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**GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS
A QUEEN'S TREASURE FROM VERSAILLES:
MARIE-ANTOINETTE'S JAPANESE LACQUER**

The exhibition brings to the U.S. examples of Japanese lacquer boxes from the collection of Marie-Antoinette, part of a significant exchange between the Getty and Versailles



Footed Fan-shaped Box, artist unknown. Edo period, late 17th – mid-18th century, Lacquer. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. Photo: Thierry Ollivier. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

**On view through January 6, 2019
at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center**

LOS ANGELES – Marie-Antoinette (1755-1793) possessed one of the finest collections of Japanese lacquer boxes in Europe and counted them among her most cherished possessions. A group of these precious objects, rarely exhibited because of the delicate lacquer's vulnerability to light, is now on display at the J. Paul Getty Museum.



Hen-shaped Tiered Box, artist unknown. Edo period, late 17th - mid-18th century. Lacquer. Musée national des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. Photo: Thierry Ollivier. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

A Queen's Treasure from Versailles: Marie-Antoinette's Japanese Lacquer features lacquer boxes from Marie-Antoinette's private collection, several of them displayed open for the first time. Because lacquer is a material that fades over time when exposed to light, the presentation at the Getty will be in two rotations. The current group of boxes will be shown through mid-July, to be replaced by another set of boxes that will be on view until the close of the exhibition.

When Empress Maria Theresa of Austria died in 1780 she left her collection of 50 small Japanese boxes to her daughter, Marie-Antoinette. The French queen had her private sitting room in Versailles, the *cabinet doré*, redecorated specifically to showcase these precious pieces. Over the next eight years she added about 30 pieces to the collection. When revolutionaries forced the royal family to leave Versailles for Paris in 1789, the queen asked a trusted art dealer to inventory and pack up the lacquer boxes. The boxes were safely preserved in Paris and, after Marie-Antoinette's execution in 1793, transferred to the state.

All of the boxes in the exhibition are Japanese, from the mid-Edo period (late-17th to mid-18th centuries). Marie-Antoinette and the French aristocracy's taste for objects from East Asia was very fashionable during the 18th century. At the time, works of Asian lacquer and porcelain were imported into major European cities and sold by art dealers to distinguished clients throughout Europe.

Marie-Antoinette likely did not keep anything in her treasured boxes, although many of them were intended for specific uses. For example, one of a pair of elaborately decorated boxes on stands features an ensemble of four small, square boxes for storing incense.

Many of the endearing Japanese lacquer boxes displayed are shaped after other objects or animals, including fans, musical instruments, a melon, and a hen.

The loan of these boxes is part of an exchange between the J. Paul Getty Museum and Versailles. The Getty Museum owns an important desk that the queen ordered for her husband, King Louis XVI. The desk, made by her preferred cabinetmaker Jean-Henri Riesener in 1777, has been on long-term loan to Versailles and displayed in the room for which it was made in the Petit Trianon since 2001.

The exhibition is on view through January 6, 2019 in the Getty Museum's South Pavilion, where the Museum's collection of French decorative arts is also exhibited, and is curated by Anne-Lise Desmas, senior curator of sculpture and decorative arts, and Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of sculpture and decorative arts at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

The J. Paul Getty Museum collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 3 p.m. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Same-day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for one fee through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program. Visit the Museum Information Desk at the Center or the Villa to obtain a coupon good for same-day complimentary parking at the other site.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

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