bronze masterpieces and reveal how the Antique world provided artists with contemporary ideas for architecture and decorative art. Architects and designers who travelled to Rome took inspiration from the classical ruins with which they were surrounded and their drawings of architecture and Antique monuments provided the basis for some of the greatest gilt-bronze works ever created.

Gilded Interiors: French Masterpieces of Gilt Bronze will be an opportunity for visitors to engage more fully with these magnificent works, which will be given centre stage in the special exhibition galleries. Well-lit and with the works fully visible 'in the round', the exhibition will enable the viewer to experience these works of art in a different way, allowing the exquisite beauty and technical accomplishments of these pieces to be properly admired and enjoyed.

Director Xavier Bray said *"The exhibition highlights a selection of outstanding works by the greatest masters of the eighteenth century, presenting them out of their usual context and positioning them as they deserve, as artworks in their own right. Viewing them alongside contemporary architectural drawings helps to enrich our understanding of their design sources and allows us to marvel at the creativity and the beauty achieved by these often forgotten artists."*

Notes To Editors

Like sculptors, makers of gilt bronze created models and cast them in metal. A vast array of specialized tools was used to create patterns and textures on the surface of the cast objects; this process was known as chasing. The objects were then gilded using the fire-gilding technique. This involved applying a paste of ground gold and mercury to the objects and exposing it to a flame, which resulted in a thin layer of gold fusing onto the object. This process, dirty and dangerous because of the noxious mercury fumes it released, was repeated several times to achieve a highly gilded surface. Different areas were then burnished or given a matt finish to further enhance the beauty and expression of the object.

Gilded Interiors: French Masterpieces of Gilt Bronze has been curated by Dr Helen Jacobsen, Senior Curator and Curator of French Eighteenth-century Decorative Arts.

An illustrated publication will accompany this exhibition.

A series of events including lectures, seminars, and art classes has been organized in relation to this exhibition. Find out more: wallacecollection.org/whatson

About the Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection is one of the most significant collections of European fine and decorative arts in the world and the greatest bequest of art ever left to the British Nation.

The Collection encompasses Old Master oil paintings from the fourteenth to the late nineteenth century, including works by Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck, princely arms and armour, and one of the finest collections of French eighteenth-century art in all media.

The Wallace Collection's public programme encourages enjoyment and application of the Collection through education, discussion and participation. Recent exhibitions include *The Middle - Tom Ellis at the Wallace Collection*, *Joshua Reynolds - Experiments in Paint*, and *The Male Nude - Eighteenth Century Drawings from the Paris Academy*.

Exhibition Details

Title:	Gilded Interiors: French Masterpieces of Gilt Bronze
Address:	The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London, W1U 3BN
Telephone:	+44 (0)207 563 9500
Website:	www.wallacecollection.org
Dates:	4 May - 30 July 2017
Opening Hours:	Monday-Sunday 10 am - 5pm
Admission:	Free

Travel: Bond Street, Baker Street and Oxford Circus

Twitter: [@WallaceMuseum](https://twitter.com/WallaceMuseum)

Facebook: facebook.com/wallacecollection

Instagram: [@wallacemuseum](https://instagram.com/wallacemuseum)

For press information and images please contact:

Press@wallacecollection.org

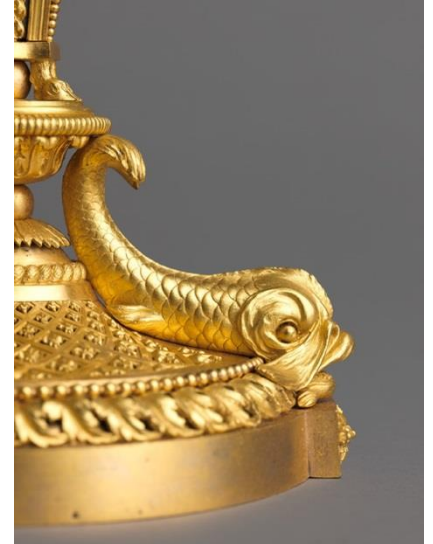
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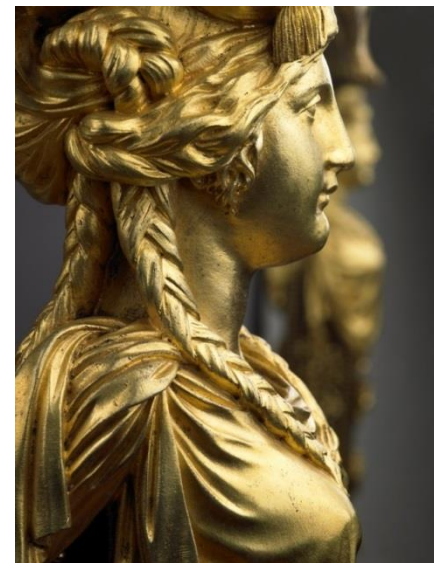
Mantel clock, Jean-Baptiste Lepaute, 1781, detail.
© The Wallace Collection



Candlestick, Claude-Jean Pitoin, 1781, detail.
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Perfume Burner, Pierre Gouthière, 1774 - 1775, detail.
© The Wallace Collection



Table, attributed to François Rémond, 1785 - 1787, detail.
© The Wallace Collection



Candelabrum, Possibly François Rémond, France, 1783 - 1786
© The Wallace Collection



Pierre-Adrien Pâris, "Chambranle de la cheminée en marbre blanc chez M. le duc d'Aumont"