

# THE ORLEANS COLLECTION – TEXT PANELS AND LABELS

## A Collection Reunited

*The Orléans Collection* celebrates not only a collector and a collection but also a city. In honor of the tricentennial of the founding of New Orleans, this exhibition brings together selections from one the most significant collections in European history, that of our city’s namesake: Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723).

Due to a series of deaths late in the reign of Louis XIV (“The Sun King”), his nephew Philippe II found himself next in succession to become king, however a direct heir was born in the final years of his uncle’s monarchy. Five years old at the time of Louis XIV’s death, Louis XV would wait until age thirteen to inherit his great-grandfather’s throne, requiring Philippe II to serve as Regent of France for eight years, from 1715 to 1723, until the young king came of age. As Regent, Philippe II’s function was to preserve the prosperity of the realm, a difficult task given the depleted finances of a kingdom strained by Louis XIV’s wars and prodigal spending.

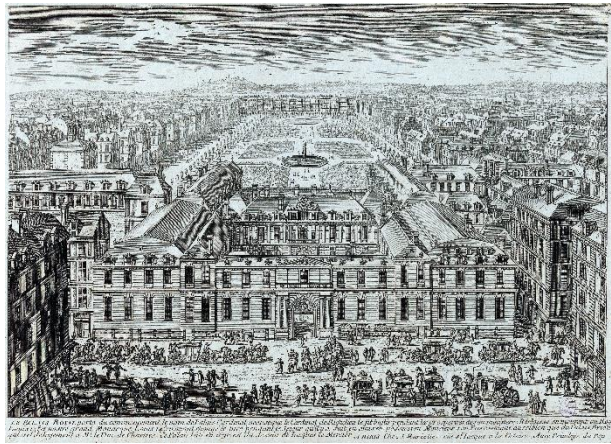
A formidable personality, Philippe II was a passionate patron of music, theater, and fine art, as well as science and alchemy. The Regent is best known now and in his day as a great art lover, collector, and connoisseur. Filling the walls of his Parisian residence, the Palais–Royal, the collection grew to well over 500 paintings. The collection would ultimately be auctioned by Philippe II’s heirs in the 1790s and scattered across the globe in the centuries that followed. For the first time in a century, this project and its catalogue offer a comprehensive analysis of the collection and its impact. The paintings reunited for this occasion are together again after more than two centuries.

## The Palais-Royal

### A Parisian Versailles

Philippe II’s Paris residence was a vast complex of gardens, grand galleries, and apartments. The lavish decoration and exquisite objects, custom-designed furniture and burgundy-brocaded walls of the Palais-Royal exemplified the Duke’s impeccable style.

The Palais-Royal had initially been owned by Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, the powerful chief minister of France under Louis XIV. In the 1630s, Richelieu significantly expanded a small townhouse he had purchased into his grand Palais-Cardinal. He bequeathed the palace to the crown upon his death. Philippe I, brother of Louis XIV, moved into the residence upon his marriage in 1681, and in 1692 it was officially given to the Orléans family.



Philippe II began transforming the Palais-Royal after he inherited the residence upon the death of his father in 1701. With his appointment as Regent, grander renovations were undertaken. At his death in 1723, the Palais-Royal he had modernized was one of Paris’s most resplendent buildings and served as the center of social and political life during the Regency.

Coinciding with the development of new neighborhoods in Paris at the turn of the eighteenth century, the Regency of Philippe II represented the return of power to Paris after Louis XIV left the city in 1666 and

later installed his entire court at Versailles. Today, the Palais-Royal is one of Paris's grandest and most beloved public spaces.

### **Architecture, Decoration, and Display**

Philippe II worked closely with his court painter, Antoine Coypel, and his architect, Gilles-Marie Oppenord, to create an image of stability and grandeur at the Palais-Royal. The grand Gallery of Aeneas, for example, was conceived as a mini- Hall of Mirrors, Versailles's renowned showpiece. A grand painting cycle and ceiling painting by Coypel adorned the space. (A reconstruction of the gallery at left offers an impression of the space.)

Philippe II displayed his paintings throughout the Palais-Royal, strategically selecting both subject matter and placement to assert authority and political legitimacy. A visitor's route through the palace was designed to impress. (See illustration at right.) From the ground-floor courtyard, a visitor ascended a grand set of stairs to arrive at an antechamber to the state bedroom or *chambre de parade*, modeled after Versailles. The visitor then moved through the Duke's magnificent Poussin cabinet, a crossroads in the palace filled with works by Nicolas Poussin. From there one could walk onward through the Gallery of Illustrious Men and proceed to the Duke's office (*cabinet de conseil*), or turn left toward four large galleries housing the Duke's unrivaled collection of paintings, and where guidebooks note his most prized pictures were displayed. Next was the glorious octagonal salon, a two-story room with more exquisite paintings and large mirrors. The visit culminated with the celebrated Gallery of Aeneas.

### **The Regency**

*"Now mark the Regency; licentious time, auspicious era"*

—Voltaire, 1752

Voltaire's characterization of the Regency was apt. The Duke had a notorious reputation for late-night parties and expensive tastes, but the eight-year period of his rule was also an "auspicious era" of stability for the realm.

The Sun King, Louis XIV, died at Versailles in 1715 after a seventy two-year reign. His great-grandson, Louis XV, the only legitimate successor to the throne, was five years old. In his will, Louis XIV appointed his nephew, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, to be the head of a Regency Council of shared power until Louis XV reached the age of thirteen. After Louis XIV's death, however, Philippe II seized complete control, declaring himself the sole Regent of France.

Inheriting a kingdom in a disastrous state due to Louis XIV's wars and his lavish spending at the vast complex of Versailles, by 1723 Philippe II had restored stability to national finances and foreign relations. While regencies are traditionally difficult and unstable times, Philippe II deftly balanced the power struggle within the French aristocracy, expanded colonial holdings, devised innovative monetary policies with economic advisor John Law, and improved diplomatic relations with Spain, France, and the Dutch Republic, all wearied by previous years of war.

## **The Duke as Collector**

*“The collection he has left behind is [...] the most interesting and the richest that exists in the world, not even excepting the king’s collection.”*

—Piganiol de la Force, 1752

Philippe II amassed one of the most significant art collections of early modern Europe. An inventory compiled at his death in 1724 records 537 paintings at the Palais-Royal. The avaricious collector acquired paintings through various means: purchasing pictures during his military service and from art dealers, or gladly accepting gifts of paintings from favored members of the court and political allies. A crowning achievement came with the purchase of more than one hundred works formerly in the possession of Queen Christina of Sweden.

Philippe II demonstrated a passion for art early in life and at age 22 made his first important commission from Antoine Coypel, who later served as his court painter. Philippe II started collecting in earnest upon inheriting the Palais-Royal and his title of Duke in 1701. His most exquisite pieces were acquired during the Regency (1715–1723).

The collection brought together paintings from the range of European art. It was displayed and categorized according to national schools, which seems intuitive today but was novel at the time. In every way, the Duke’s collection reflected deep engagement with contemporary trends in art, along with a self-conscious presentation and display that burnished his reputation as a connoisseur.

The caliber and status of the collection was well known during Philippe II’s lifetime and guidebooks highlighted the Palais-Royal as a point of interest. A description of the paintings at the Palais-Royal by Louis-François Dubois de Saint-Gelais was published in 1727, four years after the Duke’s death, and was likely conceived by Philippe II himself.

