

*Body Narratives: Motion and Emotion in the French Enlightenment*



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## THE BODY IN ART

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Edited by Susanna Caviglia



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*This volume is dedicated to the memory of Mary D. Sheriff (1950–2016), whose untimely death is a grievous loss for the discipline of art history, for eighteenth-century studies, and, above all, for her many colleagues, students, and friends.*

*She was not only a leading light and a scholar of great distinction who had a profound impact on her field, but she was also without equal in her generosity and friendship to those who had the great good fortune to know her.*





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## The Stroller: Saint-Aubin's Urban Drawing

**W**e are on the boulevard (pl. 30). Walking briskly across the tree-lined thoroughfare, a couple casts glances at the lively social scene under the canopy of the trees. At left, a group of men and women is taking their afternoon refreshments while a beggar approaches their table to ask for alms. At right, a dense, two-way procession of carriages extends into the background. A street urchin is running after one of these vehicles in an attempt to hop onto it, as another youth has already managed to do, his body glued to the side of the carriage as he tries to peek in.

The location of this animated scene was one of the most popular sites of urban leisure in eighteenth-century Paris. Constructed on the grounds of the old city ramparts demolished by order of Louis XIV in 1669, the boulevard was fully completed only in the 1760s, about the time Gabriel de Saint-Aubin produced this view. With its rows of trees providing a natural setting in which to relax without leaving the city, the public promenade offered various forms of entertainment—cafés, restaurants, theaters, and *parades*—geared toward a wide public.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of this new public space—and of the urban practice of strolling associated with it—was part of a larger process of transforming Paris into a modern city. As Joan DeJean recently argued, this process did not originate in the mid-nineteenth-century restructuring of Paris by the imperial architect Baron Haussmann, but in the early initiatives of urban renewal dating back to the early seventeenth century and extending through the first half of the eighteenth.<sup>2</sup> That is when Paris first became an object of sustained urban planning, resulting in a number of significant changes—among them the construction of boulevards and the creation of public gardens—that introduced new spaces of social, cultural, and bodily experience.

The boulevard culture produced an important change in the nature of urban strolling.<sup>3</sup> It provided grounds not only for social intermingling but also for an increasingly individuated—and self-individuating—experience. The progressive relaxation of elite codes of social behavior and bodily appearance during the early to mid-eighteenth century

1. For the history of the boulevard, see Turcot 2005; Turcot 2007; and DeJean 2014, ch. 7. For a broader historical view, see Lavedan 1975.

2. DeJean 2014.

3. See Turcot 2007, esp. pp. 135–200.

allowed for a more diversified and individualized use of public spaces. The purpose of strolling shifted, too: it was less about the display of social status than about curiosity and the pursuit of one's own pleasure.<sup>4</sup> Personalized in its purpose, strolling thus also contributed to strollers' growing self-awareness about the purpose of their experience of the public sphere—a recognition of the importance of both looking and being looked at.

Saint-Aubin's drawing *Boulevard Scene* (pl. 30) speaks eloquently to this shift in the nature and function of the urban stroll. Unlike the widely disseminated *vues d'optique*—the hand-colored engravings of urban views or notable buildings made for popular consumption (fig. 1)—his drawing does not merely visualize a place but seeks to convey the dynamic and embodied character of the urban experience afforded by it.<sup>5</sup> The compositional structure defined by the rapidly receding diagonal axis and the animated poses and gestures of the figures emphasize the corporeal dimension of walking on the boulevard. In this respect Saint-Aubin's vision also distinguishes itself from the imagery that catered to more sophisticated audiences than the *vues d'optique*, such as a boulevard scene drawn by the artist's younger brother, Augustin.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Augustin's composition, which follows the established conventions of genre painting with its neatly arranged groups of people evenly distributed between and under the trees, Gabriel's suggests not only the dynamic quality of life on the boulevard, its effect enhanced by the relatively large scale of his drawing, but also his own mobility in registering this scene: one has the impression that the artist drew while crossing the boulevard in the opposite direction of that of the couple in the foreground. We know, in fact, that Saint-Aubin often drew while walking from his inscription "Fait en marchant" on some of the drawings.<sup>7</sup> This work may have been made in preparation for a painting (not executed), but it is its qualities as a drawing, especially the effects of mobility and instantaneity produced by Saint-Aubin's use of the medium, that are most striking. For when painted, Saint-Aubin's boulevard scenes such as his *Meeting on the Boulevard* (1760; Musée Hyacinthe-Rigaud, Perpignan) tend to be more static. In *Boulevard Scene*, his animated mode of execution, with its rapid pen strokes combined with the mobile liquid stains of wash that float on the page uncontained by lines, enhances the sense of perceptual immediacy of this view, the effect of *hic et nunc* that implies the artist's presence as a witness.

I am beginning with *Boulevard Scene* to raise the question of the nature and meaning of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's distinctly urban practice of drawing. Focusing on Saint-Aubin, I want to consider what it meant to draw the city during his time and also to address a broader issue of the relationship between drawing and space. If the eighteenth-

4. *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 312–23.

5. The *vues d'optique*, which, in addition to views of well-known cities, represented momentous events such as fires or naval battles, were the first medium that brought the image of the world to wider audiences. Often viewed through a light box or an optical device called the "zogroscope," they anticipated later visual technologies of mass culture such as stereoscopy and film. For a useful basic description of the function and uses of this type of print, see Kraus 2000. See also, more extensively, Kaldenbach 1985.

6. Augustin de Saint-Aubin, *The Promenade on the Ramparts of Paris*, 1760, pen and gray ink, with brown wash, over graphite on paper, The Morgan Library, New York. The drawing was engraved by Pierre-François Courtois.

7. The large size of the drawing, 37 by 53.5 cm, led Kim de Beaumont to suggest its status as a preparatory work. See her entry on it in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 204, no. 47. For drawing while walking, see Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 90.



1. Anonymous, *Vue du boulevard Beaumarchais pris de la porte Saint-Antoine*, 18th century. Engraving and etching with hand coloring. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

century transformation of Paris into a modern city provided grounds for a new kind social experience, it also offered an arena for a new kind of artistic exploration. We need not wait until the mid-nineteenth century to witness art's immersion in the life of the city exemplified by the work of Constantin Guys, a sketcher of urban vignettes championed by Baudelaire as the “painter of modern life” par excellence.<sup>8</sup> Saint-Aubin's oeuvre presents us with ample testimony of such immersion. This is not, to be sure, merely to suggest Saint-Aubin as a precursor of Guys, as did Baudelaire, but rather to recognize the need to define his historically and aesthetically distinct engagement with urban subjects and to consider the implications of his preferred means of doing so: drawing. It is, in particular, Saint-Aubin's interpretation of drawing as a *bodily practice* that invites closer examination.

While the eighteenth century marked the advent of urban modernity in Paris, it was also the period during which drawing emerged as a modern medium. Established since the Renaissance as a basic tool of creative process, drawing acquired in the eighteenth century a different status and meaning. Adopted in the late seventeenth century as the basis of artistic instruction at the French Academy, drawing was subsequently entrenched as both a fundamental technique of academic pedagogy and as a sign of professional distinction: to be an artist, as opposed to a mere craftsman, was predicated on its mastery.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, drawing was conceptualized as an index of an artist's particular style and thus also a privileged tool of attribution and authorship. Its new authorial conception led to a growing appreciation of drawing as an autonomous form of artistic expression—an object to be exhibited, admired, and collected for itself.<sup>10</sup> Drawings became a marketable product, a

8. Baudelaire 1995, esp. pp. 5–15.

9. There is rich literature on this subject. See Benhamou, 1993, esp. pp. 46–89; and Brugerolles 2009.

10. For an account of the new appreciation of drawing, see Bailey 1999, pp. 68–92; Michel 2004; and Smentek 2008, pp. 36–60.

type of commodity.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, while the medium gained autonomy, it also assumed new importance and multiple uses in broader cultural and commercial contexts as the tool of scientific representation, the basis of industrial design, and the foundation of free public education.<sup>12</sup>

Along with these developments came the increased importance of drawing in the practice of key eighteenth-century artists such as Antoine Watteau and François Boucher. The significance of Watteau, in particular, lies in the originality and scope of his drawn oeuvre and in its reproduction and dissemination soon after his death, which contributed to the establishment of drawing as the defining principle of artistic individuality and the very condition of its reproducibility.<sup>13</sup> Following in Watteau's footsteps, Boucher built an entire career on drawing, both in the sense of making drawings expressly for sale or dissemination in prints, notably in crayon manner, and by turning his studio into a "factory" of designs for a multimedia (re)production.<sup>14</sup>

The rapidly growing popularity of the medium also generated some anxiety, the practice of drawing for drawing's sake having been recognized as a threat both to the artists and to the reigning aesthetic hierarchies. Thus in his discourse on drawing delivered at the Academy in 1732, the comte de Caylus warned young artists about the risks of getting "carried away by the pleasure of drawing" to the detriment of serious creation. He saw in such activity a "licentiousness that should be censured."<sup>15</sup>

The idea of pleasure in drawing could certainly be associated with Saint-Aubin, whether we consider his case to be an example of extraordinary productiveness or pernicious excess. Working primarily in the medium of drawing, Saint-Aubin produced a radically new genre of visual commentary on the modern city, a vision of its intimate and idiosyncratic observer.<sup>16</sup> He was a notorious stroller on the streets of Paris, launching himself on daily promenades from his small rented apartment in the center of town, on the rue Saint Jean de Beauvais abutting the Place du Louvre.<sup>17</sup> As one of his contemporaries put it, "One encountered him always with his pencil in hand, drawing everything that offered itself to his view."<sup>18</sup> During his tireless walks through the city, Saint-Aubin indeed recorded all aspects of urban life, high and low: the outdoor leisure practices of the elegantly clad upper

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11. See Michel 2006, pp. 169–220.

