



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

Versailles, 12 April 2012

## PRESS RELEASE

### THE SPLENDOUR OF PAINTING ON PORCELAIN

CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN AND THE VINCENNES-SÈVRES MANUFACTORY IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

16 May to 9 September 2012 - Apartment of Madame de Maintenon and the King's Guardroom



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#### SCENOGRAPHY

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opening Photos  
Details of works by  
Charles Nicolas Dodin  
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With the participation of  
the Louvre museum

THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES PRESENTS THE FIRST EXHIBITION CONSECRATED TO CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN (1734-1804), ONE OF THE MOST TALENTED PAINTERS OF THE PORCELAIN MANUFACTORY OF VINCENNES-SEVRES. THE EXHIBITION EXPLORES HIS ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND SHOWS THE REFINEMENT OF HIS WORK. IT ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE DIVERSITY OF THE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION OF THE ARTIST AND HIS SKILL IN ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN TASTES AND FASHIONS.

CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN dedicated most of his career to painting miniatures on porcelain and succeeded in adapting himself with talent to the changes in styles and motifs used in the Manufactory, from the most decorative rocaille style to accomplished Neoclassicism. He absorbed many influences but adapted his sources skilfully to preserve his own creative identity. His extreme dexterity, rapidity of execution and inventiveness led him to be chosen at an early age to contribute to the most exceptional commissions received in his time by the Royal Porcelain Manufactory. His works featured very soon in the major collections of works of art of the period (those of Louis XV, Louis XVI, Madame de Pompadour, Madame Du Barry and Catherine II of Russia). His porcelains were also given as diplomatic gifts, notably to King Christian VII of Denmark, the Comtesse du Nord and the Duke of Saxony-Teschen.

THE EXHIBITION PRESENTS OVER A HUNDRED WORKS, as well as archive documents, engravings, portraits of patrons, an exceptional series of twelve paintings on porcelain, and pieces from the dinner services made for Catherine II of Russia and Louis XVI in Versailles, reflecting the great diversity of the work of the artist and the Manufactory. This event benefits from loans made by the most outstanding institutions such as the royal collections of England and Denmark, the royal palace of Warsaw, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, the Louvre museum, and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Several private international collections have also contributed very generously by their loans to revealing unknown works by Charles Nicolas Dodin to the general public.



*Pair of pot-pourri 'openwork' vases painted in blue monochrome on a white background*  
Charles-Nicolas Dodin, 1754,  
Private collection  
© EPV/J.M.Manai

**THESE LOANS ILLUSTRATE THE QUALITY OF THE PATRONS** of the works of Dodin in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the reputation that his work still enjoys. For the first time, exceptional pieces will be brought together, notably sets of vases dispersed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This exhibition will also offer a unique opportunity to admire his painted porcelain slabs, called “paintings” in the documents from the 18th century. Lastly, the collection of engravings and paintings will evoke the artist’s sources and illustrate the changes in taste during his career.

**CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN STARTED BY PAINTING** mostly monochrome or polychrome cupids, in the style of the painter François Boucher. He was then inspired by Flemish and Dutch motifs, notably found in the engravings by Le Bas of the works of David Teniers the Younger, illustrating his version of the contemporary taste for the Northern Schools.



*Square slab with pink background and Chinese scene,*  
Manufacture de Sèvres, 1761  
Private collection  
© EPV/J.M.Manai

**FROM 1760 TO 1763,** the artist painted “chinoiseries”, typical Chinese scenes that testify to the persistent taste for Chinese motifs in the decorative arts of the 18th century. It was also during this period that he innovated by becoming the first artist at Sèvres to paint porcelain slabs intended to be hung on the wall and framed like paintings on canvas. These masterpieces, the fruit of genuine technical prowess, were hailed by his contemporaries as perpetuating easel painting in a permanent material. Charles Nicolas Dodin also responded to the fashion launched by the Parisian merchant Poirier who commissioned from Sèvres slabs of soft-paste porcelain to decorate pieces of furniture, clocks, barometers and small caskets. Thanks to the exceptional loan from the Louvre museum, the return to Versailles of the chest of drawers with paintings on porcelain executed by the cabinetmaker Martin Carlin for Madame Du Barry, is a major event.



*Laurel vase. The charms of country life after Boucher*  
Charles-Nicolas Dodin,  
Manufacture de Sèvres, 1772,  
Collection of the Dalva Brothers  
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**FROM 1763 ON,** Charles Nicolas Dodin painted genre scenes or subjects taken from mythology and ancient history after the most outstanding artists of his century: Boucher, Oudry, Carle van Loo, Drouais, Eisen, Greuze, Fragonard, Moreau le Jeune and Lagrenée.

**AT THE END OF HIS CAREER,** during the turbulent period of the French Revolution, the artist produced fine mythological scenes as well as Republican allegories, which continuing until 1792 to paint the dinner service of Louis XVI and porcelain pieces displaying his coat of arms.

**THE WORK OF CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN WAS HAILED BY POSTERITY IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.** Alexandre Brongniart, director of the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory of Sèvres, wrote of him that he was “an exceptional painter of the first class.” He celebrated his “talent and exactitude” and hailed him as “one of those who brought most honour and profit to the Manufactory.” In the 19th and 20th centuries, Dodin was one of the rare painters of Sèvres whose name and style were not forgotten but were in fact sought after by connoisseurs like the Barons de Rothschild, the Marquis of Hertford, Prince Demidoff, Baron Double, etc. His works are found today in the most outstanding international collections.



*The Change of Hounds in the Forest of Compiègne*  
Charles-Nicolas Dodin, 1781  
Manufacture de Sèvres  
Versailles, musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon  
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