The Palais-Royal collection enjoyed increasing fame over the course of the eighteenth century and before the middle of the 1700s the family appears to have opened the collection to visitors. Ultimately, the collection’s fame was its undoing. When Louis Philippe Joseph, Philippe II’s great-grandson, needed to raise funds during the French Revolution he turned to the collection as his main asset. The paintings left France and were sold in London in the 1790s.

## **Philippe II and Art History**

*“He would paint for almost the whole evening after dinner at Versailles...He knew a great deal about paintings. He loved them.”*

—Duke of Saint-Simon (1675-1775)

While a celebrated collector, few contemporary sources document Philippe II’s opinions on art or artists. His holdings reflect a taste aligned with writings on art theory at the turn of the eighteenth century. Philippe’s court painter Antoine Coypel played a decisive role in the formation of the collection and the Duke first picked up a brush and palette himself under Coypel’s tutelage.

Coypel’s 1721 *Discours* expresses his view of painting and is dedicated to the Duke. The book can be considered a theoretical compendium to the Palais-Royal collection. The artist praised Bolognese artists, especially Domenichino, and he is the first French source to extol the Dutch and Flemish school, of which the Duke was the first true collector in France.

Philippe II's collection featured both "Poussinistes" and "Rubénistes" paintings, reflecting the contrasting styles of Nicolas Poussin and Peter Paul Rubens. Their display at the Palais-Royal reflected an academic debate of color versus line. As the rich palettes of Rubens and other Venetian Renaissance artists grew in popularity, such favoritism challenged the foundations of the French Academy, which placed a primacy on drawing, as epitomized in the work of Poussin.

### **Queen Christina's Collection**

In October 1721, the *Mercure de France* newspaper announced that Philippe II had acquired paintings from the collection of Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689), and these works would soon "join the rare and numerous morsels" at the Palais-Royal. This sensational purchase was facilitated by the Regent's friend, financier and connoisseur Pierre Crozat. Negotiations started in 1714 and the deal was finally struck in January 1721. The shipment of more than one hundred paintings arrived in Paris in fifteen crates and four large rolls.

Fiercely independent, Queen Christina's spirit is evident in a portrait by Sebastian Bourdon (illustrated at right), a work intended as a gift for Philip IV of Spain. The Queen is presented on horseback, an unprecedented appropriation of the time-honored male equestrian portrait type. In 1655, Christina abdicated the Swedish throne, converted to Catholicism, and moved to Rome—bringing with her a substantial portion of her art collection. Some of the most celebrated paintings in Queen Christina's collection were plundered by the Swedish army from the collections of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in 1648, while others were commissioned or purchased by the Queen herself. After her death in 1689 at the Palazzo Riario, the collection passed to Livio Odescalchi, who tried for some time to sell the collection before Philippe II offered an agreeable price of 93,000 ecus (French gold coins). Queen Christina's sculpture and manuscript collections were sold to the Vatican and the Spanish Crown.

### **The Private Cabinets of Dutch and Flemish Art**

Philippe II was the first great French collector of Dutch and Flemish Art. The intimate display in this room replicates how these paintings would have been viewed at the Palais-Royal. The Duke displayed these pictures in small yellow and blue cabinet rooms located behind the large *salon à l'italienne*, which visitors entered via a secret pocket door, an enticing way to enter the more private spaces.

Antoine Coypel, the Duke's court painter, was the first French source to extol the subtleties of the intimate subjects, naturalism, and the expressive brushwork of Dutch and Flemish artists. The refined technique and jewel-like size of such pictures invite close examination.

By the time art dealer Dezallier d'Argenville published his *Lives of Flemish Artists* in 1745, Parisians were in love with Dutch pictures, also reflected today in the substantial holdings of the Louvre. The prestige of Dutch art in eighteenth century collections is reflected in the numerous Parisian publications that itemized and illustrated them, which also served to enhance the status of their owners.

Philippe II's impressive collection of Dutch and Flemish art was less appreciated by his heirs. His son, Louis d'Orléans, called "Louis the Pious," tried to sell Dutch and Flemish works in 1737, including the painting on copper by Joachim Wtewael in this room, but few were actually sold. Dealer Thomas Moore Slade handled the sale of this portion of the collection in London in 1793 and 1795.

## The Poussin Cabinet

At the Palais-Royal, paintings of the French school were displayed in a cabinet, a small, rectangular room located at a pivotal juncture between the state bedroom, the Gallery of Illustrious Men, and the private apartments of the east wing. The so-called Poussin cabinet featured paintings by seventeenth century French painter Nicolas Poussin, considered the founder of French Classicism, and included the works of his successors at the French Academy, Eustache Le Sueur and Charles Le Brun. The location of the cabinet after the state bedroom provided a clear statement of the supremacy of French art.

Several eighteenth-century visitors to the Palais-Royal praised the spectacular assemblage of French paintings. In 1711, Benoit Audran I, royal engraver to Louis XIV, dedicated a print of Le Sueur's *Alexander and his Doctor* to Philippe II, and the print (at left) is an important early publication of the Palais-Royal paintings.

Six years later, English painter James Thornhill described the Poussin cabinet in his diary, noting the installation of Le Sueur's painting over the room's fireplace. Georges Louis Le Rouge's guidebooks, *Curiosities of Paris*, printed during Philippe II's Regency, highlighted the Palais-Royal as a destination for elite visitors, and the 1719 edition specifically noted the splendor of the Poussin cabinet.

## The Palais-Royal *Salon à l'italienne* and the Art of Veronese

Beginning in 1713, Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672–1742) served as first architect to Philippe II. Though certain refurbishments of the Palais-Royal were initiated upon Philippe's inheritance of the palace at his father's death in 1701, it was when he became Regent in 1715 that the Duke and his architect undertook grander ambitions for the remodeling.

The *salon à l'italienne*, an Italian-style, two-story room with windows in the upper register, was the showpiece of the new Palais-Royal. The light-filled space with sumptuous architectural ornament was Oppenord's masterpiece. The corner room linked a series of paintings galleries with the Gallery of Aeneas. The sectional drawing at left shows Oppenord's final design of the south wall of the *salon*, which faced the Gallery of Aeneas, featuring the same large mirror above a mantelpiece at its north end. The two facing ensembles created a double-mirroring effect of infinite repetition (called *mise-en-abîme*) and a feeling of expansiveness beyond the physical parameters of the spaces.

Oppenord started his designs for the *salon* around 1719 but they were modified in late 1721. The changes coincided with the purchase of pictures from the collection of Queen Christina of Sweden and reflect Philippe II's intention to feature his new paintings in the *salon*. The 1721 changes simplified panel carving to better showcase paintings that were installed within the paneling. The room became a celebration of the Venetian artist Paolo Veronese and his *Four Allegories of Love* (now in the collection of the National Gallery of London) were hung over each of the room's four doors. The *Woman in Blue* at right was prominently placed beside one of the room's doors, where she greeted visitors at eye height.

## Eighteenth-Century French Artists at the Palais-Royal

The vast holdings at the Palais-Royal provided abundant opportunities for young artists to study the great masters. The painting on the right by Noel-Nicolas, the younger half-brother of Antoine Coyvel, was inspired by paintings at the palace dedicated to the subject of the Rape of Europa, of which Philippe II had several versions.