12. On cultural and scientific uses, see Lafont 2012. Bachelier's *École Gratuite du Dessin*, the first public school of drawing, opened in 1766; see Leben 2014.

13. For the wider importance of Watteau's drawings and their reproduction, see Roland Michel, "Watteau et les *Figures de différents caractères*," in Morgan Grasselli and Rosenberg 1984, pp. 117–27; Bailey 1999; and Tillerot 2010, pp. 274–78.

14. For the importance of drawing in Boucher's practice, see Schreiber Jacoby 1986; Katie Scott, "Reproduction and Reputation: 'François Boucher' and the Formation of Artistic Identities," in Hyde and Ledbury 2006, pp. 91–132; and Lajer-Burcharth 2009.

15. "une espèce de libertinage que l'on doit blâmer"; Caylus 2010, vol. 2, p. 451.

16. On Saint-Aubin using the etching plate as if it were a sketchpad, see Hoisington 2013, p. 71.

17. Listed in the register of the students of the Academy, this was the address where Saint-Aubin resided from at least 1758 until his death; see Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 130; and Kim de Beaumont, "Reconsidering Gabriel de Saint-Aubin: The Biographical Context for His Scenes of Paris," in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 18–47.

18. Pahin de la Blancherie 1783, p. 239.

class and the cat fights among the market women on the quais.<sup>19</sup> He recorded all kinds of public events and activities afforded by the modern city—from shopping and scientific demonstrations to art exhibitions, sales, and auctions.<sup>20</sup> He repeatedly joined the crowds of visitors to the Salons, recording the events and the exhibited works in his sketchbooks and on the margins of the Salon *livrets*, the official brochures for the exhibitions.<sup>21</sup> He also strolled across Paris with a city guide in hand, annotating its pages with comments and thumbnail sketches of works of art, urban monuments, and buildings.<sup>22</sup>

What links his diverse records of life in the city is the logic of the urban stroll understood as a principle governing the very structure and morphology of his vision. The draftsman's repeated engagements with urban themes offer not only a rich iconography of bodies on the move but also, in different ways, a record of the artist's own moving body—as the sweeping fast-glanced vista of *The Upper Gallery of the Colisée Rotunda* attests (fig. 2).<sup>23</sup> Note the use of stomping and smudging to convey the rapid movement of the body that cast this look.

I want to examine the social and cultural implications of Saint-Aubin's strolling gaze by focusing on the issue of access raised by his work. From exactly what position does Saint-Aubin cast his look at the city? Is he with the audience leaning over the balustrade to catch the activity on the ground floor of the Colisée, or is he observing these onlookers from elsewhere? Is his glance aligned with that of the well-dressed couple strolling on the boulevard in search of distraction, or is he more like the gamin gawking through the carriage window at the well-to-do people inside? Can we situate the artist's body in relation to his vision in terms that would reveal the at once historical and particular dimension of his gaze?

Saint-Aubin was not alone in adopting the habit of urban strolling as the basis of artistic practice. A new genre of literature based in the experience of walking through the city emerged in France in the eighteenth century. Originating in Marivaux's *Lettres sur les habitants de Paris*, published in the *Mercur de France* between 1717 and 1718 and later, re-edited, in his *Spectateur français* in 1728, this new literary form of urban description aimed

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19. The first exemplified by his *Nautical Fête at the Colisée*, 1772, pen and ink, watercolor and gouache, Boymans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam; the second by *The Quai de la Mégisserie and the Pont-Neuf*, repr. in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 67, fig. 12.

20. See *Shop "au Magnifique"*, 1777, glued to folio 74r of *Livre de Saint-Aubin*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques (RF 52289); *The Chemist Sage's Public Course at the Hôtel de la Monnaie*, 1779, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York (1991.4); and *Painting Sale* (fig. 11 here).

21. See *View of the Salon of 1753*, etching, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2006.84); *The Salon du Louvre in 1765* (fig. 14 here); *Exact View of the Salon of 1767*, etching, Private collection, Paris, repr. in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 272–73, no. 71; *View of the Salon of 1767*, watercolor, pen, and ink, Private collection, repr. in *ibid.*, p. 272, fig. 1; and numerous Salon *livrets* preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, and elsewhere. For a discussion of these, see De Beaumont 1998, pp. 404–54; and Colin B. Bailey, "The Indefatigable, Unclassifiable Art Lover: Saint-Aubin's Curiosity," in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 70–107.

22. On Saint-Aubin's annotations of Piganiol de la Force, see Dacier 1908; and Turcot 2007, pp. 323–42.

23. Bailey et al. 2007, no. 61. Modeled on London's Vauxhall, Colisée pleasure palace was launched in Paris in spring 1771 as a space for spectacles, fêtes, and other forms of public entertainment; see Goodman 1992. Saint-Aubin represented it on several occasions. In addition to the already mentioned *Nautical Fête at the Colisée* (1772; Boymans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam), see his *Chinese Fête in the Courtyard of the Colisée* (1772; Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 32751).



2. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *The Upper Gallery of the Colisée Rotunda*, ca. 1772. Black chalk, stumped, China ink, gray wash. Prat Collection, Paris

to convey the experience of Paris as a vast modern city that was increasingly difficult to know and to navigate.<sup>24</sup> The guides to Paris, which also functioned as how-to manuals for visitors to the French capital, responded to the need for urban knowledge, but the new literary commentaries on the city offered something different. In the hands of its two major practitioners in the second half of the century—Louis Sébastien Mercier, whose *Tableau de Paris* appeared in twelve volumes between 1781 and 1789, and Nicolas Rétif de la Bretonne, whose *Nuits de Paris* was published in seventeen volumes in 1787 and 1788—these vast publications, reflecting the new sense of urban scale, turned into a new form of journalism with literary ambitions.<sup>25</sup>

Saint-Aubin shares with these authors the sheer scope of his drawing production and his search for a new language that in some aspects anticipates theirs. His approach is, in my view, close to that of Rétif, the “nocturnal spectator,” featured walking with an owl on his head in the frontispiece to the 1788 edition of the *Nuits de Paris*.<sup>26</sup> It is not only that Saint-Aubin, too, sometimes strolled at night, as his sketch of *Promenade nocturne* indicates, but also that his idiosyncratic vision is more like Rétif’s hybrid and subjective account of the city than Mercier’s encyclopedic and typological one.<sup>27</sup> Openly mixing fact and fiction, Rétif foregrounded his role as a narrator, interrupting his account with direct interpellations of the readers: “My co-citizens, learn that I am an author, just like others, and that I never received either pension, or gratification, or a prize but that I lived instead strictly and only from my own work.”<sup>28</sup> Rétif’s self-consciously personalized narrative of the city—fragmented, disordered, and digressive, without beginning or end—transformed the urban stroller into an author, giving him a professional identity.<sup>29</sup>

Inherent in Saint-Aubin’s urban practice is, too, a concern with artistic individuality. How Saint-Aubin saw and drew the city is, I would say, inseparable from how he imagined himself as an artist and, above all, how he understood his *place* in the artistic culture—and in the culture *tout court*—of his time. Mobilizing the portable medium of drawing, the artist transformed the city into images of his experience. It is how he inscribed himself in the city space that defines him as an author.

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24. For Marivaux, see Benrekassa 1996, pp. 103–13. For Mercier, Rétif, and their predecessors, see Delon and Malandain 1996, pp. 467–70. A related, though unpublished, form of commentary on the city was the voluminous description of everyday events happening in Paris conducted between 1753 and 1789 by the bookseller Siméon Prosper Hardy, a five-thousand-page manuscript preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. On Hardy, see Goutal-Arnal 1994; and Turcot 2007, pp. 345–58.

25. As the literary historian Michel Delon has observed (Delon and Malandain 1996, pp. 468–70), Paris became a principle of infinite writing in these writers’ works.

26. Moreau Le Jeune, *Le Hibou-Spectateur marchant la nuit dans les rues*, engraving.

27. *Promenade nocturne à la Place Royale*, 1748, black chalk, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (reserve VE-53H-FOL). For professional connections between Saint-Aubin and Mercier, see Dacier 1929, pp. 179–92; and De Beaumont, “Reconsidering Gabriel de Saint-Aubin,” in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 38. On Mercier’s and Rétif’s differing modes of describing the city, see Stalnaker 2010, ch. 5.

28. “Mes concitoyens, apprenez que je suis auteur, tout comme d’autres; et que je n’eu jamais ni pension, ni gratification, ni prix; que je n’ai strictement vécu que de mon travail.” 151e *Nuit*, in Rétif de la Bretonne, *Les nuits de Paris*, cited in Testud 1977, p. 510 n. 450. Translation is mine.