In this Greek myth, Jupiter falls in love with the mortal Europa and takes the shape of an affectionate, docile bull, and carries her off to Crete. Two versions of the subject by Venetian artists Titian

and Veronese were prominently displayed in the Duke's grand gallery and the *salon à l'italienne*. Veronese's work, now in the National Gallery of London, represents the gentle seduction of Europa by Jupiter while Titian's version, now in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, depicts a violent abduction where Jupiter swims into the sea, a distraught Europa on his back.

Noel-Nicolas studied both Europa paintings at the Palais-Royal but adhered closely to Veronese's version. Similar to the source, Noel-Nicolas presents *Europa* swathed in loose rose and gold-colored silks, surrounded by graceful handmaidens and flying *putti*. A notable borrowing, the gentle, garlanded bull affectionately licks Europa's wrist, echoing the lick of her foot in Veronese's depiction.

Though he deliberately quoted the composition of the Veronese in Philippe's collection, Noel-Nicolas's Europa is rendered in the visual language of eighteenth-century France. Its sanguine expressions, sweet colors, and slick surfaces are all typical of contemporary painting in Paris.

### **Idiosyncratic Taste**

While Philippe II was well informed of the currents in art theory, aspects of his display of pictures disregarded the norms of the French Academy. Established in a series of conferences in the 1650s and 1660s, academicians advocated a hierarchy of genres. Philippe II, however, preferred to arrange his pictures according to aesthetic and formal relationships, which intermingles genres. The French lawyer Mathieu Marais noted: "connoisseurs are astonished that with the [regent's] taste for painting, he had none for arrangement, plac[ing] a devotional painting near a nude." The hanging at left of a Venus paired with a Madonna simulates this idiosyncratic tendency.

Philippe II is regarded as one of the greatest connoisseurs, and yet taste for the styles and artists he appreciated fluctuated in the following centuries. Remarkably, eighteenth-century assessments of the Orléans collection have stood the test of time and the 1727 published description of the Palais-Royal pictures remains the essential handbook to the collection.

### **The Legacy of the Orléans Collection**

*"Vast crowds are daily flocking to town to see the Orléans Gallery."*  
—*The Morning Chronicle*, London, 1790s

The public display of Philippe II's collection in London in advance of its sale became in effect the first "blockbuster" exhibitions of art. One newspaper reported an astonishing 3,000 visitors a day. In 1824, Scottish lawyer and art dealer William Buchanan published his *Memoirs of Painting*, in which he devotes a chapter to the sales. He emphasized the impact of seeing works of art which had been locked away in a princely collection. The display of Philippe II's collection was consequential to the establishment of England's first museums. The opening of a national gallery was preceded by two regional institutions, the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1816 and Dulwich Picture Gallery in 1817. Both would feature many paintings purchased by their founding donors from Philippe II's collection. When the National Gallery of London was founded in 1824, it had at its core six pictures formerly displayed in the Palais-Royal. Paintings from Philippe II's collection have since made their way to public institutions across Europe, the United States, and Australia.

Buchanan's memoir named the great assemblage of paintings at the London sales "the Orléans collection," from which NOMA's exhibition derives its name. The Orléans collection made a profound impact upon the very concept of keeping art in the public trust and ensuring that great masterworks would be accessible for generations to come.

### **Luxury Editions of the Orléans Pictures** (inside Reading Room)

This slideshow highlights works in the exhibition that were featured in Jacques Couche's *Le Galerie du Palais Royal gravée d'après les tableaux des différentes écoles*.

In 1785, Philippe II's great-grandson, Louis Philippe Joseph, Duke of Orleans (later known as Philippe-Egalite) commissioned engraver Jacques Couche to publish *Le Galerie du Palais Royal*, which reproduced the Palais-Royal paintings in lush engravings.

The effort to reproduce the paintings was well-organized. The paintings were dismantled from the walls of the Palais-Royal, situated on easels, and twenty draftsmen made drawings which were then delivered to a team of etchers and engravers. The resulting 352 images were paired with historical descriptions of each of the paintings.

It appears that Louis Philippe Joseph commissioned this painstaking documentation as a means of advertising his grandfather's collection in advance of selling the paintings. The outbreak of the French Revolution interrupted the print project and publisher Jacques Couche only returned to the project in 1806 after the sale of the Palais-Royal pictures in London in the 1790s. Completion of this compendium reflected the enduring fame of the collection and an interest in the purchase of reproductions and books illustrated with great works of art.

### **The Orléans Picture Sales in London** (inside Reading Room)

Due to mounting debts and goaded by his political ambitions, Philippe II's great-grandson, Philippe Egalite, decided to sell his inherited collection to raise funds. The collection was broken up between two London art dealers: Thomas More Slade managed the sales of the Dutch and Flemish works and Michael Bryan the Italian, French, and Spanish paintings.

To raise the capital to purchase such a big stock, both dealers reached financial agreements with groups of investors. Slade was backed by a consortium of British bankers and arranged the sales of Dutch and Flemish art in 1793 and 1795, while Bryan managed his sales in 1798 with the help of a syndicate of British noblemen.

Both Slade and Bryan organized public viewings of the collection and advertised the exhibitions. Bryan's shows were staged in two locations, in his gallery in Schomberg House on Pall Mall, and the greater part in a larger space at the Lyceum Theatre on the Strand. The twin exhibitions of Italian and French pictures opened to the public on Boxing Day—December 26, 1798—and remained on view for over six months. Many visitors responded enthusiastically, like author Mary Berry who wrote in a letter, "These pictures...are by far the finest—indeed the only real display of the excellency of Italian schools of painting that I ever remember in this country."

Artists, who were permitted free entrance for an hour each day, relished this unprecedented opportunity to view masterpieces by Titian, Veronese, Raphael, Poussin, and others. Painter Joseph Farington, a member of the British Royal Academy of Arts, sketched the installations at the Pall Mall and Lyceum on the inside cover of Bryan's exhibition catalogues. These sketches, visible on the monitors in this room, allow us to partially reconstruct the hanging of these works the last time that they were on view together.

### **Antoine Coypel**

French, c. 1661–1722

***Assembly of the Gods***, 1702–1705

Oil sketch on canvas

Angers, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 38 J. 1881

In 1702, Philippe II commissioned his court painter, Antoine Coypel, to paint the ceiling of a new gallery space at the Palais-Royal. Called the Gallery of Aeneas, the room's massive ceiling would be decorated with a scene depicting the gods of Roman mythology. This luminous sketch conveys Coypel's brilliant use of color and the Roman Baroque pictorial effect, in which the ceiling architecture is broken by clouds that extend to the heavens. This oil sketch, likely created as a presentation piece, was kept by the artist and his family and remains the most vivid record of this spectacular work, which was destroyed in the 1780s.

### **Sébastien Bourdon**

French, 1616–1671

***The Presentation in the Temple***, c. 1644

Oil on canvas

Paris, Musée du Louvre, 2802

Philippe II's grandmother, Anne of Austria, lived at the Palais-Royal while she served as Regent for her son, Louis XIV, from 1643 to 1651. During her residence, the pious Queen commissioned several paintings to adorn her private oratory, an intimate devotional space adorned with panels depicting the life of the Virgin Mary produced by the leading artists of seventeenth-century Paris.

Bourdon's contribution takes as its subject the presentation of the newborn Christ child in the Jewish temple. The Virgin Mary presents her son to Simeon; it is the moment before he recognizes the child as the Messiah. Bourdon's fluid, painterly style and atmospheric mode was a departure from the linear classicism advocated by the French Academy, of which he was a founding member.