29. On Rétif as a professional, see *ibid.*; and Varloot, “Préface,” in Varloot and Delon 1987, pp. 1–27.



3. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Spectacle of the Tuileries: The Chairs*, 1760. Etching, second state. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.21.1)

## TUILERIES

Saint-Aubin's experience as a stroller underwrites an intriguing pair of etchings entitled *The Spectacle of the Tuileries* (figs. 3, 4).<sup>30</sup> (In his hands, the etching medium was particularly close to drawing, as he tended to etch his compositions directly on the plate, foregoing preparatory stages.) Each print offers a distinct scene of life from the most popular public garden in eighteenth-century Paris. The title of the first, *The Chairs* (fig. 3), refers to the new seat-renting system introduced in the Tuileries—previously furnished with just a few wooden benches—the year Saint-Aubin made the first edition of his etching.<sup>31</sup> It is the crowd of elegant visitors to the park who availed themselves of this opportunity, paying five *sous* for a chair, that Saint-Aubin chose to represent. The second etching (fig. 4) features a watering cart used to settle the clouds of dust raised on the paths by the visitors. Offering views of the opposite sides of the eastern entry to the *grande allée*, the two images,

30. In the absence of preparatory drawings for these views, it is assumed that they were etched directly on the plate. On the etchings, see Dacier 1914, pp. 72–76, nos. 18, 19; De Beaumont 1998, pp. 281, 312–16; and Perrin Stein, “The Spectacle of the Tuileries: The Watering Cart, the Chairs (1760–63),” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 190–91, no. 41.

31. Dacier (1914, p. 76) cites an annotation—likely by Saint-Aubin's brother, Charles-Germain—accompanying the first state of the etching, now at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, referring to this civic improvement in the park introduced in 1760 by the governor of the Tuileries palace.





4. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Spectacle of the Tuileries: The Watering Cart*, 1760. Etching, second state. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.21.2)

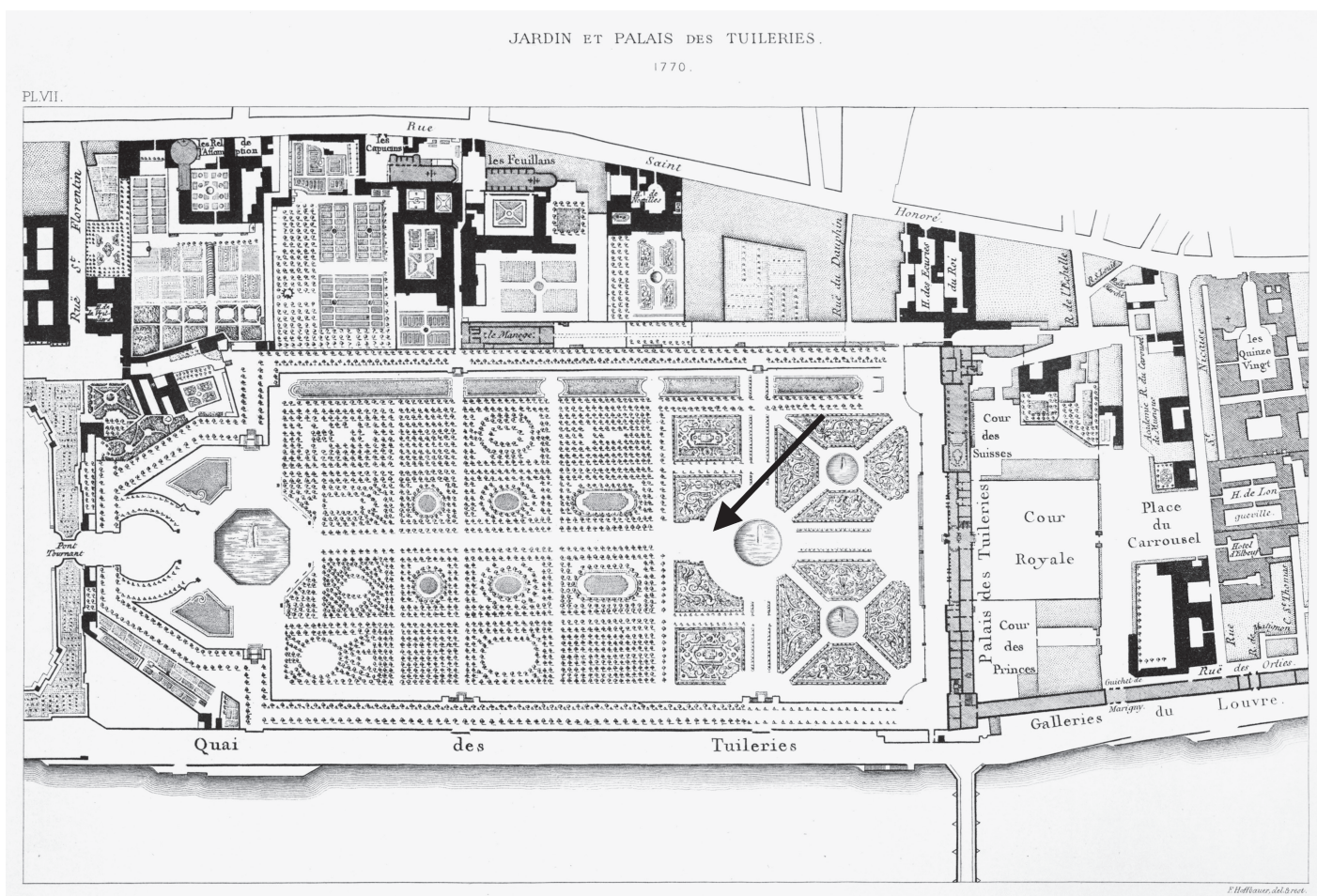
which were etched on a single plate, as one extant uncut proof indicates, are both topically and physically related.<sup>32</sup> It has been suggested that, given the shared size and horizontal format, they may have been intended for a side-by-side display that would have created a panoramic effect.<sup>33</sup> When combined in this way, the frieze like compositions, flanked by a sculpture group, describe a spatial continuum—note their shared horizon line—that simulates the lateral extension of the park near the round pond (fig. 5).

The quasi-immersive effect of the visual space generated by the side-by-side display of the two etchings brings to mind the experience afforded by the scrolling panoramas that Carmontelle produced in the 1780s as a visual entertainment for the young duc d'Orléans and his family (pl. 31). Painted on a thin transparent paper, Carmontelle's picturesque garden scenes were scrolled through an internally lit and curtained off viewing box.<sup>34</sup> Accompanied by Carmontelle's own oral commentary, and even his acoustic simulation of the sounds of footsteps and conversations between the figures walking through an imaginary landscape, these proto-cinematic views allowed the spectators to imagine themselves as participants in a virtual stroll. The different aspects of the landscape scenery

32. The uncut edition, executed in 1760 and retouched in 1763, is now in the Art Institute, Chicago. See *ibid.*, pp. 72–73, nos. 18–19; and Stein, "Spectacle of the Tuileries," in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 190–91, no. 41.

33. Stein, *ibid.*, p. 190, no. 41.

34. On Carmontelle's panorama, see Stafford and Terpak 2001, pp. 330–35; and Chatel de Brancion 2008.



5. Anonymous, *Jardin et Palais de Tuileries*, 1770, in Theodor Josef Hubert Hoffbauer, *Paris à travers les âges* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et cie, 1885). Lithograph (arrow added)

unfolding before their eyes produced an illusion of their own bodies moving, as if in a real landscape, among the painted figures.

The idea of a virtual stroll may have been on Saint-Aubin's mind while he worked on his *Spectacle of the Tuileries*. It was precisely to enhance the spatial illusion that he retouched an early impression of *The Chairs* in ink and watercolor, thus increasing its illusionistic effect (pl. 32).<sup>35</sup> Yet unlike Carmontelle's panorama, Saint-Aubin's view does not actually strive to render the space of the park revelers as coexisting with that of the viewer but rather articulates a kind of internal schism in this space. While Carmontelle's panoramic view unfolds parallel to the picture plane, as does the gaze of the viewer, Saint-Aubin's "panorama" registers a *divergence* between the lateral trajectory of the observer—the artist and the viewer—and the figural frieze formed by the visitors, a frieze that peels away from the picture plane, receding into the background. The non-coinciding paths of the strolling artist and of the *beau monde* of the Tuileries indicate the difference between his experience of the park and theirs.

35. On Saint-Aubin's treatment of this version of the etching, see Stein, "Spectacle of the Tuileries" in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 192–93, no. 42.



6. Antoine Watteau, *Assembly in a Park*, ca. 1718–20. Oil on canvas. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

The verses inscribed in Saint-Aubin’s hand below the image—a gallant quatrain composed by the draftsman himself—emphasize the extraneous position of the author in relation to the depicted space, the physical extension of the inscription along the lower edge of the image being, in my view, ultimately more important than its contents. The latter may, in fact, be a bit misleading, evoking the amorous nature of the exchanges between the pleasure-seekers of the Tuileries that were typical of the iconographic tradition of private gallant gatherings.<sup>36</sup> Yet, this resolutely is not a *fête galante* (fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> What distinguishes Saint-Aubin’s vision from the established pictorial genre is its emphasis on the stroller’s specific phenomenological experience of the public space of the park. This is not an image of the elusive exchanges between the revelers, as in Watteau, but a vision of the observer on

36. This quatrain reads: “Le faste se repose en ces jardins charmants; / Les cercles sont formés autour de chaque belle. / Nonchalamment assis, mille couples d’amants/ S’y jurent à leur âge une flamme éternelle.” Saint-Aubin was known as an amateur poet.

37. The association of these etchings with the *fête galante* has been persistent in Saint-Aubin’s literature. One recent example was the inclusion of the Musée Carnavalet version of the *Spectacle de Tuileries* in the exhibition *De Watteau à Fragonard: Les Fêtes Galantes* (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, 2014.) To my mind, while the work may certainly be considered within this tradition, what is most important is how it differs from it.

the move, representing not the visitors to the park per se but a *spectacle* of them.<sup>38</sup> As such, Saint-Aubin's image of the fashionable gathering may be compared to Manet's *Music in the Tuileries* produced about one hundred years later (fig. 7). But while Manet's spectacular vision was launched as if from within the dense crowd of visitors, among whom the painter included himself, Saint-Aubin situated himself decisively outside the crowd.