The Duke inherited this work and others from the oratory. During the French Revolution this painting was seized and sent to the Museum Central des Arts, later known as the Musée du Louvre, in Paris.

### **Simon Vouet**

French, 1590–1649

***Gaucher de Châtillon, connétable de France (1250–1328)***, 1632–1635

Oil on canvas

Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1937.119

The Palais-Royal's first resident was Cardinal Richelieu, political advisor to King Louis XIII. As part of the building's decoration, Richelieu commissioned two leading French artists to paint twenty-five larger-than-life portraits for a Gallery of Illustrious Men, dedicated to the protectors of the French monarchy.

For the project, Simon Vouet painted *Gaucher de Châtillon, connétable de France (1250–1328)*, a commander of the French army under several medieval French kings during a period of political instability. Vouet's dramatic placement of the muscular figure in a rugged profile, viewed from below and behind, combined with bold highlighting, offers a compelling image of strength and vigor.



Philippe II inherited the Gallery of Illustrious Men as part of the Palais-Royal and he must have appreciated the theme for its homage to French history and its protectors, including his own role as Regent.

### **Antoine Dieu**

French, c. 1662–1727

***Allegory of Philippe, duc d'Orléans,***

***Regent of the Realm (1674–1723),*** 1718

Oil on canvas

Musée National du Château de Versailles, MV 5968

During the reign of Louis XIV and Philippe II's Regency, the French established a colonial empire, represented here by the globe. French colonies included Saint-Domingue (now the island of Haiti and the Dominican Republic), coastal West African settlements in Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire, and New Orleans. The Caribbean colonies and New Orleans became the destinations of almost the entirety of the French slave trade, with more than 4,000 voyages recorded. The French only abolished slavery in 1848.

Here, Dieu depicts Philippe II as the head of these enterprises of the French East India Company. The subjugated cultures are represented by the female figure at upper right beneath a palm tree, which symbolizes the New World. The work was engraved as the frontispiece to a treatise devoted to the Regency published in 1718.

The portrait of Philippe II held by two goddesses replicates the official portrait of the Duke made by Jean-Baptiste Santerre. At right is Minerva, goddess of war and the arts, with Fame at left trumpeting Philippe II's glory and bearing the laurel wreath of victory. Seated atop the globe, the figure of Law holds a staff topped with the Bourbon fleur-de-lis; her foot rests on the book of laws. Seated with her back to the viewer is a figure representing the arts. She sketches on a palimpsest surrounded by art studio tools—a mahlstick and painter's palette with brushes, along with print, sculpture, and drawing books for study. Mercury enters at left holding his caduceus, which identifies him as a messenger. Associated with commerce, Mercury celebrates the financial success of the Company of the West, which administered Louisiana and other colonial territories. Holding a lamp is Prudence, lighting the way of good judgment.

### **After Hyacinthe Rigaud**

French, 1659–1743

***Louis XV (1710–1774),*** c. 1717–1725

Oil on canvas

Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art, G.52.9.132

When he became Regent in 1715, Philippe II was charged with preserving the Bourbon monarchy and assuring the succession of his five-year-old cousin, Louis XV. In that year, the Duke commissioned a monumental portrait of the young King from court portraitist Hyacinthe Rigaud for the handsome sum of 8000 *livres*. That portrait yielded several official copies, of which this is one.

To project an image of continuity, this portrait directly quoted Rigaud's iconic 1701 likeness of Louis XIV. As in the prototype, Louis XV is shown wearing magisterial blue velvet, ermine-lined robes emblazoned with gold fleurs-de-lis, and elegant white-cotton stockings. Symbols of authority abound: a crown and a

scepter topped with the hand of justice, representing Divine blessing, rest on a pillow by his side. Though he is just a boy, Louis XV is resplendent with royal attributes, announcing his legitimacy as Louis XIV's successor.

**Claude Lefèvre**

French, 1632–1675

***Louis XIV (1638–1715)***, 1670

Oil on canvas

New Orleans Museum of Art, Gift of Hirschl and Adler Gallery, 56.67

Thirty-two-year-old Louis XIV embodies the image of a glorious warrior king. He wears elaborate metal armor, lined with red velvet and fashioned with gold ornamental fleurs-de-lis, the symbol of the Bourbon monarchy. An ostrich-plumed hat sits behind his arm. The kid-leather gloves are luxuriously lined with fur and gold-thread trim.

Louis XIV, the “Sun King,” had a remarkably long reign, from 1643 to 1715. His tenure marked several political and cultural triumphs: consolidation of absolutist power in the French king, expansion of the opulent Chateau of Versailles, and the founding of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648. Louis XIV's ambitious domestic and foreign policies came at great cost and he waged a number of wars that effectively crippled the economy. As Regent, the Duke of Orleans attempted to rectify the crown's finances, in part by soliciting private investments in the French colony of Louisiana.

**Attributed to Guy Noël Aubry**

French, 18th century

***Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1715–1723)***,

n.d.

Oil on canvas

Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 842.3A

**Guido Reni**

Italian, 1575–1642

***The Meeting of David and Abigail***, c. 1615–1620

Oil on canvas

Norfolk, Virginia, Chrysler Museum of Art, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 71.524

Guido Reni depicts a scene from the biblical story of Abigail, who begs forgiveness for her cruel and imprudent husband, Nabal, who has refused to provide aid for King David of Israel's army. Moved by Abigail's beauty and humility, here sensitively rendered by the artist, David eventually marries her after Nabal's death.

The bright colors and smooth modeling are characteristic of Reni's classicism. Working mainly in Bologna, after a stint in Rome, Reni was one of the foremost painters of the seventeenth-century Bolognese school, which enjoyed a substantial reputation in Paris. Philippe II assembled an important group of Bolognese works purchased mainly from collections in Paris.

Before entering the Palais-Royal collection, this painting was owned by Anne-Jules, Duke of Noailles, a military commander in the War of Spanish Succession. At the Palais-Royal, the work hung in the same room as the painting on the right by Ludovico Carracci, one of Reni's teachers.

### **Lodovico Carracci**

Italian, 1555–1619

***The Dream of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, c. 1593**

Oil on canvas

Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1952.5.59

Lodovico Carracci and his cousins Annibale and Agostino founded a Bolognese academy of painting in the late sixteenth-century. There, they developed naturalistic yet expressive approaches to painting that would be promulgated by their students, and later championed by French academic theorist Roger de Piles in 1708.

A prime example of Lodovico's maturity as an artist, this painting features a fluid treatment of fabric and flesh and a moving emotionalism for which the Bolognese were most admired. Saint Catherine—identified by the spiked wheel in the lower left corner, the tool of her eventual torture—is here depicted asleep, dreaming of the Virgin and Child, who float gracefully above her. The gold ring on Saint Catherine's left hand symbolizes her devotion to the infant Christ.

Philippe II received this work as a gift from his former comrade, the Marquis de Nancre, who was appointed captain of the Swiss Guards at the Palais-Royal. This work was installed in the third cabinet of an *enfilade* (a linear suite of rooms) at the Palais-Royal, along with Guido Reni's *David and Abigail* (on view nearby).