This visual distance may be read as a hint at the difference in social status between the habitués of the park and their observer. In this sense, Saint-Aubin's spectacle raises the question of access to the garden as a public space. It is not that the artist was excluded from the Tuileries—as were, by law, servants, soldiers, and “poorly dressed persons”—but that his experience of the park was not identical with that of the chair-renting socialites.<sup>39</sup> The draftsman's position as a distanced onlooker of the elegant scene marks the difference in the purpose of his visit to the Tuileries: he strolls there to observe and draw—that is how he makes his living as an author working “without pension, gratification, or prize,” to borrow Rétif de la Bretonne's words—not to linger about on a paying chair. It is not leisure but labor that propels his stroll and defines his gaze. And that is precisely what the compositional structure of the *Chairs* conveys: the divergent strolling paths of the artist and the visitors point to the difference in the social nature of their experience. Saint-Aubin's insistence on this aspect also distinguishes him as a stroller from the nineteenth-century flâneur: while the latter, in Walter Benjamin's classic account, would seek refuge in the crowd, his immersion in it being a condition for a rewardingly defamiliarizing experience of the city, Saint-Aubin maintains an external position, on the crowd's edge, thus articulating a distinct place within the public space as the basis of his urban vision.<sup>40</sup>

The idea of different ways of experiencing the park is even more evident in the second etching (fig. 4), where a giant watering cart interrupts the scene of outdoor leisure. The prominence of this socially dissonant motif in the composition is remarkable. It is not the only time Saint-Aubin used the cart, as a folio from one of his sketchbooks featuring a horse-driven version of the device attests, but in the *Spectacle of the Tuileries: The Watering Cart* it is the central element.<sup>41</sup> Placed in the foreground, the rustic contraption dominates the view, pushing the *beau monde* on their rented chairs into the background, and defines the vector of movement in the composition. Pulled by four vigorously striding men guided by a cane-wielding inspector and followed by a group of kids gathering the water sprinkling from the barrel into their hats, the cart moves in a direction parallel to the picture plane, describing the trajectory of the artist's stride as he moves to capture the scene as well as his and our gaze. Propelling the lateral unfolding of this social panorama from right to left, the vehicle of the park's maintenance team acts as both a thematic and structural protagonist of the scene.

But there is in the *Spectacle of the Tuileries* another important actor whose presence complicates the visual structure and temporality of the view. At the outer limits of each

38. For a novel and nuanced argument regarding the viewer's experience of Watteau's *fêtes*, see Wile 2014.

39. On the excluded members of the public, see Jèze 1757, p. 190, cited in De Beaumont 1998, p. 282 n. 292.

40. Benjamin 1983, pp. 9–101, 170–72.

41. See *Un vauxhall parisien, 1773*, in *Livre de Saint-Aubin*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques (RF 52190, fol. 10r.).



7. Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries*, 1862. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London. Sir Hugh Lane Bequest

scene, Saint-Aubin placed a sculpture group— *Aeneas and Anchises* by Pierre Lepautre in the *Chairs*, and *Arria and Paetus* by Jean-Baptiste Théodon and Lepautre in the *Watering Cart*—that, in situ, flanked the entry to the *grande allée* of the park on the western side of the round pond.<sup>42</sup> Elevated on their pedestals, the sculptures rise above the crowd to establish the spatial connection between the two scenes: as the side-by-side display of the prints makes clear, they bracket this panoramic vision. Their function in this regard is all the more important, given the lack of connection between these two views at their inner seam. What should have appeared there is the *grande allée*. But even though its mouth is suggested in the *Chairs* by the dark cavity opening up in the background, the alley has not been fully fleshed out. As a result, there is a visible gap in the center of this spectacle, the access—to the rest of the park and to the depth of its panoramic vision—having thus been complicated or forestalled. Was it a result of spatial miscalculation due, as it has been suggested, to Saint-Aubin's lack of formal training in printmaking, or was this incongruence intentional?<sup>43</sup> It is difficult to know. What is clear is that in assigning

42. Both marble groups, based on Girardon's models, were installed in the park in 1717; see Bresc-Bautier and Pinget 1986, vol. 2, pp. 269–71.

43. Stein, "Spectacle of the Tuileries," in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 190, no. 41.

structural prominence to the sculptures, the *Spectacle of the Tuileries* gives more importance to the artist's framing of this vision than to the actual topography of the place.

The importance of the sculpture groups is enhanced by their enlivening treatment, the statues having been rendered as highly animated, their bodies materially undistinguishable from the bodies of the visitors. This trait was characteristic of Saint-Aubin's vision: fond of sculpture, which he featured frequently in his work, he often blurred the boundary between stone and life, as in his *Rendez-vous in the Palais Royal* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), where he staged what seems to be a tryst between the sculpted faun, whose facial features and ears he altered to resemble those of a human, and a woman seated on its pedestal.<sup>44</sup> In one of the renditions of the Lepautre group in the Tuileries that he jotted down in his sketchbook (*The Tuileries Garden*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), the figures of Aeneas and Anchises display similar quasi-human corporeality, echoing the animation of the human figures below them.

Saint-Aubin's enlivening approach to the sculptures turns them into forms of life existing on another temporal register. Late seventeenth-century evocations of antiquity, they embody a moment twice removed from that enjoyed by the Tuileries' visitors, and the exemplary actions that the protagonists of these sculpted groups perform—the act of filial devotion in Aeneas rescuing his father from the burning city of Troy; the moral lesson of stoic suicide that Arria offers to her husband, Paetus—are incompatible with the frivolous pursuits of the visitors.<sup>45</sup> Inserts of the past into the visual structure of the present, the sculptures introduce a temporal disjunction that discreetly reinforces the divergent paths and different tempos of the strolls envisioned in these images. Representing the distinct time of art, they are aligned with the artist, whose own time is thus separated from the leisurely pastimes of the well to do. In their very liveliness, the statues, to which the fashionable crowd seems utterly oblivious, visualize how the artist saw them during his stroll, thus contributing to the transformation in these etchings of the public park into a landscape of Saint-Aubin's own spatial and temporal experience.

## URBAN DRAWING

“Enlivened” records of his own encounters with art fill the pages of Saint-Aubin's sketchbooks. One suggestive example is a *Sheet of Studies* glued to a page in his album now at the Louvre (pl. 33). Disparate motifs inhabit this page, among them a giant astronomical clock, several female heads and figures, and a sculptural group. While there is nothing unusual about fitting diverse fragments on a single page—it was common in sketching

44. The sculpture featured in the drawing is Louis Lerambert's *Faun*, made for Versailles but moved to the Palais Royal gardens in Saint-Aubin's time; see Rosasco 1980, pp. 51–57. Saint-Aubin's enlivening approach to sculpture draws on Watteau's example, but he puts it to different use—first, in that he depicts public rather than private spaces; and second, in that he relates the sculptures to himself as an artist, marking them with signs of his experience of them. Note the inscription on the Palais Royal sculpture's pedestal that records the time and date of Saint-Aubin's visit, a habit particular to him.

45. Stein (“Spectacle of the Tuileries” in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 192) has wondered about the relationship between the park's visitors and *Aeneas and Anchises*: “Does Gabriel intend this juxtaposition as comic, or does he see an echo of Aeneas's heroism in the gallantry of the gentleman offering his seat to a lady?”



8. Étienne Aubry,  
*Madame Victoire, Daughter  
of Louis XV, Playing  
the Harp, 1773*. Oil on  
canvas. Chateaux de  
Versailles et de Trianon,  
Versailles

practice—Saint-Aubin’s drawing distinguishes itself in two respects: one, all the motifs, including those that seem to have been drawn from a live model, refer to someone else’s artwork; and, two, while these elements are manifestly heterogeneous, they have been expressly arranged into what Kim de Beaumont, speaking of a similar sheet, has aptly called an “enigmatically cohesive” whole.<sup>46</sup>

In one way or another, all the motifs evoke the places in which they were seen, some also situated by the date of the artist’s encounter with them. Thus, the lively face of a harpist staring at us from the lower right is based on Étienne Aubry’s portrait of Louis XV’s daughter, Madame Victoire, shown at the Salon in late summer 1773 (fig. 8).<sup>47</sup> That is where Saint-Aubin saw and drew it, as the thumbnail image of the painting huddled in between the left edge of the page and the clock’s base indicates. Moving up, the face of a woman in three-quarter view at upper right, identified as the actress Clairon and dated 1773, was drawn from a print made after Carle van Loo’s painting *Mlle Clairon as Medea* (fig. 9), which Saint-Aubin most likely saw at the actress’s auction in March 1773.<sup>48</sup> Next, the figure group at upper center is based on a sculpture of *Boreas Abducting Oreithyia*, also known as *Air*, by Gaspar Marsy and Anselme Flamen, then at the Tuileries gardens, where Saint-Aubin must have seen and drawn it, perhaps on his way to or from the Salon. Charles Nègre’s 1859 photograph shows the sculpture still in situ (fig. 10).<sup>49</sup> It has been suggested that the unidentified female bust next to the sculpture, at upper left, was also related to the 1773 Salon.<sup>50</sup> Finally, the astronomical clock stretching almost through the entire length of the sheet portrays not only a specific object—designed by the clockmaker Jacques-Thomas Castel—but also refers explicitly to the auction where Castel’s widow put it up for sale in July 1773 and where Saint-Aubin saw it. He notes in tiny script on the clock’s pedestal the considerable sum of money, 30, 000 *livres*, that Mme Castel was asking for it and its date, repeated with a longer annotation on the page of another sketchbook.<sup>51</sup>

What links these disparate motifs is the fact that Saint-Aubin saw them during one of his urban promenades: they are signposts of his encounters with art and curiosities while he made his rounds in the city between early spring and late summer 1773. Evoking the institutions that were situated not too far from one another—the auction house, the Salon exhibition, and the Tuileries, adjacent to the Louvre, where the Salon took place—the motifs are records of *his experience* of the artworks seen in them, products of the avid

46. De Beaumont, “Sheet of Studies,” in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 288, no. 77.

47. For the identification of the motifs, I follow Pierre Rosenberg, in his entry on this folio in *ibid.*, pp. 282–84, no. 75.

48. The painting left France for the collection of the margrave Ansbach-Bayreuth the same year Saint-Aubin produced his drawing; see *ibid.*, p. 284, based on Dacier 1926, pp. 533–35. Notwithstanding the inscription below the bust of the woman at upper left, referring to “Three portraits of Clairon by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, 1773”—likely by Gabriel’s brother Charles-Germain—only the head at upper right is identifiable as the actress.

49. The sculpture, commissioned for Versailles, was transferred in 1716 to the Tuileries, where it remained until 1792; see Bresc-Bautier and Pingeot 1986, vol. 2, no. 270; Gaborit 1998, p. 486; and Rosenberg, *ibid.*, 284.

50. Rosenberg, *ibid.*

51. “On en vend 30 000 livres en 1773.” This drawing and inscription is in the Groult album, Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques, folio 42v. A color photograph of Castel’s clock, sold at Sotheby’s London, May 18, 1977, lot 72 (whereabouts unknown), is reproduced in Rosenberg 2002, p. 82, fig. 19.





9. Jacques-Firmin Beauvarlet after Carle Van Loo, *Mlle Clairon as Medea*. Engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris



10. Charles Nègre.  
*Statues of the Tuileries  
Garden: Gaspar Marsy  
and Anselme Flamen,  
"Boreas Abducting  
Oreithyia, or Air,"* 1859.  
Albumen print from  
collodion negative.  
National Gallery of  
Art, Washington, D.C.,  
Patrons' Permanent Fund



11. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Painting Sale*, 1776, 1776. Watercolor, gouache, black chalk. Musée du Louvre, Paris

sketching in which he engaged on such occasions, as his figure in the foreground of his drawing representing a painting auction attests (fig. 11). Composed on this sheet are the souvenirs of the draftsman's stroll through art in the city, a spatial and temporal structure of his promenade.

The deliberateness and care with which Saint-Aubin articulated the connective tissue between these disparate motifs emphasizes the idea of the artist's experience as the unifying ground of this image. Thus, at the center of the page, he enlarged the moon dial of the astronomical clock, rendering it in light strokes that create a vaporous setting from which both the sculpture group and the bust of La Clairon emerge into view. Note the delicate hatching and stumping that produce the effect of integration between the harpist's head and the rest of the page. It is precisely as a result of these self-conscious integrating maneuvers that the sheet acquires its eerie effect of cohesion. Unrelated yet connected to one another by the draftsman's technical procedures, these artistic fragments come together as an imaginary topography of Saint-Aubin's urban stroll, at once located in the actual space of the city and its artistic institutions and independent of them.

Numerous other sheets testify to a similar approach. On folio 5r of the so-called Groult album, Coysevox's equestrian statue of *Fame* situated at the entrance to the Tuileries coexists with the figure of a woman mounted on a stone post, reading a book, and a bust of a man in three-quarter view looking at us as if he were a passerby. On the pedestal of *Fame* the artist scribbled, "1759, at three in the afternoon, sunny," thus locating his own experience at the core of the scene.<sup>52</sup> In a 1776 *Sheet of Studies* (fig. 12), diverse motifs accompanied by inscriptions—among them the indoor staircase in the Palais des Tuileries; two domestic figures seated on chairs, chatting; a crouching female statue; a Swiss guard holding a halberd; a drawing of the Hôtel de Montesson in Chaussé d'Antin, far from the Tuileries; and various thumbnail sketches of paintings, one possibly representing the ceiling decoration at the Palais des Tuileries—are imbricated to create a multilayered whole.<sup>53</sup> The artist's use of watercolor to accentuate the details such as the dress of the two figures—one of them, the convalescent person of uncertain gender dressed in a housecoat and a head wrap, has been recognized as Saint-Aubin himself—helps to coalesce this composite space.

By embracing such a randomly cumulative mode of composition—resembling the narrative structure of Rétif's *Nuits de Paris*, which interweaves episodes related only by the fact that the narrator witnessed them during his night strolls—Saint-Aubin invented a new form of urban drawing: an imaginary reworking of the actual space of the city that reflects the way in which he observed it. He constructed landscapes of his encounters not only with people, as did Rétif, but also with buildings, monuments, sculptures, paintings, objects, and artifacts that were tokens of the city's past and its present. To call these hybrid works "urban drawing" is to draw attention to their specific socio-cultural parameters. For I would suggest that, in their very form, these composite images evoke the limits and constraints of Saint-Aubin's experience of the city due to his particular situation as a self-employed artist working most of the time—as did his literary counterpart Rétif—without a specific commission and largely outside the official institutional structures of the

52. "1759, à trois heures après midi, grand soleil"; Dacier 1929–31, vol. 2, no. 1105; and Dacier 1943, pp. 15–16.

53. Private collection. See Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 132; vol. 2, no. 1080; and De Beaumont, "Sheet of Studies," in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 280–90, no. 77.



12. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Sheet of Studies*, 1776. Black chalk, pen and black ink, color washes.  
Private collection

PEINTURES.

25

147. Une Perdrix.  
 148. Esquisse d'une Chasse au lion.  
 149. Un Ange annonce aux Bergers la venue du Sauveur. *Dessin.*  
 150. Plusieurs Dessins & Esquisses, sous le même numéro.

AGRÉÉS.

Par M. GREUZE, Agrée.

L'Empereur Sévère reproche à Caracalla son fils, d'avoir voulu l'assassiner dans les défilés d'Écosse, & lui dit: Si tu desires ma mort, ordonne à Papinien de me la donner avec cette épée.

152. La Mère bien aimée, caressée par ses Enfants. *voyez au Dalaboude*

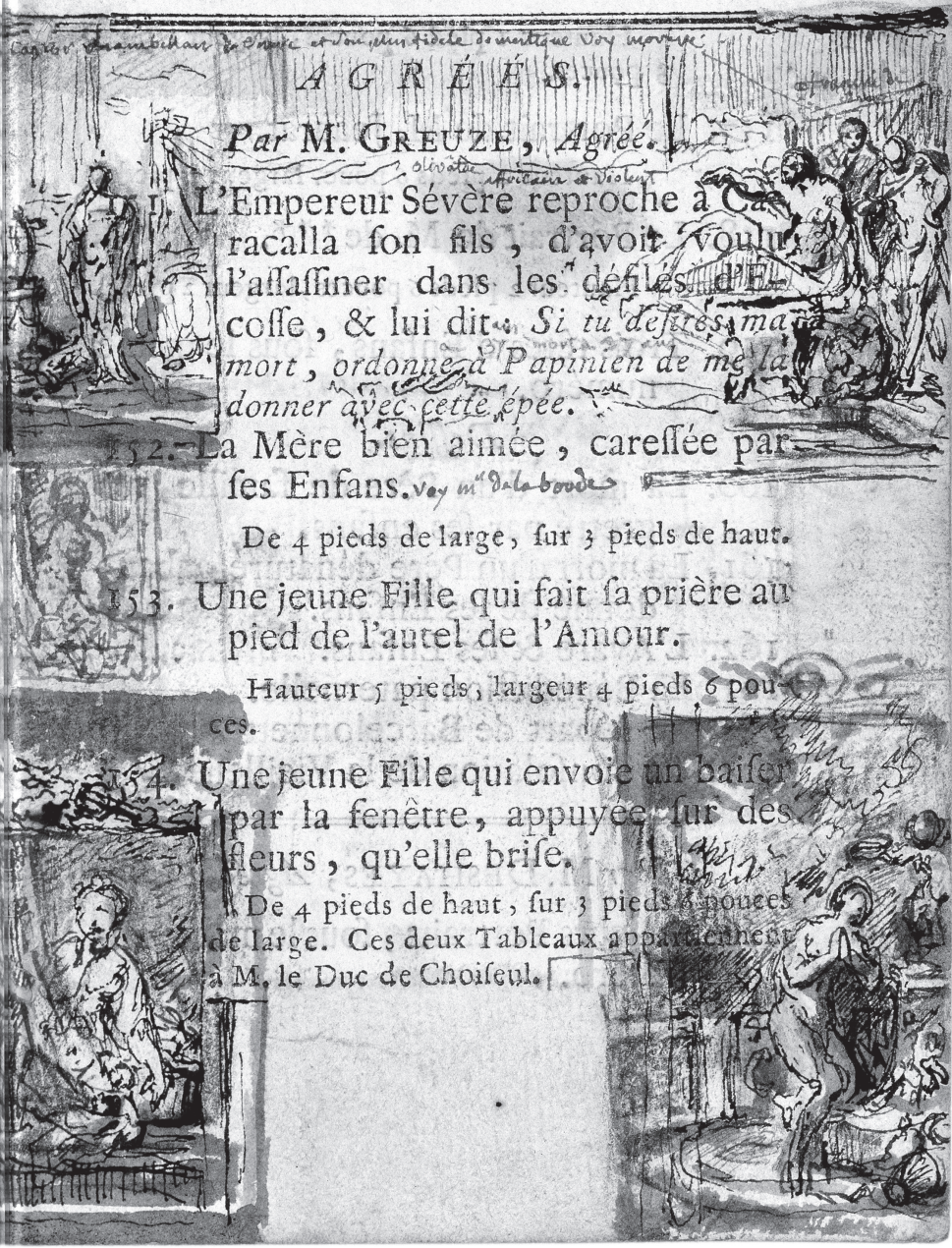
De 4 pieds de large, sur 3 pieds de haut.