### **Nicolas Poussin**

French, 1594–1665

***The Infant Bacchus Entrusted to the Nymphs of Nysa;***

***The Death of Echo and Narcissus*, 1657**

Oil on canvas

Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Mrs. Samuel Sachs in memory of her husband, Samuel Sachs, 1942.167

Right of center, a vine-wreathed Bacchus is cradled by nymphs. The child has been brought to the nymphs by red-cloaked Mercury, messenger of the Roman gods in his winged shoes. After the death of his mother, Bacchus was delivered by his father Jupiter to the care of the nymphs. Jupiter is seen in the clouds above, identified by the eagle. The composition is centered on a vine-covered grotto, with an expansive Mediterranean landscape at right. The frieze-like and statuesque figures signal Poussin's study of classical sculpture.

Here Poussin has conflated two mythological stories, and the lifeless figures at right are the dead Echo and Narcissus. The pairing of these stories is unique and their contrasting narrative incites a meditation on life and death, typical of the contemplative mood of Poussin's allegorical landscapes.

*The Infant Bacchus* was painted in 1657 for Poussin's close friend and fellow painter, Jacques Stella, who was also a well-connected picture dealer, and the work was praised by French art theorists before and

during Philippe II's lifetime. The Duke acquired the picture from the Stella family as part of his outstanding collection of thirteen paintings by France's most celebrated artist of the seventeenth century.

**Peter Paul Rubens**

Flemish, 1577–1640

***The Triumph of Rome: The Youthful Emperor Constantine Honoring Rome***, c. 1622–23

Oil on panel

The Hague, Mauritshuis, 837

A young personification of Rome sits on a throne crowned by the figure of Victory. The she-wolf and twin brothers Romulus and Remus, key figures in the mythological founding of Rome, are positioned at her feet. This work is among twelve oil sketches by Peter Paul Rubens depicting scenes from the life of the Emperor Constantine which were translated into tapestries offered to Cardinal Francesco Barberini during his visit to Paris in 1625. The Duke ultimately purchased these panels from the descendants of the Gobelins tapestry firm. Despite their diminutive size, the group was displayed prominently in one of the larger paintings galleries at the Palais-Royal, demonstrating Philippe II's vision of the French monarchy emulating the Roman Empire.

Rubens was well represented in Parisian collections and guidebooks to Paris routinely praised the artist's work at the Palais-Royal. At the French Academy, in the debate between "Rubenistes" and "Poussinistes," the Rubens faction lauded his expressive use of color, here evidenced in the bold, gestural brushwork with spare highlighting that deftly builds form.

**Giorgio Vasari**

Italian, 1511–1574

***Six Tuscan Poets***, 1544

Oil on panel

Minneapolis Institute of Art, 71.24

Giorgio Vasari, considered to be Europe's first art historian, was also an accomplished architect and painter. He produced *Six Tuscan Poets* around the same time that he began working on his most famous text, *The Lives of the Artists* (1550), a collection of biographies of Italian artists. In *The Lives*, Vasari advocated for the merits of *disegno*—an argument that would later inform eighteenth-century French debates about the advantages of line versus color.

Here Vasari presents six illustrious figures of the Italian Renaissance: from left to right, humanists Landino and Ficino (distinguished by their fifteenth-century professors' caps) and poets Petrarch, Boccaccio, Dante, and Cavalcanti (crowned with the laurel wreaths of poets). Engaged in intellectual debate, the thinkers gather around a table filled with tools of learning: instruments of geometry, astronomy, and geography, including a compass, quadrant, and terrestrial and celestial globes.

Dante, the author of *The Divine Comedy*, is seated in a carved wooden chair and dressed in a pale pink tunic and violet cassock. Identifiable by his distinctive profile, he holds a text by the ancient Roman poet Virgil, author of the *Aeneid*, the subject of Philippe II's Gallery of Aeneas, a connection the Duke must have appreciated. Philippe II acquired this erudite painting from the heirs of Cardinal Mazarin, a prominent art collector and minister to Louis XIV.

### **Giulio Romano**

Italian, c. 1499–1546

***The Birth of Bacchus***, c. 1530s

Oil on panel

Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 60.PB.7

Giulio Romano was considered to be the primary heir to the Raphaellesque tradition of *disegno* (drawing and design) and served as court artist to Federico II Gonzaga, first Duke of Mantua in northern Italy. This brilliantly hued work is among a series of twelve erotic mythological paintings produced for Gonzaga's office (*studiolo*).

Depicted is the story of the dramatic birth of Bacchus, Greek god of wine, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. At upper left, a vengeful goddess Hera watches from behind a cloud as her unfaithful husband Zeus leaves his lover, Semele, seated in profile and burning from Zeus's thunderbolt. Before her death, Semele gives birth to Bacchus, who is cradled by a pair of nymphs at lower center.

Most of the Gonzaga collection was acquired by King Charles I of England, which was sold after he was overthrown and beheaded in 1649. French banker and collector Everhard Jabach later brought part of this Romano series to Paris and his heirs sold the works to Philippe II. In total, the Duke owned at least fifteen paintings by Romano and sixteen attributed to Romano's master, Raphael, indicating his high esteem for the artist.

### **Alessandro Allori**

Italian, 1535–1607

***Venus Disarming Cupid***, 1570s

Oil on panel

Montpellier, Musée Fabre, 887.3

Cupid meets the gaze of Venus as he attempts to retrieve his bow from her grasp. The tone is playfully erotic. The frolicking doves at lower right complement the mood and identify Venus as the goddess of love, as do the carnations of betrothal and the golden ball that was her prize as the greatest beauty at the Judgment of Paris. The dark, fleeing figures at left are likely personifications of the anguish of love lost and crazed jealousy. Alessandro Allori's treatment of Venus's body conveys strength: defined contours and strong lines, with the musculature of an ancient sculpture.

The subject and composition reinterpret a design by Michelangelo, which had caused a huge sensation in Florence in the 1530s. Allori's treatment is an ode, in its bold line and modeling, to Florentine *disegno* (drawing or design). The saturated greens and blues of the silk cloth, Cupid's wings, and the landscape at upper left use the palette of Flemish art favored by Florence's great art patron Francesco de Medici.

Sometime in the 1560s, the painting was brought to Paris by its first owner, Lodovico Cattani da Diaceto, a noted figure at the Valois court of Henry III. In the seventeenth century, the picture was in the famed collections of the Princes of Conde. It was acquired by Philippe II at the Conde sales in the 1710s, an example of his tendency to scour Paris for treasures.

**Nicolas Poussin**

French, 1594–1665

***Ecstasy of Saint Paul*, 1643**

Oil on panel

Sarasota, Florida, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Museum purchase, 1956, SN 690

Though he spent much of his career in Rome, Nicolas Poussin is considered the founder of French Classicism. For the French Academy, Poussin's paintings stood for ideal purity and rational design. Academic advocates for the supremacy of line over color took his name, calling themselves "Poussinistes."

Poussin presents the glorious rapture of Saint Paul, buoyed by a cluster of angels. A leading French patron, Paul Freart de Chantelou, commissioned the work to complement another work in his collection, *Vision of Ezekiel*, then attributed to Raphael.

Poussin painted a larger version of this work, which was in Louis XIV's collection. In a competitive spirit, Philippe II often acquired work in counterpoint to the royal collections.

**Paolo Veronese**

Italian, 1528–1588

***Supper at Emmaus*, mid-1570s**

Oil on canvas

Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2571

Biblical feasts first emerged as an independent subject in Venetian painting in the late fifteenth century. This canvas is derived from a larger painting now in the Louvre, which had been in the collection of Louis XIV and must have been known to Philippe II.

The tight composition concentrates the scene, while emotion is intensified by the radiating light from Christ's head and the momentary reactions of the figures. The pilgrims' leaning poses, the dramatic blue sky, and the tense hand gestures all intensify the moment of revelation of Christ's presence, to whom the kind pilgrims had given shelter.

This picture was purchased in Italy by Pierre Crozat, the Duke's friend and great connoisseur, on one of his trips to negotiate the purchase of Queen Christina's collection. At the Palais-Royal, the picture was appreciated for its Venetian colorism and was displayed in the *salon à l'italienne*, a room dedicated to Veronese's art.

**Domenichino**

Italian, 1581–1641

***The Way to Calvary*, c. 1610**

Oil on copper

Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 83.PC.373

*The Way to Calvary* is a dynamic representation of the passion of Christ: surrounded by his torturers and struggling under the weight of his cross, Christ's weary gaze meets that of the viewer. Philippe II was an avid collector of Domenichino's works on copper, valued for their enamel-like surfaces, and this work was displayed within the *cabinet d'entrée* along with the two works at left and behind.

The popularity of Domenichino among seventeenth and early eighteenth-century French collectors may be attributed to the articulation and praise of the Bolognese school in French academic discourse. Art theorist Roger de Piles described this painting in his 1608 *Discours* as a work that approaches the “sublime.”

**Francesco Albani**

Italian, 1578–1660

***Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness***, c. 1603

Oil on copper

Sarasota, Florida, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 115

Philippe II displayed this intimate work, a gift from the Marquis de Nancre, in his *cabinet d'entrée*, a small chamber located behind the grand picture galleries where the Duke displayed other Bolognese works on copper, like the one at right.

In the 1727 description of the collection this work is attributed to Annibale Carracci, one of the founders of the Bolognese academy, but it is now considered to be by Francesco Albani, who absorbed the luminous color, noble classicism, and emotional grandeur of Carracci as his student.

Albani's copper paintings were highly regarded in France and well represented in the collections of Louis XIV and the Dukes of Orleans. Seventeenth century art theorist Roger de Piles wrote that they were “scattered like precious gems throughout Europe... They have become very much in fashion, and being learned and enjoyable, they please everyone.”

**Domenico Zampieri, called Domenichino**

Italian, 1581–1641

***St. John the Evangelist***, c. 1625–1628

Oil on canvas

Greenville, South Carolina, Museum & Gallery at Bob Jones University, P.69.467.14

Domenichino presents St. John the Evangelist as a handsome, divinely inspired youth, with his traditional attributes: the eagle, the book, and a scroll, referring to his scriptural texts. This work is a small autograph version after Domenichino's masterpiece in fresco at Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome, which a patron may have commissioned out of admiration for the original.

This canvas once belonged to Philippe de Lorraine, a lover of Philippe II's father, who must have given it to Philippe II, who displayed it in the *cabinet d'entrée* alongside other Bolognese works in this gallery.

Admired by eighteenth-century French artists and connoisseurs for the monumentality of its design and grace, *St. John the Evangelist* has enjoyed an enduring reputation as one of the greatest paintings of the sixteenth century. After it was sold in London at the turn of the nineteenth century, a visitor to the Earl of Carlisle's Castle Howard described the painting as “one of the most indisputable and admirable pictures of Domenichino existing. It is elevated, refined, and intense in feeling, and most delicately blended, in a warm and harmonious tone of the greatest clearness.”

### **Claude Augustin Duflos**

French, 1700–1786

after **Paolo Caliari, called Veronese**

Italian, 1528–1588

#### ***Supper at Emmaus***

Engraving on cream antique-laid paper

Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of William Gray from the collection of Francis Calley Gray, G1035

In collaboration with Philippe II, wealthy financier and collector Pierre Crozat initiated a project to record the most important paintings in Parisian collections, which included those of Louis XIV, the Duke, and Crozat himself.

The first of these volumes, known as a *recueil* (compendium), was published in 1729, six years after Philippe II's death, and dedicated to painters of Rome and Florence. The second volume was devoted to Venetian artists and published in 1742 by the print dealer Pierre-Jean Mariette. The publication featured lavishly illustrated engravings accompanied by art historical descriptions.

Crozat's Parisian *hôtel* (townhouse) on the Right Bank of Paris was located near the Palais-Royal and served as an important social and intellectual hub for artists, academics, and art lovers. Crozat, whose older brother Antoine was a major investor in the French colony of Louisiana, also served as an art advisor and dealer to Philippe II. He was instrumental, for example, in negotiating the purchase of paintings from Queen Christina's collection in 1721.

### **Noël-Nicolas Coypel**

French, 1690–1734

#### ***The Rape of Europa*, 1722**

Oil on canvas

Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D.

and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 97.128

### **Gerard Dou**

Dutch, 1613–1675

#### ***The Violin Player*, 1653**

Oil on canvas

Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, GE150

As one of the highest paid artists of the Dutch Golden Age, Gerard Dou's reputation was second only to Rembrandt's. Such eminent collectors as Cosimo III de' Medici acquired Dou's works. French art theorists marveled at the perfection of Dou's slick surface treatment and the convincing illusionism of his "invisible" brushwork, evident in the carpet of this painting. One of Philippe II's most important pictures from northern Europe, *The Violin Player* was hailed in a 1719 guidebook to Paris as one of Dou's great masterpieces.

The painting is probably a self-portrait. In the room at back left, a painting sits unfinished on an easel and an apprentice appears to be sizing a canvas or preparing pigments.

Below the window, the relief sculpture of children playing with a goat makes reference to the *paragone*—



the debate between painters and sculptors over whose art was more lifelike. The portrait, the studio view, and the reference to the *paragone* result in a praise of painting.

### **Godfried Schalcken**

Dutch, 1643–1706

***Preciosa Recognized***, late 1660s

Oil on panel

Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, Purchased 1898, 476

The scene is from Miguel de Cervantes's *La Gitanilla* (*The Little Gypsy Girl*), published in 1613 and translated to Dutch in 1643. In the story, Preciosa, the daughter of a wealthy couple, is abducted as a young child and raised by gypsies. As she matures into adulthood, her lover, Don Juan, is put on trial, which is presided over unbeknownst by Preciosa's biological father. Confessions lead to a discovery of Preciosa's past and the culminating moment when Preciosa's true parents recognize her is depicted here. The mother reaches out to embrace her long-lost daughter and the father is shown in confounded anguish. The juxtaposition of Preciosa's simple dress with her parents' finery is a demonstration of technical mastery, while the theatrical mode of depiction matches the fictional drama.

The seductive protagonist was a common feature in Schalcken's art, and the lush effect of the paint surface functions to further intensify the viewer's enchantment. *Preciosa* is one of Schalcken's most accomplished works. The textures of the mother's embroidered dress, her slipper and billowing sleeve, and the jewelry still-life in the foreground are hallmarks of Schalcken's highly refined style.

An artist who enjoyed substantial recognition in his lifetime, Schalcken had also worked for the German Elector Palatine Johan Wilhelm, a well-known collector of the period. Flemish engraver-dealer Jan van der Bruggen sold Schalcken's work in Paris, from whom Philippe II acquired this painting and who helped the Duke make contact with Adriaen van der Werff to commission the work at right.