153. Une jeune Fille qui fait sa prière au pied de l'autel de l'Amour.

Hauteur 5 pieds, largeur 4 pieds 6 pouces.

154. Une jeune Fille qui envoie un baiser par la fenêtre, appuyée sur des fleurs, qu'elle brise.

De 4 pieds de haut, sur 3 pieds 6 pouces de large. Ces deux Tableaux appartenent à M. le Duc de Choiseul.



13. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, Sketch of Greuze's "Septimius Severus Reproaching Caracalla," from the *livret* of the Salon of 1769. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris

production and reception of art. It was precisely in order to make sense of his situation that Saint-Aubin developed a drawing practice, taking advantage of the inherent possibilities of the medium—its portability and flexibility, its open-ended, adjustable and erasable character—and its institutionally unanchored status. By composing arbitrary spatial and temporal wholes out of disparate cultural fragments—such as the sheet with Castel’s clock or the one with a domestic scene incongruously embedded in the staircase of the Tuileries—the draftsman addressed his particular position as both an insider and an outsider to the art world. The medium of drawing became his means for gaining access to the space of others’ cultural experience and making it his own.

## SALON STROLLING

It is precisely the concern with cultural access that links folios such as the *Sheet of Studies: Castel’s Clock, Various Portraits and Carved Group* (pl. 33) to other idiosyncratic forms of annotation that Saint-Aubin developed to record art in the city. There is a structural similarity between this sheet and the pages of the Salon *livret* adorned with his thumbnail sketches of the exhibited works (fig. 13).<sup>54</sup> This habit, which Saint-Aubin practiced for nearly two decades, produced innumerable tiny but exceptionally accurate renditions of art, most of them done in black chalk, some in sanguine, often elaborated in wash and watercolor.<sup>55</sup> The purpose of these extraordinary marginal inserts is unclear. Hand ornamentation of printed texts was not unheard of, as Gilles-Marie Oppenord’s pen-and-ink additions to the pages of the French edition of Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* indicate, but Saint-Aubin’s marginalia differ in character from these precedents. Jean-François Bédard has argued that Oppenord’s sketches amounted to a “decorative game” with an elite patron, an exercise typical of the culture of “wordliness” within which the architect employed in the service of the regent, Philippe, duc d’Orléans, operated.<sup>56</sup> Saint-Aubin, on the other hand, drew for no one in particular. He lacked steady employment and, aside from intermittently teaching drawing at Jacques-François Blondel’s École des Arts and serving as an adjunct professor at the Académie de Saint-Luc for a brief period between 1774 and the dissolution of the institution in 1776, lived mostly of the income generated by more or less random projects as an illustrator and printmaker.<sup>57</sup> The more puzzling is the sustained quality of Saint-Aubin’s illustrating habit and the sheer number of elaborate miniature sketches he left on the pages of the Salon *livrets*—more than three hundred of them adorn the 1777



54. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Sketch of Greuze’s “Septimius Severus Reproaching Caracalla” from the Livret to the Salon of 1769*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris (Rés.Yd2 1133).

55. See Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, pp. 96–99; De Beaumont, 1988, pp. 404–54; and Bailey, “The Indefatigable, Unclassifiable Art Lover: Saint-Aubin’s Curiosity,” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 75–80.

56. Bédard 2010, pp. 17–19, with illustrations of Oppenord’s additions to Ripa throughout.

57. For Gabriel de Saint-Aubin’s sketchy professional career and his intermittent employment by Blondel, see De Beaumont, “Reconsidering Gabriel de Saint-Aubin,” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 31–32.

edition alone.<sup>58</sup> What motivated this unusual and time-consuming practice? According to one contemporary source, Saint-Aubin may have produced these illustrated catalogues for sale.<sup>59</sup> There is, however, no evidence corroborating this suggestion—most of the *livrets* were found in the artist's drawers after his death, with no copies proving their wider circulation having been located.<sup>60</sup> To my mind, while there may have been a commercial ambition behind Saint-Aubin's practice, it does not explain his obsessive illustrating habit, which extended to other sources, for example, his annotations of the copy of Piganiol de la Force's *Description de Paris* that he owned and kept to himself, adding to it and updating it over many years.<sup>61</sup> Nor could a commercial aim justify the curious insubordination of these visual annotations to the text upon which they often encroach, as does, for example, his rendition of Greuze's painting *Septimius Severus* in the *livret* for the Salon of 1769 (fig. 13). These evidently are not illustrations of the text in a traditional sense but more idiosyncratic inserts the function and meaning of which must be further explored.

I would suggest that Saint-Aubin's primary reason for illustrating these brochures was a desire to inscribe *himself* in the public space of representation, his mode of inscription interrupting the linear spatial and temporal progression of the text to open it up to another time and space—those of the image. The catalogue page was thus transformed into an imaginary entity not unlike the sheet of studies with Castel's clock. Rather than mere records of the exhibitions, these minute and elaborate inscriptions in the *livrets* were traces of Saint-Aubin's experience of the Salon, documents of his *relation* to the exhibited works and the exhibition itself. Like the sheet with Castel's clock, the annotated pages of the brochures were essentially the products of a stroller's gaze, testimonies of a visitor to, rather than a participant in, the Salon exhibition. Their miniature scale and their placement on the margins of these books speak to their author's own marginal position in relation to the official institution of art display. Bear in mind that, despite his repeated attempts to enter the Academy, Saint-Aubin failed to become a member and could not, therefore, exhibit his work at the Salons.<sup>62</sup> His passion for annotating the Salon catalogues may thus be understood as a mode of gaining access to the institutional space from which he was excluded. Far from being, as they have been seen, simply evidence of Saint-Aubin's interest in and enthusiasm for art, these annotations may reasonably be expected to register a more

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58. Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 97. According to Dacier, there were 150 thumbnails in the *livret* for the Salon of 1761 and 250 for 1769.

59. Grimm 1877–92. The encounter with the artist, to whom Grimm refers as the “peintre brocanteur”(nt des Arts Graphiques, Paris, tioned,” occurred at the sale of the duc de Choiseul collection (April 6, 1772). The price for each copy that the artist had apparently quoted upon Grimm's request was 5 *louis* (120 *livres*). Grimm's comment, reported by Dacier (1929–31, vol. 1, p. 91), is discussed in De Beaumont 1998, pp. 485–87; and Bailey, ““The Indefatigable, Unclassifiable Art Lover’: Saint-Aubin's Curiosity,” in Bailey et al. 2007, p. 75.

60. Dacier 1928; and Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, pp. 128–29.

61. Saint-Aubin owned the eight-volume edition of *Description de Paris* published in 1742 by C.-N. Poiron, Paris. The volumes are now in the Musée du Petit Palais, Paris. Dacier assumes that the artist annotated and illustrated his copy between 1770 and 1779. See Dacier 1908. See also de Los Llanos 1992, pp. 129–34, no. 83 (I–VI).

62. On the artist's failed attempts to enter the Academy and the reorientation of his career caused by it, see Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, pp. 25–48; De Beaumont 1998; and De Beaumont, “Reconsidering Gabriel de Saint-Aubin,” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 25–36.



complex reaction to Salon art and the Salon itself. For example, the way in which Septimius' body invades and interrupts the printed entry on Greuze's painting strongly suggests the status of this image as a disruptive supplement, a kind of visual excess that complements but also disturbs the *livret's* verbal descriptions of the work, as a subtle challenge to the cultural text of the exhibition.<sup>63</sup>

To say that these visual commentaries to the *livrets* are governed by the spatial and temporal logic of the stroller's gaze is, then, to recognize them as a roundabout authorial strategy adopted by Saint-Aubin in an effort to make sense of his experience of the Salon, their purpose being to create his own space within the space of artistic establishment. What are his visual framings of the catalogue texts other than imaginary brackets—not unlike the sculpture groups flanking the *Spectacle of the Tuileries*—through which an outsider insinuates himself into the cultural space he can truly enter *only* this way? His procedure amounts to what may be called a *tactic of the parergon*, a mode of cultural re-appropriation through marginal maneuvers in time and space.<sup>64</sup> I am suggesting that Saint-Aubin's consistent placement of his work on the margins of culture *besides* others' work—whether it was the cultural text of the Salon, the architecture of the city, or the objects encountered therein—was not an act of mere documentation of what was there or a polite complimentary gesture of “filling in” the missing information for others to see. Rather, it was a performance that reframed the cultural space to make space for and thus mark the presence of the performer.