### **Adriaen and Pieter van der Werff**

Dutch, 1659–1722; 1665–1722

***The Judgment of Paris***, 1716

Oil on panel

London, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Bourgeois Bequest, 1811, DPG147

Paris sits holding a golden apple while three goddesses vying for his attention: Venus, Juno, and Minerva. Venus reaches for the prize while her son Cupid appears at right along with a pair of doves at her feet. This ancient beauty pageant would unleash the Trojan War. Venus, trying to secure the golden prize, enticed Paris to seek out Helen of Troy, a beauty whose subsequent abduction resulted in mass bloodshed. The refined gestures, smooth modeling of the elongated female form, and marble-like surfaces engendered associations with gentility and antiquity.

Dutch art is rarely associated with nude subjects, though recent scholarship has repositioned their importance. With this in mind, the presence of *The Judgment of Paris* and other nudes by northern European artists is consistent with Philippe II's particular passion for erotic themes. The work was clearly of particular import for him—it served as the centerpiece of the blue dining room in his Dutch cabinet rooms.

Philippe II rarely worked directly with contemporary artists, but this commission is noted in Andriaen van der Werff's accounting book. It documents the Duke's considerable payment of 5,000 florins, reflecting the substantial international reputation van der Werff enjoyed in his lifetime.

### **Cornelis Poelenburgh**

Dutch, c. 1594/5–1667

#### ***Apollo and Coronis*, 1650s**

Oil on copper

Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, GE299

Copper paintings by the Utrecht artist Cornelis Poelenburgh were appreciated for their classical themes and collected by royals across Europe; Philippe II was no exception. This work, one of four attributed to Poelenburgh at the Palais-Royal, depicts the Greek god Apollo slaying his pregnant lover, Coronis, as punishment for her infidelity.

Categorized as an Italianate painter, Poelenburgh's landscape is bathed in a particular sunshine typical of this style in southern Europe. The copper surface yields reflection and high finish, and subtle details like the bloodstained yellow silk dress are intensified. The diminutive, yet strongly modeled nudes are also hallmarks of the dreamy harmonies of Poelenburgh's pastoral works.

In the 1727 description of Philippe II's paintings, this Poelenburgh is praised for a signature style and the intimacy of its scale. The Duke had a particular interest in the enticing surfaces of works on copper, as also seen in the next gallery.

### **Joachim Anthonisz Wtewael**

Dutch, 1566–1638

#### ***Jupiter in Danaë's Room*, 1595–1605**

Oil on copper

Paris, Musée du Louvre, R.F. 1979–23

Jupiter bursts into the room of the beautiful young Danae, descending upon her in a shower of gold. The startled Danae, flanked by an elderly maid and the winged Cupid, flings up her arm, but resistance is futile. She will later give birth to Jupiter's son—Perseus, the future slayer of Medusa.

Philippe II owned at least four paintings of this subject by Italian artists. At the Palais-Royal, this painting was incorrectly attributed to the German artist Hans Rottenhammer I (1564–1625). The contrived yet dynamic composition is in fact more typical of Joachim Anthonisz Wtewael of Utrecht. His art is the epitome of the Mannerist style typified by exaggerated, elongated forms and contorted poses. Wtewael's muscular bodies swoop, twist, and flail, conveying the drama of popular mythological narratives on an intimate scale and with an erotic sense of humor.

Four years after Philippe II's death in 1723, his pious son, Louis of Orleans, attempted to sell a number of the northern European paintings from the collection, including *Jupiter in Danaë's Room*, whose eroticism he may have found objectionable. For reasons unknown, however, the auction never took place, so the work remained at the Palais-Royal until the French Revolution.

### **Sébastien Bourdon**

French, 1616–1671

***Countess Ebba Sparre (1629–1662)***, 1652–1653

Oil on canvas

Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1952.5.34

At the invitation of Queen Christina of Sweden, Sebastien Bourdon left his native Paris to become the premier portraitist at the Swedish court. Christina commissioned this portrait of her intimate friend, the Countess Ebba Sparre.

Christina brought this portrait with her to Rome after abdicating the Swedish throne and converting to Catholicism. It was among the paintings from her collection later purchased by Philippe II. At some point after her death, the subject and owner of this painting became confused, likely because Bourdon also painted several portraits of Queen Christina herself. At the Palais-Royal, it was thought to be a portrait of the Queen, and was only correctly identified as her close confidante, Ebba, three centuries later, after it entered the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

### **Guido Cagnacci**

Italian, 1601–1663

***A Young Martyr***, c. 1650

Oil on canvas

Montpellier, Musée Fabre, 852.2.1

A young martyr, nude from the waist up, sprawls on the ground, the tools of torture beside her. The theatrical lighting, composition, and subject of this work—a powerful marriage of violence, eroticism, and religious fervor—epitomize Guido Cagnacci's art. Cagnacci initially worked on commissioned church altarpieces, but in the final decade of his career he relied upon private patronage, painting subjects for private devotion such as this work.

Queen Christina of Sweden may have acquired this painting after she converted to Catholicism and moved to Rome in 1655. After Philippe II purchased paintings from the Queen's collection in 1721, *A Young Martyr* was recorded as hanging in the Fourth Cabinet of the Palais-Royal. There, it was placed alongside several other Bolognese pictures with macabre religious themes—many of which are now untraced.

### **Andrea del Sarto**

Italian, 1486–1530

***Leda and the Swan***, c. 1520s

Oil on canvas

Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1402

In Greek mythology, Leda, wife of Tyndareus, King of Sparta, was adored by Jupiter, who seduced her in the form of a swan, resulting in the birth of the twins Castor and Pollux, the great Roman warriors.

Arriving at the Palais-Royal as part of the purchase of Queen Christina's collection, Andrea del Sarto's work is an embodiment of Florentine naturalism; the earthy, muted tones and soft contours achieve an overall atmospheric quality. Eschewing the overt sensuality common in most treatments of this subject, the tenderness of Leda's embrace and the caress of the swan's wing against her hip is matched with

enchancing infants, one asleep at the lower left.

Philippe II possessed a remarkable four other versions of *Leda and the Swan* by artists of the middle and late Italian Renaissance. This not only reflects Philippe's taste for erotic subjects, but also his tendency to accumulate different versions of the same subject. The Duke's engagement of comparison as way of understanding artistic choices and versions of subjects is demonstrated throughout his collection.

*Leda and the Swan* was fully restored for this occasion and has not been on view for more than one hundred years.

### **Paolo Veronese**

Italian, 1528–1588

***Portrait of a Woman with a Dog***, c. 1560–1570

Oil on canvas

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, inv. no. 423 (1930.121)

A woman stands before the viewer as if interrupted while reading, her thumb holding her place in the book. She looks to the left, lost in thought, a mood reinforced by the absent-minded placement of her hands. Her fashionable lap dog is a symbol of status and loyalty. It has been proposed the subject may be an actress. True or not, the costume is not of her period but of an earlier one, suggesting this is an historicized portrait.

Philippe II owned one of the most sensuous and spectacular collections of Venetian art gathered by any private individual. This picture was notably installed in the Palais-Royal's *salon à l'italienne*, a room dedicated to the art of Paolo Veronese, which is discussed on the panel at left.

### **Lorenzo Lotto**

Italian, c. 1480–1556

***The Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome, Peter, Francis, and an Unidentified Female Saint***, c. 1505

Oil on canvas

Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland. Purchased by private treaty with the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund 1984, NG 2418

Early Italian Renaissance paintings were not widely collected in eighteenth-century Paris, yet Philippe II owned works by Lorenzo Lotto and his teachers, demonstrating the impressive historical range of his collection. This devotional altarpiece, a *sacra conversazione* (holy conversation), is one of the earliest known paintings by Lotto. The young Venetian artist employed a naturalistic compositional device typical of his teacher Giovanni Bellini's workshop: a green cloth of honor marks the division between the mortal

world and the sacred space of the Virgin and Christ. The charmingly chubby child balances on his mother's knee, leaning forward as if to read the elderly saint's scroll, which also bears the artist's signature in Latin.

### **Lambert Sustris**

Dutch, c. 1515–after 1650

***The Education of Cupid***, c. 1640

Oil on canvas

El Paso Museum of Art, Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1961.1.32

In *The Education of Cupid*, Venus and her son Cupid are visited by Mercury, the messenger god, identified by the wings on his shoes. Young Cupid is being instructed about the potency of the arrows he will soon possess. These arrows strike immediate love in humans, nothing to take lightly. The painting was acquired in 1721 by Philippe II as part of Queen Christina's collection.

Despite the fact that Philippe II owned another large nude by Lambert Sustris, this work was not identified with the artist. The painting was attributed to the Italian artist Titian while at the Palais-Royal. The association was not unfounded, for the Dutch artist was a collaborator of Titian's in the late 1530s. Sustris's palette and his depiction of flesh and body contours approximate the Venetian style, while the naturalism and certain aspects of anatomy reflect the artist's northern European origins, seen here in Venus's disproportionately small head and narrow shoulders in relation to her larger hips. The figure of Mars is particularly well modeled, evidenced by his relaxed pose and projecting knees, the musculature of his torso and right arm, and his amorous gaze in *profil perdu* (lost profile).

Note the treatment of Venus in the Venetian style: she is supple, doughy, and sensuous, in contrast to the contemporary Florentine marble-like and muscular Venus seen in Allesandro Allori's *Venus and Cupid* in the third gallery of this exhibition.

### **Valentin de Boulogne**

French, 1591–1632

***A Musical Party***, c. 1626

Oil on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of The Ahmanson Foundation, AC1998.58.1

Paintings by Valentin de Boulogne, a French artist who lived and worked in Rome, were well represented in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French collections, including the royal collection. Philippe II received *A Musical Party* as a gift from the Marquis de Nancre, captain of the Swiss Guard at the Palais-Royal. The painting depicts an impromptu tavern concert of four men and a gypsy woman. This intimate, dramatically lit work—a poignant observation of the physical and psychological drama of the human body, coarsened by dirt, drink, and time—exemplifies Valentin's style, modeled after the Italian Baroque painter Caravaggio.

This painting was one of the sixty-four works retained by the third Duke of Bridgewater, an investor in the London sales of the Palais-Royal collection organized by Michael Bryan in 1798. In early nineteenth-century London, the picture was displayed at Bridgewater's home, Cleveland House, an elegant neo-Palladian townhouse. Royal Academy students avidly studied work by the Old Masters on view there. One

contemporary noted “...long before the National Gallery had been formed, the gallery... at Cleveland House...was for the English art student, in a limited degree indeed, what the Louvre is to the French.”

**Rembrandt van Rijn**

Dutch, 1645–1669

***The Mill***, 1645–1648

Oil on canvas

Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, 1942.9.62

Situated on a bulwark at a distance, this windmill faces the setting sun. A low vantage point and aerial perspective, combined with dark clouds giving way to a clear sky, reflected in the water below, gives this humble subject a sweeping monumentality. Seventeenth-century art writers Andre Felibien and Roger de Piles valued this painting as picturesque for its color harmonies and truth to nature, which was thought to express the essence and strength of Rembrandt’s spirit.

At the Palais-Royal, *The Mill* hung in the kitchen of the private apartments of Dutch and Flemish art. A seemingly improbable location, the room must have been considered appropriate for its dark setting where the luminous passages could glow. This unwonted placement demonstrates Philippe’s II’s cheeky wit, for he was a collector with so many masterpieces, even a room set aside for food preparation had them.

The painting enjoyed enormous fame in eighteenth-century France. While the picture fetched a surprisingly low sale price of 60 guineas in the London sales, it was greatly admired and studied by nineteenth-century artists, including Benjamin West, John Constable, and J.M.W. Turner. The picture’s technical virtuosity and mood played a considerable role in the development of Romantic landscape and gestural painting in English art.

Commensurate with its fame, the painting was purchased by Peter A.B. Widener in 1911 for the extraordinary sum of 100,000 British pounds sterling. The painting entered the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in 1942 as part of one of the most fundamental early gifts to the fledgling institution, founded in 1939. One hundred eighty three paintings from Philippe II’s exceptional collection are now housed in public institutions around the world.

**Luis de Bretez**

French, d. 1738

**Michel Étienne Turgot**

French, 1690–1751

***Plan de Paris***, 1734

The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2012.0206

Michel Etienne Turgot, the city planner of Paris, commissioned the architect Luis de Bretez to produce a survey of the French capital in 1734. The resulting map offers a bird’s-eye view of streets, churches, palaces, and homes and presents a compelling portrait of the city in the eighteenth century.

As this remarkably detailed view shows, the Palais- Royal is situated on the Right Bank of the Seine River and across the Rue Saint-Honore from the Louvre and Tuileries Palaces. The Louvre was the traditional

seat of power of the Bourbon kings, as well as the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture. The young King Louis XV lived at the Tuileries during Philippe II's Regency at the behest of the Duke of Orleans.

The Saint-Honore neighborhood was home to wealthy financiers who were drawn to the area's new grand residential squares. Many of Philippe II's social circle lived here. The Palais-Royal's first resident, Cardinal Richelieu, played a pivotal role in the development of the neighborhood, which was fully realized as part of Louis XIV's ambitious plan to completely redesign and modernize Paris.

**Jean-Louis Lemoyne**

French, 1665–1755

***Philippe II, Duke of Orléans,  
Regent of France (1674–1723)***, 1715

Marble

Musée National du Château de Versailles, MV 1901

**Jean-Louis Lemoyne**

French, 1665–1755

***Philippe II, Duke of Orléans,  
Regent of France (1674–1723)***, 1715–17

Bronze

Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland. Purchased with the assistance of funds from the Patrons of the National Galleries of Scotland and the Art Fund 1998, NG 2695

**Eustache Le Sueur**

French, 1616–1655

***Alexander and His Doctor***, c. 1648–49

Oil on canvas

London, National Gallery, Bought with the support of a number of gifts in wills, 1999, NG576

This painting entered the Palais-Royal collection by 1711, when engraver Benoit Audran I dedicated his copy of it (illustrated on the panel at right) to Philippe II. Enshrined in the Duke's pantheon of French art, the painting hung in the Poussin Cabinet and was the only work to represent Eustache Le Sueur, a contemporary of Nicolas Poussin and founding member of the French Academy.

A convalescent Alexander the Great is about to drink a potion prepared by a trusted physician, despite the fact that the Greek leader had been warned in a letter that there was a murder conspiracy within his inner circle. The composition is a reinvention of the work of another celebrated and tragic deathbed scene by Poussin, though here rendered in Le Sueur's muted palette, which complements the classical style and hard modeling.

After being sold in London as part of the dispersal of the Orleans collection, the work was installed as an overdoor in a home on St. James's Square in London, where it remained until the 1990s. Only then was it reidentified as Le Sueur's masterpiece, long assumed lost. On the occasion of this exhibition, the painting has traveled for the first time.