The same may be said about Saint-Aubin's multiple depictions of the Salon exhibitions.<sup>65</sup> It is chiefly to him that we owe our vision of this new public institution. Yet Saint-Aubin's depictions were not mere reportage. Rather than “celebrations of the Salon itself,” these views strike me as far more complex and ambiguous constructions that raise the question of their author's relation to the represented space.<sup>66</sup> To take one example, from what position did he sketch *The Salon du Louvre in 1765* (pl. 34)? There is not only the matter of the draftsman's physical placement, which is in and of itself intriguing, as he seems to be hovering in the air, but also of the cultural and professional position this view afforded him.

There are several ways in which *The Salon du Louvre in 1765* points to the artist's presence, raising the question of his mode of access, both actual and imagined, to the

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63. For supplement, see the classic discussion by Jacques Derrida in Derrida 1997, esp. pp. 141–64.

64. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *parergon*, a Latin derivative of the Greek wherein *para* = besides, *ergon* = work, refers to “something subordinate, or accessory to the main subject; an ornamental addition or embellishment; it also means secondary or supplementary work, or business.” The term has acquired, though, a more complex meaning through its by-now classic elaboration by Jacques Derrida in “Parergon,” in Derrida 1987, pp. 14–147.

65. Using different mediums, Saint-Aubin represented several Salons. Among the known extant ones are the Salon of 1753 (etching, repeated as the view of the Salon of 1767); Salon of 1765 (pencil and watercolor); Salon of 1767 (pencil, ink, and watercolor); and 1779 (oil on sheets of paper mounted on canvas). See also a drawing with a view of the left wall and some visitors to the Salon of 1769, collection of Comtesse Béhague, repr. in Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, pl. 31; vol. 2, no. 798, pp. 143–44. In addition to these, there are numerous sketches of the Salon in the artist's sketchbook.

66. De Beaumont 1998, p. 428. The emulatory view of Salon views prevails in Saint-Aubin's literature. See also Sahut, “View of the Salon du Louvre in 1779,” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 274–77, no. 72.

space. First, as was his habit, he recorded the exact time of his visit: the clock, designed by Pajou, that stands among other artifacts exhibited on the tables by the western wall of the Salon indicates exactly 12:10 P.M.<sup>67</sup> Second, he annotated some of the exhibited objects by hand—under Cochin’s drawing for the frontispiece for the *Encyclopédie* affixed to the baize covering the table at the extreme left, he copied verbatim the description of it from the *livret*, and he wrote a note quoting from the *livret*’s description of Nicolas-Bernard Lepicié’s giant painting *The Landing of William the Conqueror on the English Coast* (Abbaye aux Hommes, Caen) under the cornice and above the picture frame in the illustration. Third, it has been suggested that at the extreme left in the topmost row of paintings on the Salon’s wall of honor, Saint-Aubin inserted an *Allegory of Painting* that was his own invention (fig. 14).<sup>68</sup>

As these textual and visual inserts attest, this Salon panorama is not simply a faithful record of art on display but an imaginary space that bears traces of the artist’s active role in its construction. Slipped amid the works on display are the signs of the strolling draftsman’s experience of the exhibition in a physical and a subjective or affective sense, the latter register having been evoked by the figures of the visitors to the exhibition and their reactions.<sup>69</sup> Note, at bottom left, the man gesticulating in front of the small sculpture to draw the attention of his female partner to it, and, next to him, the embracing couple contemplating another object. Yet, the draftsman, as his view suggests, is not exactly like other visitors—his point of view, from high above, is different from theirs and so is his relation to this space. The difference of his position from that of the viewers is also conveyed by the addition of his handwritten inscriptions, which, though unclear in their purpose—were they written as notes to himself or were they meant for the viewers?—exemplify the same strategy Saint-Aubin used in the *livrets*, only in reverse: while in the latter, he supplemented text with images, here he bracketed images with text. Through these textual and visual supplements, such as his own fictional “painting,” the artist marked this institutional space as a field of his own aesthetic and professional experience.

By thus re-framing the interior of the Salon, Saint-Aubin placed himself neither simply inside nor outside it—his body, like his work, acting as a parergon of this space.<sup>70</sup> The question is: to what effect? Is this an image of cultural insubordination—the artist’s refusal to accept his fate as an outsider to the official institution—or rather a symptom of his insurmountable attachment to, and dependence on, the culture that excluded him? In my view, it is an ambivalent tactic—a tactic of ambivalence—always extrinsic yet not simply identifiable with the exterior; intrinsic but unassimilated by the interior. As such it constituted the artist’s quest for a place in the visual culture of his time.

In this regard, Saint-Aubin’s panorama of the Salon of 1765 has something in

67. See Bailey, “The ‘Salon du Louvre’ in 1765,” in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 268–71, no. 70.

68. Suggested by Bailey (ibid., p. 270), who notes that this *Allegory* did not figure in the Salon *livret* and cannot be associated with any known eighteenth-century painting.

69. By using watercolor and gouache, Saint-Aubin rendered the atmospheric effects of the exhibited paintings, emphasizing how these works appeared to the viewers rather than simply what they represented; see De Beaumont 2014, pp. 29–30.

70. This mode of positioning himself may be related to Derrida’s definition of the *parergon* as “a hybrid of outside and inside”; Derrida 1987, p. 63.



14. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *The Salon du Louvre in 1765* (detail of the Allegory of Painting), 1765. Watercolor, brown ink, gray ink, pencil, highlighted with white. Musée du Louvre, Paris

common with *Sheet of Studies: Castel's Clock, Various Portraits and Carved Group* (pl. 33), the unfinished state of the *Salon* making the connection between these two works as constructed, imaginary wholes the more evident. The sheet with Castel's clock creates Saint-Aubin's own "Salon," an imaginary space that, in documenting his stroll through the public displays of art, produces the author as a place, a function of urban experience. It is to gain access to the space of creative distinction and authorship that Saint-Aubin embraces drawing as a medium and puts it in service of an endless, exhaustive recording of art in the city. In other words, the Louvre sheet is a form of negotiation conducted by someone who has no access to the world where things that are worth, as he duly noted, 30,000 *livres* belong but who can draw it. In carefully integrating these elements on a page of his sketchbook, Saint-Aubin demonstrated—if only to himself—that he inhabited a distinct realm of his own creation.



15. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Study of Objects in the Artist's Room*, 1780. Black chalk. The British Museum, London

We find a similar approach in the representation of the artist's own dwelling (fig. 15).<sup>71</sup> A drawing done in 1780—apparently his last—depicts an interior view of Saint-Aubin's apartment on the rue Saint Jean de Beauvais that consisted of one spacious room with windows looking out on the Place du Louvre and a small kitchen with a view of the courtyard.<sup>72</sup> What is striking about its rendition is its spatial under-definition. We do not get any sense of where we are, the confines of the space are not clearly articulated, and there are no windows. The interior is described instead by a concatenation of things that confuses rather than defines its scale: studio paraphernalia such as the mannequin stretched out in the foreground and a tilted palm tree at right; works of art such as a

71. The inscription on the drawing, *dernier dessin de St. Aubin*, is by his brother, Charles-Germain; see De Beaumont, "Study of Objects in the Artist's Room," in Bailey et al. 2007, pp. 120–21, no. 6.

72. Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 130.

painting of Mary Magdalen leaning against what seems to be a wall and a Crucifixion attached to a closet; musical instrument (a violin or bass fiddle); a stone basin, and various objects of everyday use amassed pell-mell on the floor. According to one account, the disarray found in the artist's place after his death was such that the notary refused to conduct an inventory of his possession until they were put in some order.<sup>73</sup> The artist's choice to represent his dwelling in this way shifts emphasis from the interior space onto its frame, constituted by his possessions. These make evident the extent to which his everyday existence was inseparable from art. The drawing thus materializes not only the artist's actual living space—giving us some sense of its neglected state and his indigence—but also his cultural position, turning his room into an image of the marginality of his existence, a position that Saint-Aubin ceaselessly represented and redefined. As a visual record of a messy intermingling of art and life, the drawing also reminds one of an anecdote told by the artist's brother, Charles-Germain, about Saint-Aubin's resorting to his drawing tools to improve his appearance by redrawing his own contours, as it were: before going out, he would often run a white chalk over his dirty stockings and over his hair to simulate a powdered wig and thus make himself more presentable.<sup>74</sup>

The import of Saint-Aubin's practice resides precisely in his capacity to frame and re-articulate his world—and himself—by drawing it. Embracing drawing as the autonomous means, unmoored from its institutionalized functions as a pedagogical or a preparatory tool, Saint-Aubin sketched out the contours of his own autonomy as an artist operating on the margins of Enlightenment culture. Mapping out the domain of his urban experience, his vast graphic oeuvre made these margins visible and thus also legible—accessible—to us.



73. The story about the notary's refusal was first told in Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 147. Charles-Germain also commented on the jumbled state in which his brother's left his apartment in Gabriel's mini-biography: "Il est mort dans / un anéantissement absolu, . . . [il] a laissé dans le plus grand désordre / Son linge, Ses habits et quatre ou cinq/ mille dessins non terminés"; *Livre de Saint Aubin*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques (RF 52464), transcribed in Rosenberg 2002, p. 29.

74. The anecdote is cited in Dacier 1929–31, vol. 1, p. 89.

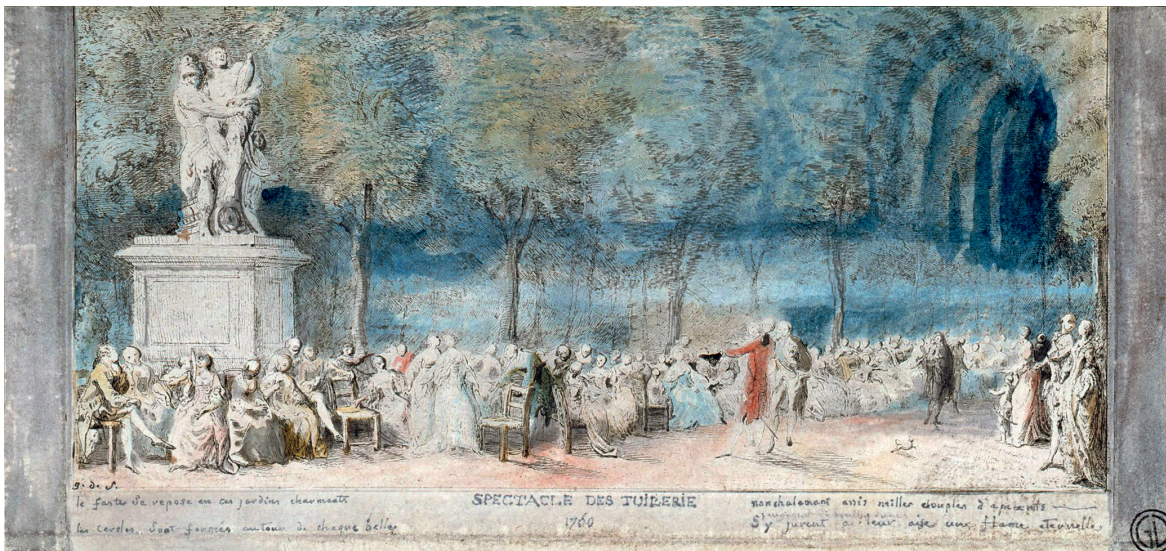




Pl. 30. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Boulevard Scene*, ca. 1760. Pen and ink, brush, gray and brown washes, over black chalk, with touches of watercolor. Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris

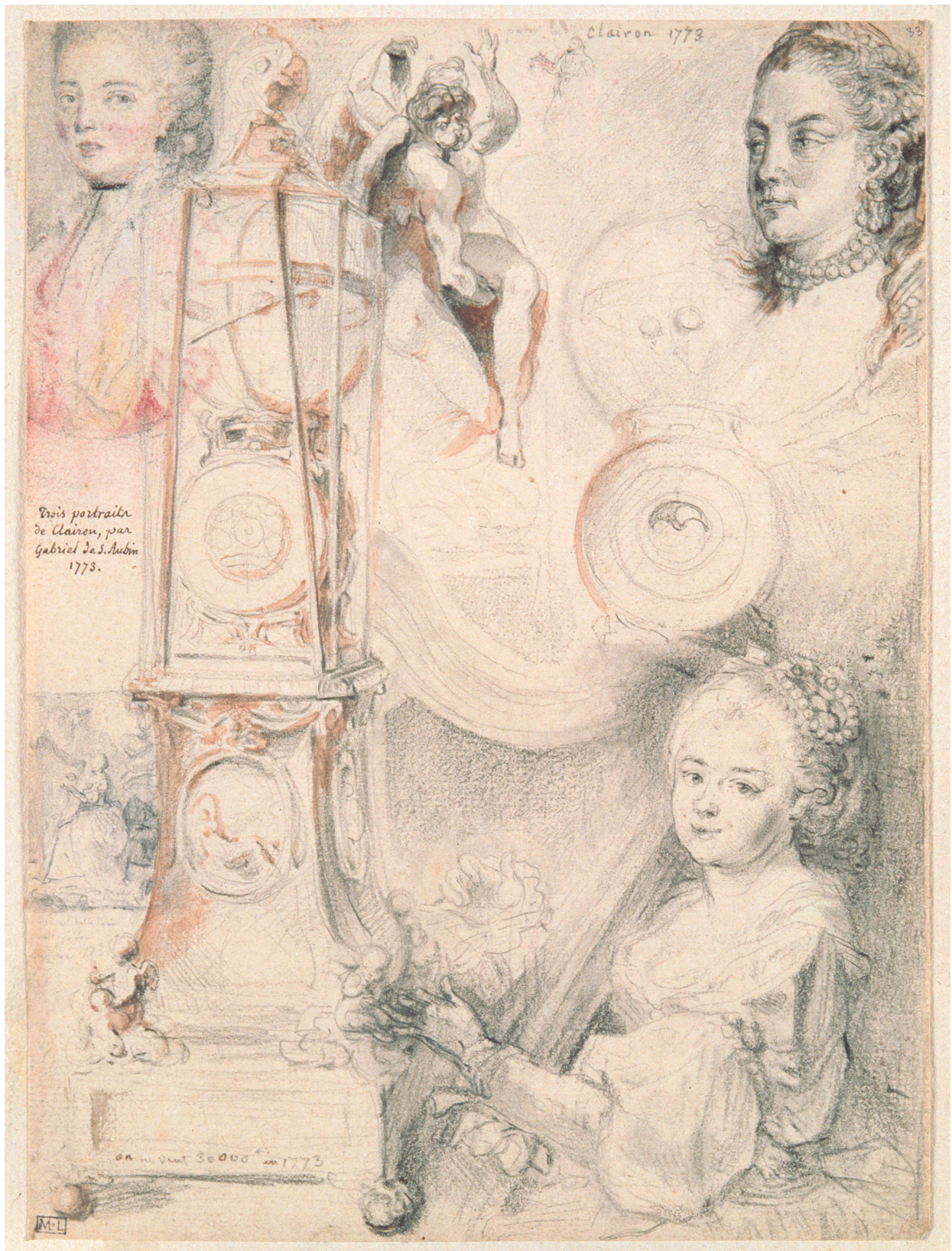


Pl. 31. Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle, *Figures Walking in Parkland*, 1783–1800. Watercolor and gouache, traces of black-chalk underdrawing, on translucent paper. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

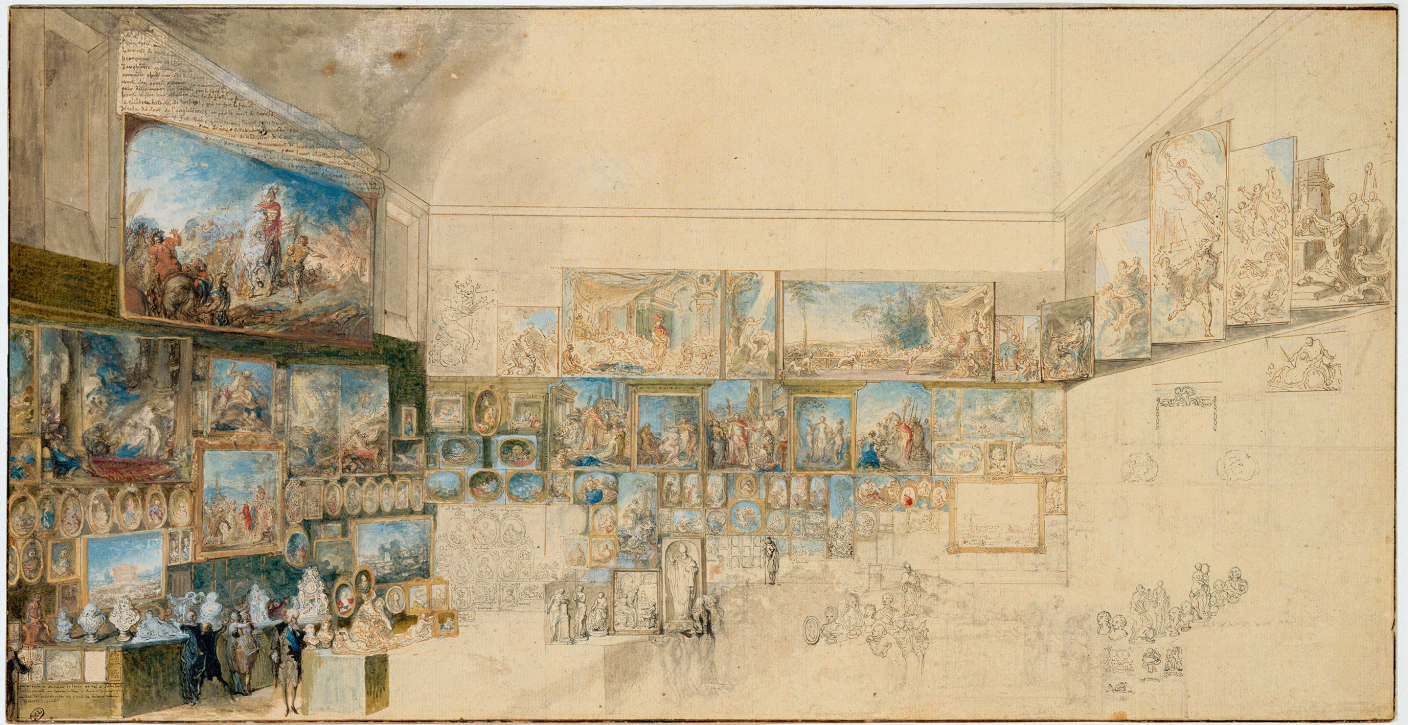


Pl. 32. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Spectacle of Tuileries: The Chairs*, 1760. Etching, pen and black ink, watercolor. Musée Carnavalet, Paris





Pl. 33. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Sheet of Studies: Castel's Clock, Various Portraits and Carved Group*, 1773. Black chalk, brush and gray wash, bister, yellow and pink washes. Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris



Pl. 34. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *The "Salon du Louvre" in 1765*. Watercolor, brown ink, gray ink, pencil, highlighted with white. Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris