

LOUDRY'S PAINTED MENAGERIE

*Portraits of Exotic Animals
in Eighteenth-Century Europe*



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JEAN-BAPTISTE OUDRY

This beautiful volume—published to coincide with an exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum—is the first to focus on Jean-Baptiste Oudry's life-size portraits of animals from the royal menagerie at Versailles. A tiger, a lion, a leopard, and, most impressive of all, the famous rhinoceros known as Clara joined a group of other exotic animals in Oudry's "painted menagerie," which was purchased in 1750 by his German patron, the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

The book's insightful essays situate this suite of paintings within the context of Oudry's career; discuss Oudry's remarkable drawings of animals; and present a fascinating history of menageries and of the phenomenon known as "Claramania"—the public sensation caused by the travels of the Indian rhinoceros through Europe. The volume also contains an essay on the conservation of Oudry's portraits of a lion and of Clara, paintings that have not been on display for more than a century.

With 86 color and 17 black-and-white illustrations

Above: Jean-Baptiste Perroneau, *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Oudry* (detail), 1753. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 7158. Photo: © Hervé Lewan/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

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*Portraits of Exotic Animals
in Eighteenth-Century Europe*

Edited by Mary Morton

With essays by

Colin B. Bailey

Marina Belozerskaya

Charissa Bremer-David

Christoph Frank

Christine Giviskos

Mark Leonard

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The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

This volume accompanies the exhibition *Oudry's Painted Menagerie*, organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the Staatliches Museum Schwerin and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The exhibition is on view at the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, May 1–September 2, 2007; at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, October 7, 2007–January 6, 2008; and at the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, April 4–July 6, 2008.

The J. Paul Getty Museum's presentation of the exhibition is sponsored by



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FOREWORD

Oudry's Painted Menagerie is the result of an international collaboration of conservators, curators, and art historians. The project was born in Schwerin in north-central Germany in 2001, on the reemergence of two enormous canvases, one of a lion, the other of a rhinoceros, painted by the great eighteenth-century *animalier* Jean-Baptiste Oudry. These paintings, referenced in the scholarly literature but not seen in public for some 150 years, have been treated in the paintings conservation studio of the J. Paul Getty Museum over the past several years. They now hang alongside other life-size portraits of exotic animals painted by Oudry and sold as a suite in 1750 to the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Oudry's primary patron.

The presence of "Clara" (as the famous rhinoceros was known) has generated enormous excitement and a rather loyal following among many who have encountered her portrait in the conservation studio. Mary Tavener Holmes, an independent scholar of eighteenth-century French art and a member of the Getty Museum's Paintings Conservation Council, has written a wonderful children's book on the subject of Clara's tour, *My Travels with Clara*, published in conjunction with the exhibition. Charissa Bremer-David, of the Department of Sculpture and Decorative Arts, has gathered together a fabulous array of art objects inspired by Clara's image for the Getty venue of the exhibition, bringing Oudry's paintings into the broader realm of fashion, popular entertainment, and animal celebrity. The Getty venue also features a body of drawings, selected by Christine Giviskos, assistant curator of drawings, mostly from the collection at Schwerin, which reveals the artist's extraordinary graphic skills and his particular sensitivity in rendering animals.

Oudry's epic animal paintings will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in the fall of 2007, and then home to Germany, where they will be installed once again in all their splendid glory in the duke's elegant hunting lodge called Ludwigslust. The return of Oudry's painted menagerie will help complete the renovation of this great ducal seat, reminding visitors of the glorious reign of one of Germany's great eighteenth-century art patrons, Christian Ludwig II of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

I am enormously grateful to Kornelia von Berswordt-Wallrabe, Director of the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, for her generous enthusiasm for this project, and to Peter C. Marzio, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for bringing these marvelous objects to museum visitors in Texas. My thanks go to Wachovia for their sponsorship of the exhibition in Los Angeles; to the Friends of Heritage Preservation and to the Getty Museum Paintings Conservation Council for funding the treatment of *Rhinoceros* and *Lion*; to the FAMA Kunststiftung for funding treatment of the *Bustard and Guinea Hen*; and to Feldtmann Kulturell for funding treatment of *Demoiselle Crane, Toucan, and Tufted Crane*. Here at the Getty Museum I would like to thank Mark Leonard, conservator of paintings; Scott Schaefer, curator of paintings; and Mary Morton, associate curator of paintings, for spearheading this project and seeing it through to its marvelous completion.

Michael Brand
Director
J. Paul Getty Museum

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was conceived by Mark Leonard, conservator of paintings, at the Getty Museum, and Scott Schaefer, curator of paintings, who were profoundly taken with Oudry's *Rhinoceros* and *Lion* on unrolling them six years ago in the basement of the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, and who expertly guided the enterprise from its inception to its culmination in this exhibition.

Crucial to the realization of this exhibition was the extraordinary enthusiasm, energy, and collegiality of the fine staff of the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, beginning with Director Kornelia von Berswordt-Wallrabe, and including Hela Baudis, Gerhard Graulich, Gero Seelig, Regine Kränz, and Jutta Allman.

The collaboration began with the benefit of generous funding from the Friends of Heritage Preservation, a group of Los Angeles residents with a commitment to art and architectural conservation. It continued with the support of the Paintings Conservation Council, an equally committed group of donors who have provided exceptional support for a variety of paintings conservation projects at the Getty Museum. Conservators Mark Leonard and Tiarna Doherty worked tirelessly on the two largest canvases in the exhibition, *Rhinoceros* and *Lion*, restoring them to the immaculate condition in which they are displayed in the exhibition. Gene Karraker coordinated the production of new frames for both these paintings, based upon existing models from the Schwerin collections. William Friedkin recorded on film the extraordinary odyssey of the Schwerin paintings to Los Angeles and made his footage available for the exhibition project.

We are grateful to the institutions and private collectors who have generously lent their objects to the rhino-mania section of the exhibition, which tracks the influence the famous Dutch rhinoceros named Clara effected on visual culture in Europe: at the British Museum, London, Antony Griffiths, Mark McDonald, and Martin Royalton-Kisch; at the Courtauld Institute, London, Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen; at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Paul Williamson; at Galerie Steinitz, Paris, Bernard and Benjamin Steinitz; at the Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Martin Roth and Ulrich Pietsch; at Gallerie d'Arte Moderna, Florence, Carlo Sisi (former director), and Isabella Lapi Ballerini; at Gallerie de Palazzo Leoni Montanari, Vicenza, Fatima Terzo; at Ca'Rezzonico, Museo del Settecento Veneziano, Venice, Giandomenico

Romanelli and Filippo Pedrocchi; at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, J. P. Sigmond, Freek Heijbroek, and Ronald de Leeuw; at the Historisches Museum Bern, Thomas Richter and Peter Jezler; at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Wendy Kaplan and Nancy Thomas; at the Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library, UCLA, Katherin Donahue; Jeanne and Andrea Rothe, and Mark Leonard; at the Musée du Louvre, Paris, Marc Bascou and Marie-Laure de Rochebrune; at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Susan Allen, David Brafman, and Marcia Reed; and at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Weston Naef, Virginia Heckert, and Anne Lyden. We are also grateful to our colleagues at the British Museum, London, for lending to the selection of Oudry drawings from Schwerin in the exhibition.

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the exhibition evolved with the input of a number of talented people. We would like to acknowledge the support of Director Michael Brand; past and present colleagues in the Paintings Department, Virginia Brilliant, Charlotte Eyeran, Edouard Kopp, Jean Linn, Tom Jacobs, Tanya Paul, Jon Seydl, Phaedra Siebert, Kabir Singh, Anne Woollett, and in particular Audrey Sands, who researched Oudry's menagerie paintings and completed an undergraduate thesis on the subject at Columbia University; in the Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department, Antonia Bostrom, Peggy Grosse, and Bieke van der Mark; in the Exhibitions Department, Sophia Allison, Quincy Houghton, Amber Keller, Paige-Marie Ketner, and Susan McGinty; in the Registrar's Office, Cherie Chen, Sally Hibbard, Amy Linker, Meagan Miller, and Betsy Severance; in Exhibition Design, Lily Lien, Emily Morishita, Merritt Price, and Nicole Trudeau; in Museum Administration, Mikka Gee Conway, Barbara Smith, and Julia Tranner; in Preparations, Bruce Metro and his team; in Paintings Conservation, Carmen Albendea, Kristen deGhetaldi, Sue Ann Chui, Elisabeth Mention, Laura Rivers, Yvonne Szafran, and Tatyana Thompson; Nancy Turner in Paper Conservation and Brian Considine in Decorative Arts and Sculpture Conservation; in the Education Department, Mari-Tere Alvarez, Peggy Fogelman, Clare Kunny, and Peter Tokofsky; in Interactive Programs, Sandy Johnson and Anne Martens; in Public Programs, Laurel Kishi and Sarah McCarthy; in the Web Group, Annelisa Stephan and Vicki Porter; Catherine Comeau in Publications; and in Communications, Mara Benjamin, Miranda Carroll, John Giurini, and Ron Hartwig.

At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, we are grateful to Director Peter C. Marzio and European Art Curator Edgar Peters Bowron for their steady interest in having Oudry's painted menagerie in Houston.

The catalogue was ably assembled and produced by Jim Drobka, John Harris, and Suzanne Watson; expertly edited by Cynthia Newman Bohn; and illustrated through the efforts of Dominique Loder and Cherie Chen. I would like to thank the five essay authors: Colin B. Bailey, chief curator of the Frick Collection in New York, who read through several of the essays in draft; Christoph Frank, professor of art and architecture at the Università della Svizzera italiana in Mendrisio, Italy, whose unflagging archival research brought to light fascinating new material about Oudry's relationship with the court of Schwerin; Marina Belozerskaya, an independent scholar whose passion for animals, good stories, and beautiful things enlivens this volume; and my Museum colleagues Charissa Bremer-David and Christine Givikos, for their engaged and engaging texts, and for their curatorial expertise.

Mary Morton
Associate Curator
Department of Paintings



“A LONG WORKING LIFE, ♦ CONSIDERABLE RESEARCH AND ♦ MUCH THOUGHT”

An Introduction to the Art and Career of Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755)

COLIN B. BAILEY

IN JULY 1753 JEAN-BAPTISTE PERRONNEAU (1715–1783) FINALLY delivered his reception pieces to the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture.¹ His *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Oudry* (fig. 1) showed the urbane and prosperous sixty-seven-year-old academician, whom contemporaries recalled as *fort replet* (quite chubby), standing before a canvas on which he had just started work—a pair of hunting dogs are drawn in outline at left. Immaculately bewigged and powdered, his white lace jabot and cuffs without a speck of paint, Oudry leans against a chair upholstered in Genoan crimson velvet. He cradles a large palette in his left arm (the colors laid out in orderly arrangement), holds several spotless brushes in one hand, and gestures toward his palette knives with the other. Attached to the palette, and glinting against his olive-green waistcoat, is a silver palette cup that holds diluent with which to thin the paint: Oudry often advised his students “not to spare the turpentine.”² A striped handkerchief peeks out from the pocket at lower right; it, too, is without a blemish.³

Perronneau’s official portrayal of an academician at the apogee of his career went on public view a month later at the Salon of 1753, where Oudry exhibited no fewer than twenty-nine works—eighteen paintings, five drawings, six prints—in a sort of end-of-career retrospective.⁴ The artist’s vitality and ingenuity were everywhere commended. Friedrich Melchior Grimm, writing in the recently created *Correspondance littéraire*, praised the canine family group *Lice Feeding Her Pups* (fig. 2) as “le premier tableau du Salon,” an indirect attack on Oudry’s colleague (and former protégé), François Boucher (1703–1770), who had exhibited his masterpieces for Madame de Pompadour, *The Rising of the Sun* and *The Setting of the Sun* (London, Wallace Collection), at the same venue.⁵

By mid-century Oudry’s preeminence in the contemporary visual culture of the French court and capital was unquestioned—although modern scholarship has not considered this to be an altogether appropriate role for a mere animal painter to play.⁶ Queen Maria Leszczyńska’s favorite artist, with sumptuous living quarters in the Louvre and a beautiful studio in the Tuileries, Oudry had worked for the court for over a quarter of a century. Director of the Beauvais tapestry works since 1734—he began commissioning cartoons from Boucher the following year—he also held office at the Gobelins



FIGURE 2
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Lice Feeding Her Pups (Bitch Hound Nursing Her Pups)*, 1752. Oil on canvas, 103 × 131 cm (40½ × 51⅝ in.). Paris, Musée de la chasse et de la nature, inv. 71.2.1. Photo: © Nicolas Mathéus, Musée de la chasse et de la nature, Paris.

FIGURE 1
Jean-Baptiste Perronneau (French, 1715–1783), *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Oudry*, 1753. Oil on canvas, 131 × 105 cm (51⅝ × 41⅜ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 7158. Photo: © Hervé Lewan/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

manufactory, where he was appointed *inspecteur* in 1748. A portraitist by training, a painter of religious compositions by necessity, as his career took off in the 1720s Oudry established himself as the foremost painter of hunts, animals, still lifes, and landscapes, as well as the illustrator of poets Paul Scarron and Jean de La Fontaine. His annual income rose from around 900 livres, in the first years of his marriage to the daughter of a mirror maker in December 1709, to 18,000 livres in the last decades of his life.⁷

At the same time he aspired to the fullest academic honors. Received as a history painter in February 1719, he “ascended to the most honorable ranks of the Company” and became a professor in March 1743, with the right to pose the nude male model for the academy’s life class.⁸ With little interest in art theory, and yet fully respectful of the hierarchy of the genres and its distinction between “history” and the other “talents”—a divide Oudry in some ways bridged—in June 1749 and December 1752 he presented two lectures at the academy on the practical and technical aspects of the painter’s craft.⁹ In Perronneau’s portrait details such as the laid-in canvas, palette cup, spotless paintbrushes, and general cleanliness overall can each be associated with Oudry’s recommendations for better artistic practice. And Oudry’s investigations into color theory and chiaroscuro prompted still lifes of white objects set against a white background (*des fonds blancs*) that were recognized as virtuoso demonstrations of some of his deeply pondered ideas.¹⁰

Immensely prolific, and possessor of an organized studio—fellow painter Alexandre-François Desportes quipped that he especially liked Oudry’s paintings “when they were entirely from his hand”¹¹—in a career of some forty years Oudry is estimated to have produced about a thousand paintings and three thousand drawings.¹² His industriousness was legendary. While he claimed to work no faster than other artists, he admitted starting his day earlier, “often greeting the sunrise with my palette at the ready.”¹³ Oudry’s earliest biographer noted that he did not waste afternoons paying call on his fellow tenants at the Louvre and that even his evenings were spent drawing.¹⁴

Oudry was born within a few years of Antoine Watteau (1683–1721), whose path he must have crossed many times on the pont Notre-Dame; François Le Moyne (1688–1737), the *premier peintre* who was working at Versailles when Oudry was painting animals at the Ménagerie de Versailles; and Jean-François de Troy (1679–1752), the fabrication of whose Esther series at

the Gobelins manufactory Oudry oversaw. With them, Oudry stands as one of the founding fathers of the Rococo. But since his career continued and overlapped with those of the younger academicians who developed the *style pittoresque* into the New Painting of the 1730s and 1740s, he is often compared to Boucher, Jean-Siméon Chardin, and the generation of 1700, and, in truth, found slightly wanting. A survey of Oudry’s art and life is thus a useful way to approach the state of French painting in the post-Regency years. The first decades of Louis XV’s personal reign were an economic golden age, in which the priorities of royal and aristocratic decoration acted as an engine for the development of a luminous, painterly language of tremendous refinement, vitality, and invention: qualities occluded somewhat under the rubric of “Rococo.”¹⁵

A much earlier effigy of the artist, this time a self-portrait in gouache and pen and ink (fig. 3), suggests that the road to honors and success was not necessarily an easy one. Drawn when he was around thirty, this three-quarter view of a fresh-faced young man whose hair is covered by an artist’s kerchief communicates a certain reticence (and maybe even anxiety).¹⁶ The grandson of a master founder (*maître-fondeur*) established on the rue de la Ferronnerie, whose uncles both worked in the family business, Oudry was the son of a member of Académie de Saint-Luc, the painters’ guild to which were attached practitioners of the mechanical arts of painting and sculpture (and art dealers as well). Trained as a *maître-peintre*, Oudry’s father Jacques (ca. 1661–1720) was in fact a dealer on the pont Notre-Dame, with premises a few houses down from the shop of his more well-known contemporary Edme-François Gersaint.¹⁷ In November 1705 Jacques enrolled his son in the guild’s school (where Oudry would win prizes for drawing and later assume the post of professor) and placed him as an apprentice with the prominent portraitist Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746), with whom the young Oudry studied for five years, probably between 1705 and 1709.¹⁸ Lodging in his master’s home on the rue Saint-Avoye, Oudry apparently took on the running of Largillière’s domestic affairs, as well as assisting in his commissions, and may well have become a sort of surrogate son to him. (At Oudry’s wedding in December 1709 Largillière was the only witness who was not a relative of either bride or groom).¹⁹ Throughout his career Oudry made reference to the training he had received from his *cher maître*, and his early manner was imbued with Largillière’s warm-toned,



FIGURE 3
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Self-Portrait*, n.d. Brush, pen and ink, gouache, 31.2 × 25 cm (12¼ × 9⅞ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, inv. RF 31099.1. Photo: © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

painterly colorism, indebted to Flemish models in general, and Rubens and Van Dyck in particular. Having trained in Antwerp and London, Largillière was among the principal exponents of Rubenism in French painting at the end of the seventeenth century; following his apprenticeship with him, Oudry went on to make studies after Rubens's Medici cycle in the Palais du Luxembourg.²⁰ From early on a range of Northern models was available to Oudry. His hunts evoke the bloody combats of Frans Snyders (1579–1657) and Jan Fyt (1611–1661); his opulent trophies recall Jan Weenix (1642–1719), his group portraits of birds, Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–1695), his aggressive swans, Jan Asselyn (1610–1652). Largillière had Oudry copy Dutch hunting scenes²¹ and may also have instilled in him an admiration for Nicolaes Berchem (1620–1683), whom Oudry would later rank higher than Titian as a model for the landscape painter.²²

After leaving Largillière's studio, Oudry initially sought a career within the guild. His parents' marriage portion to him and his bride included money for the purchase of his *maîtrise* (200 livres); Oudry père rose to become director of the Académie de Saint-Luc, and Oudry's bust-length *Saint Jerome* decorated the guild's chapel on the rue du Haut-Moulin (by the pont Notre-Dame) during his lifetime and beyond.²³ It was only in June 1717, when his accomplishments as a portraitist had attracted an invitation from the court of Saint Petersburg,²⁴ that Oudry presented himself for membership at the Académie royale. Just under two years later, in February 1719, he was received as a history painter with the somewhat leaden allegory *Abundance with Her Attributes* (fig. 4).²⁵

Oudry's immersion in the guild and the milieu of the pont Notre-Dame, as well as his apprenticeship with an artist steeped in the Franco-Flemish tradition, took the place of the more formal, academic training that an artist like Chardin would undergo fifteen years later. Ironically, Oudry would cleave to the strictest of orthodoxies in his reliance on drawing, preparing (or recording) all his compositions in studies executed in a variety of media—from black and white chalk, pen and ink, to gouache and pastel—and on papers of various hues. His breakthrough came in the early 1720s, when through his connection to the well-placed engraver and miniaturist, Jean-Baptiste Massé (1687–1767)—whose town house on the place Dauphine he decorated in collaboration with Claude Audran—Oudry was presented to two of the most powerful (and cultivated) figures in the royal household: Louis Fagon



(1680–1744), son of Louis XIV's *premier médecin*, and *intendant des finances* in Louis XV's administration, and Henri-Camille, marquis de Béringhen (1693–1770), boon companion to the young monarch, whose father was *premier écuyer de la Petite Ecurie* (a post the son would inherit in February 1724).²⁶ In the early 1720s, Fagon commissioned Oudry to decorate his country residences in Fontenay-aux-Roses (much admired by Mariette) and at the château de Voré; he would be responsible for Oudry's appointment as painter to the Beauvais manufactory in 1726, and for proposing him as director eight years later.²⁷ Somewhat ironically, Fagon's private commissions to Oudry were for painted rather than woven wall decorations, and the suite of panels for the Salon of the château de Voré, recently acquired by the Louvre, shows Oudry's fluency in arabesque ornamentation and his familiarity with the repertory of the *fête galante*. Characters from the commedia dell'arte disport themselves with people of fashion, who hunt, fish, dance, and attend rough and ready entertainments in the open air (fig. 5). It was noted that a guitar-playing Oudry also acted as the master of ceremonies at Fagon's country retreats, taking on the role of Pierrot in the *parades* he organized there.²⁸ As with Watteau and the painters of the *fête galante*, personal theater and the pleasures of elite sociability infiltrated the iconography of Oudry's decorations.²⁹ More pertinent perhaps, through the protection of the Béringhen dynasty, in 1723 and 1724 Oudry received the commission to decorate the exterior panels of the two new royal carriages, a ten-seater and a twelve-seater. This was not his earliest royal commission—in 1721 he had painted birds for the stage sets of a ballet performed at the Tuileries Palace³⁰—but it was a much more public display of his entire hunt repertory.³¹

Having been introduced to the royal stables, Oudry now gained access to the royal kennels (the *Vénerie royale*). In 1725 he painted *Misse and Turlu, Two Greyhounds Belonging to Louis XV* (Musée national du château de Fontainebleau), the first of eleven overdoors for the château de Compiègne that portray dogs from the royal pack (*la meute*) of whom Louis XV was

FIGURE 4
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Abundance with Her Attributes*, 1719. Oil on canvas, 181 × 145.5 cm (71¼ × 57¼ in.). Château de Versailles and Château du Trianon, inv. MV 7205. Photo: © Gérard Blot/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

FIGURE 5
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Dance* (Decorative Panel Painted for Louis Fagon, at the Château de Voré), 1720–23. Oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. RF 2002-22. Photo: © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.





FIGURE 6
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Polydore (One of Louis XV's Dogs)*, 1728. Oil on canvas, 138.5 × 169.3 cm (54½ × 66⅞ in.). Château de Fontainebleau, inv. 7026. Photo: © Gérard Blot/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

inordinately fond. One of the ministers quipped that the king “worked like a dog for his dogs” (*fait véritablement un travail de chien pour ses chiens*), and that he knew the names and breeds of each one. Among Louis’ favorites was the pointer *Polydore* (fig. 6), painted in 1728, shown standing to attention, the mark of the *Venerie royale* branded on his flank. The following year the king would inform his uncle, the *grand veneur*, that Polydore had sired six pups on Mascarade and indeed something of Polydore’s potency is captured in Oudry’s overdoor decoration.³²

In the series for Compiègne, Oudry was following a model established by the older animal painter, Alexandre-François Desportes (1661–1743), who in 1702 had painted portraits of Louis XIV’s favorite hunting dogs as overdoors for the château de Marly.³³ Oudry’s instincts as a courtier may

also have served him well, since he was obliged to paint certain of his canine portraits in the presence of the king himself.³⁴ (By contrast, Desportes seems to have run into difficulties with the boorish *valets de la vénerie*).³⁵ Between 1725 and 1752, Oudry would be almost continuously employed on royal decorations of cynegetic themes, from affectionate portrayals of Louis XV’s setters, pointers, and hounds, to monumental narratives of the hunt in action, to plangent still lifes of antler trophies (the *têtes bizarres*) (fig. 7).³⁶

The rituals and ceremonies of the hunt, no less than Louis XV and the court’s obsession with them, had significant implications for the patronage of members of the Académie royale generally, and for Oudry above all. Royal commissions aside, in the 1720s Oudry’s expansive allegories and still lifes, with their asymmetrical, rhythmic compositions, opulent accoutrements,



FIGURE 7
Jean-Baptiste Oudry,
*Stag Head with
Deformed Antlers*, 1750,
Oil on canvas, 171 ×
108 cm (67³/₈ × 42¹/₂ in.).
Château de Fontaine-
bleau, inv. 7064.
Photo: © Réunion des
musées nationaux/Art
Resource, New York.



FIGURE 8
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Dead Wolf*, 1721. Oil on canvas, 193 × 260 cm (6 ft. 4 in. × 8 ft. 6³/₈ in.).
London, Wallace Collection, inv. P626. Photo: © By kind permission of the Trustees of the
Wallace Collection, London.

and mysterious encounters, are steeped in the pleasures (and perhaps also the dangers) of the hunt.³⁷ Among the grandest of these *retours de chasse*, the Wallace Collection's *Dead Wolf* of 1721 (fig. 8), evokes the most seigniorial of residences—there are even fleurs de lis decorating the crust of the half-eaten game pie.³⁸ The conspicuous display of fruit and wine is a tour de force of illusionism: A small mountain of figs is cooling (untouched) in the porcelain bowl beneath the damask tablecloth. Yet the presence of the dead wolf, not an animal commonly hunted in France, adds an unexpectedly violent note. And the single-barrel flintlock gun, so prominent in the center of the composition, does not inspire confidence; it was an instrument used for shooting wild fowl, of which there are none in sight.³⁹

Similarly audacious (and equally disturbing) is *The Return from the Hunt with a Dead Roe Deer* (fig. 9) of the same year, where the struggling heron, still very much alive, is attached to the same branch as the dead roe, hanging in an ungainly attitude.⁴⁰ The silent presence of a pair of hooded falcons, jauntily perched on the long arm of the gun and oblivious to the heron's desperate (and noisy) machinations, may have introduced an anachronistic note, since *la chasse au faucon* had long passed out of fashion, and by the 1720s was largely a ceremonial affair. But in pairing the heron and the roe deer Oudry was engaging in one of his favorite pictorial tropes, a juxtaposition that recurs throughout his oeuvre and was discussed in his lecture of December 1752: the illusion of feather and fur, and the different techniques and applications required of the painter to achieve it.⁴¹

As would be typical of Oudry's commitment to the public display of his work, *The Return from the Hunt*, not painted on commission, was among the twelve paintings shown at the Louvre at the Salon of 1725, where it was characterized by the *Mercure de France* as “une composition assez bizarre.”⁴² In all likelihood, this same group of paintings—which included an enormous stag hunt (fig. 10), a group of aquatic still lifes made in Dieppe, and a large vertical buffet decoration—along with the rest of Oudry's studio (“tous les tableaux de son Atelier”), were transported to Versailles in March 1726, when twenty-six works were arranged in three rooms of the *appartements du roi* for the delectation of the sixteen-year-old king, his twenty-three-year-old wife, and members of their court.⁴³ It was an unprecedented honor (and acclamation) for Oudry—the first mid-career retrospective in the history of art, perhaps!—but it did not necessarily help sell his pictures. *The Return*



FIGURE 9
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Return from the Hunt with a Dead Roe Deer*, 1721. Oil on canvas, 163 × 129 cm (64 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. G 184. Photo: © Courtesy Staatliches Museum Schwerin.



FIGURE 10
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Stag Hunt*, 1723. Oil on canvas, 303 × 465 cm (9 ft. 11 in. × 15 ft. 3 in.).
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. NM 867. Photo: © National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm.

from the Hunt remained in Oudry's possession for the rest of his life; and *The Stag Hunt* would be acquired only in 1740 by the Swedish ambassador, Count Tessin, for Queen Luisa Ulricke's Banqueting Hall in Stockholm.⁴⁴

However, since Louis XV and his intimates hunted three times a week, and every day when the court was at Fontainebleau and Compiègne—in the first decade of his personal reign the king opened new pathways through his forests, replenished the game reserves, and even refurbished the Ménagerie—Oudry did not lack for work.⁴⁵ In 1726 he was appointed painter to Beauvais, responsible for providing designs for a new tapestry series of *Les Chasses nouvelles*, representing the five principal animal hunts. Two years later he was contracted to furnish the manufactory with eight large compositions as cartoons for the *Amusements champêtres* (1728), the *Comédies de Molière* (1732), and the *Métamorphoses d'Ovide* (1734)—thus extending his range into genre and theatrical subjects, which were not altogether his forte, and prompting him to hire Boucher as soon as possible.⁴⁶ In January 1728, Oudry was ordered to follow the royal hunt—a horse was provided—and for two years worked on *Louis XV Hunting the Stag in the Forest of Saint-Germain* (fig. 11)

for the *cabinet du roi* at Marly, the first of his panoramic modern histories, in which not only the thirteen hunters, but “all the horses and dogs” were “exact Portraits.”⁴⁷ Oudry must have sensed that if he succeeded in this new genre—punctiliously specific in details of location and protagonists, but transcendent in its vision of the Bourbon court in action—royal patronage would continue in abundance. Hence the time taken in crafting this composition; hence, too, the portrait of himself that Oudry commissioned from his former master and which he faithfully copied in the lower right-hand corner (fig. 12).⁴⁸ Dressed in hunting costume, crayon and paper in hand, Oudry discreetly insists that his work is created from life (*d'après nature*). His self-confident appearance as well as a certain embonpoint suggest that the forty-four-year-old artist had finally arrived.

After proving himself in 1730, three years later Oudry received a commission to provide the Gobelins with three monumental cartoons of the *Chasses royales de Louis XV* for tapestries to decorate the royal bedchamber, the royal antechamber, and the Salle de Conseil at Compiègne. The commission would soon be extended to include nine cartoons in all, and Oudry would finally complete the series in 1746.⁴⁹ These enormous canvases, for the most part set in identifiable parts of the forest of Compiègne, the king's favorite hunting retreat, blend portraits of actual courtiers (and, one assumes, actual dogs) with a supporting cast of hunters, horses, game, hounds, and elegant onlookers. Epic and panoramic, they convey something of the sheer magnitude and grandeur of the royal hunts, which might involve as many as eighty *sonneurs de cor*, nine hundred hounds, and one thousand horses.⁵⁰ While Oudry does not appear to have followed a strictly sequential program (or indeed been given any direction on which scenes to include), his series offers an epic cynegetic cycle. Starting with the ceremonious shodding of the king (*le botté du roi*), at the crossroads of the puits du Roi, the traditional point of departure for the royal hunt (*Rendez-vous au carrefour du puits du Roi*, 1735, Fontainebleau, Musée national du château), the cartoons move to the first kill in one of the nearby ponds (*La Mort du cerf aux étangs de Saint-Jean-aux-Bois*, 1736), to a chase along the river Oise (*Chasse au cerf dans l'Oise à la vue de Compiègne du cote de Royallieu*, 1737) and conclude with the *curée chaude*, when the entrails of the dead stag are held aloft, announcing that parts of the animal are to be fed to the pack (fig. 13).⁵¹ It is not the least of Oudry's achievements that the drama and excitement of the hunt, as well as



FIGURE 11
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Louis XV Hunting the Stag in the Forest of Saint-Germain*, 1730. Oil on canvas, 211 × 387 cm (6 ft. 11½ in. × 12 ft. 8 in.). Toulouse, Musée des Augustins, inv. Ro 182. Photo: © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.



FIGURE 12
Detail of Oudry sketching from *Louis XV Hunting the Stag in the Forest of Saint-Germain* (fig. 11). Photo: © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

its more bloodthirsty aspects, are conveyed with a documentary exactitude that allows for supreme elegance, and even, at times, lyricism.⁵² Two sets of the series were woven at the Gobelins—the first for Compiègne, the second for Louis XV’s son-in-law, Infante Don Philippe, duke of Parma.⁵³ But it is the cartoons themselves that constitute Oudry’s masterpiece, prepared and executed with a deliberation and refinement equaled only in the 1750s by Boucher’s *Rising of the Sun* and *Setting of the Sun*—cartoons for a single weaving at the Gobelins, of which all trace has been lost.⁵⁴

In letters written in the course of 1734 to one of his foreign patrons, Oudry noted that the *Chasses royales* were occupying all of his time (“l’on ne me donne pas un moment de relache”) and that the king had ordered him not to stop working on them until they were finished (“ordre absolu de Sa Majesté de ne les pas quitter qu’à leur entière confection”).⁵⁵ This helps explain why Oudry was involved in neither of the prestigious group commissions of fanciful hunting handed out by the Bâtiments du Roi during the 1730s: the *chasses exotiques* for the petite galerie of the *petits appartements* at Versailles (1735–39) or the convivial prandial scenes for the king’s dining room of the *petits appartements* at Fontainebleau (1737).⁵⁶ Yet however well-employed he was at court, in the 1730s—before the reappearance of the regular Salon in 1737—Oudry was also relentless in marketing his work to potential foreign clients, and the lists that he drew up in 1732 and 1735 suggest that a considerable number of his canvases remained available for sale.⁵⁷ Somewhat unexpectedly, his greatest successes were with the Protestant North. In 1730 Oudry placed two of his most violent early hunts (*The Wolf Hunt*, 1723–24, and *The Boar Hunt*, 1725–26), previously exhibited in Paris and Versailles (and passed over by the crown), in the Residenz of Carl Wilhelm Friedrich, margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach, where they remain today.⁵⁸ Through Carl Gustaf Tessin, Swedish ambassador in Paris between 1739 and 1742 and a great connoisseur of contemporary French painting and drawing, Oudry succeeded in selling eleven paintings to the Swedish crown in 1740 (he had proposed twenty-four in his letter five years earlier), the earliest of which dated from 1719.⁵⁹ As a token of the artist’s appreciation, Tessin received the superb portrait of his *Dachshund Pähr with Dead Game and a Rifle* (fig. 14), exhibited at the Salon of 1740 and recognized by its owner as one of the “most beautiful paintings he has ever made” (not surprisingly, it was also the public’s favorite).⁶⁰



FIGURE 13
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Fourhu, Giving the Quarry to the Hounds*, 1746. Oil on canvas.
Château de Fontainebleau, inv. 7018. Photo: © Gérard Blot/Réunion des musées nationaux/
Art Resource, New York.

FIGURE 14
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Dachshund Pähr with Dead Game and a Rifle*, 1740. Oil on canvas,
135 × 109 cm (53 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. NM 864. Photo: © National
Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm.





FIGURE 15
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Three Does Watching Two Stags Fighting*, 1734. Oil on canvas. Formerly Schwerin, Staatliches Museum (missing since the Second World War). Photo: Courtesy of the Staatliches Museum Schwerin.

Oudry's greatest foreign patron and collector, however, was Duke Christian Ludwig II of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1683–1756), an almost exact contemporary of his, who governed the modest principality in north-eastern Germany, on the Baltic Sea, first as regent and after 1747 as sovereign prince. An ardent art lover, who had visited Paris in 1726 and assembled an impressive collection of Northern old masters, Mecklenburg-Schwerin was not inclined to nudity in either painting or sculpture (the court was deeply Pietist).⁶¹ While this would cause Oudry some difficulty in finding antiquities for the grand-ducal collection later on, it proved no barrier to the promotion of his own work. Between 1733 and 1755, Duke Christian (and his son, Crown Prince Friedrich [1717–1785]) acquired no fewer than forty-four

paintings and forty drawings by Oudry—the largest and most representative collection of his work in existence.⁶²

It is not known why Oudry chose to approach this north German court, but in 1732 he sent the duke's chamberlain a list of twenty-nine paintings that were available for purchase, following up with an unsolicited painting, as an inducement perhaps (the work remains unidentified). While the duke did not select anything on Oudry's list, in 1733 he commissioned four new works: a pair of gory hunt scenes that were reduced replicas of the Brandenburg-Ansbach decorations and a pair of new works, *Three Does Watching Two Stags Fighting* (fig. 15) and its pendant, *A Family of Roe Deer* (fig. 16).⁶³ It is clear from the surviving correspondence that Mecklenburg-Schwerin gave



FIGURE 16
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *A Family of Roe Deer*, 1734. Oil on canvas, 120 × 172.5 cm
(47¼ × 67⅞ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. G 216.

precise instructions for this commission, but despite his evident eagerness to please, Oudry chose not to follow his patron's brief to the letter. For the former canvas, the duke had specified a stag with several doe and two stags in heat fighting; Oudry simplified and placed the male and female animals in separate groups, with the deer fighting and the startled does looking on. For the pendant, he had been asked to show a family of four roe deer, with the mother suckling a kid; instead Oudry painted only three animals. Taken together, the pendants offer an interesting contrast of the male and female realms, mirrored in the sexual violence of the first and the ordered domesticity of the second—themes also of interest to painters of *fêtes galantes* and *tableaux de modes* in the 1730s.⁶⁴

After these initial acquisitions, Duke Christian Ludwig's acquisitions were episodic. His son, Crown Prince Friedrich, visited Oudry in Paris several times between 1737 and 1739, sat to him for a portrait (a rare occurrence for Oudry; see plate 1), and purchased the gruesome *Wolf Caught in a Trap* of 1732 (Schwerin, Staatliches Museum), which had recently been offered to Stockholm but was rejected by the Swedes.⁶⁵ Just over a decade later, in March 1750, Oudry again contacted the ducal household with a list of sixteen pictures, of which ten “formed a series appropriate for the decoration of a gallery.” (Oudry was doubtless aware of the new two-storied, half-timbered building added to the castle as a picture gallery for the ducal collections).⁶⁶ In his letter Oudry was referring to the ill-fated (and, in many ways, mysterious) commission of exotic birds and animals from the Ménagerie, painted between 1739 and 1745 from life and apparently “par ordre de Sa Majesté.”⁶⁷ He also mentioned the availability of a related work, much larger in scale—a life-size portrayal of the Indian rhinoceros, Clara (see plate 11), who had been on display at the Foire Saint-Germain in February 1749—a picture that he intended to exhibit at the forthcoming Salon.⁶⁸ As Oudry himself explained, the Ménagerie series had been undertaken at the request of François Gigot de La Peyronie (1678–1747), Louis XV's surgeon and a great favorite of his, “who wished to have the pictures engraved and to provide a series of natural history [paintings] for the royal botanical garden.”⁶⁹ Upon his death at Versailles in April 1747, the energetic and philanthropic *premier chirurgien* had left bequests of nearly one million livres to support the training of surgeons, most notably through the Société royale de chirurgie that he had founded in 1731 and which would become the Académie royale

de chirurgie in July 1748. Unfortunately for Oudry, La Peyronie had neither taken possession of the paintings—which had appeared one or two at a time in every Salon between 1739 and 1746 with the designation of having been painted “pour le roi”—nor had he left any provision for their payment in his will.⁷⁰

Oudry had long been a visitor at the Ménagerie, the octagonal pavilion and surrounding fan-shaped courtyards in the southwest precinct of Versailles that had been built by Louis Le Vau between 1662 and 1669.⁷¹ One of his earliest commissions for the cabinet des oiseaux at Versailles (1729) had shown a *Family of Axis Deer* (Paris, Muséum d'histoire naturelle);⁷² in his lists he had indicated that the lion in the *Lion and the Fly*, 1732 (Stockholm, Nationalmuseum), a monumental rendering of La Fontaine's fable, had been painted “à la Ménagerie de Versailles, d'après nature;”⁷³ even the stags and roe deer for Mecklenburg-Schwerin's pair of pendants had been painted at the Ménagerie, “where I paint the animals from life (où je fais les animaux d'après le naturel).”⁷⁴ Oudry would also have been familiar with the series of animal paintings by Desportes' teacher Nicasiaus Bernaerts (1620–1678), that had long decorated the gallery of the octagonal pavilion at the Ménagerie.⁷⁵

As expected (and reiterated by their author on numerous occasions), Oudry's iconic portrayals of wild cats and exotic birds were meticulously observed from life. The series engaged him in some ways as a portraitist (his earliest calling), and he skillfully communicated mood, character, and expression—from the quiet grace and dignity of the *Indian Blackbuck* (see plate 4), to the patent stupidity of the *Mufflon* (see plate 5). Animals assume familiar gender identities: the *Leopardess* (see plate 7) is shown “dans une attitude tranquille,” whereas her ferocious mate (“en colère”) (see plate 6) adopts a stance calculated to inspire terror in the spectator (the descriptions are Oudry's).⁷⁶ Befitting a history painter and professor at the Académie royale, Oudry brought a narrative dimension to his depiction of natural curiosities; the dramatis personae of *Démoiselle Crane*, *Toucan*, and *Tufted Crane* (see plate 10) present themselves as strutting deities awaiting the judgment of an ornithological Paris. Once again Oudry showed himself to be a contemporary—albeit a considerably older one—of the naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon (1707–1788), who would be appointed superintendent of the Jardin botanique du roi in August 1739, the very month that three works from the Gigot de La Peyronie series were exhibited at the Salon for

the first time.⁷⁷ Buffon's revolutionary *Histoire naturelle*, which would appear in thirty-six volumes between 1749 and 1788, prided itself on offering a wide readership "the exact description and true history of each thing." Linnaean classification was superseded by a plenitude of description: The natural history of an animal species should now include "their generation, the duration of pregnancy, the number of young, the care of the fathers and mothers, their type of rearing, their instinct, their place of habitation . . . their habits, their tricks, their way of hunting."⁷⁸ Taking into account the very different representational means at his disposal, Oudry's sympathetic portrayals respond to Buffon's criteria for the fullest and most scrupulous investigation of the animal kingdom.

But what was the eventual destination of Oudry's ten *Ménagerie* paintings of various formats (with the majority painted on canvases five feet by four)? Hal Opperman claimed, in error, that the series was painted for the Royal Botanical Gardens at the Trianon, which had yet to be built.⁷⁹ He reasonably pointed out, however, that La Peyronie was unlikely to have gone to the expense of commissioning large, finished pictures, at a cost of several hundred livres each, simply as engravers' models (they would, however, have been appropriate as tapestry cartoons).⁸⁰ Drawings would have done equally well, although Basan's undated engraving of the *Mufflon*, as well as that of the slightly smaller *Lynx* (whereabouts unknown, formerly Schwerin, Staatliches Museum), were indeed made after Oudry's paintings.⁸¹ Xavier Salmon has argued persuasively that the primary purpose of the series may have been to provide a decoration for the Jardin botanique du roi on the rue Faubourg Saint-Victor, founded by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis the XIV's minister of finance, in 1650 as the Jardin royal des plantes médicinales. This was primarily a teaching establishment, which housed the royal plant collection, as well as dead animals from the *Ménagerie* at Versailles.⁸² Buffon was eager to bring live animals to the Jardin du roi, but it was only in 1793 that the renamed Muséum d'histoire naturelle succeeded in doing so.⁸³ Buffon certainly admired "the famous Oudry, who so excelled in painting animals"⁸⁴ but chose not to use his image of Clara the rhinoceros in its entirety for his publication. In fact, Oudry was called upon as an illustrator of Buffon only once, for the drawing of a horse engraved by Jean-Charles Baquoy for the fourth volume of the *Histoire naturelle*, published in 1753 (fig. 17).⁸⁵

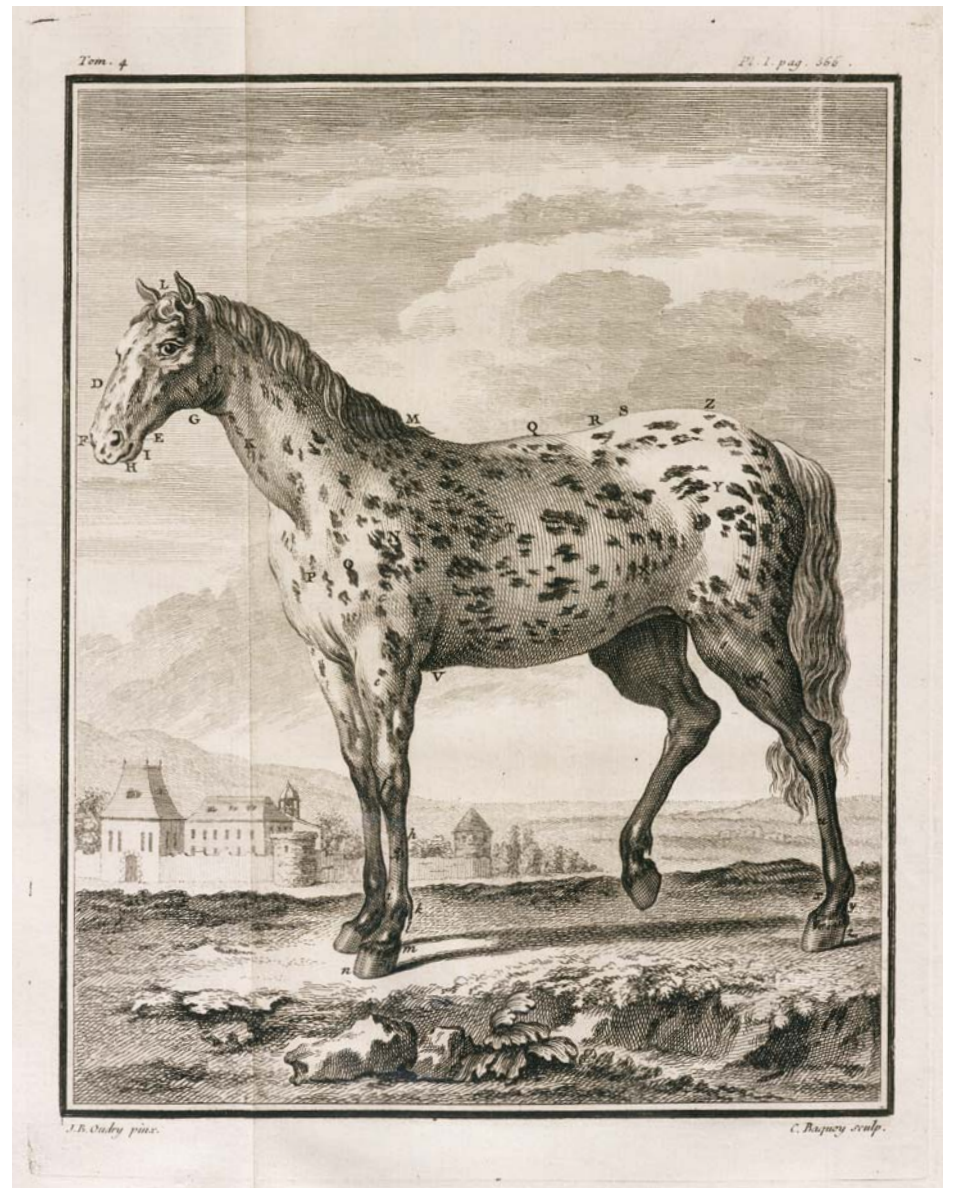


FIGURE 17
Jean-Charles Baquoy (French, 1721–1777) after
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Drawing of a Horse*, from
Georges-Louis LeClerc, comte de Buffon, *Histoire
naturelle* (Paris, 1753), vol. 4, p. 366, pl. 1. Paris,
Bibliothèque nationale, call number Cote 13057.
Research Library, The Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles, 84–B8203.

The attractive notion that Buffon's specimens at the Jardin du roi might have been studied in proximity to Oudry's resplendent portrayals of them is purely speculative and, beyond the slightly ambiguous phrasing in Oudry's letter to Mecklenburg-Schwerin of March 1750, has no documentation to support it. Equally intriguing, a comment to her father from Grand Duchess Ulrica Sophia, who accompanied Crown Prince Friedrich on his visit to Paris in the summer of 1750, suggests that the ever resourceful Oudry may have hoped to add to the series. "Since your Grace has commissioned [sic] the animals from the Ménagerie and they are not all finished, in order to save money Oudry can paint some of them together on the same canvas, provided they are small enough."⁸⁶ Nothing came of such a proposal in the short term, but in 1752 Oudry did indeed paint an enormous *Lion* (see plate 12)—the second largest work by Oudry in the ducal collection—for which he received payment in 1754, once again reassuring his patron that "le lion est peint d'après nature."⁸⁷

For all his involvement with courtly patrons—both at home and abroad—Oudry was above all a Parisian painter, who had refused invitations to work in Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. To the extent possible in Louis XV's Paris, he was also immersed in the public life of the city. Oudry showed at the Exposition de la Jeunesse on the place Dauphine every year between 1722 and 1725, and between 1737 and 1753 was the dominant presence at the Paris Salon, exhibiting some 180 paintings there.⁸⁸ It has been estimated that during the 1740s and early 1750s almost half of Oudry's output was produced for display at the Salon, rather than on commission for the crown or private patrons. As Opperman noted, "No painter courted the public, through the vehicle of the Salon, more zealously," and Oudry's contemporaries were of like mind.⁸⁹ Commenting on his submission to the Salon of 1753, Estève noted, "The artist's fecundity is astonishing. Which ever way one turns at the Salon, it is always his animals that one sees."⁹⁰ Feeling that this rather belittled Oudry's achievement, the engraver and theorist, Charles-Nicolas Cochin shot back, "It would be more fitting to say that wherever one turns at the Salon, it is always beautiful things that one sees."⁹¹ Oudry did not hesitate to use the Salon as a showcase for works made many years before; it was only at the Salon of 1750, for example, that he showed *Louis XV Hunting the Stag in the Forest of Saint-Germain* (see fig. 11)

Painted in 1730.⁹² Nor did he refrain from showing the same work on more than one occasion: Between 1739 and 1746 three of the exotic animals from the Ménagerie series made repeat appearances at the Galerie d'Apollon.⁹³ No single painting, however, was promoted quite as energetically as the *Bulldog Attacking a Swan* (fig. 18). Painted in 1731, listed as available for sale in 1732 and 1735, this dramatic canvas was exhibited at the Salons of 1737, 1743, and 1751; it was still in Oudry's possession at the time of his death.⁹⁴

Although unsuccessful in the case of *Bulldog Attacking a Swan*, it is clear that Oudry considered the Salon the appropriate place to market his work. It was only after seeing the brutal *Dogs Attacking a Wild Sow and Her Young* (Caen, Musée des beaux-arts) at the Salon of 1748 that the Surintendant des Bâtiments Tournehem decided to purchase it for the dining room of the royal hunting lodge at La Muette, where after the requisite enlargements the painting served as the pendant to Oudry's *Wolf Hunt* (Gien, Musée internationale de la chasse), commissioned two years earlier.⁹⁵ A decade or so after Oudry's death, Denis Diderot regaled his readers with the circumstances under which the baron d'Holbach had acquired *Lice Feeding Her Pups* (see fig. 2), for which he had paid the generous sum of 100 pistoles (1,000 livres). Whereas Diderot's Oudry is in despair at the lack of interest his work had elicited until Holbach had seen and purchased it at the Salon ("Ah, mon ami, la maudite race que celle des Amateurs" / "Oh, my friend, what a dreadful breed those art lovers are"), it is much more likely that the artist was courting potential buyers by scrupulously listing those works still in his possession as "belonging to the author" (à l'Auteur), and hence available for sale.⁹⁶

Oudry was many things: a Parisian artist; a court painter; the director of a royal manufactory; a professor in the academy; and, perhaps most unexpectedly, a member of the select group of Rococo empiricists who made "delicate discriminations about light in color."⁹⁷ If his signal achievement as a painter of the hunt and of the hunt trophy was to have transformed a discredited feudal imagery into the lingua franca of civilized decoration, it is worth exploring a little the intellectual and practical means by which he did so. A constant in his career is the commitment to painting "from nature." A regular visitor to the Ménagerie, he also familiarized himself with the royal forests that provided the backgrounds for his hunts and animal paintings, led sketching expeditions in the overgrown park and gardens of the abandoned



FIGURE 18

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Bulldog Attacking a Swan*, 1731. Oil on canvas, 192 × 256 cm (6 ft. 3⁵/₈ in. × 8 ft. 4⁷/₈ in.). Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, inv. 1953–15. Photo: © Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève.



FIGURE 19

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *View of a Park, with Bench and Pavilion*, ca. 1744–47. Black and white chalk on blue paper, 35.7 × 57.4 cm (14 × 22⁵/₈ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 2096.

residence of the Guise family at Arcueil (fig. 19), and traveled on numerous occasions to Dieppe so that he could paint fish “dans leur fraîcheur.”⁹⁸ Yet Oudry’s much-vaunted naturalism was an inflected, mediated idiom. While there is no reason to doubt his repeated claims that his animals and birds were painted after nature, as a seasoned academician he quite naturally turned to artistic models as well, particularly the supply of Flemish paintings and sketches available at the Gobelins manufactory and the Ménagerie. Long ago, Opperman pointed out that one of Oudry’s most vivid studies, that of an egret, was in fact copied from an oil-sketch by Pieter Boel (figs. 20–21).⁹⁹ Other similarly lifelike (and lively) drawings of exotic birds and animals have been shown to be copies after paintings or sketches by Boel and Bernaerts.¹⁰⁰ This sort of appropriation was both respectable and well established; Boucher paid Oudry the compliment of basing the



FIGURE 20

Pieter Boel (Flemish, 1622–1674), *Studies of a Red-breasted Merganser and an Egret (Two Ducks and an Egret)*. Oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm (25¹/₂ × 31⁷/₈ in.). Chambéry, Musée des beaux-arts, inv. 3980. Photo: © Jean-Gilles Berizzi/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.



FIGURE 21
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study of an Egret*, ca. 1740–50. Black and white chalk on blue paper, 34.3 × 28.7 cm (13½ × 11¼ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, inv. 31486. Photo: © Thierry Le Mage/ Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.



protagonist of his *Leopard Hunt*, 1736 (Amiens, Musée de Picardie), on one of Oudry's leopards, executed earlier in the decade.¹⁰¹

Where Oudry broke with Franco-Flemish tradition, however, was in his reliance upon drawings to prepare his still lifes and hunts. In the manner of the most punctilious history painter, Oudry mapped out his compositions and details of them in carefully worked sheets that he jealously guarded in his studio. (One is put in mind of Watteau's bound volumes of drawings accompanying him on his many journeys and the source of almost every figure in his repertory). Oudry also made drawn records of his compositions, but so meticulous are his preparations that it is often difficult to distinguish between them and his *ricordi* and replicas.¹⁰² When volumes of Oudry's drawings were sold after his death, it was noted that "The Author had derived pleasure in executing them with the greatest care and chose not to sell any of them."¹⁰³ One of the most beautiful of Oudry's preparatory drawings on blue paper is the *Study for a Decorative Panel* (fig. 22), which should be compared with the *Decorative Panel with Dogs* (fig. 23) executed in 1742 for the dining room of Samuel-Jacques Bernard's hôtel in the faubourg Saint-Germain.¹⁰⁴ The drawing in pen and ink and gray wash, with white highlights throughout, is meticulous, yet fluid and lively. And while all the elements are carefully transcribed from drawing to painting, with no changes of mind in the process, Oudry's instincts as a colorist led him to dramatize the lighting effects in the painted composition. From the blond and relatively even lighting of his drawings, Oudry moves unfailingly to a more insistent chiaroscuro, deploying light and shadow to convey the sensations of different surfaces, volumes, and forms in a manner of which Largillière would wholeheartedly have approved.

Although rumors of Oudry's death circulated in January 1755,¹⁰⁵ he had sufficiently recovered from a stroke to travel the forty-nine kilometers northwest of Paris to his lodgings at Beauvais. It was there that he died on April 30, having spent the previous day in his studio, mounting tapestries.¹⁰⁶

FIGURE 22
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study for a Decorative Panel*, 1742. Pen and ink, brush, and gouache on blue paper, 46 × 36.6 cm (18¹/₈ × 14³/₈ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 2089.



FIGURE 23
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Decorative Panel with Dogs*, 1742. Oil on canvas, 227 × 151 cm (89³/₈ × 59¹/₂ in.). Strasbourg, Musée des beaux-arts, inv. 1688. Photo: © Musées de Strasbourg, M. Bertola.

The size of Oudry's family had much diminished over time — of the thirteen children born to him and Marie-Marguerite Froissé, only two sons and three daughters were living at the time of his death. Oudry had placed his eldest son, Jacques-Charles, born in November 1710, in the administration of the Ponts et Chaussées, from 1744 under the direction of Daniel-Charles Trudaine (a patron of his and of Boucher's).¹⁰⁷ His second son, also christened Jacques-Charles (1722/3–1778), had followed his father as a still-life painter and been admitted and received by the Académie royale in 1748; at the time of his father's death he was resident in Brussels, where he was painter at the court of Prince Charles de Lorraine.¹⁰⁸ Of Oudry's two married daughters, on each of whom he had settled the substantial dowry of 5,000 livres, Marguerite-Thérèse was married to Nicolas Nolleau, "bourgeois de Paris," whereas Nicole had separated from her husband, a grocer, in September 1753.¹⁰⁹ The third daughter, Marie-Anne Oudry, remained unmarried and lived with her mother in the Louvre. The final heir to Oudry's estate was his son-in-law, the history painter Antoine Boizot (1702–1782), who had married Marie Oudry in 1738; she had died in June 1739, shortly after giving birth to their son.¹¹⁰

After seals were placed on Oudry's residences in the Louvre and the Tuileries, as well as on two properties in Paris belonging to him, between May 3 and June 23 an inventory of all his effects was drawn up.¹¹¹ The bookseller Jean-Baptiste Bauche was brought in to appraise Oudry's library, and his paintings and drawings were valued by Jean-Joseph Dumont, a member of the Académie royale, in concert with the dealer François Joullain.¹¹² (Academicians frequently moonlighted as appraisers; Oudry had been called in to assist at the inventory of both Hyacinthe Rigaud and Largillière's collections).¹¹³ The sale of Oudry's collection and the contents of his studio took place at the Couvent des Petits Pères on the place des Victoires on July 7, 1755. Seven carriage trips were required to transport his various belongings to the makeshift salesroom.¹¹⁴ The single recorded advertisement for the sale (no catalogue was printed) noted that in addition to paintings, drawings, studies, and "utensiles de Peinture," there would also be sold "Jewels, Snuff-boxes, Very Rare Guitars, and Medals."¹¹⁵

The discovery of Oudry's unpublished posthumous inventory and the documents notarizing the division of his estate — unknown to either Jean Locquin or Hal Oppermann — offers insights into his fortune and living conditions, as well as providing the most complete listing available of his library, his collection, and the contents of his studio. While it is only possible

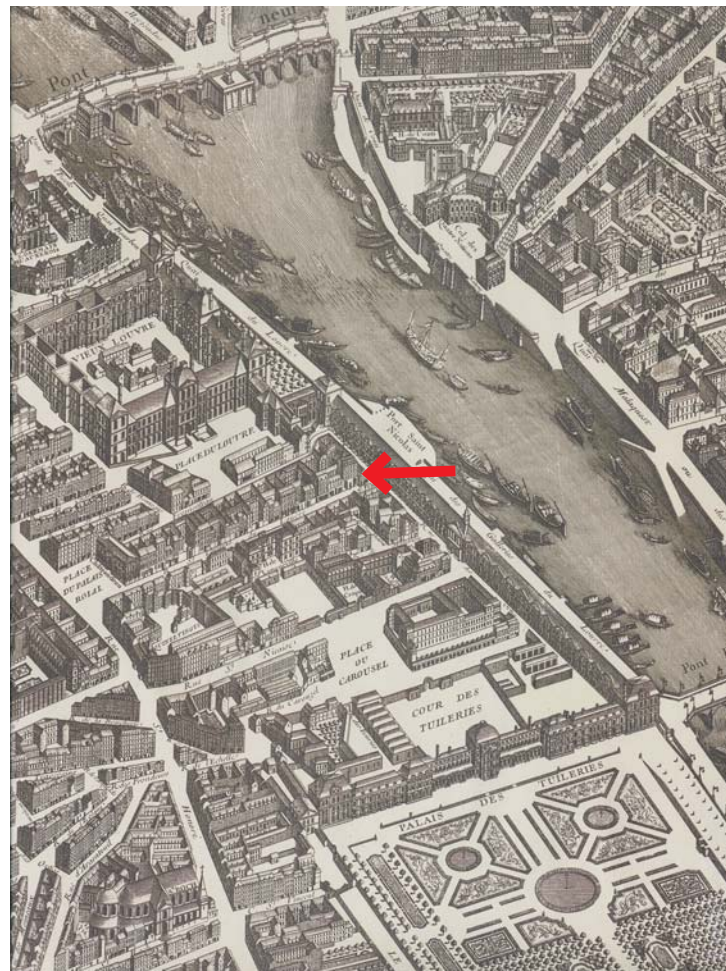


FIGURE 24
Plan Turgot, 1739, detail showing the Louvre and the Tuileries (Oudry's residence is marked by the arrow). From *La Machine d'argent*, exh. cat. (New York, Sotheby's, May 20, 2004), p. 41. Photo: © Courtesy of Sotheby's.

to summarize these documents briefly here, it is hoped that they will soon be published in full.¹¹⁶ Oudry's primary residence was a two-story *appartement* in the Galleries du Louvre, situated at the angle between the cul de sac Saint Thomas du Louve and the rue des Orties (fig. 24), which he had been granted in February 1744. Since the mid-1720s, Oudry had also occupied a two-room studio in the Laboratoire of the Queen's apartments at the Tuileries Palace (the painter Joseph Vernet would inherit these quarters in May 1755).¹¹⁷

The notary's description of the family lodgings in the Louvre suggests a luxuriously appointed residence, with large pier glasses and mirrors decorating the reception rooms, and a sumptuously upholstered bed, with a baldachin of crimson and gold damask and armchairs to match. Oudry's cabinet was richly furnished, and it was here that he kept his gold boxes, snuffboxes, clocks and watches (of which several are noted). Oudry's library contained approximately 750 books on various subjects, including many that might be considered required reading for the history painter: Plutarch's *Les Vies des hommes illustres*, Bernard de Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité expliquée*, Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, Natali Conti's *La Mythologie des dieux*. As expected, the library also included books on the hunt and descriptions of France, and, while Buffon is not among the authors named, Oudry owned a full set of the *Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences*, valued at 300 livres.¹¹⁸

It was also in Oudry's lodgings at the Louvre that all of his drawings and studies were kept. Over one hundred volumes and portfolios are inventoried, many containing ninety sheets or more.¹¹⁹ This confirms Gougenot's comment that "Oudry was more attached to his drawings than to his paintings and he considered them a resource to be left to his family; hardly any were available during his lifetime."¹²⁰ For the most part, the volumes were organized strictly by subject: volumes devoted to animals, to birds, to plants, hunts, "Chinese drawings," and landscapes and views after nature. Here Gougenot was in error when he claimed that Oudry had arranged his holdings in volumes of fifty sheets of assorted subjects, "so that one could be sure of having examples of all the genres in which he had worked."¹²¹ The most valuable drawings by Oudry were the volumes of "eighteen compositional drawings of the hunt" (appraised at 400 livres), "forty-six drawings of landscapes and views of Arcueil" (150 livres), and "twenty-nine compositional drawings of animals" (120 livres).¹²² The drawings and prints that were kept in portfolios were generally appraised for much less, but included drapery studies, studies of the nude model, and copies. While the overwhelming majority of these were by Oudry himself, studies by Largillière, Gilles-Marie Oppenord, and Claude Gillot and drawings and prints after Rigaud, Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, and the German animal painter Johann Elias Ridinger (1698–1767) are also listed.¹²³ Among the paintings, pastels and prints that hung in Oudry's rooms on the rue des Orties, the absence of works by any of his contemporaries is striking. Gougenot, in the biography that he delivered at the academy in January 1761, spoke of Oudry's "excessive

attachment to his own work," with Giovanni Paolo Panini the only other living artist whose paintings he wished to possess.¹²⁴ Of twenty-six items listed in the inventory (and valued low), a flower painting by Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer (1636–1699) appraised at 50 livres is the only work whose author is identified.¹²⁵ In his lecture of December 1752, Oudry had recommended "the illustrious Baptiste"—as Monnoyer was known—as "an excellent model" for students to follow.¹²⁶

It is also clear from the notaries' records that Oudry's own paintings were displayed in his "très-bel atelier" in the Tuileries Palace, which may have functioned as a showroom of sorts. Here, as Gougenot noted, Oudry "formed a picture cabinet in which paintings other than his own were not admitted."¹²⁷ The inventory of this collection lists fifty-one autograph compositions and seventy-two copies.¹²⁸ Of the former, eighteen were acquired at Oudry's estate sale for the ducal collections in Schwerin; these are listed in an appendix. In many cases their appraised value is less than a quarter of the price fetched at auction (see the appendix at the end of this essay).

Oudry's collection and the contents of his studio realized about 40,000 livres, just under a quarter of the value of his entire estate.¹²⁹ The same amount of money (40,000 livres) was invested with a Receveur-général des finances, Monsieur de Villemur. Two properties that the couple owned were appraised at 60,000 livres: a modest house on the rue Mouffetard, acquired in 1732, and a larger establishment on the grand rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, in Oudry's possession since September 1751 and where he retained the use of a garden pavilion and an aviary (there is even a bill for the feeding of the birds).¹³⁰ Oudry kept a considerable amount of cash on hand—9,000 livres in all—and the family silver was appraised at just over 5,000 livres.¹³¹ Having died free from debt, Oudry left an estate worth 175,000 livres, greater than Boucher's would be a decade and a half later.¹³² Oudry's widow, Marie-Marguerite Froissé, who had brought a mere 700 livres as a dowry forty-five years earlier, inherited just over 95,000 livres and lived very comfortably for the rest of her life.¹³³ Gougenot characterized Oudry as a man "of the utmost probity; loyal to his friends, thrifty, yet generous when the occasion required; hardworking, a tender husband, who loved his children but perhaps expected too much from them."¹³⁴ The ideal portrait of an honest and hardworking bourgeois.¹³⁵ The archival record, less poetic perhaps, confirms such an assessment. ♦

Notes

I am most grateful to Christoph Frank for his generosity and encouragement, and to Mary Morton for her persuasiveness and support. For help with research and writing, it is a pleasure to thank Michael Gallagher, Mark Leonard, Margaret Iacono, Mary Lydecker, Udolpho van de Sandt, David Pullins, Alan Wintermute, and Carol Togneri. This essay is for Carol Togneri, with the greatest affection.

The quotation in the title, “Une longue pratique, bien des recherches et bien des réflexions,” is from Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Discours sur la pratique de la peinture*, a lecture given at the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture in December 1752; see Oudry 1863, p. 108.

1. P. Le Leyzour and A. Daguerre de Hureaux in *Les peintures du roi, 1648–1793* (Paris, 2000), p. 267, r 297, r 298. Portraits of Oudry and the sculptor Lambert-Sigisbert Adam had been commissioned in January 1746; Perronneau had been censured for his tardiness in January 1755; see A. de Montaiglon, ed., *Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture 1648–1793* (Paris, 1875–92), vol. 6, pp. 34, 344.
2. “On conçoit aisément que la térébenthine ne doit point être épargnée”: Oudry 1863, p. 114.
3. For Oudry, an artist’s cleanliness was as important as his godliness: “La propreté est essentielle . . . et même dans toutes vos opérations. Elle donnera à vos ouvrages une fraîcheur et une durée et à vos personnes, comme à votre profession, un air de décence.” (Cleanliness is essential . . . and for all of your procedures. It will endow your works with freshness and longevity, and give to your person—as to your profession—the appearance of decency): Oudry 1863, p. 109.
4. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 204–6.
5. Friedrich Melchior Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire*, ed. U. Kølving (Ferner-Voltaire, 2006), vol. 1, p. 66.
6. Oudry is rather summarily described as the “crowd favorite” of the 1720s—to be replaced by Chardin in the following decade in T. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, 1985), pp. 86–87. K. Scott (*The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* [New Haven and London, 1995], pp. 216–17), while noting the breadth of Oudry’s patronage, remarks rather upon the rarity of depictions of the hunt itself in interior decoration. Oudry is not mentioned at all in Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatri-*
7. From the abbé Louis Gougenot (1719–1767) on, Oudry has been fortunate in his historians; this essay is greatly indebted to Hal Opperman’s scholarship, notably Opperman 1977 and Paris 1982.
8. Ottawa–Washington–Berlin 2003, p. 9.
9. Oudry’s first lecture, *Réflexions d’étudier la couleur en comparant les objets les un avec les autres*, is published in Oudry 1844; for his second, see Oudry 1863. On the context for his theoretical writings, see C. Michel, *Cochin et l’art des Lumières* (Rome, 1993), pp. 219–22.
10. In the *Correspondance littéraire*, Grimm (2006, vol. 1, p. 66) noted that *The White Duck* (formerly Houghton, Marquis of Cholmondeley) and its pendant, *Still Life with a Hare, Pheasant and Partridge* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), had been executed “en conséquence d’un mémoire qu’il a lu à l’Académie” (to elucidate a treatise that he had presented at the Academy), which implies that Oudry’s *Réflexions d’étudier la couleur* had circulated.
11. “Ce qui faisoit dire au célèbre Desportes, qu’il aimoit bien les Oudry quand ils étoient entièrement de sa main.”: Gougenot 1761, p. 371.
12. Paris 1982, p. 20.
13. “Je ne vais pas plus vite qu’un autre, mais je travaille davantage, et souvent, ma palette chargée, j’ai attendu qu’il fit jour.”: Gougenot 1761, p. 377.
14. “Il n’a jamais pris un après-midi entière pour son plaisir. Aussi reprochoit il quelques fois à ses confrères qui venoient l’après-midi le voir qu’ils perdoient la plus belle partie du jour”: *Mémoire pour servir à l’Eloge de Mr. Oudry*, ca. 1760; reprinted in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 171. Opperman speculated that the author was Antoine Boizot, Oudry’s son-in-law and a painter attached to the Gobelins, but the brevity of reference to Oudry’s wife and children seems to discount this. Since certain phrases reappear in Gougenot’s *Life*, is it possible that this anonymous *Life* might be one of Gougenot’s earlier drafts?
15. Crow 1985 (see note 6 above), chapters 2, 3; Scott 1995 (see note 6 above); Ottawa–Washington–Berlin 2003.
16. J. Cordey, “Deux albums de portraits peints par Oudry,” *Revue de l’art ancien et moderne* (1920), p. 218.
17. G. Glorieux, *A l’Enseigne de Gersaint, Edme-François Gersaint, marchand d’art sur le pont Notre-Dame (1694–1750)* (Mayenne, 2002), p. 67. Until 1718 Gersaint’s dealership had belonged to the history painter Antoine Dieu (1662–1727).
18. Gougenot 1761, p. 366. The precise dates of Oudry’s apprenticeship with Largillière are lacking, though Orlandi, in 1719, noted that it was for a period of “cinque anni,” and La Roque, in 1726, stated that it began after Oudry had spent his nineteenth year studying with Michel Serre, *premier peintre des galères du roi*; see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 164. For a discussion of this apprenticeship, see Opperman in M. Rosenfeld, *Largillière and the Eighteenth-Century Portrait* (Montreal, 1982), pp. 310–19, where it is dated slightly later to 1707–12.
19. “Oudry acquit à telle point sa confiance, qu’il le chargea entièrement du détail de ses affaires domestiques.”: Gougenot 1761, p. 366. For Largillière’s attendance at Oudry’s wedding, hitherto unrecorded, see Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, IV/350, “Mariage,” Jacques [sic] Oudry et Marie-Marguerite Froissé, 28 December 1709.
20. “E dopo fece studi diversi sopra l’opera dipinta dal Rubens nel palagio de Lucemborgo.”: Orlandi, *Abecedario pittorico* (1719); reprinted in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 164.
21. “Il lui fit faire deux copies de chasses d’après un maître hollandois, l’une d’un sanglier, l’autre d’un ours.”: *Mémoire* (see note 14 above); reprinted in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 170.
22. “Berchem lui apprendrait à lire ce naturel et à le rendre avec cette fière facilité qui caractérise ce maître.”: Oudry 1863, p. 115.
23. According to his marriage contract (see note 19 above), Oudry’s parents gave the couple “200 livres qu’ils ont payé et déboursé pour les frais de sa maîtrise.” For the *Saint Jerome* (whereabouts unknown), see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 376 (p. 35).
24. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 368–70; Oudry had received permission to travel to Saint Petersburg in November 1716 but in the end declined the invitation.
25. Opperman 1982, pp. 73–74; Le Leyzour and Daguerre de Hureaux (see note 1 above), pp. 142–44.
26. On Fagon’s patronage of Oudry, see M.-C. Sahut, “Un exceptionnel décor de Jean-Baptiste Oudry entre au Louvre,” *Revue du Louvre, la revue des musées de France* 1 (February 2003), pp. 13–19; on Bérighen, whose portrait—now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.—Oudry (exceptionally) painted in 1722, see Ottawa–Washington–Berlin 2003, p. 21.
27. Sahut (see note 26 above). Inventoried among the contents of Oudry’s studio at the Tuileries was “le portrait de Mr. Fagon, prisee la somme de six livres”; see Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345, “Inventaire après décès,” Jean-Baptiste Oudry, 7 May 1755, Tableaux et copies [Tuileries], no. 98.
28. Gougenot 1761, p. 379.
29. Crow 1985 (see note 6 above), pp. 53–56.
30. M. Roland-Michel and D. Rabreau, *Les Arts du Théâtre de Watteau à Fragonard*, exh. cat. (Galerie des Beaux-arts, Bordeaux, 1980), p. 40. The ballet in question was Michel-Richard de Lalande and André-Cardinal Destouches’ *Les Eléments*, for which Claude Gillot designed the costumes.
31. M. Terrier, “Travaux de Jean-Baptiste Oudry pour la Petite Écurie du roi,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (November 1982), pp. 188–90.
32. Véron-Denise in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 15–21, 76.
33. P. Jacky, “Alexandre-François Desportes (1661–1743): quatre dessus de porte provenant du château de Bercy entrent à Chambord,” *La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 45 (June 1996), p. 62.
34. “M. Oudry avoit acquis une si grande habitude de parler aux grands et de travailler en leur presence, qu’il peignoit à la cour avec d’autant de tranquillité qu’il eût pu le faire chez lui.”: Gougenot 1761, p. 377.
35. Desportes was obliged to work “au milieu des valets de la vénerie, gens très peu curieux de peinture et dont on achète difficilement la complaisance”: Claude-François Desportes’ life of his father, read to the Academy in August 1748; cited in P. Jacky, *Alexandre-François Desportes, Tableaux de chasse*, exh. cat. (Paris, Mona Bismarck Foundation, 1998), p. 70.
36. See the excellent survey in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4.
37. For an interesting discussion of hunting imagery as “a constituent of feudal largesse,” see Scott 1995 (see note 6 above), p. 217.

38. S. Duffy and J. Hedley, *The Wallace Collection's Pictures: A Complete Catalogue* (London, 2004), pp. 309–10.
39. J. Ingamells, *The Wallace Collection: Catalogue of Pictures, French before 1815* (London, 1989), p. 275.
40. Paris 1982, pp. 83–84; Schwerin 2000, pp. 56–57.
41. “Les diverses manoeuvres . . . ou pour le poil ou pour la plume” are explicated in Oudry 1863, p. 114. M. Baxandall (*Shadows and Enlightenment* [New Haven and London, 1995], p. 132) provides a fine summary of Oudry’s illusionism, concluding “what we see here is not trompe l’oeil but a performance inviting a flicker perception between the manipulation of pigments and the sensation of surfaces.”
42. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 180.
43. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 181–82.
44. Schwerin 2000, pp. 56–57 (see also the appendix to this essay); P. Grate, *Le soleil et l’étoile du nord: la France et la Suède au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1994), pp. 226–27.
45. On Louis XV’s early passion for hunting, see M. Antoine, *Louis XV* (Paris, 1989), pp. 146–49.
46. J. Badin, *La Manufacture de tapisseries de Beauvais depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris, 1909), pp. 57–59; Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 83–93. In recognition, perhaps, Boucher made Oudry godfather to his second daughter, Marie-Emilie, born on April 27, 1740; see G. Brunel, *Boucher* (New York, 1986), p. 30.
47. “Tous les Chevaux et les Chiens sont exactement Portraits”: Paris 1982, p. 133, quoting from the *livret* of the Salon of 1750.
48. For Largillière’s *Portrait of Oudry* (whereabouts unknown) as engraved by Tardieu, see Opperman in Rosenfeld 1982 (see note 18 above), p. 311.
49. Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 19–20.
50. Antoine 1989 (see note 45 above), p. 147.
51. Véron-Denise in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 44–59.
52. Bailey 2004, p. 277.
53. Paris 1982, pp. 135–38.
54. On Boucher’s celebrated tapestry cartoons, see, most recently, J. Hedley, *François Boucher: Seductive Visions* (London, 2004), pp. 104–112.
55. Letters of July 31 and November 9, 1734, to “Monsieur Hafft, homme de chambre de S.A.S. Duc de Mecklenbourg, à Neustad”: Seidel 1890, pp. 94–95.
56. Salmon 1995, pp. 16–34.
57. Oudry’s lists are conveniently reproduced and analyzed in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 219–23.
58. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 80–81.
59. Grate 1994 (see note 44 above), pp. 223–24.
60. “C’est un des plus beaux Tableaux qu’il a jamais fait,” Tessin to Harleman, February 12, 1740; Grate 1994 (see note 44 above), p. 214. Tessin refused to accept this *galanterie* for nothing and gave Oudry a gold snuffbox worth 500 livres in return (“Moy qui pique d’être aussi gallant que lui, je luy fait tenir par Lundberg un tabatière d’or de plus de 500 livres”).
61. The fundamental study of Oudry and Schwerin remains Seidel 1890. See also the excellent chapter in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 307–14, as well as Solodkoff 2000, Droguet in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 85–91, and, most recently, Solodkoff in Paris 2005, pp. 82–88.
62. Schwerin 2000. For new information on the eighteen paintings by Oudry purchased at his posthumous sale on July 7, 1755, see the appendix to this essay.
63. Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 114–15.
64. Bailey 2004, p. 278.
65. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 483 (p. 337); Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 92–93, 108–9.
66. Seidel 1890, p. 99. On the new picture gallery, begun in 1747 and completed in 1756, see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 309–10, and Droguet in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 86–89.
67. Paris 1982, pp. 182–85; Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 135–51.
68. Seidel 1890, p. 100. Oudry’s portrait of the Indian rhinoceros, Clara, was shown at the Salon of 1750, as no. 38, the *livret* specifying that the female rhinoceros had been painted “dans sa loge à la Foire Saint-Germain,” and that it was still in Oudry’s possession (“il appartient à l’Auteur”); see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 200, 488 (p. 349). The comte de Buffon in his *Histoire naturelle* (1749–67, vol. 6, p. 179) claimed incorrectly that Oudry’s picture had been “fait par ordre du roi.”
- Hard though it is to imagine, this gargantuan canvas appears to have elicited not a single comment from critics of the Salon. For a superb account of Clara’s peregrinations across Europe, see Ridley 2004.
69. “Qui voulait les faire graver, et former une suite d’histoire naturelle pour le Jardin de Botanique de Sa M^{te},” Oudry to Secretary Caspar, March 25, 1750: Seidel 1890, p. 99, and Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 137.
70. Antoine 1989 (see note 45 above), pp. 331–32; Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 136.
71. Mabilley 1974 remains the fundamental study of the Ménagerie.
72. Oppermann 1977, vol. 1, p. 482 (p. 336); Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 139.
73. Grate 1994 (see note 44 above), p. 234.
74. Seidel 1890, p. 94 (letter of July 31, 1734). Although in his next letter (November 9, 1734), Oudry was quick to inform his patron that the landscape of *A Family of Roe Deer* was made “d’après nature dans la forest [sic] de Saint-Germain”: Seidel 1890, p. 95.
75. “Comme pour préparer à ce qu’on voit, ou pour en faire souvenir après l’avoir vu” (To prepare us for what we are about to see, or to serve as a souvenir of something that we have just seen), as Mlle de Scudery had so nicely put it in *La Promenade de Versailles* (1669); cited in Mabilley 1974, p. 16.
76. From Oudry’s letter of March 25, 1750; see Seidel 1890, p. 99.
77. Roger 1997, p. 46. Oudry showed the *Indian Blackbuck*, *Mufflon*, and *Hyena* at the Salon of 1739, all three listed as “pour le Roy”; see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 184.
78. From the “Premier Discours” of the first volume of Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*, published in 1749; see Roger 1997, p. 89.
79. Paris 1982, pp. 38, 185; this error then crept into the entries on the series in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, nos. 65–76. Opperman corrected himself in the English edition of his catalogue, where he speculated that the pictures may have been intended for the Jardin du roi in Paris, “and not for the simpler botanical gardens in Trianon” (Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, p. 103). The late Antoine Schnapper noted that plans for a menagerie at the Trianon were not drawn up until 1749, and the botanical gardens
- there were developed only after 1751, “sans bâtiment important.” (without a significant building); see A. Schnapper, “Exposition J. B. Oudry, 1686–1755, Paris, Grand Palais, 1er octobre 1982–3 janvier 1983,” *Kunst-chronik* 36, no. 2 (February 1983), p. 103.
80. Paris 1982, p. 183. If Oudry is to be believed, the entire series would have cost La Peyronie 8,000 livres; the artist offered it at half price to Mecklenburg-Schwerin.
81. Paris 1982, pp. 183–85.
82. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 139–40.
83. Y. Laissus and J.-J. Petter, *Les animaux du Muséum: 1793–1993* (Paris, 1993), pp. 78–80.
84. “(Le) célèbre Oudry, le peintre des animaux, et qui a si fort excellé en ce genre”: Buffon 1749–67, vol. 6, p. 179. Having examined Clara at the Foire Saint-Germain, Buffon concluded that Oudry had exaggerated the size of her horn and as a result directed the draftsman Jacques de Sève to follow Charpentier’s print (for the horn) and Oudry’s painting for the rest of the animal’s body. De Sève, not Oudry, is listed as the author of *Le rhinocéros*, plate VII, in the eleventh volume of Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*.
85. Opperman 1966, p. 402, n. 13.
86. “Comme votre Grâce a commandé des animaux de la Ménagerie et qu’ils ne sont pas encore tous peints, que pour économiser les frais, il va en réunir quelques-uns, s’ils sont assez petits, sur une seule toile,” letter of August 18, 1750: Solodkoff in New York 2005, p. 85.
87. Oudry to Duke Christian Ludwig’s secretary, Caspar, summer 1754: Solodkoff in New York 2005, p. 84.
88. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 177–215.
89. Paris 1982, pp. 174–75.
90. “La fécondité de M. Oudry est étonnante. De quelque côté qu’on se tourne dans le Sallon, ce sont toujours des Animaux qu’on aperçoit,” [Estève], *Lettre à un ami sur l’Exposition des Tableaux faite dans le grand Sallon du Louvre, le 25 Août 1753*; see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 208.
91. “On pourroit dire à juste titre, de quelque côté qu’on se tourne dans le Sallon, ce sont toujours de belles choses qu’on aperçoit,” *Lettre à un Amateur*, reprinted in Oppermann 1977, vol. 1, p. 209. Cochin was currently engaged in providing engravers’ drawings for the 276 illustrations to La Fontaine’s *Fables* that Oudry had “dashed off in his spare time” (des croquis que M. Oudry avoit gribouillés à ses heures perdues)

- some twenty years earlier. Cochin also oversaw the publication of this luxury edition, which appeared in four volumes between 1755 and 1759; see Paris 1982, pp. 157–59, and C. Michel, *Charles-Nicolas Cochin et le livre illustré au XVIIIe siècle: avec un catalogue raisonné des livres illustrés par Cochin 1735–1790* (Geneva, 1987), pp. 375–76.
92. Paris 1982, pp. 132–34.
93. The *Hyena* was shown at the Salons of 1739 and 1746; the *Tiger* at the Salons of 1740 and 1747; either the *Leopard* or the *Leopardess* appeared at the Salons of 1741 and 1743; see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 425–26 (p. 191), 486–87 (p. 344, p. 345, p. 346).
94. R. Loche, *Catalogue raisonné des peintures et pastels de l'école française* (Geneva, 1996), pp. 223–27. The work appears in Oudry's posthumous inventory as "no. 32, un grand tableau sans bordure représentant un Cigne et un Dogue d'environ sept pieds sur six pieds, prisé la somme de deux cent quarante livres"; Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above).
95. Paris 1982, pp. 204–6.
96. Paris 1982, pp. 224–27; Grimm 2006 (see note 5 above), vol. 1, p. 67.
97. Baxandall 1995 (see note 41 above), pp. 96, 130–34.
98. Oudry's commitment to topographical accuracy was such that, in preparing his series of the *Chasses royales*, he commissioned maps of the forest of Compiègne as guides to the landscape; see Gougenot 1761, pp. 372–73. In 1742 Oudry himself was requested to produce a mammoth *Plan of the Forest of Sénart* for the royal dining room at Choisy; Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 586–87 (p. 607). For Oudry at Arcueil, see Paris 1982, pp. 232–44; like Desportes before him, he traveled with "une petite tente sous laquelle il dessinait et même peignait des paysages" ("with a small tent under which he draw and even painted his landscapes"); Gougenot 1761, p. 377. Gougenot (1761, p. 277) also noted that Oudry made at least ten visits to Dieppe to paint piscatory still lifes, on which see Paris 1982, pp. 88–92.
99. Opperman 1977, vol. 2, p. 822 (D 947).
100. See the examples cited by Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 192–95, and Bailey 2004, p. 277.
101. For Oudry's gouache *Study of a Leopard*, ca. 1732, in the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, see Grate 1994 (note 45 above), p. 237, and Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 160–61.
102. Paris 1982, pp. 168–69; Droguet in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 94.
103. "L'Auteur, qui prenoit plaisir à les travailler avec un soin extrême, n'en vendoit aucun," from the advertisement to the sale of Oudry's collection in the *Annonces, Affiches, et avis divers*, June 30, 1755; see Paris 1982, p. 39.
104. Paris 1982, pp. 208–10; Schwerin 2000, pp. 62–63.
105. Grimm 2006 (see note 5 above), vol. 2, p. 288, January 15, 1755, where it was noted that Oudry's death had deprived the Académie royale "d'un autre artiste fort habile" (another very talented artist).
106. "La veille de sa mort, il étoit encore dans les ateliers occupé à faire monter une pièce de tapisserie.": Gougenot 1761, p. 382.
107. J. Guiffrey, "Scellés et Inventaires d'Artistes," *Nouvelles Archives de L'art français* (Paris, 1884), pp. 203–4. The birth date of Oudry's eldest son is given in Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/349, "Notoriété," 2 July 1756; according to Opperman (1977, vol. 1, p. 13), he was still living in Paris in 1780.
108. For Oudry's second son, the still-life painter, see J. Cailleux, "M. Oudry le Fils, ou les avatars de la paternité," *Burlington Magazine* (Supplement) 41 (July 1982), pp. i–viii, and Le Leyzour and Daguerre de Hureau 2000 (see note 1 above), p. 266.
109. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348, "Liquidation de communauté et partage," 10 April 1756. This document itemizes various bequests and the division of Oudry's estate, as well as listing the status of his heirs. Marie-Thérèse Oudry had married Nicolas Nollet on May 15, 1746, bringing a dowry of 4,500 livres to the union, supplemented by 500 livres paid on October 31, 1747. Her sister Nicole had married Pierre Paul de la Groue, "marchand épicier à Paris," on December 15, 1746, with a dowry of 5,000 livres.
110. Archives Nationales (see note 109 above). The documents make no reference to a fifth daughter, Geneviève-Henriette, in 1740 a "religieuse professe" at the Benedictine convent at Villarceaux and who had presumably predeceased her father; see Paris 1982, p. 28.
111. Guiffrey 1884 (see note 107 above) published the *procès-verbal* of the seals affixed to Oudry's property by the officials of the Châtelet, which referred to the *inventaire après-décès*, drawn up by the notary Billeheu between May 7 and June 16.
112. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above).
113. Guiffrey 1884 (see note 107 above), pp. 63–65, 86.
114. Listed among the debts of Oudry's estate was "la somme de quatorze livres . . . pour sept voitures employées pour transporter des meubles de la Cour des Princes [Oudry's lodgings in the Tuileries] aux Petits Pères [the Couvent des Petits Pères de la Place des Victoires, where these effects were auctioned]; see Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), *Dettes passives et dépenses communes*, no. 38.
115. Paris 1982, p. 39.
116. See the references to these documents in notes 28 and 110. Under the direction of Christoph Frank, there is a project under way to publish a critical edition of all known documents relating to Oudry and Schwerin.
117. Guiffrey 1884 (see note 107 above), pp. 106, 131. Oudry's had been the "onzième logement (11th lodging) de la Grande Gallerie du Louvre" after the death of the sculptor René Frémin.
118. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above); the appraisal of Oudry's library, valued at 1,304 livres, took place on May 12, 1755.
119. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above), 16 May 1755; the appraisal of Oudry's "Etudes, desseins de compositions, esquisses et autres" included 110 items (volumes and portfolios) valued at 4,144 livres.
120. "M. Oudry étoit en quelque sorte plus attaché à ses dessins qu'à ses tableaux . . . il les regardoit comme un fonds qu'il accumuloit pour sa famille. On n'en a presque point eu de son vivant.": Gougenot 1761, p. 380.
121. "Il en formoit des portefeuilles composés chacun de cinquante morceaux, et tellement variés qu'en possédant un seul de ces portefeuilles, on étoit sûr d'avoir quelque chose dans tous les genres qu'il avoit embrassés.": Gougenot 1761, p. 380.
122. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above), nos. 17, 19, 20.
123. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above), nos. 23, 25, 31, 42, 91, 94.
124. "Malgré cet attachement excessif pour ses ouvrages, il fut tenté d'orner ce cabinet de quelques morceaux de Jean Paul Panini.": Gougenot 1761, p. 371. Oudry's efforts to exchange works with Panini were rebuffed, and no work by the Italian view painter is inventoried in his collection.
125. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above), "Tableaux et dessins," no. 1, "Un tableau peint sur toile par Baptiste représentant des fleurs dans sa bordure dorée, estimé 50 livres."
126. "L'illustre Baptiste est, à mon gré, un grand maître en cette partie et bien plus utile à consulter que tout ce que les Flamands nous ont envoyé.": Oudry 1863, p. 115.
127. "C'est là où M. Oudry forma un cabinet . . . Mais il n'y admit d'autres tableaux que les siens.": Gougenot 1761, pp. 270–71.
128. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345 (see note 27 above), 17–20 June 1755, "Tableaux, desseins estampes et choses concernantes la peinture etant dans les deux pieces dependants de l'appartement de la Reine [Tuileries Palace]," nos. 1–123.
129. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), "Masse de partage," nos. 1–7 (for the yield from the sale and for payments owed by the members of Oudry's family for works acquired at the auction). The notarial documents confirm Gougenot's statement (1761, p. 371) that the collection fetched 40,000 livres.
130. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), "Masse de partage," nos. 15, 25, 29.
131. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), "Masse de partage," nos. 10–12. For the silversmiths in Oudry's circle, see Solodkoff 2000 and Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, pp. 116–17.
132. Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), where the "total des biens de la communauté" is estimated at 174,028 livres. The "masse des biens" of Boucher's estate in April 1773 was 152,618 livres; see C. Bailey, "Marie-Jeanne Buzéau, Madame Boucher (1716–96)," *Burlington Magazine* 147 (April 2005), p. 233.
133. Her dowry is given in Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, IV/350 (see note 19 above); for her portion of Oudry's estate, see Archives Nationales, LIII/348 (see note 109 above), "Recapitulation."
134. "D'une probité à toute épreuve; ami fidèle, . . . économe, et cependant honorable dans les occasions essentielles; infatigable au travail . . . tendre époux, aimant ses enfants, mais voulant peut-être trop exiger d'eux.": Gougenot 1761, p. 38.
135. Paris 1982, p. 28.

**WORKS BY JEAN-BAPTISTE OUDRY
ACQUIRED BY THE COURT OF MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN
AT THE SALE OF OUDRY'S COLLECTION
AND THE CONTENTS OF HIS STUDIO ON JULY 7, 1755**

A listing of the works acquired by Mecklenburg-Schwerin on July 7, 1755, as they are numbered, described, and appraised in Oudry's unpublished *inventaire après décès* on June 20, 1755.* Seidel (1890, pp. 103–4) was the first to publish Mecklenburg-Schwerin's acquisitions; for convenience only, the corresponding references in Oppermann's catalogue raisonné (Opperman 1977) and the most recent catalogue published by the Staatliches Museum Schwerin are listed. Where a work is noted as having been formerly in the collection, it appears in the illustrated inventory of paintings lost during the Second World War (see Schwerin 2000, pp. 202–3). Unless otherwise noted, Oudry's paintings were inventoried as having been in wooden, gilded frames.

*Archives Nationales, *Minutier Central*, LIII/345, "Inventaire après décès," Jean-Baptiste Oudry, 17–20 June 1755, "Tableaux, desseins estampes et choses concernantes la peinture etant dans les deux pieces dependants de l'appartement de la Reine [Tuileries Palace]," nos. 1–123.

1. "Un tableau peint sur toile représentant une guirlande de fleurs et des légumes, 96 livres."

Garland of Vegetables, ca. 1717 [inv. 3467]
Opperman 1977, p. 475
Schwerin 2000, p. 202 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 240 livres

3. "Un tableau peint sur toile représentant une vase de Porphyre garni de fleurs avec un nid d'oiseau, 96 livres."

Still Life with Two Partridges and a Porphyry Vase, 1723 [inv. 183]
Opperman 1977, p. 488,
Schwerin 2000, no. 9
Acquired in 1755 for 269 livres

4. "Deux tableaux pendans représentant l'un deux chiens qui se battent avec un debris de cuisine et l'autre deux chiens avec du gibier dans leur bordure à trois ornemens, 200 livres."

Two Dogs Fighting in a Kitchen, 1750 [inv. 532]
Opperman 1977, p. 321
Schwerin 2000, no. 17

Two Setters and Dead Game, 1750 [inv. 3432]
Opperman 1977, p. 407
Schwerin 2000, p. 203 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 800 livres

5. "Un tableau représentant une épaule de mouton avec une poularde et un lapin, 40 livres."

Still Life with Animals, Vegetables, and a Vase of Flowers, 1716 [inv. 3485]
Opperman 1977, p. 474
Schwerin 2000, p. 202 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 120 livres

19. "Un tableau représentant un heron et un butor poursuivi par un barbet, dans sa bordure avec ornemens, 150 livres."

Spaniel Attacking a Bittern and a Heron, 1748 [inv. 185]
Oppermann 1977, p. 223
Schwerin 2000, no. 27
Acquired in 1755 for 309 livres

21. "Un tableau représentant un chevreuil et deux chiens, 96 livres."

Two Dogs with Dead Game, 1752 [inv. 3428]
Opperman 1977, p. 412
Schwerin 2000, p. 203 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 520 livres

22. "Un tableau représentant un renard dans son trou, 48 livres."

Fox in Its Burrow, 1754 [inv. 1890]
Opperman 1977, p. 351
Schwerin 2000, p. 203 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 330 livres

25. "Deux tableaux pendans paysages représentant l'un une vue d'Arcueil et l'autre une vue de la foret de Saint Germain avec des animaux, prisés ensemble 400 livres."

Landscape with the Aqueduct of Arcueil, 1745 [inv. 217]
Opperman 1977, p. 608
Schwerin 2000, no. 72

Forest Landscape with Shepherd, Sheep, and Cattle, 1742 [inv. 215]
Opperman 1977, p. 606
Schwerin 2000, no. 73
Acquired in 1755 for 879 livres

26. "Un tableau représentant des instruments de musique, 20 livres."

Allegory of Painting, Sculpture, and Music, 1713 [inv. 188]
Opperman 1977, p. 473
Schwerin 2000, no. 8
Acquired in 1755 for 36 livres

29. "Un tableau représentant un Saint Pierre délivré de prison, 20 livres."

Saint Peter Delivered from Prison, 1713 [inv. 559]
Opperman 1977, p. 36
Schwerin 2000, no. 3
Acquired in 1755 for 41 livres

34. "Un grand tableau d'environ huit pieds représentant une chasse de cerf, 150 livres."

Stag Hunt, 1738
Opperman 1977, p. 198 (whereabouts unknown)
Acquired in 1755 for 485 livres

37. "Un tableau représentant une palette garnie de couleurs avec des desseins, 10 livres."

Allegory of Painting, ca. 1713 [inv. 263]
Opperman 1977, p. 527
Schwerin 2000, no. 7
Acquired in 1755 for 23 livres

40. "Un tableau sans bordure représentant un faucon tombant sur les canards, 72 livres."

Hawk Attacking Ducks, 1740 [inv. 219]
Opperman 1977, p. 290
Schwerin 2000, no. 20
Acquired in 1755 for 270 livres

41. "Un tableau représentant un heron et un chevreuil, 50 livres."

Return from the Hunt with a Dead Roe, 1721 [inv. 184]
Opperman 1977, p. 441
Schwerin 2000, no. 12.
Acquired in 1755 for 351 livres

46. "Un tableau représentant un Renard et des raisins, sans bordure, 40 livres."

The Fox and the Grapes, 1725 [inv. 3431]
Opperman 1977, p. 54
Schwerin 2000, p. 202 (formerly in the collection)
Acquired in 1755 for 66 livres

47. "Un tableau sans bordure représentant un Cerf aux abois, 40 livres."

A Stag Lying Down, ca. 1738 [inv. 192]
Opperman 1977, p. 352
Schwerin 2000, no. 37.
Acquired in 1755 for 75 livres



FIGURE 1

Theodor Schloepke, *View of the Schwerin Picture Gallery*, 1845. Lead pencil and watercolor, 31.4 × 46.1 cm (12³/₈ × 18¹/₈ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 2691 Hz.

♦ PICTORIAL RELATIONS ♦

New Evidence on Jean-Baptiste Oudry and the Court of Mecklenburg-Schwerin

CHRISTOPH FRANK

THE REGION ONCE ENCOMPASSED BY THE DUCAL PRINCIPALITY of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in northern central Germany, geographically close to the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg and Rostock and thus to the important trade routes of the North and Baltic Seas, is one of the remoter—predominantly agricultural—corners of Germany, and the duchy, relatively little known in its day, is still largely understudied.

Yet, already in the eighteenth century calls were heard to make the territory better known to a larger and interested public. For example, in 1768 the Irish traveler and writer Thomas Nugent made a heartfelt appeal to disclose what he called “a treasure, which now as it were lies buried in a corner of Germany.”¹ Nugent, whose *Travels through Germany* contains one of the most informative descriptions of mid-eighteenth-century Mecklenburg, was referring primarily to the ducal collections:

*The duke's gallery, consisting of seven rooms of large dimensions, is well stocked with the most exquisite paintings, by the principal masters, and with all sorts of natural and artificial rarities. I have gone through the whole three or four times, and can assure you that there are few princes in Germany who have a finer museum. To enumerate the particulars would exceed the bounds of a letter, and indeed I have not had time as yet to make a list. I wish his highness would order a catalogue to be printed; it would be the means of disclosing a treasure, which now as it were lies buried in a corner of Germany.*²

Even today, the visitor to Schwerin and the nearby palace of Ludwigslust can experience the sensation of having made an “archaeological” find, the sort of feeling usually brought about by genuinely unexpected discoveries. Nugent must have felt this way when he first visited this extraordinary

collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Northern European art. Despite the profound impact of two world wars and the ensuing developments, it is the ducal collection that still constitutes the nucleus of the outstanding holdings of the Schwerin museum.

However, not only Irish and British visitors to eighteenth-century Mecklenburg showed themselves impressed by what they saw, but also aesthetically spoilt Parisians could find something to their liking there, as can be deduced from an unpublished letter of June 1, 1775, in the papers of the French agent in Hamburg, Coquebert de Montbret, which gives a short description of the castle and gardens at Schwerin, the latter recently laid out by the French architect Jean-Laurent Legeay (1708/10–1790):

*The castle is situated on an island of the lake and the gardens on another which are connected by a bridge. The castle is very old and very ugly on the exterior, despite the fact its location is admirable. The gardens which are very beautiful have been designed by a Frenchman called Le Jay or Leger [Legeay]. . . . Foreigners are received here with much kindness. After the dinner [with the duchess] we saw the duke's cabinets where there are very beautiful pieces of painting; and a large number of originals by the best Flemish painters. Amongst the specimens of natural history I came upon two horns which appear to be of buffalos and which have been found in 1749 in the small river Stör which was being cleaned.*³

These documents would seem to indicate that among eighteenth-century visitors, Schwerin and Ludwigslust, despite their relatively small size and isolated situation, were considered to have collections of art and natural artifacts and curiosities that were among the best of Germany. Yet, the political and economic potential of the small territory was far more limited than that of its powerful neighbors, Saxony and Prussia. The collections of

both Dresden and Berlin, specifically Potsdam, which had been in large part constituted at the same time as those in Schwerin, were soon to outshine the collecting activities of the smaller territories all round.

The duchy of Mecklenburg had, like so much of Northern Europe, suffered extensively as a result of the Nordic War (1700–21) in which Sweden and Russia, as well as so many other northern powers, had been involved either directly or indirectly.⁴ The ducal government of Christian Ludwig II von Mecklenburg-Schwerin (governed 1747–56) and his son Friedrich II (governed 1756–85) was marked by slow economic recovery and little political independence vis-à-vis the neighboring territories, as well as considerable political infighting among the duchy's powerful nobility. The ensuing Seven Years War (1756–63) did little to improve Mecklenburg's economy. Hence, expenditures for the arts and learning were extremely limited, even more so after 1763, and mostly confined to the ducal purse. In fact, in eighteenth-century Mecklenburg private art collectors, otherwise so very numerous in cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg, or Leipzig, are virtually unknown.

◆ THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN LUDWIG II'S PATRONAGE

*Bey verlangten Ankauf der großen frantzösischen Kupffer
verstehe zugleich die gantze Collection . . .*

(As regards the demanded acquisition of the great French coppers,
I understand at the same time the entire collection . . .)

— Christian Ludwig II, 1739

The early days of the patronage of Christian Ludwig II (born 1683) remain somewhat in the dark, despite extensive (but so far little studied) documentation for his first journey, between April and September 1704, to the Netherlands and England, where he is known to have acquired medals and engravings, as well as for his Italian grand tour of 1705/06, the latter being of seminal importance for his aesthetic initiation. The surviving correspondence from Florence and Venice and more important still the journal of his journey to Rome, published in part in 1791–93, testify to the fact that Christian Ludwig was from an early date particularly interested in the work of contemporary artists.⁵ Among his papers survives also an extended correspondence with the famous Venetian portraitist Rosalba Carriera (1675–1757), from whom he had commissioned a portrait of himself.⁶ His

acquisition in those years of antiquarian and artistic literature can be traced on the basis of surviving library catalogues.⁷ A trip to Paris during the summer of 1726 is only indirectly documented on the basis of the duke's register of incoming and outgoing letters.⁸ It may well have been during this trip that the duke was made aware of Jean-Baptiste Oudry and his painted oeuvre; this supposition is supported by a certain familiarity of tone in the surviving correspondence with Oudry, which, however, dates only from 1733 onward. While in Paris, the duke must certainly have visited Versailles, where he may have also had a chance to see some of Oudry's work.⁹ Following his return from Paris and his ensuing nomination as *Kaiserlicher Kommissar* (imperial commissioner) (1728)—thereby driving from power his demented brother Karl Leopold—Christian Ludwig undertook a campaign of redecoration at the castle in Schwerin (1728–31), which may well have been the origin of the Schwerin collections. The Schwerin archives contain a series of important documents about acquisitions, practically none of which predate this period.¹⁰ A few years later the collections had grown to such an extent that a separate gallery (fig. 1) was added to the castle (1747–56).¹¹

Among the acquisition correspondences in the archives is a folder containing Oudry's exchange with the chamberlains Hafften and Caspar, both in residence at Schwerin, who for the next twenty or so years acted on the duke's behalf, as well as number of related documents, such as lists of paintings and receipts.¹² A relatively small portion of this correspondence was published in 1890 by the then curator of the Prussian royal collections, Paul Seidel, in a seminal article that remains a most important reference work on Oudry.¹³ In his article Seidel elucidates in particular the early years of Oudry's association with Duke Christian Ludwig.¹⁴ On the basis of the documentation for the years 1732 to 1734, it is known that at this time the duke commissioned from Oudry two pendants, *Three Does Watching Two Stags Fighting* and *A Family of Roe Deer* (see Bailey, figs. 15 and 16), as well as a *Boar Hunt* and a *Wolf Hunt*, all signed and dated 1734 and delivered to Schwerin in the same year.¹⁵ By 1735 the two hunting pictures were hanging at Christian Ludwig's principal residence at Neustadt.¹⁶ The duke, a passionate huntsman, may have been primarily interested in these pictures in terms of their subject matter rather than their pictorial quality. Yet, his interest in Oudry, which after 1734 is only indirectly documented, does not seem to have waned. However, shortly afterward Prince Friedrich seems to have taken over from his father in becoming one of Oudry's principal patrons.

◆ PRINCE FRIEDRICH'S GRAND TOUR IN 1737–39

Ein Wolff, der im Eisen gefangen, der über alle Masse[n] schön ist

(A wolf, caught in a trap, beautiful beyond all measure)

—Prince Friedrich, 1739

From the moment of Christian Ludwig's first attempts to embellish his residence and enlarge its collections, he appears to have contemplated the idea of sending his son on an extended grand tour of Europe. After initial disputes with the all-powerful Mecklenburg *Ritterschaft* (knighted nobility) over the cost of such an undertaking, which extended over some seven years (!), Christian Ludwig eventually succeeded in providing the necessary funds, and in the summer of 1737 Prince Friedrich (born 1717) finally embarked on a tour (1737–39) that was to take him to the Netherlands, France, and England, as well as a number of important German cities.¹⁷ The official pretext for the journey had been the prince's attendance at the academy of Angers, where he was to be educated in the noble arts of riding, fencing, and dancing. However, as soon becomes clear from the surviving correspondence between son and father, the prince was more interested in the collections and monuments, as well as the contemporary art scene, in Brussels, Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Paris, than in courtly entertainments.¹⁸ Friedrich's interest in the arts was not only supported but effectively encouraged by his father, who ordered both the prince and his preceptor, von Nitzschwitz, to look out for and acquire paintings, prints, and decorative arts items for his residences at Neustadt and Schwerin.

The surviving documentation allows for a very detailed reconstruction of the journey, sometimes even on a day-to-day basis, as in addition to the letters exchanged between son and father, it includes a journal by von Nitzschwitz covering the first part of the journey, as well as a less detailed journal kept by Friedrich, which lists his daily engagements during the latter half of the journey, particularly his prolonged sojourn in Paris in 1738–39. According to these sources, Friedrich first arrived in Paris on October 7, 1737, and left for Angers on October 19. If the surviving documentation is to be believed, Friedrich devoted all twelve days of his first-ever visit to Paris entirely to the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture. The prince in letters to his father referred to himself as a *Liebhaber* (*amateur*) of painting and indicated he wished to be perceived as such by artists (he mentions the portraitist Antoine Pesne and the medallist Jean Duvivier).¹⁹ During the

same visit Friedrich sought out Jean-Baptiste Oudry, the only living painter he seems to have visited, on at least three occasions (October 11, 13, and 17). On October 17, just before leaving the city, Friedrich was invited by Oudry to come along to his studio in the Louvre in order to look at the artist's drawings. As von Nitzschwitz recorded in his journal, "He showed you a great number of his drawings and presented you with some of them as well."²⁰ Given Oudry's possessiveness in relation to his drawings, some of which he held in higher esteem than his paintings—as recorded by his biographer Louis Gougenot—this presentation provides a first proof that the relations between painter and patron were very privileged indeed.²¹

For many a member of one of those numerous provincial courts in Germany and Northern Europe, Paris (and to some extent Versailles)—next to the other two most populous cities of their time, Naples and London—was simply one of the most attractive spots on earth.²² When asked by his father what sort of first impressions Paris had made on him, the prince replied that he could not imagine that there existed a more pleasant place in the world and that the country consisted of regions so beautiful that even a famous landscape painter would not be able to imagine them.²³ The latter remark serves perhaps as another indication that Friedrich was inclined toward seeing the world in pictorial terms rather than political or economic ones. The ensuing days of Friedrich's first sojourn were spent visiting the most famous monuments and private collections the city had to offer: He visited the Palais de Luxembourg, with its famous gallery and gardens, the Invalides, the collection of Roman antiquities assembled by Cardinal de Polignac (soon to be acquired by Frederick II of Prussia), and the gallery of the duc d'Orléans at the Palais Royal. The last was the richest and most prestigious collection of paintings in Paris with major works by Raphael, Titian, Sebastiano del Piombo, Veronese, Giulio Romano, Correggio, Guido Reni, Annibale Carracci, Poussin, and Antoine Coypel, all of which were listed in von Nitzschwitz's journal.²⁴ But smaller collections by private individuals were not neglected either, which demonstrates that this *amateur* was prepared to stray away from the beaten track—so well prepared by eighteenth-century guidebooks to Paris—and that he would go out of his way in order to catch a glimpse of a little-known collection and its hidden treasures. There is no proof for this, but it may well have been Oudry who served as a pictorial counselor and thus may have paved the way for a young prince with an unusually strong taste for painting.

The relationship with Oudry appears to have been particularly intense right from the start as can be learned from a letter by Friedrich to his father of November 16, 1737:

I do not know, whether I have already announced in my previous letter, that Oudry has been very gracious towards me, and as I have been with him the last time [October 17], he showed me two to three books containing many of his drawings whilst afterwards asking me that I should take from them whatever and however many I desired to have, at which point he started selecting from the very best, handing them to me as I was just about to go to Angers, in order to give even more when I should return; he also wanted to instruct me in drawing in front of plaster [casts], when I should come back, as he could see that I had a great desire to do so.²⁵

A year later, however, on December 5, 1738, Friedrich informed his father in a slightly ambiguous passage that Oudry was not teaching him the art of drawing after all, as either drawing or teaching was the artist's strength.²⁶

Given the undoubted quality and bravura of Oudry's drawn oeuvre, it is more likely that this reference contains a hidden critique of the artist's possible lack of patience with and attention to his princely pupil, who, on the evidence of several hundreds of his drawings, mostly of game, horses, and coaches (often traced and derived from other sources), was a rather mediocre amateur draftsman.²⁷ Friedrich, however, was infatuated with Oudry's work, to the point of copying and tracing a large number of his drawings, engravings, and even paintings.

During his second sojourn in Paris, which was to last for more than a year, from May 10, 1738, until May 29, 1739, Friedrich continued to visit galleries, buy art, and be seen in the company of Oudry. The references in the documentation to visits to and from Oudry, as well as to his work, are too numerous to be reiterated here; suffice it to say that he saw the artist on no less than five occasions in the month of May 1739 (May 4, 6, 9, 11, and 22), when he had his portrait taken (see plate 1). His liking for contemporary French art—he mentions in his correspondence, apart from Oudry, the



FIGURE 2
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Imitation of a Bronze Bas-Relief*, 1730. Oil on canvas, 50 × 108 cm (19¾ × 42½ in.).
London, private collection.

names of François Boucher, François Desportes, and Charles Parrocel—had developed to such an extent that he visited the 1738 Salon of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture no less than four times within one week (August 18, 21, 23, and 25). On September 4, Friedrich reported to his father that apart from the numerous other beautiful paintings of that year, there was one of a bas-relief by Oudry, *Silenus and the Nymph Aegle*, which he considered to be of extraordinary beauty,²⁸ a judgment with which other visitors to the Louvre concurred (fig. 2):

À propos of the Buffets Monsieur Oudry had also some exhibited which one admires generally. But without doubt one cannot see anything more seductive than his bas-relief of small frolicking satyrs. There is a secret virtue which encourages one to verify it by touching; but whilst feeling it one discovers the illusion; one cannot be better assured of the fact that it is but a flat painting, and the eye still objects that it is the sense of touch which is misled.²⁹

As in 1737, when the Salon had reopened after long years of closure, Oudry's oeuvre was not particularly well represented in the 1738 exhibition, but it was warmly received by the critics.

Whether under the influence of others or not, Friedrich was aware that Oudry was to be considered among the best artists of his day. He continued to send his father lists of Oudry's works that could potentially be acquired for Schwerin and even a drawing he had done in Oudry's studio in order to convey a better idea of what was available (fig. 3).³⁰ Before leaving Paris he acquired for himself the rather gruesome composition, *Wolf Caught in a Trap*, which is still at Schwerin, at the price of 400 livres (fig. 4).³¹

With Friedrich's departure from France, his contact with Oudry seems to have broken off for a while; it is not until March 1750 that Oudry is heard from again, in a letter to Caspar, chamberlain at Schwerin.³² Given the closeness—if not friendship—between the artist and Friedrich, throughout the latter's stay in Paris, it is particularly surprising that not a single letter of what must have been their correspondence has come to light so far. Perhaps this may be explained by the fact that the ducal private papers appear to have been extensively purged at an undisclosed early date. What is more interesting is that the surviving documentation includes some twenty-three autograph letters by Oudry, and a close reading of these shows that the artist

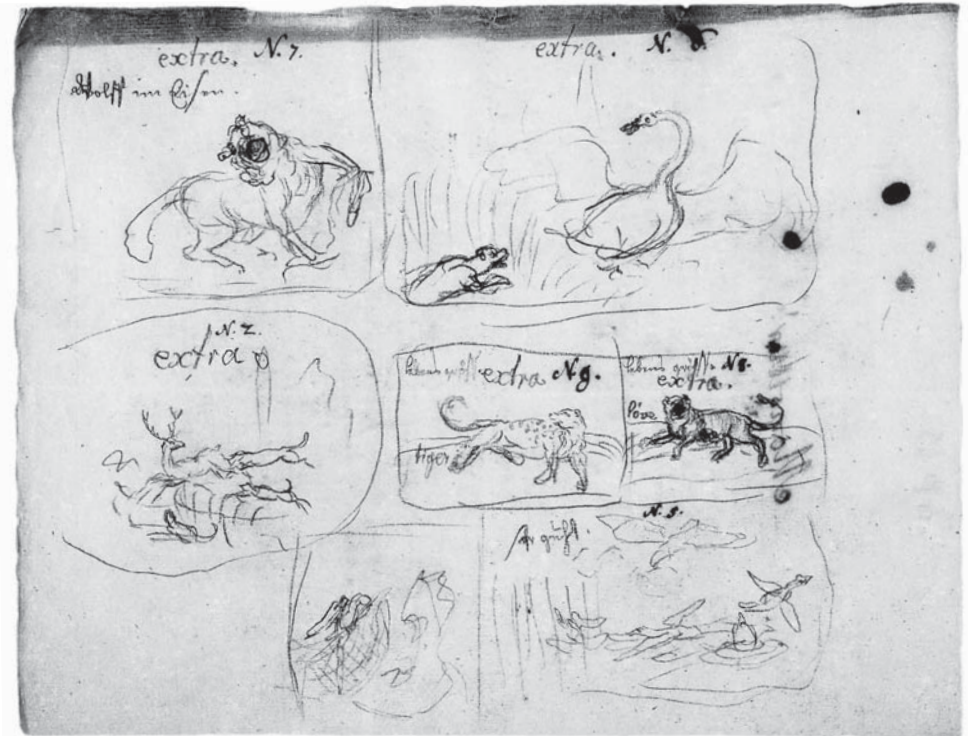


FIGURE 3
Pictures Seen in Oudry's Studio. Drawing from a letter dated February 26, 1739, sent by Prince Friedrich to his father. Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 46. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.



FIGURE 4
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Wolf Caught in a Trap*, 1732. Oil on canvas, 130 × 162 cm
(51 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 63 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. G 213.

had already been in touch with the Mecklenburg court well before his first letter of December 21, 1733 (and thus before the prince's visit to Paris) and remained in close contact throughout the years until his death in 1755. The last five years of Oudry's life are particularly well documented in this correspondence, which includes a very personal letter to Duke Christian Ludwig, dated November 11, 1754, in which Oudry expresses his concern for the latter's state of health.³³

◆ THE MENAGERIE PICTURES AND CLARA

*Vous me faites l'honneur de me dire Monsieur
[votre] désire d'avoir quelques tableaux de ma façon?
(You are doing me the honor of telling me, Monsieur,
your desire to have some pictures of my fashioning?)
—Oudry, 1750*

Contact with the Mecklenburg court seems to have been renewed on March 25, 1750, when the artist responded to an enquiry by the chamberlain, Caspar:

At the moment I have a series appropriate to decorate a gallery. This unique collection is composed of pictures included in the attached memorandum. These are the principal animals of the king's menagerie, all of which I have painted from life on the order of His Majesty and under the guidance of Monsieur de La Peyronie, the king's first surgeon, who wanted to have them engraved and thus form a series of natural history for the Botanical Garden of His Majesty. I have executed these pictures with great care; they remained with me because of the death of Monsieur de La Peyronie; thus I ask only half of what I were to ask if His Serene Highness would have commissioned them from me. To take but some would render the collection wanting and would force me to raise the prices of those chosen.³⁴

The memorandum Oudry mentions (see pages 52, 54–55) not only lists all of the menagerie pictures, which were eventually acquired by Christian Ludwig II, but also makes specific reference to the extraordinary life-size rendering of Clara:

Last year there came to Paris a rhinoceros which Monsieur Oudry had painted from life, the same size as this animal; it is 12 feet from the head to the tail and 6 feet in height; this animal is painted on a canvas 15 long and 10 feet high with a landscape background at the price of 800 livres tournois. If His Serene Highness were to take the rhinoceros, he [Oudry] would graciously ask not to ship it before the end of the next month of September, so that this year it would be exhibited at the Salon in the Louvre, like those above have been exhibited in the preceding years, as one can learn from a small brochure which is printed every year and which gives the details of the works of the academicians who exhibit there.³⁵

As has already been made clear, in 1738 Prince Friedrich was a passionate visitor to the Salon, to the extent even of informing his father what he had seen there, and it is thus not surprising that Oudry counted on the understanding and sympathy of his patrons when he asked to ship the huge painting only after it had been shown at the Salon of 1750 (the Salon *livret* of that year indicates that the painting was listed as no. 38).³⁶ On May 27, 1750, Oudry informed Caspar of his great sense of satisfaction and joy that Christian Ludwig had decided to acquire the painting of Clara as well as the menagerie pictures, and by March 1752 Clara had safely arrived in Schwerin, where she was consigned to a cupboard in the Schwerin castle (as can be deduced from an early inventory entry).³⁷ Clara's early history in Schwerin remains somewhat in the shadows (or in the cupboard as it were), but it seems that sometime in the early 1770s, in conjunction with the construction and embellishment of the new palace at Ludwigslust (1772–76), Clara was finally brought there—in May 1808 she was returned to the ducal gallery in Schwerin in the company of the equally large-scale renderings, *Lion* and *Tiger*.³⁸

In his memorandum, Oudry seems to be subtly encouraging the duke and the prince to follow the academy's annual exhibitions by reading the published descriptions and commentaries. Some of these commentaries are listed in the 1772 Ludwigslust library catalogue and are likely to have been sent to Schwerin by Oudry.³⁹ There are a number of hitherto unnoticed indications that both father and son (as well as Friedrich's sister Ulrica Sophia) may have been more interested in contemporary artistic issues and discourse than has been assumed—and not simply suffering from an addiction to

hunting scenes or a predilection for zoological subject matter. In connection with the 1737–39 journey, Everhard Korthals Altes has already noted that Christian Ludwig's and Friedrich's interest in contemporary Dutch and French art must be considered quite unusual and remarkable for a small court on the German peripheries.⁴⁰

At the time of these major acquisitions for Schwerin, Prince Friedrich, his wife, Louisa Frederica, and his sister Ulrica Sophia undertook a journey to the spas of Aix-la-Chapelle [Aachen], where Friedrich hoped to consult some doctors and take the waters in order to alleviate problems with his eyesight. To avoid the summer heat the ducal party decided to travel to Paris. They spent the summer months (July 23–September 23, 1750) in the French capital, where they met regularly with Oudry. On August 2, Ulrica Sophia wrote to her father that since Oudry had not heard anything further about Christian Ludwig's decision to acquire the menagerie pictures, he needed to be reassured, "thus we are very fortunate that we came here, because otherwise he [Oudry] could have easily sold the pieces."⁴¹ In many ways the 1750 sojourn in Paris is reminiscent of Friedrich's first journey in 1737–39. The days were spent visiting palaces and galleries, as well the city's numerous print sellers, among them Gabriel Huquier and Pierre Mariette, and providers of all sorts of luxury goods and other household commodities. The ducal party went on at least two occasions to see live exotic animals, including a tiger, lion, and pelican, apparently housed near the place Vendôme. An entry of September 4 in the account book kept by the chamberlain, Caspar, reveals to some extent the ducal party's principal concerns and preoccupations during their sojourn, noting prices paid for engravings, glass seals, a snuffbox, and other items as well as tips to servants and guides.⁴²

The engravings acquired during this visit from Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772) may well have been *Three Dogs, a Dead Stag, and a Gazelle* and *A Dead Boar, a Fountain, and a Mastiff Pursuing a Swan*, both executed after compositions by Oudry, which have been dated around 1745, as Prince Friedrich made careful outline drawings of these engravings, which are included in his drawing album at the Schwerin archives (figs. 5 and 6).⁴³ As Hal Opperman has pointed out, Huquier is a key figure in Oudry's career.⁴⁴ He is known to have brought together after Oudry's death what must have been the largest collection of Oudry drawings in the eighteenth century, including several major albums and some sixty animal studies in black and white chalk, as



FIGURE 5

Prince Friedrich, *A Dead Boar, a Fountain, and a Mastiff Pursuing a Swan* (after an engraving by Gabriel Huquier). Pen and brown ink, 58.5 × 34.2 cm (23 × 13½ in.). Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12–1/25, Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses (Varia domestica), no. 216. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.



FIGURE 6
Gabriel Huquier (French, 1695–
1772), *A Dead Boar, a Fountain,
and a Mastiff Pursuing a Swan*,
from a drawing probably done
in 1745. Engraving, 52 × 34 cm
(20½ × 13⅜ in.). Paris, Institut
national d'histoire de l'art,
département de la biblio-
thèque, inv. Fol Est 489.
Photo: © Institut national
d'histoire de l'art, bibliothèque
(Collections Jacques Doucet).



FIGURE 7

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Porcupine*. Black and white chalk, 26.6 × 33.2 cm (10½ × 13⅛ in.).
Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/25, Verschiedene Angelegenheiten
des Fürstenhauses (*Varia domestica*), no. 216. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

well as a number of large, finished compositional drawings. Huquier published several series of engravings after Oudry, beginning in 1735, by which date Oudry had abandoned printmaking. Thus it is quite noteworthy that Prince Friedrich would extend his collecting efforts not only to paintings and drawings by Oudry but also to the highly interpretative field of reproductive engravings, from which on occasion he was to copy for his own purposes. There exist some fifty of Friedrich's drawn outline copies after Oudry, in connection with which a startling discovery was recently made. In the album of Friedrich's copies at the Schwerin archives there is a loose sheet of a porcupine in black and white chalk on blue paper, which was clearly drawn by Oudry himself. Apparently, this work was left in Friedrich's album after he had copied it (and ever since then overlooked) (figs. 7 and 8).⁴⁵



FIGURE 8
Prince Friedrich, *Porcupine* (after Oudry). Pen and brown ink, 24 × 39 cm (9³/₈ × 15³/₈ in.). Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12–1/25, Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses (Varia domestica), no. 216. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

◆ NETWORKING: AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ART

Massé, son ancien ami (Massé, his old friend)

—Louis Gougenot, 1761

Huquier is not the only close artistic associate of Oudry's who surfaces in the Schwerin correspondence in these years; others include the famous silversmith François-Thomas Germain (1726–1791), from whom Christian Ludwig, through Oudry's mediation, was to commission the splendid *machine d'argent*, recently acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 9)⁴⁶, and the painter and engraver Jean-Baptiste Massé (1687–1767), whose *Grande Galerie de Versailles et les deux Salons qui l'accompagnent, peints par Charles Le Brun* (The Great Gallery of Versailles and the Two Salons that Accompany It, Painted by Charles Le Brun) of 1753 (fig. 10)⁴⁷ constitutes one of the greatest cycles of large-scale reproductive engravings the eighteenth century ever saw into print. Christian Ludwig, again through the auspices of Oudry, acquired this volume at a price of 300 *livres tournois* (Massé had been working on this exceptional series of engravings for nearly thirty years and had devoted large parts of his personal fortune to it).⁴⁸ As Gougenot points out in his life of Oudry, Massé had been among the first to recognize the talents of the young painter and had helped him considerably in those early days:

*Monsieur Massé, his old friend, opened him the first routes [toward success] . . . His industrious friendship led him from time to time to talk about the talents of Monsieur Oudry, his purity, uprightness and his other personal qualities . . . The frankness of Monsieur Oudry pleased him as much as his work and he conceived at this very moment the intention of being useful to him. It was him who presented him some time afterwards to the King, and who drew him from behind the curtain behind which he had been, so to speak, previously hidden.*⁴⁹

In 1725 in recollection of his gratitude toward his friend, Oudry had painted a ceiling in Massé's lavishly furnished apartment on the place Dauphine, which was regularly visited by the Paris high society and foreign visitors alike, as he was a much sought-after portraitist and miniaturist, who was also appreciated for his impeccable attire and manners.



FIGURE 9
François-Thomas Germain (French, 1726–1791), *Machine d'argent*, 1754. Silver,
21 × 37 × 23 cm (8¼ × 14½ × 9⅛ in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005.43.

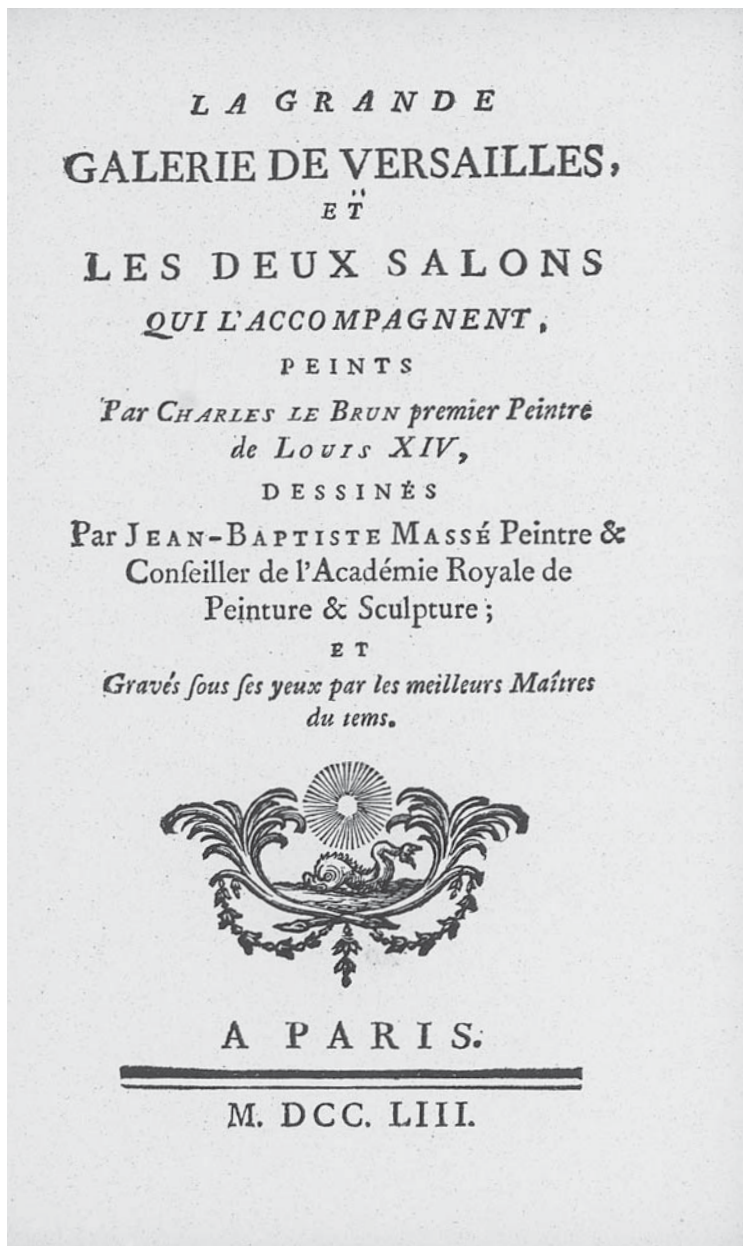


FIGURE 10
Title page of *La Grande galerie de Versailles, et les deux salons qui l'accompagnent*,
peints par Charles Le Brun... dessinés par J. B. Massé (Paris, 1753). Research Library,
The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 88-B4429.

Massé, perhaps not surprisingly, can also be found among François-Thomas Germain's customers and acquaintances, as on July 9, 1766, he is known to have acquired twelve sets of gilded cutlery at a mere 1,684 *livres* 17 *sols* 6 *deniers*.⁵⁰ According to his own statement not only was Massé satisfied with the acquisition but, perhaps more importantly, so were his guests. Germain, whose extraordinary compositions owe a great deal to the compositions of both Oudry and François Desportes, was generally considered one of the best silversmiths of his day, enjoying such illustrious patrons as the king of Portugal and Catherine II of Russia. Not only did he live in a studio very near Oudry's, but he is also to be counted possibly among his friends (given the closeness of their collaboration that would not be surprising) and definitely among his patrons—Oudry's painting *Spaniel Seizing a Duck* was formerly in Germain's collection.⁵¹ A preparatory drawing for this composition (fig. 11) as well as its pendant, *Fox Guarding a Partridge*, found its way into the Schwerin collections following the sale of Oudry's studio in 1755.⁵² The latter acquisition may not have been just coincidental, as Friedrich, at a so far undisclosed date, executed an outline copy of the *Spaniel Seizing a Duck* for his album (fig. 12).⁵³ Thus do such drawn copies, like the surviving correspondence, provide insights into eighteenth-century networks and the workings of the art market.

◆ THE SWEDISH CONNECTION

Parlés moy je vous prie des Tableaux d'Oudry, et comment on les a trouvé?—
(I beg you, please, tell me about Oudry's pictures, and how one has found them?)
—Carl Gustaf Tessin, 1740

Throughout the 1730s and 1740s—at a time when the royal palace at Stockholm was undergoing extensive refurbishment—the king of Sweden and the Swedish court featured among Jean-Baptiste Oudry's most prominent patrons.⁵⁴ As a direct result, the Oudry collections at the royal palace and the Nationalmuseum at Stockholm are rightly considered to count among the most exquisite in existence. Key interlocutors were Carl Hårleman, in Paris in 1732 and later appointed superintendent of the royal buildings (1741), and Count Carl Gustaf Tessin, who was on a diplomatic mission to Paris from 1739 until 1742, after previous visits to the city in 1728



FIGURE 11
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Spaniel Seizing a Duck*, 1745. Black and white chalk,
45.1 × 37.7 cm (17¾ × 14⅞ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 2091 Hz.



FIGURE 12
Prince Friedrich, *Spaniel Seizing a Duck*,
after Oudry. Pen and brown ink, 43.7 × 34 cm
(17¼ × 13⅜ in.). Schwerin, Landeshaupt-
archiv, Herzogliches Hausarchiv.
Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

and 1736, where he is likely to have started acquiring paintings by the artist, presumably first of all for himself. Tessin's later correspondence with his wife and Hårleman represents a rich source for the constitution of the Swedish art collections while also serving as an impressive testimonial of how the French capital and its cultural scene were perceived by enlightened foreign visitors.⁵⁵

In 1735, Oudry prepared a long list of works for sale (almost the same as another list that he had sent to Schwerin in 1732)⁵⁶ and submitted it to Stockholm through Tessin's intermediary. Tessin first obtained the king's blessing, then presented the list to parliament for approval.⁵⁷ The Swedish parliament, however, considered Oudry's pictures too expensive and negotiation dragged on for years. Despite the relatively rich documentation, the exact acquisition dates of the majority of the Swedish pictures can so far not be determined. However, it can be established that the *Still Life with a Turkish Carpet*, *Dead Game*, and *a Silver Tureen*, for which the preparatory drawing is at Schwerin, and *Le Lion et le Moucheron* (*The Lion and the Fly*) were purchased from Oudry in 1747 for 600 and 1000 *livres* respectively.⁵⁸ Painted at the *Ménagerie de Versailles*, *Le Lion et le Moucheron* was first offered by Oudry to Prince Friedrich for 1000 *livres* in 1739, when the prince made a quick sketch of it for his father (fig. 13). Oudry kept a copy, of the same size, after the picture had been sold to Sweden and eventually proposed it for sale to Schwerin in 1750 for 250 *livres*, but it was not purchased. It is all the more interesting to note that there is also an outline copy by Friedrich of the *Still Life with a Turkish Carpet* (fig. 14), evidence, perhaps, of what one might call Oudry's programmatic approach to both his patrons, Mecklenburg and Sweden. It also demonstrates that Friedrich was interested in Oudry's oeuvre well beyond the works he acquired for his own collection.⁵⁹



FIGURE 13
Prince Friedrich, *Le Lion et le Moucheron*, after Oudry. Pen and brown ink, 46.5 × 38.6 cm (18¼ × 15¼ in.). Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12–1/25, Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses (*Varia domestica*), no. 216. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

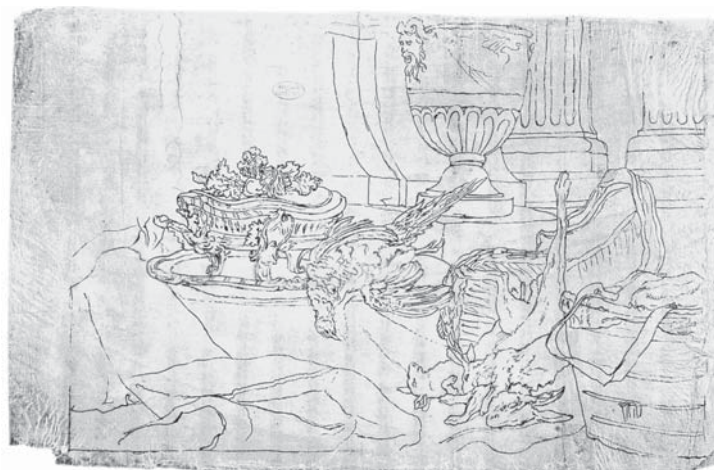


FIGURE 14
Prince Friedrich, *Still Life with a Turkish Carpet*, *Dead Game*, and *a Silver Tureen*, after Oudry. Pen and brown ink on tracing paper, 33.4 × 54.5 cm (13⅜ × 21½ in.). Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Herzogliches Hausarchiv. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

◆ OF ANIMALS AND THEIR COLOR

Aber in der colorit ist er unvergleichlich...

(But in coloration he is incomparable...)

—Prince Friedrich, 1738

In later years, Friedrich's interest in Oudry also extended to the artist's art theoretical side. Oudry sent the prince the manuscript texts, recently rediscovered in the University Library of Rostock, of his two famous lectures on color and painting, delivered to the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture on June 7, 1749, and December 2, 1752. The first of these manuscripts Oudry dedicated to the prince: *DÉDIÉ A. S. A. LE PRINCE FREDERIC. PRINCE héréditaire DE MECKLENBOURG. 1750. Par son tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur J. B. te Oudry* (fig. 15).⁶⁰ Oudry was prepared to spend a considerable amount of money on these presents: The gilt and embossed red and green bindings were executed by no less than Louis XV's and Madame de Pompadour's bookbinder, Antoine Michel Padeloup, perhaps the most outstanding representative of this distinguished craft in mid-eighteenth-century France (figs. 16 and 17). Interestingly, the only other patron of Oudry's who is known to have received the texts of his *conférences* in identical bindings was Carl Gustaf Tessin.⁶¹ Of course, this in itself cannot serve as a proof that Friedrich actually read these treatises, but another drawing in his album, this time of a so-called *clavecin oculaire* (ocular harpsichord), which he appears to have brought back from one of his journeys to Paris, shows him to have had distinctive interests in contemporary theory, after all (fig. 18). Despite the fact that the ocular harpsichord, devised by the Jesuit color theorist and aesthete Louis-Bertrand Castel (1688–1757) to generate harmonies of light and color, was never realized, it was nonetheless the subject of considerable interest in scientific circles in Paris throughout the 1720s and 1730s.⁶²

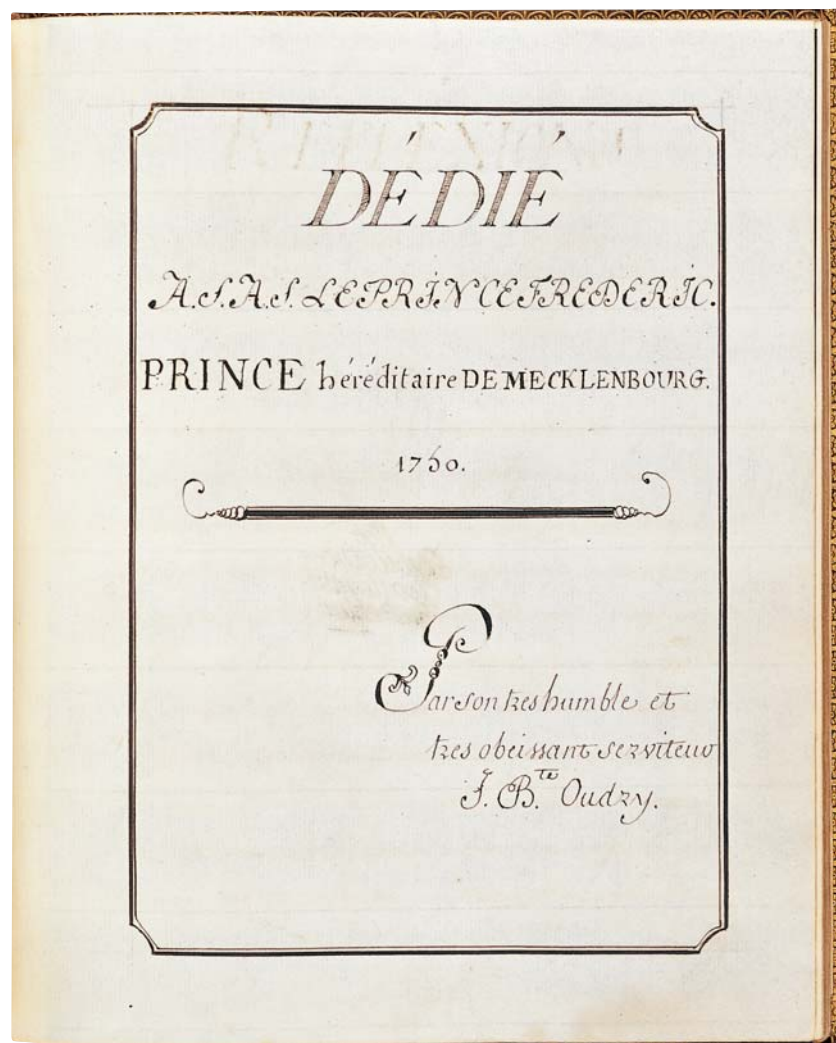


FIGURE 15
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, dedication to Prince Friedrich, *Conférence MS.* of 1749. Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sondersammlungen, Mss. var. 74, n. fol. Photo: © Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek.



FIGURE 16
Antoine Michel Padeloup, *Binding of Oudry's Conférence MS. of 1749*. Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sondersammlungen, Mss. var. 74. Photo: © Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek.



FIGURE 17
Antoine Michel Padeloup, *Binding of Oudry's Conférence MS. of 1752*. Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sondersammlungen, Mss. var. 75. Photo: © Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek.

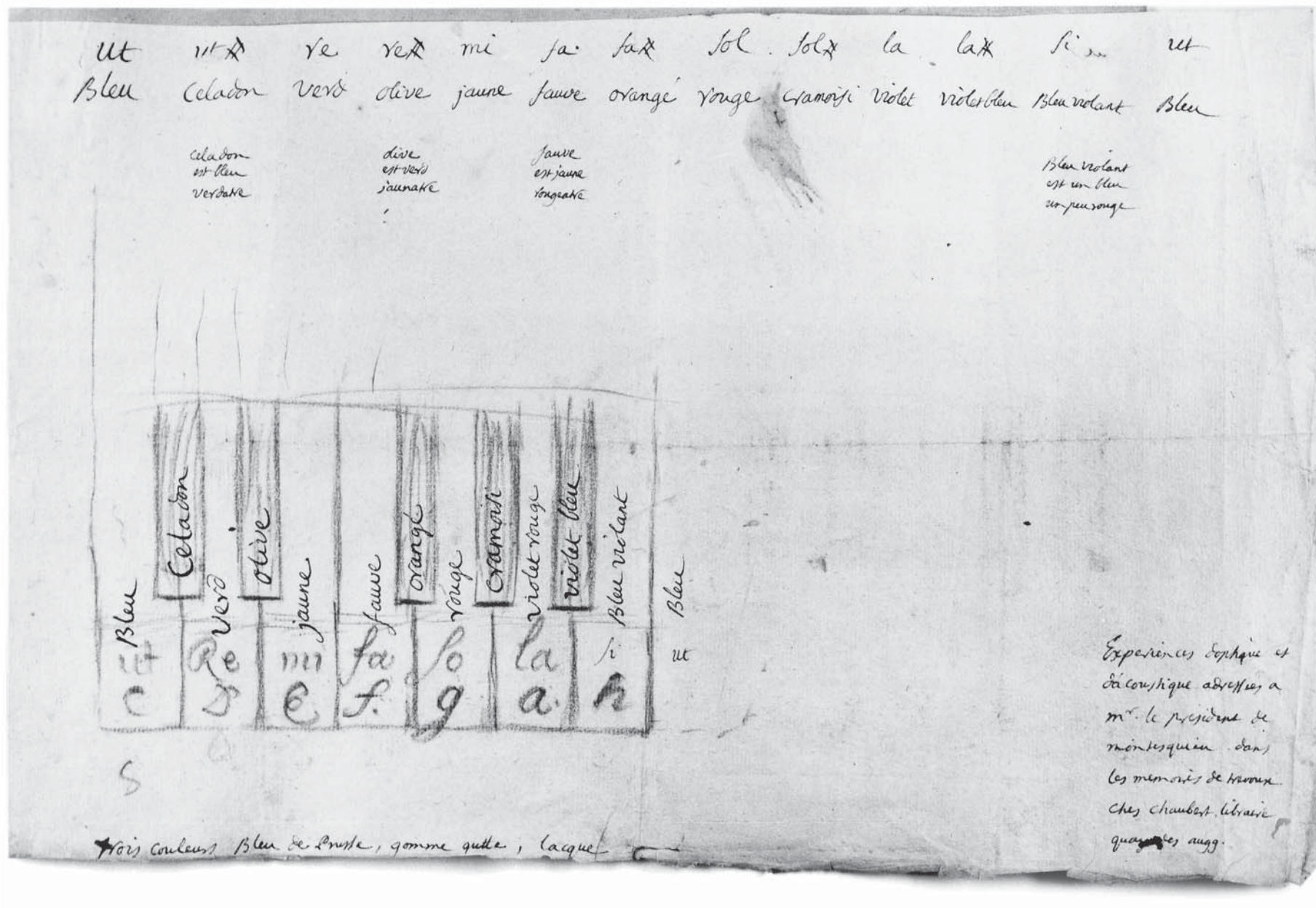


FIGURE 18

Prince Friedrich (?), *Drawing of an Ocular Harpsichord*. Red and black chalk, pen and brown ink, 20.8 × 34.5 cm (8¼ × 13⅝ in.). Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/25, *Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses (Varia domestica)*, no. 216. Photo: © Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv.

◆ CONCLUSION

A collection which might rival those of most of the princes in Germany
—Thomas Nugent, 1768

The latter part of the Schwerin correspondence with Oudry covers the years from Friedrich's last journey to Paris in 1750 until the artist's death in 1755, as well as the ensuing sale of the contents of Oudry's studio, at which the ducal family was once again to emerge as the principal buyer. Throughout the last years of his life Oudry acted foremost as a *marchand mercier* (dealer in luxury goods) for the court of Schwerin, providing his ducal patrons with much needed household commodities from Paris (among them a *chaise percée* [convenience chair]), commenting on the quality of furniture and light fixtures, commissioning and supervising the execution of statues for the ducal gardens at Schwerin and Ludwigslust. In connection with the latter, he searched the auction rooms for plaster casts, a task that caused him many a headache, since, according to the increasingly Pietist tastes of his patrons, figures were not to be chosen if represented in the nude. The correspondence of these last years testifies to a high degree of intimacy and familiarity between the artist and his German patrons, the result of which is a collection of which Thomas Nugent said in 1768: "Were the pictures of this palace [Neustadt, Christian Ludwig's principal residence until his brother's death in 1747], and those of the castle of Schwerin, placed in one gallery, they would form a collection which might rival those of most of the princes in Germany."⁶³

Schwerin's collection comprises some very prominent examples of mid-eighteenth-century French art, and perhaps the installation of Oudry's pictures in the palace of Ludwigslust, envisaged for 2008, will serve as a reconstruction (however partial) of the extraordinary cultural context in which they were acquired and help us to understand that hunting animals and hunting pictures were quite different pursuits at the court of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. ◆

Notes

This enquiry forms part of a larger archival investigation that aims to reconstruct the history of the largest collection of Oudry's work in existence. The goal is to publish for the first time ever Oudry's entire correspondence with the court of Schwerin on the occasion of the installation of the Oudry galleries at Ludwigslust, which is envisaged for 2008. For encouragement and criticism, the author would like to thank Colin B. Bailey, Mary Morton, and Gero Seelig, curator of old master painting at the Staatliches Museum Schwerin.

1. Thomas Nugent, *Travels through Germany* (London, 1768), vol. 1, p. 229. For placement of the Schwerin collections in relation to the other principal collections of eighteenth-century Germany, see Christoph Frank, "Disclosing a Treasure, which now as it were lies buried in a corner of Germany." *Kunstsammlungen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und des Klassizismus*, in *Nationalschätze aus Deutschland. Von Luther zum Bauhaus*, exh. cat., ed. Norman Rosenthal (Bonn, Bundeskunsthalle, 2005), pp. 178–83.
2. Nugent (see note 1 above), vol. 1, p. 229.
3. "Le château est situé dans une isle du lac, et les jardins dans une autre qui communiquent par un pont. Le château est fort antique et très vilain au dehors, quoique la position en soit admirable. Les jardins qui sont fort jolis ont été dessinés par un français nommé Le Jay ou Leger . . . Les étrangers y sont reçus avec beaucoup de bonté. Après le diner [avec la duchesse] nous vismes les cabinets du Duc où il y a de très beaux morceaux de peinture; et bon nombre d'originaux des meilleurs peintres flamands. Parmi les pièces d'histoire naturelle j'ai remarqué deux cornes qui paroissent être de Buffles et qui ont été trouvé en 1749 dans la petite rivière de Stör que l'on nettoyoit." Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. n. a. fr. 20102, fols. 120v–121v. For more on Legeay, see Gilbert Erouart, *Architettura come pittura: Jean-Laurent Legeay un piranesiano francese nell'Europa die Lumi* (Milan, 1982), pp. 53–60, 133–35.
4. For a brief history of Mecklenburg in the early modern period, see Hartmut Schmied in *Die Geschichte Mecklenburgs von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Wolf Karge et al., 4th ed. (Rostock, 2004), pp. 69–111.
5. Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv (hereafter LHA), 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 279–81 (1704), resp. no. 282 (1705/06). See also "Des Durchl. Herzogs und Herrn Christian Ludwigs II. von Mecklenburg, glorwürdigen Andenkens, Tagebuch während seines Aufenthalts zu Rom im Jahre 1705 und 1706," in *Rostocksche Monatsschrift*, vol. 1 (1791), pp. 145–61, 297–309; vol. 2 (1793), pp. 7–19.
6. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen (Acta aulica), VI. Hofverwaltung und Hofeinrichtungen; Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 22.
7. *Catalogus Bibliothecae Ducis Christiani Ludovici II., Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sondersammlungen, Mss. Meckl. J 64(5)*.
8. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/22, Korrespondenz der herzoglichen Familie untereinander (Litterae familiares inter Serenissimi familiam) sowie mit auswärtigen Fürsten, no. 185. The latter refers to the letters the duke wrote to his wife from Paris on July 19 and 20, 1726, as well as the letters he received from his wife on July 18 and 26.
9. See Colin B. Bailey's essay in this catalogue.
10. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen (Acta aulica), VI. Hofverwaltung und Hofeinrichtungen; Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, nos. 1–155.
11. Friedrich Schlie, *Die Kunst- und Geschichtsdenkmäler des Grossherzogtums Mecklenburg-Schwerin*, vol. 2 (Schwerin, 1898), p. 607.
12. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen (Acta aulica), VI. Hofverwaltung und Hofeinrichtungen; Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109.
13. Seidel 1890, pp. 80–110. All ensuing articles on Oudry at Schwerin are indebted to Seidel; see Schwerin 2000 and Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4. In connection with the forthcoming installation of the Oudry galleries at the palace of Ludwigslust, a critical edition of all Oudry-related sources at Schwerin as well as a critical catalogue of the collection itself is being prepared for publication.
14. Seidel 1890, pp. 88, 92–95, 97.
15. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 424–25, 483–84 (p. 188, p. 189, p. 338, and p. 339).
16. F. Köhler, Specification derer in Neustadt befindlichen Fürstlichen Gemälde Neustadt, den

31. Januar 1735; Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 300a, n. fol., nos. 50 and 51.

17. Friedrich Wigger, “Aus dem Leben Herzog Friedrichs des Frommen bis zu seinem Regierungsantritt,” *Jahrbücher des Vereins für Mecklenburgische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, vol. 45 (1880), pp. 53–176. The journey is well documented in the Schwerin archives; see foremost Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, nos. 294–98.

18. Altes 2004–5, pp. 216–50.

19. See his letters to his father from Paris, November 24, 1738, and from Berlin, August 23, 1739; Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 37 and letter no. 69.

20. “Er zeigte Ihnen viele von seine[n] Zeichnungen, und beschenkte Sie auch mit einige[n].”: Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 294, n. fol. First published by Altes 2004–5, pp. 247–48.

21. Gougenot 1761, vol. 2, p. 380; see also Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 135.

22. On the “German” perception of France through the medium of aristocratic travel, see Thomas Grosser, *Reiseziel Frankreich: Deutsche Reiseliteratur vom Barock bis zur Französischen Revolution* (Opladen, 1989); and Mathis Leibetseder, *Die Kavaliertour: adlige Erziehungsreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004).

23. “Weil Ew[er] HzD [Herzogliche Durchlaucht] befohlen zu wissen, wie mir Paris gefallen; so kann unterthänigst berichten, daß ich keinen angenehmeren Ort auf der Welt zu seyn glauben kann, eben wie auch das Land, welches von solchen schönen Gegenden zusammen gesetzt ist, als sie der berühmte Landschaft-Mahler, nicht ausdenken kann.” (Since Your Most Serene Highness has ordered to know, whether Paris had been to my liking, I can most humbly relate to you, that I cannot believe there to exist a more pleasant place on this world, just like the country, which is put together of such beautiful regions, as even the famous landscape painter cannot imagine.): letter from Angers, November 16, 1737; see Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 15.

24. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 294, n. fol.; first published by Altes 2004–5, no. 3, pp. 247–48. The itinerary as recorded in von Nitzschwitz’s journal is backed up by the account books, which record in great detail all the entry fees and tips; see Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 298, n. fol.

25. “Ich weiß nicht, ob ich in meinen vorigen Briefen schon gemeldet, daß Ouderie so höfflich gegen mir gewesen, und wie ich das letztemahl bey ihm gewesen, mir 2. bis 3. Bücher in welchen lauter Zeichnungen von ihm gelegen gezeigt, und mir hernach gebeten, ich möchte nur aussuchen, was ich behalten wollte, und wie viel ich behalten wollte; worauf er mir dann von den aller besten selbst aus gesucht, und mir nur unterdessen, daß ich nach Anger[s] ginge mit gegeben, um wann ich wieder käme noch mehrere zu geben, auch wollte er, wann ich wieder käme, mir im zeichnen vor plaister instruieren, weil er sege [sähe], daß ich große Lust dazu hatte.”: Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 15.

26. “Zeich[n]en lernet mich Ouderi nicht, dann dieses ist eben nicht sein fort, aber in der colorit ist er unvergleichlich” (Oudry does not teach me how to draw, because this is not his strength, but in coloration he is incomparable): Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 38.

27. See, for example, the little studied album of Friedrich’s drawings at Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/25, Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses (Varia domestica), no. 216.

28. “Nun sind hier auf dem Louvre die Gemähle exponiret, welche überaus schön sind, unter andern ist ein barelie [bas-relief] von Ouderi wie Brons [Bronze] gemahlet so extra schön; hernach auch einige von Deport desgleichen wenige sind” (At the moment the paintings are exhibited at the Louvre; they are very beautiful, amongst others there is a bas relief by Oudry feigned in bronze, so very beautiful; later on also some by Desportes, of which there are not many like this one): Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 32. For the picture in question, present whereabouts unknown, see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 183, 548 (p. 497), no. 16; vol. 2, p. 1198, fig. 423. The picture was still with Oudry in 1743 and by 1757 with La Live de Jully.

29. For the quote by one of the Salon critics: “A propos des Buffets, M. Oudry en a aussi exposé qu’on admire généralement. Mais sans doute on ne peut rien voir de plus séduisant que son Bas-relief de petits Satires folâtres ensemble. Il y a une vertu secrete qui pousse à le vérifier par le toucher; mais lorsque ce sens en a découvert l’illusion, on n’en est pas plus assuré que ce n’est qu’une peinture platte, & l’œil redit encore que c’est le Tact qui se trompe.”; see L[e] C[hevalier] d[e] N[eufville de Brunaubois Montador], *Description raisonnée des tableaux exposés au Louvre. Lettre à Madame la marquise de S. P. R.* (Paris, 1738), p. 6; cited in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 183–84. For the painting of a buffet, now in Stockholm, see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 550 (p. 502); vol. 2, p. 1095, fig. 245.

30. See, for example, Friedrich’s letter to his father of February 26, 1739, which also contains the drawing in question; Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 296, letter no. 46.

31. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 483 (p. 337).

32. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109, fols. 1r–3r.

33. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109, fols. 69r–69v.

34. For the full text of this letter, see the appendix to this essay. See also Mary Morton’s essay in this catalogue.

35. For the full text of this memorandum, see the appendix to this essay.

36. “[No. 38] Le Rhinoceros, grand comme nature, sur une toile de 15 pieds de large de 10 de hauteur. Cet Animal a été peint dans sa Loge à la Foire de S. Germain; il appartient à l’Auteur”: *Explication des peintures...* (1750); cited in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 200.

37. Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109, fol. 25r; and *Inventarium, welches über die auf dem Hochfürstl. Hause zu Suerin, vorgefundenen Meublen und Geräthschaften in Gegenwart des Hof-Commissarii Langhoffen, des Haus-Inspectoris Wilsons und des Cammer-Dieners Schnellle errichtet worden, Schwerin, den 20. Martz & seqq. Anno 1752*: 37. “Der so genannte blaue Saal... 1 großer Schrank von Tannen Holtz mit 4 Thüren[,] worinn das Contrefait von dem großen Rhinoceros”: Schwerin, LHA, 2.26–2, Hofmarschallamt, sign. 1849, fol. 34.

38. “Verzeichniß derjenigen Herrschaftlichen Sachen, welche Endes Unterzeichneter an den Aufseher der Herzoglichen Gallerie in Schwerin unterm 4ten May a. c. abgeliefert hat.

[...] 100. Ein Rhinoceros, in Lebensgröße. V[on] Oudry 12-„,17-„

101. Ein Löwe, in Lebensgröße. d. gl.-„, 11-„,8.8

102. Ein Tyger, in Lebensgröße. d. gl.-„, 6.6.8.8.

[...] Ludwigslust d. 5ten Maj 1808 [gez.:] J. N. Erdtmann.”

(Inventory of those most serene objects, which he who has signed below has handed over to the supervisor of the Ducal Gallery in Schwerin on the 4th of May of the current year.

[...] 100. A Rhinoceros, in life size. By Oudry 12-„,17-„

101. A Lion, in life size. By the same-„, 11-„,8.8

102. A Tiger, in life size. By the same-„, 6.6.8.8.

[...] Ludwigslust the 5th May 1808 [signed] J. N. Erdtmann).

Schwerin, LHA, 2.26–2, Hofmarschallamt (10.11. Bildergalerie etc.), Sign. 2298, n. fol.

On Clara’s installation at Ludwigslust, see Mark Leonard’s essay in this catalogue.

39. There are, for example, five copies of the *livret* of the 1747 Salon alone, which may well have been sent to Schwerin by Oudry; see Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sonder-sammlungen, Mss. Meckl. O 116d, fol. 128v, shelf nos. 946 and 1700. The Salon of 1747 contained no less than fifteen of Oudry’s compositions; see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 193–94.

40. Altes 2004–5, p. 239.

41. “so ist es ein großes Glück, daß wir hier gekommen sind, weil er sonst die Stücke leicht hätte verkaufen können.”: Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 304, n. fol. Oudry may have been bluffing though.

42. “in dem Hôtel Soupise Trinckgeld geben [tips given in the Hôtel de Soubise] ... 6 lt.

in dem Hôtel Villar [in the Hôtel Villar] ... 4 lt.

in dem Hôtel de Grimberg [in the Hôtel de Grimberg] ... 3 lt.

à Mr Huquieres vor Kupferstich [to Monsieur Huquier for engravings] ... 11 lt. 16 ./.

- noch demselben vor Kupferstich [to the same for engravings] ... 10 lt. 16 ./.
- dem Goldschmied Artout ... [to the goldsmith Artout] ... 36 lt.
- an Mr Mariette vor Kupferstich [to Monsieur Mariette for engravings] ... 16 lt. 16 ./.
- à l'hôtel de Matignon, concierge [at the Hôtel Matignon, to the concierge] ... 6 lt.
- der Diener, welcher das Garten Haus gezeigt [to the servant who showed us the garden] ... 3 lt.
- à l'hôtel du Maine [at the Hôtel du Maine] ... 6 lt.
- vor ein Stück Zin[n] [for a piece of pewter] ... 4 ./.
- die Thiere à la place de Vendome zu besehen [to look at the animals at the place Vendôme] ... 1 lt. 4 ./.
- à l'hôtel de Toulouse [at the Hôtel de Toulouse] ... 6 lt.
- vor 18. St[ück] gläserne Cachets [for eighteen glass seals] ... 18 lt.
- den Löwen und Tiger zum 2ten Mahl zu besehen [to see the lion and the tiger a second time] ... 8 lt. 8 ./.
- den Pelican zu besehen [to see the pelican] ... 8 lt. 8 ./.
- dem Kerl Trinckgeld geben [a tip given to that chap] ... 12 ./.
- vor eine tabatiere von Papp [for a snuffbox made of cardboard] ... 15 ./.
- zu Sceaux im Haus und Garten Trinckgeld geben [at Sceaux tips given in the house and the garden] ... 13 lt. 4 ./.
- dem Patissier [to the pastry cook] ... 1 lt. 4 ./.
- vor arme [for the poor] ... 1 lt. —"
- Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/7, Reisen mecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 304, n. fol.
43. For the engravings, see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, app. 5, pp. 291–92 (p. 88 and p. 89). The drawings by Friedrich are at Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/25, *Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses* (Varia domestica), no. 216.
44. Yves Bruand, "Un grand collectionneur, marchand et graveur du XVIIIe siècle, Gabriel Huquier," *Gazette-des-Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., 37 bis (1950), pp. 99–114; see also Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 101.
45. *Porcupine* here attributed to Jean-Baptiste Oudry; see Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/25, *Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses* (Varia domestica), no. 216 (unpublished). Compare with the drawing of a porcupine in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin (inv. KdZ 1812); see Günter Arnolds, *Französische Zeichnungen, Zeichnungen des Kupferstichkabinetts in Berlin* (Berlin, 1947), pp. 38–39, fig. 20 (after an oil study by Peter Boel [Musée de Rennes]); and Opperman 1977, vol. 2, p. 782 (D 739). Friedrich's copy is executed in pen and brown ink from the original drawing and measures 24 × 39 cm (9 3/8 × 15 3/8 in.); see Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/25, *Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses* (Varia domestica), no. 216. On the basis of the latter album a certain number of drawings at the Schwerin Museum, hitherto given to Oudry, need to be de-attributed and returned to Prince Friedrich, which will be the subject of a separate inquiry by the author.
46. See Alexander von Solodkoff, "A Lost 'machine d'argent' of 1754 by François-Thomas Germain," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7, no. 2 (2000), pp. 122–35.
47. *La Grande Galerie de Versailles et les deux Salons qui l'accompagnent, peintes par Charles Le Brun, premier peintre de Louis XIV, dessinés par Jean-Baptiste Massé, peintre et conseiller de l'Académie royale de peinture et sculpture et gravés sous ses yeux par les meilleurs maîtres du tems* (Paris, chez la veuve Amaury, libraire, au Palais de Justice, 1753). This grand folio volume is based on fifty-three drawings by Massé (now at the Musée du Louvre), which were engraved by the leading representatives of their art, among them Charles-Nicolas Cochin and Jean-Georges Wille. Well received at Versailles, the work was nonetheless considered cold and of limited interest by the Paris press.
48. See Emile Campardon, *Un artiste oublié: J. B. Massé, peintre de Louis XV, dessinateur, graveur, documents inédits* (Paris, 1880), pp. 13–14.
49. "M. Massé, son ancien ami, lui en fraya les premières routes... Son amitié industrielle lui suggéra de faire tomber de temps à autre la conversation sur les talents de M. Oudry, sur sa candeur, sur sa droiture et sur ses autres qualités personnelles... La franchise de M. Oudry lui plut autant que ses ouvrages, et il conçut dans le moment même le dessein de lui être utile. Ce fut lui qui le présenta quelque temps après au roi, et qui le tira de dessous le rideau sous lequel il avoit été, pour ainsi dire, caché jusqu'alors." Gougenot 1761, vol. 2, p. 370.
50. According to Massé's testament, published by Emile Campardon (see note 48 above), pp. 172–73; see also Christiane Perrin, *François-Thomas Germain orfèvre des rois* (Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau, 1993), p. 95.
51. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 438 (p. 220); vol. 2, p. 1126, fig. 308.
52. Opperman 1977, vol. 2, p. 743 (D 624), p. 1040, fig. 135; purchased by Christian Ludwig together with its pendant at Oudry's sale in 1755 for 59 livres. For the latter, see Opperman 1977, vol. 2, pp. 770–71 (D 673), p. 1040, fig. 136.
53. Schwerin, LHA, Herzogliches Hausarchiv, no inv. no.
54. See Gunnar W. Lundberg in *Carl Gustaf Tessin och konsten*, ed. Per Bjurström (Stockholm, 1970), pp. 76–80; Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 84–85; and Pontus Grate, *French Paintings II. Eighteenth Century, Swedish National Art Museums* (Stockholm, 1994), pp. 223–26, no. 202.
55. *Tableaux de Paris et de la Cour de France 1739–1742. Lettres inédites de Carl Gustaf, comte de Tessin*, ed. Gunnar von Proschwitz, vol. 22, *Romanica Gothoburgensia*, (Göteborg and Paris, 1983); and for the earlier part of the story, Pierre Lespinasse, "Les voyages d'Hårleman et de Tessin en France (1732–1742) et leurs conséquences au point de vue de l'influence française en Suède (D'après leur correspondance conservée aux Archives royales à Stockholm)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'art français* (1910), pp. 276–98.
56. "Mémoire et description des tableaux faits par Oudry, peintre ordinaire du Roy[,] composant la meilleure partie de son cabinet, tous originaux": Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/26, Hofstaatssachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109, fols. 76r–77r; first published by Seidel 1890, pp. 91–92. See also Opperman 1977, vol. 1, app. 3, pp. 219–23.
57. Stockholm, Royal Archives, Slottsbyggnadsdeputationen: ankomme bref..., vol. IV, fols. 187–92.
58. For the pictures, see Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 384 and 550 (p. 62 and p. 502); vol. 2, pp. 1084 and 1095, figs. 223 and 245; and Pontus Grate (see note 54 above), no. 209, pp. 235–36, and no. 208, pp. 233–34. For the Schwerin drawing of the still life, see Opperman 1977, vol. 2, p. 841 (D 1007), p. 1095, fig. 246. The drawing (Schwerin, inv. 2090 Hz.) was purchased at Oudry's sale in 1755, together with another drawing D 991 for 30 livres 2 sols.
59. Prince Friedrich after Oudry, *Still Life with a Turkish Carpet, Dead Game, and a Silver Tureen*; see Schwerin, LHA, Herzogliches Hausarchiv, no inv. no.; and Prince Friedrich after Oudry, *Le Lion et le Moucheron*; see Schwerin, LHA, 2.12–1/25, *Verschiedene Angelegenheiten des Fürstenhauses* (Varia domestica), no. 216.
60. Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sonder-sammlungen, Mss. var. 74 and Mss. var. 75. The two manuscripts came to the library together with other parts of Friedrich's Ludwigslust library in 1790; see [Olav Gerhard Tychsen], *Catalogus Manuscriptorum a Duce Friderico Francisco in Bibliothecam academicam illatorum ao. 1790*, Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Sondersamm-lungen, Mss. Meckl. J 64 (9), fol. 9, nos. 35 and 36. The *conférences* were first edited by Eugène Piot on the basis of the manuscripts at the École de Beaux-Arts in Paris; see Oudry 1844, pp. 33–52; and Oudry 1863, pp. 107–17.
61. For Tessin's copy of Oudry's *Discours sur la manière d'étudier la couleur*, now in the Royal Library in Stockholm, see Sten B. Lindberg in *Carl Gustaf Tessin* (see note 54 above), pp. 116–18, ill. p. 118.
62. See Maarten Fraansen, "The Occular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel. The Science and Aesthetics of an Eighteenth-Century Cause Célèbre," *Tractrix* 3 (1991), pp. 15–77.
63. Nugent (see note 1 above), vol. 2, p. 265.

**JEAN-BAPTISTE OUDRY'S CORRESPONDENCE
WITH THE COURT OF MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN
IN RELATION TO THE ACQUISITION OF THE MENAGERIE PICTURES
AND THE PORTRAIT OF CLARA THE RHINOCEROS (1750)**

11

MEMOIRE d'une collection de
Tableaux originaux du Sr. Oudry, peintre ordinaire
du Roy et professeur en son Academie Royale
de peinture et de sculpture.

Savoir

Un Singe grand comme nature peint sur une toile de 8 pieds de large sur 6 pieds de haut du pris de	700. s. s.
Un Loup Cervin comme nature peint sur une toile de 6 pieds de large sur 4 de haut du pris de	500. s. s.
Un Tigre mort en coloris sur une toile de 5 pieds sur 4 pieds de	350. s. s.
Un Tigre semblable dans une attitude tranquille de même grandeur	350. s. s.
Le Ouzart de Dardanie sur une toile de 5 pieds et sur 4 de haut de	350. s. s.
La Gazelle de même grandeur	350. s. s.
Un Oustard et un Pigeon sur une toile de même grandeur du pris de	350. s. s.
Le Lynx royal, la Daimelle et un Ouzart de Judée qui L'on nomme gros bec sur une toile de 5 pieds de large et 4 pieds de haut	350. s. s.
Le Gazelle, c'est un grand Ouzart de 4 pieds de haut qui a La tête colorie comme un poule de Judée, des pieds de touche, point de robe de queue, sur une toile de 5 pieds de haut sur 4 de large	350. s. s.
La Gazelle est un Ouzart qui a de haut 5 pieds est une de bois mais Sr. Oudry l'a peint morte attachée à un trou de bois sur une toile de 5 pieds sur 4 pieds de haut du pris de	350. s. s.
Tous ces Tableaux ont des fonds de paravents sur lesquels on peut faire valoir les animaux Si Sr. Oudry a un ouvrage quel qu'il soit de beaux dont le détail est cy après.	

1571 von H. Meier zu Schwerin.

Le Chat cervin sur une toile de 5 pieds de large sur 2 pieds et 1/2 de haut du pris de	120. s. s.
Le Guide Lion peint de même grandeur de	120. s. s.
Il y a aussi la même de même en Rhinoceros que Sr. Oudry a peint de plus nature et de la même grandeur de cet animal, il a 12 pieds de long la queue et 6 pieds de haut, cet animal est peint sur une toile de 15 pieds de large sur 10 pieds de haut avec un fond de paravents du pris de	800. s. s.
cy Sr. Oudry a aussi un Rhinoceros, Il demanderoit un prix de son ouvrage qui se fera du mois de septembre prochain, pour qu'il soit exposé au Salon de l'Académie, comme ceux cy dessus, pour être exposés les années précédentes, comme on peut le faire par une petite Oratoire qui s'imprime tous les ans et qui fait le détail des ouvrages de l'Académie, qui y sont exposés.	
Si Sr. Oudry a aussi un autre Copie d'un grand Tigre Royal grand Lion qui a peint pour le Roy de Suède, sur une toile de 8 pieds de large et 6 de haut du pris de	250. s. s.
Il a aussi une autre Copie d'un grand Tigre Royal ayant par deux fois au travers de sa queue, dont l'original est en Suède, l'adite Copie est sur une toile de 6 pieds sur 4 de haut du pris de	200. s. s.

Memorandum listing all the menagerie paintings, attached to letter dated March 25, 1750, from Oudry to Caspar, chamberlain of castle at Schwerin. Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, no. 109, fols. 11f-11v.

I.

Jean-Baptiste Oudry to T. J. Caspar,
secretary of Duke Christian Ludwig II

Paris, March 25, 1750

/9r/ Monsieur

Rien n'est plus glorieux pour moy et ne sauroit me toucher d'avantage que les bontés dont S. A. S. Monseigneur le Duc de Mecklenbourg veut bien m'honorer. Je conserverai bien précieusement le riche présent qu'il lui a plu m'envoyer, et j'aurai grand soin de tems à autre de le montrer à mes enfans pour les exciter à l'émulation, et à faire croître dans leur coeur les sentimens de la vive reconnoissance dont je suis pénétré.

Vous me faites l'honneur de me dire Monsieur [votre] /9v/ désire d'avoir quelques tableaux de ma façon? J'en ai actuellement une suite propre à décorer une gallerie. Cette collection unique est composée des tableaux compris au mémoire ci joint. Ce sont les principaux animaux de la ménagerie du Roy que j'ai tous peints d'après nature par ordre de Sa Majesté et sous la direction de Mr. De la Pe[y]ronie Son premier chirurgien, qui vouloit les faire graver, et former une suite d'histoire naturelle pour le Jardin de Botanique de Sa Mté. J'ai fait ces tableaux avec grand soin; ils me sont restés par la mort de Mr. De La Peyronie; aussy j'en demande moitié moins que je n'en demanderois si S. A. S. me les avoit commandés.

En détacher un nombre ce serait rendre la collection imparfaite, [et me] mettre dans la nécessité de hausser le prix de ceux qui /10r/ seraient choisis. Je vous prie, Monsieur, de me faire la grace de continuer à faire ma cour à S. A. S. et au Prince, car je ne doute point que je ne vous doive beaucoup dans les bontés dont ils m'honorent. Soyés, Monsieur, fortement persuadé de ma parfaite reconnoissance et du profond respect avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur[,]

votre tres humble et tres

obéissant serviteur

Oudry

Paris, le 25 Mars 1750

Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/26,
Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen,
No. 109, fol. 9r-10r.

First published in Seidel 1890, p. 99.

Monsieur,

Nothing is more glorious to me and touches me more than the kindness with which His Most Serene Highness Monseigneur the Duke of Mecklenburg wants so much to honor me. I will most preciously safeguard the rich present which it has pleased him to send me, and I will take great care to show it from time to time to my children to encourage them to emulate me, and thus to increase in their hearts the sentiments of a lively gratitude which has penetrated me.

You are doing me the honor of telling me, Monsieur, your desire to have some pictures of my fashioning? At the moment I have a series appropriate to decorate a gallery. This unique collection is composed of pictures included in the attached memorandum. These are the principal animals of the king's menagerie, all of which I have painted from life on the order of His Majesty and under the guidance of Monsieur de La Peyronie, the king's first surgeon, who wanted to have them engraved and thus form a series of natural history for the Botanical Garden of His Majesty. I have executed these pictures with great care; they remained with me because of the death of Monsieur de La Peyronie; thus I ask only half of what I were to ask if His Serene Highness would have commissioned them from me.

To take but some would render the collection wanting and would force me to raise the prices of those chosen. I ask [beg] you, Monsieur, to do me the grace of continuing to make my court at His Most Serene Highness and the Prince, as I do not doubt in the slightest that I owe you a great deal in the kindness with which they honor me. May you be, Monsieur, strongly persuaded of my perfected gratitude and the profound respect with which I have the honor to be, Monsieur,

your very humble and very

obedient servant

Oudry

Paris, 25 March 1750

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, Mémoire d'une collection de tableaux originaux du Sr. Oudry, peintre ordinaire du Roy et professeur en son Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture, 1750.

/IIR/ Mémoire d'une collection de tableaux originaux du Sr Oudry, peintre ordinaire du Roy et professeur en son Accademie Royale de peinture et de sculpture.

Sçavoir

Un Léopard grand comme nature peint sur une toille de 8 pieds de large sur 6 pieds de haut du prix de . . . 700.##. lt.

Un loup cervier combattant contre deux dogues sur une toille de 6 pieds de large sur 4 de haut du prix de . . . 500.##. lt.

Un tigre masle en colère sur une toille de 5 pieds sur 4 pieds de . . . 350.##. lt.

Un tigre femelle dans une attitude tranquille de même grandeur . . . 350.##. lt.

Le bouquetin de Barbarie sur une toille de 5 pieds et sur 4 de haut de . . . 350.##. lt.

La Gazelle de même grandeur . . . 350.##. lt.

Une Outarde et une Pintade sur une toille de même grandeur du prix de . . . 350.##. lt.

L'oyseau royal, la Damoiselle et un oyseau des Indes, que l'on nomme gros bec sur une toille de 5 pieds de largeur et 4 pieds de haut . . . 350.##. lt.

Le Gazuel; c'est un grand oyseau de 4 pieds de haut, qui a la teste colorée comme une poule d'Inde, les pieds d'autruche, point d'aisle ny de queue, sur une toille de 5 pieds de haut sur 4 de largeur . . . 350.##. lt.

La Grue, c'est un oyseau qui a de haut 5 pieds estant de bout; mais le Sr Oudry l'a peint morte, attachée à un tronc d'arbre. Sur une toille de 5 pieds sur 4 pieds de haut du prix de . . . 350.##. lt.

Tous ces tableaux ont des fonds de paysage suivant les oppositions nécessaires pour faire valoir les animaux.

Le dit Sr Oudry a encore quelques tableaux dont le détail est cy après.

/IIV/ Le chat cervier sur une toille de 3 pieds de largeur sur 2 pieds et ½ de haut, du prix de . . . 120.##. lt.

Le Guide Lion peint de la même grandeur de . . . 120.##. lt.

Il vint à Paris l'année dernière un Rhinocéros que le dit Sr Oudry a peint d'après nature et de la même grandeur de cet animal, il a 12 pieds de la teste à la queue et 6 pieds de haut; cet animal est peint sur une toille de 15 pieds de large sur 10 pieds de haut avec un fond de paysage du prix de . . . 800.##. lt.

Sy S. A. S. prenoit le Rhinocéros il demanderoit en grace de ne l'envoyer qu'à la fin du mois de Septembre prochain, pour qu'il soit exposé au Salon du Louvre cette année, comme ceux cy dessus y ont été exposés les années précédentes, comme on peut le sçavoir par une petite brochure qui s'imprime tous les ans et qui fait le détail des ouvrages des académiciens qui y sont exposés.

Le dit Sr Oudry a aussy dans son Cabinet une copie d'un grand Lion qu'il a peint pour le Roy de Suède, sur une toille de 8 pieds de large et 6 de haut, du prix de . . . 250.##. lt.

Il a aussy une autre copie d'un grand tigre Royal, agacé par deux dogues au travers des grilles, dont l'original est en Suède, la ditte copie est sur une toille de 6 pieds sur 4 de haut, du prix de . . . 200.##. lt.

Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/26, Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen, No. 109, fol. IIR-IIV; appended to J.-B. Oudry's letter to T. J. Caspar of March 25, 1750.

First published in Seidel 1890, pp. 99-101.

Memorandum of a collection of original pictures by Monsieur Oudry, ordinary painter to the king and professor in his Royal Academy of painting and sculpture.

Be known

A leopard, large as nature, painted on a canvas of 8 feet long by 6 feet high, of the price of . . . 700.##. lt. [= *livres tournois*]

A lynx fighting against two mastiffs, on a canvas of 6 feet long by 4 high, of a price of . . . 500.##. lt.

An angry male tiger, on a canvas of 5 feet by 4 feet of . . . 350.##. lt.

A female tiger in a tranquil attitude, of the same size . . . 350.##. lt.

The Barbary sheep, on a canvas of 5 feet, and by 4 feet high, of . . . 350.##. lt.

The gazelle, of the same size . . . 350.##. lt.

A bustard and a guinea-fowl, on a canvas of the same size, of the price of . . . 350.##. lt.

The Royal Bird [Tufted Crane], Demoiselle and a bird from India, which one calls Great Beak [Toucan], on a canvas of 5 feet length and 4 feet high . . . 350.##. lt.

The Cassowary; this a great bird of 4 feet height, which has the head colored like a Turkey, the feet of an ostrich, neither wings nor tail, on a canvas of 5 feet in height by 4 in length . . . 350.##. lt.

The Crane, this is a bird that has some 5 feet in height when it stands up; but Monsieur Oudry has painted it dead, attached to a tree trunk. On a canvas of 5 feet by 4 feet of height, of the price of . . . 350.##. lt.

All these pictures have landscape backgrounds according to the needed oppositions to show the animals off to advantage.

The said Monsieur Oudry still has some pictures, the details of which follow here after.

The lynx on a canvas of 3 feet of length by 2 and ½ feet of height, of the price of . . . 120.##. lt.

The lynx [guide-lion] painted of the same size, of . . . 120.##. lt.

Last year there came to Paris a rhinoceros which Monsieur Oudry had painted from life, the same size as this animal; it is 12 feet from the head to the tail and 6 feet in height; this animal is painted on a canvas 15 feet long and 10 feet high with a landscape background at the price of . . . 800.##. lt.

If His Serene Highness were to take the rhinoceros, he [Oudry] would graciously ask not to ship it before the end of the next month of September, so that this year it would be exhibited at the Salon in the Louvre, like those above have been exhibited in the preceding years, as one can learn from a small brochure which is printed every year and which gives the details of the works of the academicians who exhibit there.

The said Monsieur Oudry has also in his cabinet a copy of a great lion which he has painted for the King of Sweden, on a canvas of 8 feet of length and 6 of height, of the price of . . . 250.##. lt.

He also has another copy of a great royal tiger, irritated by two mastiffs through a grill, of which the original is in Sweden, the said copy is on a canvas of 6 feet by 4 feet high, of the price of . . . 200.##. lt.

Jean-Baptiste Oudry to T. J. Caspar,
secretary of Duke Christian Ludwig II

Paris, 27 May 1750

/25r/ Monsieur.

Rien de plus satisfaisant pour moy que l'honneur de votre reponse, à laquelle vous attachés un ordre de faire l'envoy de tous les tableaux contenus au memoire joint à ma precedente lettre. Cet ordre n'est [m'est?] doublement agreable, de ce que S. A. S. veut bien, sur mon simple exposé prendre cette collection de tableaux et en même temps de ce que vous avés la bonté de me marquer, de les envoyer sans être demontés, la difficulté qu'il y a, à les rétendre dans la même situation ôte le coup d'oeil qu'ils doivent avoir, l'attention que j'auray à les faire encaisser avec soin, doit, Monsieur, Vous tranquiliser sur les accidents, qui peuvent survenir dans le transport. J'ay l'honneur de Vous prevenir, Monsieur, qu'il part tous les Dimanches de Paris une Diligence par Eau qui transporte toutes les marchandises de cette ville en celle de Rouen, pour de ce dernier endroit être embarquées pour leur differentes destinations. Faites moy la grace, Monsieur, de me marquer à qui il faut que j'adresse cette caisse afin que je m'entende avec la personne que vous aurés comise à ce sujet. Comme S. A. S. veut bien à votre sollicitation me laisser le Rhinoceros jusqu'à l'exposition du prochain Salon, aussitost qu'il sera fini, j'en agiray de même pour le soin de son transport, à la différence qu'il n'est pas possible de l'envoyer sans être roulé, mais par les arrangements que je prendray, il sera facile de le remonter. Il sera mis dans une caisse longue avec le chassis démonté, de façon que rien n'empchera de le remettre dans son Etat naturel; Permettés moy, Monsieur, de vous observer que j'ose me flatter que S. A. S. /25v/ sera satisfait de cette collection, et que rien dans ce genre n'a été travaillé avec autant de soin, et que jusque aux toilles rien n'y a été épargné et que l'impression de cette toille est faite sans Colle, n'étant qu'avec de la

couleur à l'huile. Par cette attention elles sont à l'abri de la pourriture et de becailler. J'ay cru, Monsieur, devoir entrer dans tout cet detail, pour mettre Votre connoissance à porté de juger par Vous même, que de pareils soins sont utiles.

Faite[s] moy la grace, Monsieur, de prevenir Votre banquier sur le remboursement des frais qui seront occasionnés par le transport et autres, qui seront détaillés dans un memoire que j'auray l'honneur de Vous faire parvenir.

Comme mon devoir aurait du commencer par vous prier de continuer votre bonté à faire ma cour auprès de S. A. S. et du Prince, j'ose me promettre, que vous me les continuerés ; ma vive reconnoissance ne peut être surpassée que par le profond respect avec lequel j'ay l'honneur d'être, M[onsieur],

Oudry

Paris, le 27 May 1750

Schwerin, Landeshauptarchiv, Älteres Aktenarchiv, 2.12-1/26,
Hofstaatsachen, Kunstsammlungen, Angebote und Erwerbungen,
No. 109, fol. 25r-25v.

First published in Seidel 1890, pp. 101-2.

Monsieur,

Nothing is more satisfying for me than the honor of your reply, to which you appended an order to send all the pictures contained in the memorandum attached to my previous letter. This order is doubly agreeable, as His Most Serene Highness is most intent on taking on the basis of my simple exposé this collection of pictures as well as those which you had the kindness of marking for me, and sending them without being rolled up, which would have removed the view [by a customs officer?] which they need to have. The attention which I will pay towards packing them carefully, must, Monsieur, reassure you regarding potential accidents in transport. I have the honor of informing you, Monsieur, that a boat departs every Sunday from Paris to transport merchandise to Rouen, from where it is shipped to various destinations. Do me the grace, Monsieur, to let me know to whom I should address the crate, so that I can contact the person you have commissioned to such effect. As His Most Serene Highness has agreed—at your solicitation—to leave me the *Rhinoceros* until the next Salon exhibition, as soon as it is over, I will act in the same manner for the care of its transport, although it will not be possible to send it without being rolled, but I will make arrangements for it to be easily mounted [back on its stretcher] again. It will be placed inside a long crate with a frame that will come apart, in such a manner that nothing will prevent it from being put back again in its natural state. Permit me, Monsieur, to make you aware that I dare flatter myself that His Most Serene Highness will be satisfied with this collection, and that nothing of this sort has ever been executed with such care, and that nothing has been spared even with regards to the canvases, which have been primed

without glue, being solely made of oil paint. As a result of this measure they are protected from dirt and clotting. I have gone into such detail, Monsieur, to inform you so that you can judge for yourself that such care is useful.

Do me the grace, Monsieur, to warn your banker about the transport fees which will have to be reimbursed, as well as other fees which will be listed in detail in a memorandum which I will have the honor of sending you.

As I am duty-bound to beg your continued kindness towards my courtship of His Most Serene Highness and the Prince, I dare promise myself that you shall continue to do so; my lively gratitude cannot be surpassed but by the profound respect with which I have the honour to be, Monsieur,

Oudry

Paris, 27 May 1750



MENAGERIES

◆ AS PRINCELY NECESSITIES AND ◆ MIRRORS OF THEIR TIMES

MARINA BELOZERSKAYA

THE FIRST GREAT WOMAN RECORDED IN HISTORY WAS QUEEN Hatshepsut of Egypt. Dressing like a king and wearing a false beard, she ruled her country for twenty years in the fifteenth century B.C., making it prosper and expanding its trade relations with other states. Most famously, she sent an expedition down the Red Sea to Punt, a land in East Africa that was rich in gold, ivory, resins, and wild animals. She wanted the exotic creatures in particular to enhance her royal image, for little can compare with the impact of a retinue of unusual and marvelous beasts. Gratifying Hatshepsut's desire, her agents returned home with monkeys, leopards, curious birds, wild "cattle," and a giraffe for the royal menagerie (fig. 1).¹ It was a great coup for the queen to demonstrate her power and influence over faraway regions through a collection of live trophies.

Hatshepsut was one of many rulers in the course of history to be captivated by strange animals. Halfway across the globe, around 1150 B.C., the Chinese emperor Wen Wang built a nine-hundred-acre "Park of Knowledge" in the province of Henan, between Beijing and Nanjing, where he kept various deer, "white birds with dazzling plumes," and a great variety of fish.² Mesopotamian kings and their Persian successors set up large, walled parks, called *paradeisoi* by the Greeks, where they maintained numerous beasts for contemplation, hunting, and court ceremonies—hence our word *paradise*.

Collecting rare, exotic, and wild beasts seems to be a universal human desire.³ People have been indulging it for millennia, on different continents, and in various cultural settings. Because keeping animals purely for entertainment is expensive, only rulers and aristocrats had the wherewithal to gather unusual animals at their palaces and pleasure parks. Rulers pursued rare fauna for diverse reasons, and these have been evolving over the course of the centuries. In the Hellenistic world, in ancient Rome, and in the Aztec empire, war often provided the incentive and the means for procuring rare beasts. In the Renaissance, animals came to be employed as effective tools of international diplomacy. From the sixteenth century onward, foreign beasts

were acquired for more scientific purposes. Of course, at all times exotic creatures also enabled rulers to demonstrate their political power and its reach. By looking at the changing history of man's relations with animals—through a series of revealing examples—we can see how menageries reflected the values, concerns, and ambitions of the age in which they were formed.

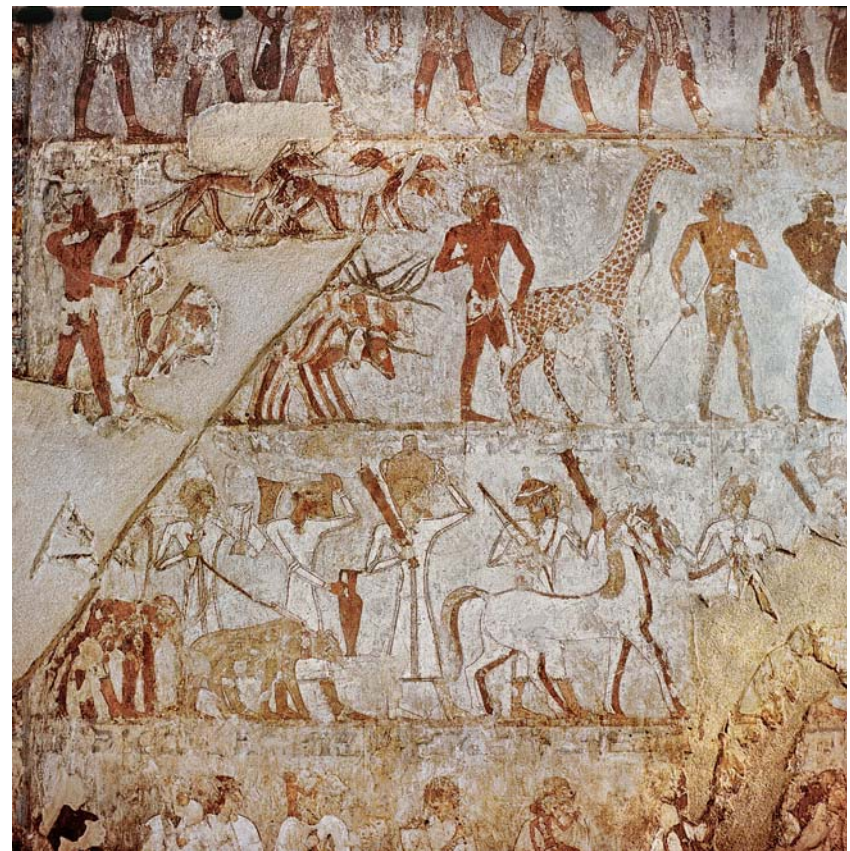


FIGURE 1
Detail of a wall painting from the tomb-chapel of the vizier Rekhmire, showing the arrival of exotic animals similar to those brought to Queen Hatshepsut, Egyptian, Eighteenth Dynasty. Tomb of Rekhmire, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Tombs of the Nobles, Thebes, Egypt. Photo: © Werner Forman/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 9, detail.

◆ ANIMALS AND ANCIENTS

As Alexander the Great waged an assault on the Persian Empire, he encountered an astounding military technology.⁴ At the battle of Gaugamela (in present-day Iraq) in 331 B.C., Darius, the king of Persia, met his Macedonian enemy with a phalanx of fifteen elephants (fig. 2). Flapping their ears, trumpeting, stomping the ground with treelike feet, the giant beasts terrified the uninitiated. They threw soldiers and horses into panic, trampled them underfoot, and wreaked havoc on the battlefield. Being a superb strategist, Alexander managed to outmaneuver these living tanks and win the battle, but he grasped the tactical usefulness of elephant warriors and decided to assemble his own animal troops.

Too busy with his eastern conquests, Alexander never did create his own elephant army. But his successors, having inherited his beasts, deployed them against each other as they vied for Alexander's legacy and for supremacy over one another. In fact, possession of war elephants became a kind of ancient arms race.

All elephants up to that point, however, were imported from India, the routes to which lay under the control of Alexander's general Seleucus, and after his death, that of the general's son Antiochus I. So other successors had to find alternate sources for their animal warriors. This problem was particularly pressing for Ptolemy Philadelphus, who came to rule Egypt in 282 B.C. Philadelphus contested with Antiochus the possession of Coele-Syria (southern Syria)—the endpoint of the great trade routes stretching from the East. He had inherited from his father, Ptolemy I, another of Alexander's generals, a handful of elephants, but with time and military confrontations their number dwindled. Philadelphus desperately needed to replenish his stock to preserve and consolidate his kingdom in the face of constant threats from other successors. For him elephants were not a luxury but a necessity for strengthening his kingdom in its formative stage.

Having read Herodotus and Aristotle, who had reported that elephants lived in the African hinterland, areas now encompassed by eastern Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, Philadelphus sent his explorers to investigate.⁵ They were to travel along the Nile valley and the western coast of the Red Sea, describe the regions they traversed, survey their natural resources, and bring back interesting specimens. Of course, the king was most keen



FIGURE 2
Phalera depicting a war elephant, Hellenistic Period, chased and gilded silver, diam: 24.7 cm (9¾ in.). St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum. © State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

to obtain the elephants. But he was also eager to best Alexander the Great, who had gathered much scientific information during his eastern campaign, enabling his teacher Aristotle to compose an encyclopedic *History of Animals*. Philadelphus, who through his patronage of literature and science made the library of Alexandria the preeminent study center in the Mediterranean world, commanded his explorers to bring back other unusual beasts as well.⁶

His quest and ambition paid off. Within a few years, in the winter of 275/74 B.C., when Philadelphus staged a procession in honor of his father and the god Dionysus, he was able to parade before his astonished subjects and foreign guests a spectacular collection of exotic creatures.⁷ Marching first were ninety-six elephants pulling military chariots. After them followed saiga antelopes (hump-nosed ruminants from the Urals), oryxes with bright white bodies and horns rising like tall spears, hartebeests (hump-shouldered fawns with long, narrow faces), ostriches, camels, a large white bear (either a Thracian variety or an albino from Syria), leopards, cheetahs, caracals, a giraffe (unknown even to Aristotle), a two-horned white Ethiopian rhinoceros, and other African, Ethiopian, Arabian, Syrian, and Persian beasts



FIGURE 3
The Magerius Mosaic (hunting scenes in celebration of Venationes offered by Magerius), 3rd century A.D., from the amphitheater in Smirat, Tunisia. Tunisia, Sousse Museum. Photo: © Vanni/Art Resource, New York.

and birds. A by-product of a war effort, this animal array was like nothing ever seen in any Greek city. As a result, Philadelphus gained a lasting renown—less for his battlefield triumphs, which were not spectacular, than for creating a splendid court, sponsoring learning of all kinds, and ushering in a golden age of Alexandria.⁸ Philadelphus was typical of Hellenistic kings in combining active warfare with nurturing of knowledge, but he stood out among them for the lasting effects of his cultural and scientific endeavors.

War also enabled the Romans to gather great quantities of exotic animals. But unlike Philadelphus, who sent his beasts to reside peacefully in the royal zoo after his Grand Procession, except for the elephants, of course, the Romans slaughtered foreign fauna in staged combats. (This practice would subsequently be emulated, though on a much smaller scale, by various European rulers, from the Medici in fifteenth-century Florence to the Saxon electors in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dresden). Wild beast hunts in the arena were, along with gladiatorial fights, a favorite entertainment of the

Romans (fig. 3).⁹ Presented only a few times a year, these spectacles were always special events, anticipated with great eagerness and much talked about afterward.

Rome was a violent place. In the city itself, it was dangerous to walk down the street because of roving bands of thugs. Outside its walls, war veterans often turned into bandits and prowled the countryside. Beyond the frontiers of the empire, the Roman army conquered foreign peoples with highly organized and merciless onslaughts. Violence in the arena was an extension of the violence of the whole state.

Roman society was also highly stratified. Those who appeared in the arena were perceived as lesser beings than the spectators and thus deserving their fate. Gladiators, who fought against men, as well as the *bestiarii* and *venatores*, who sparred with exotic animals, were either slaves sold to gladiatorial schools or free men who voluntarily gave up the rights and privileges of citizens in order to escape debt or to obtain a guaranteed subsistence. Wild beasts were also seen as justly receiving harsh treatment. They were inferior creatures, violent and aggressive by their very nature, so it was deemed appropriate for humans to vent their own aggression on animals. Aristotle had argued that animals lacked rationality, and so they could be treated without the justice or humanity due to men. Of course, he warned, wanton cruelty toward animals was inadvisable as it might accustom humans to brutal conduct toward each other. But for the Romans the sight of fighting and dying beasts was, by and large, not seen as wanton. It demonstrated their state's triumph over foreign lands and control over nature.

The killing of a multitude of beasts during the show also exhibited its sponsor's largesse—his ability to dispose of the huge sums of money that went into procuring and transporting the animals to Rome—just for the pleasure of the populace. The sponsors were usually ambitious politicians or emperors. Thus Augustus boasted in the first century A.D. that among the great achievements of his reign, “in my own name, or that of my sons or grandsons, on twenty-six occasions I gave to the people, in the circus, in the forum, or in the amphitheater, hunts of African wild beasts, in which about three thousand five hundred beasts were slain.”¹⁰ This number would grow higher and higher with each successive emperor. Trajan had eleven thousand animals killed in the games celebrating his Dacian triumph in A.D. 106.¹¹

Bringing the games together was an enormously complex undertaking. To begin with, the sponsor had to call on his contacts in the regions where desirable beasts dwelled. Since Romans built their political careers on military campaigns in distant lands, they asked the rulers and governors of the territories they had subjugated to provide them with a variety of exotic creatures. Transporting wild animals from faraway provinces was also an involved business. The Roman fleet was used in this process, either merchant galleys, which served as both cargo vessels and men-of-war, depending on circumstances, or ships for ferrying army horses, which had a large hull in the back and a flat bottom. Ferocious beasts, such as lions, were brought on board and kept in cages for the duration of the journey. Larger animals, such as elephants or rhinoceroses, were secured on the deck by ropes or chains attached to their feet. Needless to say, handling wild creatures, traumatized by arduous journeys, was a fraught task. Pliny the Elder, however, reports a charming anecdote about disembarking elephants at the south-Italian port of Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli): Frightened by the length of the gangway stretching from the boat to the shore, the animals, of their own accord, turned around and crossed it backward to cheat themselves in their estimation of the distance.¹²

Even if they arrived in good time and decent shape, exotic beasts required attentive care and proper feeding to perform in the games. Symmachus, a consul who staged opulent animal hunts in A.D. 391, had imported a number of crocodiles for his show, but they refused to eat for fifty days. When the time for the games arrived, the crocodiles had little pluck left in them. Emaciated, they had to be dispatched in a hurry, before they expired on their own from hunger and the stress of being dragged into the arena and attacked by armed men.¹³

The lot of exotic animals—forcefully removed from their natural habitats, carted along uneven roads, loaded on and off wagons and ships, and then subjected to human whims—had always been quite miserable. Even when they were not killed by the hundreds or thousands to entertain the masses, wild beasts had to endure confinement, the wrong food, different climate, and other hardships that often caused their premature death.

◆ EXOTIC BEASTS AND RENAISSANCE RULERS

After a hiatus of several centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire, Renaissance Europeans began to sail more often to distant lands in search of valuable and lucrative commodities, be they African gold, Egyptian carpets, Turkish alum (used for fixing dye to cloth), or Eastern spices. Increasingly they brought back not only those prized wares but also unusual birds and beasts. Because they were still rare and always marvelous, exotic animals became potent diplomatic gifts and political tools.

In 1516 the king of Portugal, Manuel I, presented a remarkable assemblage of animals to Pope Leo X.¹⁴ Manuel had several motivations for his offering: He wanted to express his obedience to the recently elected pontiff, to show Portuguese achievements abroad, to request relief from church tithes so that Portugal could use this money for further expansion in Africa and the Indies (couched as conversion of the natives to the Catholic faith), and to obtain a guarantee that the Spice Islands would be Portugal's domain, rather than that of Spain, which was also trying to claim this critical commercial region. To dazzle and win over the pope, Manuel sent him Chinese and Mexican manuscripts to appeal to Leo's learning, vestments and altar fittings adorned with gems to suit his opulent tastes, and to tantalize the pope's interest in nature—a cheetah, two leopards, various parrots and Indian birds, a fine Persian horse, and, most spectacular of all, a young white elephant from India trained to dance to the music of pipes and to respond to commands in Indian and Portuguese. As the convoy of human and animal ambassadors made its way from Lisbon to Rome, crowds of onlookers came out to gawk at the rare creatures. Once the cortege reached the Vatican, it became the object of international attention. The beasts, especially the elephant Hanno, were a great success (fig. 4). They brought glory to Manuel for being able to procure such stunning gifts thanks to the Portuguese expansion overseas, and to Leo for commanding such wondrous offerings from powerful European rulers.

Some two decades later, in 1533, Leo X's cousin, Pope Clement VII, married his kinswoman Catherine de Medici to Henry II, son of the French king Francis I. In the course of the nuptial festivities the two parties exchanged splendid gifts. These events were later immortalized in verse by the writer and courtier Nicolas Houel and illustrated in commemorative drawings by Antoine Caron (ca. 1521–1599). As Houel wrote:



FIGURE 4
Majolica platter showing the elephant Hanno in procession with Pope Leo X, surrounded by cardinals, courtiers, and the Swiss Guard, Montelupo, Italy, ca. 1516. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London/Art Resource, New York.

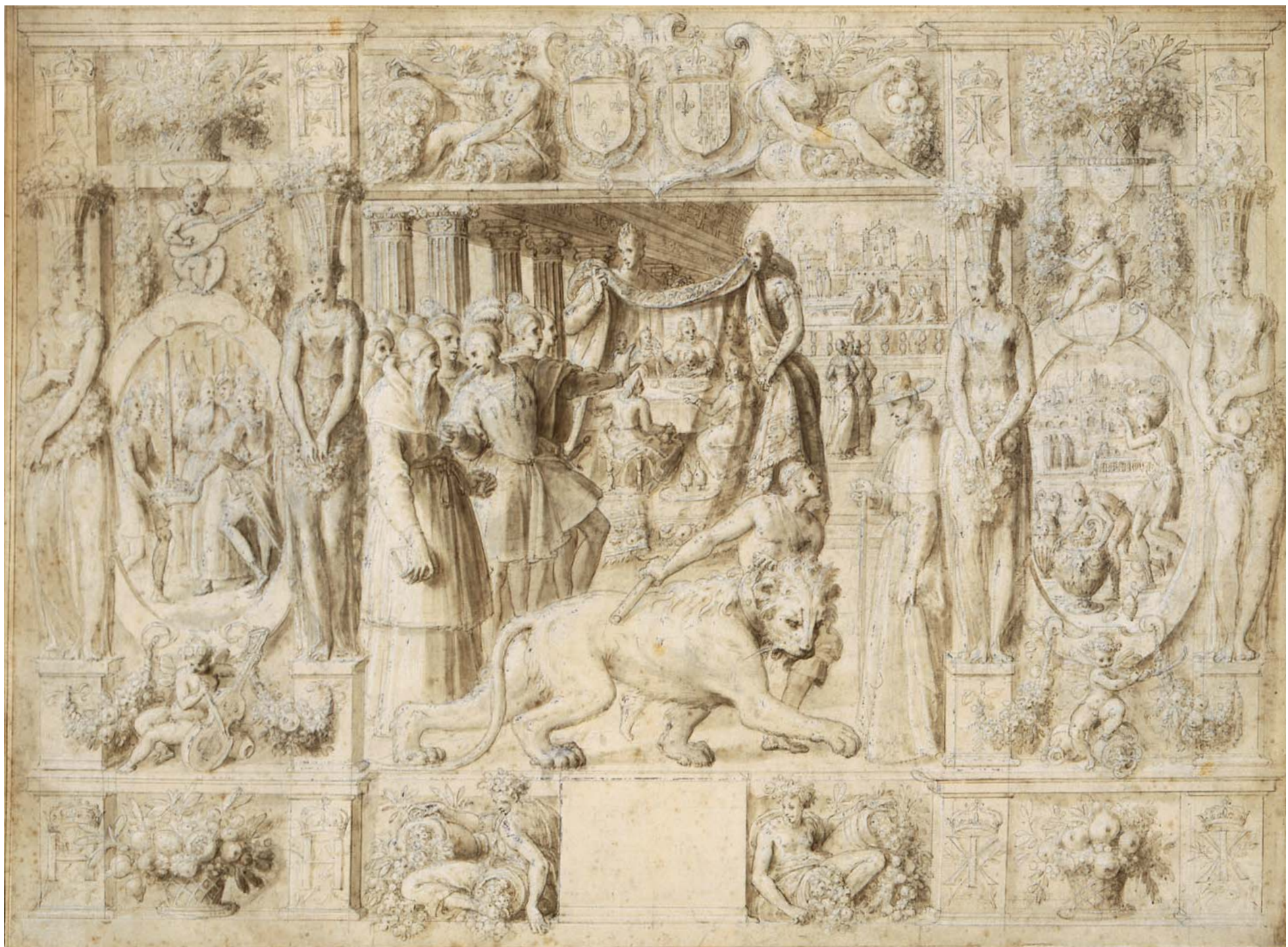


FIGURE 5

Antoine Caron (French, ca. 1521–1599), *The Gifts Exchanged between Pope Clement VII and King Francis I*, ca. 1560–74. Brown ink and brown wash, 40.6 × 55.4 cm (16 × 21¾ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, inv. RF 29752-12. The drawing accompanied Nicolas Houel's *Histoire française de nostre temps*. Photo: © J. G. Berizzi/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

*The tournament having ended, the Holy Father
made a gift to the King of a unicorn's horn,
likewise the King gives him a beautiful tapestry,
Showing him thus his great generosity.
And to gratify in kind the other side
To Ippolito, the nephew of the triple crown,
Likewise a lion he offers him,
Full of grandeur and courage . . .*¹⁵

The accompanying drawing (fig. 5) shows the servants bearing massive metal vases in the right medallion, the unicorn horn being presented in the left one, the proffering of the tapestry in the background of the central panel (the tapestry depicted *The Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci [1452–1519], with the French royal arms prominent over the head of Christ). The most important position, however, is given to the lion in the front center. Previously shipped to Francis I from Algiers, this beast was, of course, a princely creature par excellence, but it was also one of the emblems of Florence. The Medici had kept lions for generations and, as true heirs of the ancient Romans, staged animal combats to entertain visiting dignitaries. In April 1459, for example, Cosimo de' Medici decided to treat Pope Pius II and Galeazzo Maria Sforza to a spectacle of lions attacking and ripping apart horses, bulls, buffalos, boars, goats, and cows. Unfortunately, the lions were so well cared-for that they showed no interest in hunting, embarrassing Cosimo and displeasing his guests.¹⁶ Still, the gift of a lion to the papal nephew was astute.

On occasion, animal presents could prove overwhelming to rulers. The Chinese emperor Xian Zong Zhu Jianshen, for example, received so many lions from foreign ambassadors that when a delegation from Sultan Ahmad, the Timurid ruler of Samarkand, arrived at his court in the 1480s with two more felines, the emperor protested. Quite contrary to the Confucian tradition of graciously accepting gifts from vassals, he declared that lions were useless animals, too expensive to keep, and not even fit to harness in front of his carriage. He had had enough of them.¹⁷

Yet most rulers felt that exotic fauna was very effective in symbolizing their political might and its extent. When Hernán Cortés arrived in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán in 1519, he was astonished by the enormous size and scope of the emperor Montezuma's collection of birds, beasts, and unusual humans, and devoted more time to the description of this menagerie than to any other aspect of the city.¹⁸ Cortés marveled at pavilions full of birds of prey and at separate pools for sea and river fowl. He gaped at majestic jaguars, pumas, and ocelots in their stout cages and at reptiles kept in clay jars. He was also amazed by the assembly of dwarfs, hunchbacks, albinos and other such men and women kept in the royal zoo. Hundreds of attendants took care of Montezuma's creatures, taking pains to feed them appropriate diets and keep them in good health. The vastness and variety of this menagerie left no doubt that Montezuma controlled a great empire. And to his subjects it also signaled that the emperor was like a god, ruling over all creation. Cortés took to heart the message of Montezuma's animal collection. Seeing it as a direct reflection of the Aztec ruler's power, he took pains to destroy it when sacking Tenochtitlán in 1521.

Then, a few years later, when his own authority and reputation needed shoring up, Cortés sailed back to Spain, taking along jaguars, ocelots, pelicans, brightly plumed parrots, an armadillo and an opossum (two animals entirely new to Europe), and, most remarkable of all, human specimens: male and female dwarfs and hunchbacks, a band of men and women "whiter than Germans" (i.e., albinos), Aztec jugglers and ball-players, and Mexican noblemen, used by Cortés as if they were rare and diverting pets (fig. 6).¹⁹ This fabulous train paid off handsomely. Impressed by the marvels Cortés had captured in the Aztec kingdom, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V showered him with honors and privileges, conferring on him the title of marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca and a grant of twenty-two pueblos. Charles also confirmed Cortés as captain-general of New Spain and "governor of the islands and territories he might discover in the South Sea," and gave him the right to retain the twelfth part of what he should conquer in perpetuity for himself and his descendants. These titles and concessions assured Cortés first rank among the conquistadors and colonists of New Spain. He gained them in no small part thanks to his animal cortege, which made him appear, according to a contemporary, "as a great lord."



Indianische Vorführung mit einem Holzklotz (2. Phase)
Indian performance with a wooden block (2nd phase) Producción india con un tajo de madera (2-a fase)



Indianische Vorführung mit einem Holzklotz (3. Phase)
Indian performance with a wooden block (3rd phase) Producción india con un tajo de madera (3-a fase)

FIGURE 6

Christoph Weiditz (German, 1500–1559), *Aztec Juggler*, 1529. Drawing from *Das Trachtenbuch des Christoph Weiditz von seinen Reisen nach Spanien (1529) und den Niederlanden (1531/32)*. Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Handschrift 22474. Reproduced from a facsimile of this manuscript published by Theodor Hampe (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927). Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 83–B11083.

◆ RARE FAUNA FOR ENLIGHTENED MONARCHS

The Age of Exploration, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, introduced new incentives for collecting exotic creatures. The steady stream of beasts from the New World, Africa, and Asia brought back by conquistadors, merchants, and adventurers spurred not only the eagerness of European rulers to acquire them but also the desire of naturalists to comprehend the bounty of nature in new, more scientific ways. Exposed to novel species, scientists began to rethink their understanding of the animal world. Thus far it had been studied largely through the prism of ancient writers on the subject, such as Aristotle and Pliny the Elder. Now naturalists began to base their descriptions and analysis of fauna on direct observation of both exotic species and familiar ones.²⁰ Influenced by this new trend, rulers, in their turn, started to amass menageries of both live beasts and preserved specimens, turning their collections into scientific laboratories. One of the most passionate exponents of this new approach was Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II, who ruled from his capital of Prague (1576–1612).

Rudolf hunted for exotic fauna from every possible source (fig. 7).²¹ He enlisted the help of merchants with their far-flung contacts, urged his diplo-

mats to acquire beasts from distant lands, kept an eye on rare creatures procured by other rulers, and tried to cajole them to cede them to him. Thus he acquired New World parrots, lovebirds from Madagascar, a purple-naped lory and salmon-crested cockatoo from the Moluccas, two ostriches, and several dromedaries—very rare in Central Europe at this time and procured via Turkish intermediaries despite the ongoing war with the Ottomans. Rudolf also owned a skunk, a coatimundi, and a llama from the New World, as well as lions, tigers, cheetahs, and many other animals besides.

Rudolf spared no effort to bring rare creatures to his court. He spent thirty years pursuing a rhinoceros that had been imported from India by the king of Portugal, eventually getting only a few bones.²² He was more successful in wresting from another ruler the first live cassowary ever to come to Europe—a bird observed by Jean-Baptiste Oudry two centuries later in the French royal menagerie and painted for the king.

The cassowary is a large, flightless bird that dwells in the tropical forests of Australia and New Guinea. It has glossy black plumage that looks like thick hair, a bright blue neck with a patch of brilliant red skin on the nape,

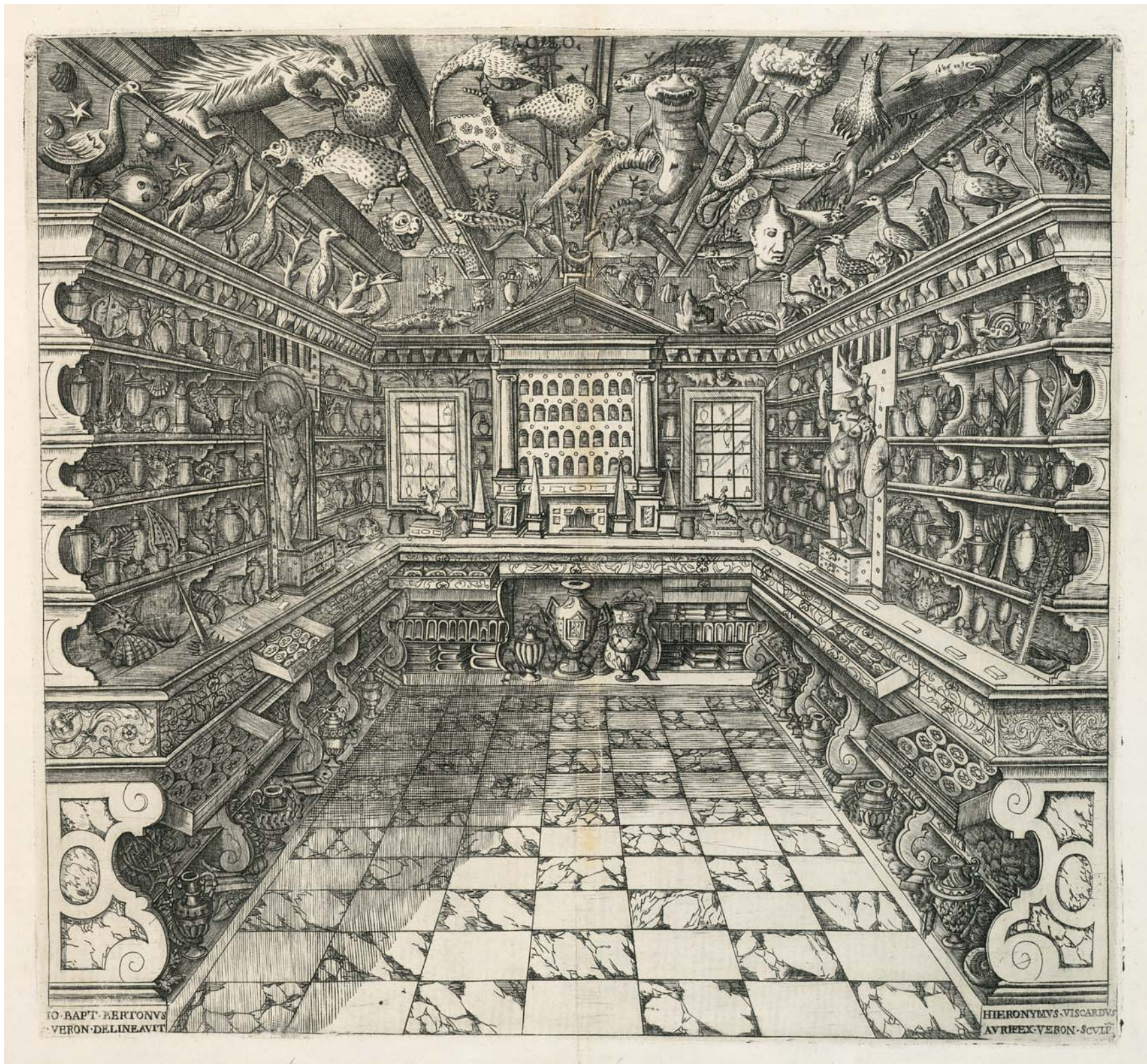


FIGURE 7
Frontispiece from Benedetto Ceruti and Andrea Chiocco, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolari junioris Veronensis* (Verona, 1622), illustrating a natural history collection contemporary with that of Rudolf II. Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 85–B1 661.

and two long red wattles dangling in front. A domed horny helmet rises atop its head, over the eyes and the beak, giving it its name, which derives from a Papuan word meaning “horned head.” The bird uses this helmet to push aside the vegetation as it runs through the rain forest with its head bent down. The cassowary’s stout, powerful legs end in long, three-toed feet. The inner toe has a deadly twelve-centimeter-long spiky claw which the bird uses for defense.

Rudolf’s cassowary had had quite an adventurous life, not altogether atypical of the journeys endured by other exotic beasts that ended up at European courts in that era.²³ It made its first recorded appearance on December 4, 1596, as a gift from the king of Java to a Dutch ship captain sailing in search of spices. The bird, however, was “as much a stranger to the inhabitants of Java as it is new for us,” remarked the French scientist Carolus Clusius, who conducted research under Rudolf’s patronage. The king of Java had probably himself received the cassowary as a diplomatic gift, although it is not recorded from whom. Given the rarity and the spectacular appearance of the creature, he must have felt that it would make an excellent goodwill offering to the Dutch traders who were known for their fierce conduct in the East Indies. The Dutch gladly accepted the bird and managed to preserve it alive and in good health on the long journey back home. The cassowary disembarked in Amsterdam in July 1597. For several months it was put on show, and locals and foreigners passing through the bustling port gawked at it—for a fee. After its novelty had cooled off a bit, it was sold to Count Georg Eberhard von Solms, who collected animals at his park at Le Haye.

When news of the remarkable bird reached Rudolf, he at once undertook to secure the fascinating stranger for his menagerie (he enlisted the aid of a local duke to help convince the count to cede the bird to the emperor). Rudolf may well have expected a truly fantastic creature, for rumors said that the Indian bird ate embers and red fire. Four months later, when the cassowary finally arrived in Prague, it did not peck at coals, but it was still a striking specimen, with its long cobalt blue and raspberry red neck and its rounded helmet giving it regal hauteur. Rudolf was thrilled with his acquisition and generously rewarded the courtiers who delivered it to him. He was now the only man in Europe to possess such an extraordinary pet. To honor and safeguard his distinguished animal, Rudolf erected in the garden of his castle an imposing aviary especially “for the Indian [*sic*] bird,” and engaged the

painter Bartholomaus Beranek to decorate the cassowary’s home with pretty pictures—perhaps evocations of its natural habitat. While the emperor was clearly elated, it is harder to know how happy the cassowary was in its new abode or how long the tropical creature lasted in the wintry Prague climate. By 1607 it was listed as a stuffed specimen in Rudolf’s *Kunstkammer*.

Rudolf was also delighted to secure a dodo—very likely the first live example to reach Europe.²⁴ This gawky and defenseless bird was discovered by Dutch sailors on Mauritius in September 1598, when five Dutch ships had come upon this uninhabited island in the Indian Ocean while heading for the East Indies. Apparently they managed to bring a live dodo to Europe on their return journey, and it was acquired by Rudolf. The emperor commissioned one of his court artists to paint the uncanny creature for his compendium of fauna illustrations.

Depictions of animals became in this era a crucial component of natural history studies because they supplied valuable visual data. As Conrad Gesner wrote, the readers of his *Historia animalium* (*History of Animals*, a five-volume encyclopedia published between 1551 and 1558) could look at the woodcut images of the animals he discussed where and whenever they pleased, whereas the ancient Romans could only see exotic beasts for the duration of the games. Images also served to supplement collections of live and preserved creatures and to make them known to the outside world. Carolus Clusius, for example, turned the portrait of the emperor’s dodo into a print and included it in his *Exoticorum libri decem* (*Ten Books of Exotica*), an up-to-date and extremely influential presentation of new animals and plants published in 1605 and based in part on Rudolf’s menagerie. Oudry’s portraits of animals from Versailles were also intended to be translated into prints for a suite of natural history illustrations.

Of course, sixteenth-century natural history was not yet “pure science.” Nature was still viewed as a manifestation of divine creativity and approached with a sense of wonder. Man’s purpose in studying it was to marvel at God’s ingenuity.²⁵ As the humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola wrote in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1496), after creating the world and populating it with animal life, the Divine Architect “longed for a creature which might comprehend the meaning of so vast an achievement, which might be moved with love at its beauty and smitten with awe at its grandeur.” The French naturalist Pierre Belon, in his *Natural History of Birds*

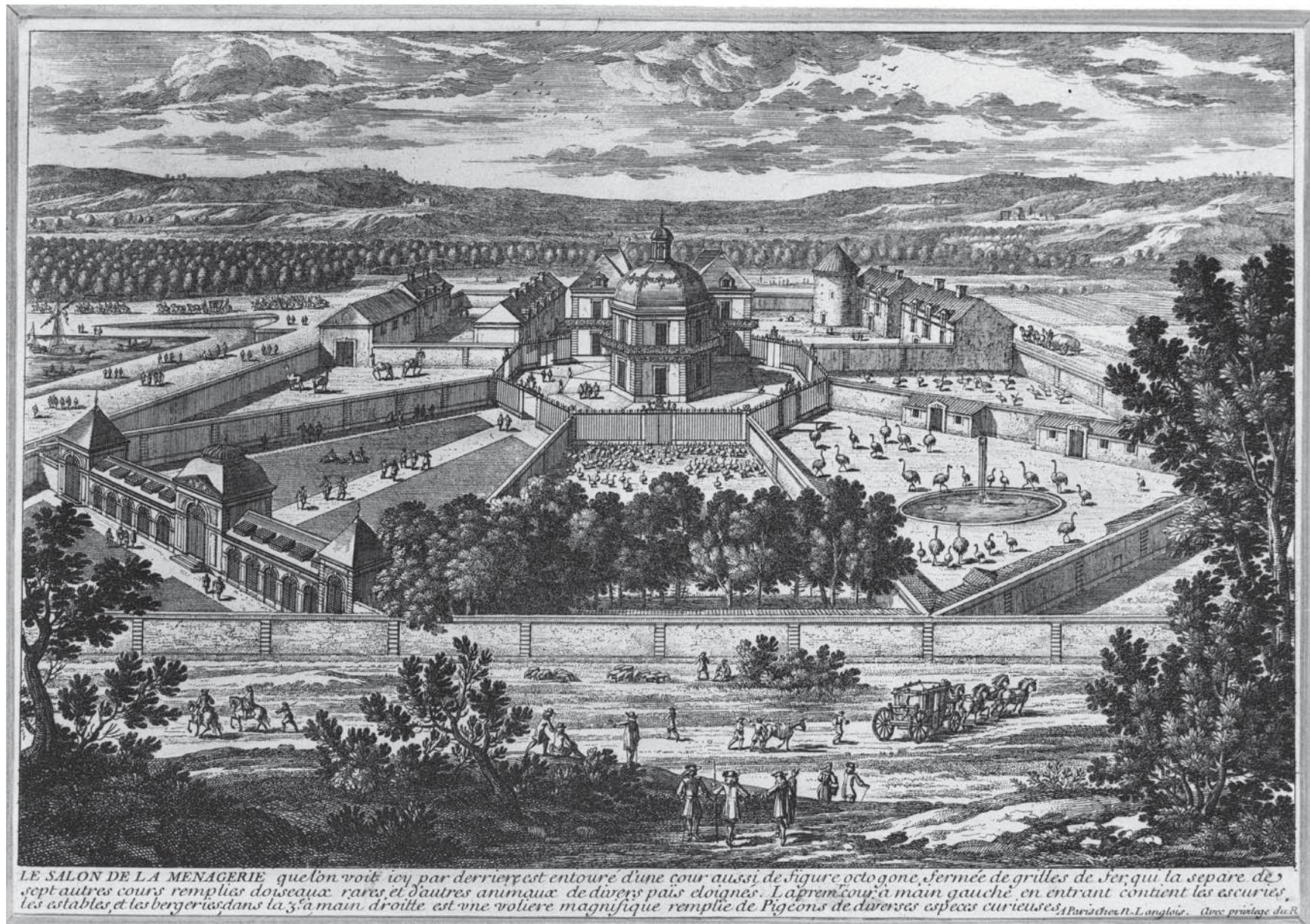


FIGURE 8

Nicolas Langlois (French, active ca. 1640), *View of the Versailles Menagerie*. Engraving. Château de Versailles and Château du Trianon, inv. GRAV. 465. Photo: © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

(1555), contended that it was particularly one of the chief duties of a well-bred man to scrutinize and admire God's creations and thereby improve his understanding of the universe. And the English clergyman cum naturalist Edward Topsell promoted the investigation of nature as a guide to salvation. In his *Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes and Serpents* (1607), he argued that God saved the animals from the Flood in order to allow humans access to divine knowledge: "Surely, it was for that a man might gaine out of them much knowledge, such as is imprinted in them by nature, as a spark of that great wisdom whereby they were created." Such religious underpinnings of

natural history persisted into the eighteenth century. Carolus Linnaeus, the "father of taxonomy" (a system of naming, ranking, and classifying organisms that is still in use today) believed that the naturalist's task was to reveal the divine order of creation.

This kind of spiritual quest, combined with scientific investigations and the imperatives of royal majesty, continued to underlie the creation of zoos in the seventeenth century, the most famous of them being the menagerie at Versailles, established by Louis XIV (fig. 8).²⁶ The king's primary purpose in building his menagerie was undoubtedly royal pomp: He wanted to impress

his guests and subjects with his collection, without unduly taxing himself or them. Therefore he first focused on acquiring peaceful animals that could be admired grazing and pecking picturesquely in their enclosures. When he was not himself at Versailles, Louis allowed paying visitors to see his creatures. The playwrights and poets Molière, Jean de La Fontaine, Jean Racine, and Nicolas Boileau who came to satisfy their curiosity were especially impressed by the demoiselle cranes and the pelicans, marveling at nature's creativity in producing such birds. The establishment of the Academy of Science shortly after the founding of the Versailles menagerie expanded the king's thinking about his animals, and he began to encourage scientists to use his collection to advance zoological knowledge.

Louis XIV initiated the menagerie project in 1662, when he was a spirited man of twenty-four. It was his first undertaking at Versailles, which had been built as a countryside retreat by his father thirty-eight years previously. The king commissioned architect Louis Le Vau (1612–1670) to devise an original plan for his zoo. Up to that point rulers tended to spread wild animals in different parts of their estates, putting cages of ferocious beasts here, aviaries there, gaming animals in a third place. Louis XIV wished all his animals to be united in one location and placed amidst trees, plants, and flowers in a true zoological garden. He also decided that the animal enclosures should be seeded with grass and provided with basins and water jets that would come to life when he went walking around the menagerie. Finally, the king wanted the whole complex to be easily visible at a glance, so Le Vau designed a series of wedge-shaped pens, radiating like an open fan out of a central point at which he placed a little chateau where the king and his company could partake of light meals and rest from their walks. Adjacent to the chateau was an octagonal pavilion from the balconies of which one could look at the animals below. As a preview to admiring live birds and beasts, the walls of the gallery leading from the chateau to the pavilion and those of the pavilion itself were hung with animal paintings by Nicasiaus Bernaerts (1620–1678). (The king had ordered him to depict all new creatures arriving at the menagerie.)

Initially, Louis XIV concentrated on deer, gazelles, and other ruminants, which nibbled demurely at the green lawns of the enclosures, as well as on vividly colored birds from all over the world, which fluttered cheerfully in the aviaries — except for ostriches, Egyptian herons, and large egrets, which

inhabited a pen where the ground was covered by sand and stones to recall the African desert. With time this peaceful assembly came to be augmented by fiercer and showier creatures. Some of them were diplomatic gifts from foreign rulers. The king of Portugal, Pedro II, for example, sent Louis XIV an elephant, while the king of Siam offered him three crocodiles. Governors of French colonies abroad were also instructed to obtain rare beasts for the crown. The marquis de Chouppes was ordered to procure birds on Belle-Isle, while M. Lopis de Mondevergue, governor of Madagascar and Bourbon, sent a cassowary, which he had bought from merchants sailing back from the Indies. The vessels of the East India Company were likewise asked to bring Louis XIV exotic species from their voyages to Asia, Africa, and America, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the king's minister of finance, personally delegated the animal purveyor Mosnier Gassion to undertake annual trips to the Levant, Egypt, and Tunis to capture rare animals for Versailles. (Colbert was interested in acclimatizing foreign species on French soil.) The long voyages by seas, rivers, and bad roads were punishing for the poor beasts and many of them perished en route, necessitating further hunting expeditions. Between 1671 and 1694, Gassion made forty-one trips, and between 1687 and 1694 alone, he imported 536 sultan hens, 103 ostriches, 84 Egyptian ducks, 81 Numidian demoiselle cranes, and scores of other birds, not to mention beasts.²⁷

One of the favorite animals at Versailles was the elephant presented to Louis XIV by the king of Portugal.²⁸ There had not been an elephant in France since the reign of Henry IV, and the giant, yet gentle beast attracted numerous visitors, scientists, and artists. The animal was very sweet, softly accepting offerings, even from small children. But it was also clever and adventurous. It learned to unfasten the leather straps by which its feet were bound, and one night broke open the door of its enclosure so skillfully that its keeper, who was sleeping nearby, did not even wake up. The elephant then went to visit the other animals, scaring them by its massive bulk and sending them for cover to all corners of the menagerie. Yet it was itself a timid creature, especially afraid of pigs. The elephant survived at Versailles for thirteen years. When it died in 1681, its dissection was a major scientific event. It was only then that it was discovered that the creature was not a male, as the keepers had supposed all along, but a female.

Since the king made his collection accessible to members of the Academy of Science, so that they could conduct zoological studies based on his extraordinary array of beasts, the scientists reveled in being able to examine the 55 different species of mammals, including monkeys, panthers, cheetahs, servals, lynxes, walruses, sea lions, porcupines, beavers, antelopes, gazelles, buffalo, stags, deer, reindeer, the elephant, and others besides. There were also 16 species of birds of prey, 20 of parrots, some 150 species of other types of birds, plus crocodiles, turtles, lizards, and snakes.²⁹ When the animals died, scientist dissected them and learned valuable lessons in comparative anatomy. They also drew and made prints of these specimens—both whole beasts and anatomical parts—and preserved the carcasses so that they could be displayed in the chateau at Versailles and in the Jardin du roi in Paris.

Alas, Louis XIV's great-grandson and successor, Louis XV, did not share his predecessor's enthusiasm for animals, and during his reign the menagerie went into decline. As one observer reported, the poor animals were living in mire up to their knees. Yet the international fame of the Versailles zoo endured, and exotic beasts continued to be sent to France as diplomatic gifts. At the same time, rulers in other countries sought to emulate this famous establishment.

Eugene, prince of Savoy, great-nephew of Louis XIV's prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, and descendant of both the ducal house of Savoy and the French royal house of Bourbon, created his outstanding menagerie on the model of Versailles—even replicating the fan-shaped enclosures—despite the fact that he hated Louis XIV.³⁰ Eugene's family had intended him for the church, but he longed for military glory. After Louis XIV turned down his application for a commission, Eugene fled the French court and went on to make a brilliant military career in the service of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I.

But Eugene was interested in more than war. He was an eager collector of books, scientific specimens, and artworks, and an avid builder, constructing several palaces, including a winter palace in Himmelspfortgasse in Vienna and his summer residence, the Bevedere Palace, on the outskirts of the city. It was at Bevedere that he set up a great menagerie in which he gathered 43 species of mammals and 67 species of birds. Like other rulers, Eugene obtained his animals through merchants and dealers, as well as from foreign potentates. The envoy from Tunis, for example, brought him a tiger.

Eugene was especially fond of a pair of bison presented to him by Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia, the reindeer sent by the king of Sweden, and a tame lion that was allowed to walk around the palace.

The place of exotic beasts in Eugene's mind and heart is evident from an album of prints produced in his honor by Salomon Kleiner in the 1730s. The volume is devoted to the Belvedere: its buildings, beautiful apartments, and elegant gardens. A pair of prints shows the general layout of the menagerie and its embellishments. The animals themselves appear in a separate cycle of illustrations, where they are posed in the garden together with Eugene's exotic plants and prized statues, including two marble figures of women recently unearthed at Herculaneum, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79 (fig. 9).³¹ By putting together statuary and rare beasts, the prints celebrated Eugene as a student of both science and art, of natural and man-made wonders. It was a concise exposition of the interests incumbent on a progressive ruler. The inclusion of exotic animals alongside artworks in princely palaces reflected the preeminent role of natural history in this era of scientific curiosity and advancement of knowledge.

Holy Roman Emperor Franz I looked to both the Versailles and Belvedere menageries when he created and presented a beautifully renovated Schönbrunn zoo (at the Hapsburg summer palace outside Vienna) to his wife, Maria Teresa, in 1752.³² This menagerie had thirteen enclosures for the animals, as well as pathways, pools with fountains, a pond, and several ornate pavilions, including one in which the queen could breakfast while watching camels, elephants, and zebras outside. Franz procured animals through dealers in Holland and England as well as through expeditions he sponsored to America. Altogether he imported some 600 to 700 birds and animals to the Schönbrunn aviaries and grassy enclosures, although some animals also came from Belvedere after Eugene's death. Franz I's successor, Joseph II, opened the menagerie to the public, and it continues to function as the city's zoo to this day, having, of course, been brought up to modern standards.

The dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, in contrast to the rulers mentioned above, were rather poor, governing merely a small German principality, and they were apparently not in a position to establish their own menagerie.³³ So they did the next best thing: They bought portraits of animals kept in the celebrated Versailles menagerie. These pictures, moreover, had originally been commissioned as a gift to Louis XV and painted by a cel-



FIGURE 9

Salomon Kleiner (German, 1700–1761), Exotic animals of Prince Eugene of Savoy, plate 103 from volume 2 of *Das Belvedere in Wien* (1731–40; facsimile: Graz, 1969). Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 88–B2638.

ebredated animal painter who worked for the French king and was well known in Germany—Jean-Baptiste Oudry.

Oudry had a long-standing relationship with the dukes of Schwerin, selling them over twenty-six of his own paintings (they would acquire eighteen more after his death) and playing middleman in their transactions with other Parisian artists.³⁴ So when he offered Duke Christian Ludwig a series of animal portraits based on the birds and beasts of Versailles, Oudry was building on a history of ducal interest in his works. Christian Ludwig was also an avid huntsman, so Oudry's pictures appealed to his interest in animals, and he was a keen collector of paintings, especially favoring seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish masters who specialized in convincing depictions of nature. The bond between Oudry and the ruling family of Schwerin was reinforced in 1738 when the duke's son, Friedrich, visited Paris after spending a year at the riding academy in Angers. Oudry toured the young prince around the city, took him to artists' ateliers and the Gobelins tapestry manufactory, and painted his official portrait. Christian Ludwig initially wanted his son to be depicted by the most prestigious painter in Paris, Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743). But the royal portraitist charged too dearly for his creations. Oudry was happy to oblige for less.³⁵

It seems likely that a similar combination of shortage of funds (to maintain live beasts) and the already established relationship with Oudry, who was able to provide the dukes of Schwerin with satisfactory and cheaper surrogates, convinced Christian Ludwig and Friedrich to buy Oudry's animal series. The fact that this cycle had been initially intended for the French king made it all the more appealing. By buying the pictures the dukes of Schwerin satisfied several needs and desires at once. They likened themselves to the French court by patronizing the same painter and by exhibiting the same exotic beasts; they augmented their gallery of paintings; and they created an impression of princely glory at a fraction of the cost that attended the ownership of rare fauna. Of course, painted animals were not as wondrous, exciting, and impressive as live ones, but Oudry's canvasses brought them to life. His animal portraits allowed the dukes of Schwerin to take their place in a long history of princely collecting of marvelous beasts as symbols of power, sophistication, and mastery over the natural and political realms. ♦

Notes

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- Loisel 1912, vol. 1, p. 37; Fisher 1966, p. 27.
- See Belozerskaya 2006.
- H. H. Scullard, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (London, 1974), pp. 64–65.
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- Vincent Drognet, "Oudry et la Cour de Schwerin," in *Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4*, pp. 85–91; Solodkoff 2000, pp. 122–35.
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TECHNIQUE AND TRADITION IN OUDRY'S ANIMAL DRAWINGS

CHRISTINE GIVISKOS

HIS FINISHED DRAWINGS ARE IN BLACK CHALK, VERY FINELY touched, highlighted with white using the brush. His studies are also in black chalk, highlighted with white chalk.”¹ With those two sentences, Antoine-Jean Dézallier d’Argenville summed up Jean-Baptiste Oudry’s draftsmanship in his 1762 biography of the artist. Dézallier d’Argenville would have had to revise this limited assessment had he known the remarkable group of Oudry’s drawings now in the Staatliches Museum Schwerin. Acquired for the most part during Oudry’s lifetime or soon after his death in 1755 by Duke Christian Ludwig II of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and his son, the drawings span the artist’s entire career and demonstrate the variety of Oudry’s draftsmanship with regard to media and function. While black and white chalks were undeniably Oudry’s preferred drawing media, the range of materials and types of drawings in the Schwerin group demonstrates that Dézallier d’Argenville’s remarks are insufficient to characterize Oudry as a draftsman. Besides refined copies after his own paintings, Oudry’s drawings in Schwerin include quick preparatory sheets, more fully realized compositional studies as well as independent works executed in brown ink and wash, red chalk, pastel, and even *trois crayon* (red, white, and black chalks), demonstrating a versatility and facility extending far beyond works in black and white chalk.² The animal drawings in Schwerin also demonstrate Oudry’s range of subjects in his particular specialty, which included the royal hunt, still lifes with dead game, animal portraits, and expressive heads. Oudry’s animal drawings often relate directly to his paintings, showing fully realized birds and beasts in specific poses and articulated expressions that convey the immediacy and naturalism associated with his painted compositions. The drawings also show that Oudry relied as much or more on artistic tradition as on observed nature when composing his animal subjects.

Oudry’s prodigious output as a draftsman provides evidence of the centrality of drawing to his artistic practice. Hal Opperman catalogued some one thousand drawings in the 1977 revision of his dissertation on Oudry, many of which were unlocated and known only through brief descriptions in sales catalogues.³ Oudry never expounded upon drawing as a practice as he did in two *conférences* (lectures) on painting at the Académie royale de peinture et sculpture in 1749 and 1752. However, his actions as director of the Beauvais tapestry manufactory (1734–55) suggest that he believed in its pedagogical importance, subscribing to the traditional, academic view that mastery of drawing is the basis for artistic excellence. At Beauvais he sought to raise the quality of the tapestries by reinvigorating the manufactory’s drawing school for its workers (and establishing a free drawing school in Beauvais in 1750); unfortunately, little is known about these schools beyond the fact of their establishment.⁴

There is more documentary evidence regarding the great personal, intellectual, and artistic value Oudry assigned to his own drawings. The short notice announcing the sale of his estate after his death in April 1755 concluded by noting the large number of drawings in Oudry’s collection, due in part to the artist’s reluctance to sell his drawings.⁵ No catalogue of the sale was printed, but the recently rediscovered inventory made after Oudry’s death has come to light and confirms the great size and careful organization of his drawings collection suggested by Louis Gougenot in his biography of Oudry.⁶ An artist retaining his own drawings in albums and portfolios cannot be considered uncommon, although Oudry may have been precocious in this practice, as evidenced by his creation of two albums of drawings comprising works he made between 1713 and 1718.⁷ Any ambitious painter running a studio at the time would have taken care to have a significant collection of drawings and prints in the studio to serve as reference material, as an enticement to potential clients, and possibly as a legacy should a child also

Figure 10, detail.

become a painter. Our increasing knowledge about the market for drawings during the eighteenth century suggests there would have been a significant pool of buyers for Oudry's many drawings had he made them more available.⁸ While the majority of his drawn oeuvre seems to have remained in his possession, Oudry did part with numerous drawings during his lifetime. Around 1740, he sold a group of drawings to the Swedish ambassador to Paris, Count Carl Gustaf Tessin. In 1751, Oudry sold the 276 drawings he had made twenty years earlier to illustrate Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* to Louis Regnard de Montenault, and several of the drawings in the Schwerin group were surely acquired by the court of Mecklenburg-Schwerin during Oudry's lifetime.⁹ In one known instance in 1745, Oudry gave two drawings to an unknown collector, suggesting the possibility of other gifts and sales of drawings that are undocumented.

Oudry publicly exhibited his drawings on one occasion during his lifetime, at the Salon of 1753. The *livret* (small catalogue) for that exhibition lists five drawings, described as being made *d'après nature* (from studying nature) and as belonging to the artist, among Oudry's presented works, which also included sixteen paintings and six prints engraved after his drawings illustrating La Fontaine's *Fables*.¹⁰ Three of the exhibited drawings depicted the ruined estate of the prince de Guise at Arcueil, where Oudry drew in the landscaped gardens during the 1740s, making some fifty finished drawings, mostly in black and white chalk on blue paper (the Arcueil drawings are today considered the pinnacle of Oudry's draftsmanship for their sensitive rendering of the play of light among the park's natural and man-made features).¹¹ The other exhibited drawings were two large compositions depicting combat between two groups of animals in forest landscapes, *Composition for a Large Picture: Eagles Attacking Swans* (unlocated) and *Another Composition: Tigers Attacking Horses* (Vienna, Albertina). These drawings, executed in pen and ink and brush with black wash and white gouache on blue paper, were part of a group of twelve such drawings that Oudry made in 1745, probably as presentation sheets.¹² The Arcueil drawings and animal combat drawings are highly finished, independent works and as such were logical choices to be included in a Salon exhibition. However, the increasing taste for the *première pensée* (literally, "first thought"; refers to freely drawn, exploratory studies) among drawings connoisseurs as the eighteenth century progressed led to diminished esteem for finished drawings, probably

accounting for Dézallier d'Argenville's curt summary of Oudry's draftsmanship.¹³ Pierre-Jean Mariette's remarks about the unbelievably high prices fetched by two of Oudry's animal combat drawings in 1756 because of their high degree of finish also suggests that the limited exposure and availability of Oudry's drawing oeuvre during his lifetime prevented an appreciation of its true variety and his mastery of all drawing media.¹⁴

Oudry was accepted into the Académie royale as a history painter, and thanks to this designation, his monumental paintings of animals and still lifes achieved an unprecedented prominence for such subjects in the *livrets* of Salon exhibitions and in the assessments of Salon critics.¹⁵ The royal hunt provided Oudry with a subject that could be treated in a fashion similar to that of monumental history paintings, that is, inspired by artistic precedent and executed on a grand scale after being prepared with numerous drawings and oil sketches.¹⁶ Several studies of horses now in Schwerin can be related to the great commission for the *Chasses royales de Louis XV*, a series of tapestry designs to be woven at Beauvais that occupied most of Oudry's attention between 1733 and 1746. Oudry had already painted several portraits of the king's hunting dogs when, in 1728, he was invited to accompany the royal hunting party, and he commemorated the occasion by including his self-portrait as a draftsman in the lower right corner of his 1730 painting *Louis XV Hunting the Stag in the Forest of Saint-Germain* (see Bailey, fig. 12). For that painting as well as the subsequent *Chasses royales* series, Oudry included "true portraits" of the horses and dogs in addition to those of the members of the hunting party.¹⁷ The *Sheet of Studies with a Horse and Four Horses' Heads*, executed in black, white, and red chalk on blue paper, was probably made in the course of preparing the tapestry designs (fig. 1).¹⁸ The four horses' heads, each shown in profile facing the left, may be studies for portraits of the hunt horses. Drawn with a refined technique and regal bearing, they form a contrast to the standing horse at left. Rendered only in black chalk and in a rougher technique than the other studies, this horse is a different animal from that depicted in the four profile studies; its long tail indicates that it was probably a carriage horse (hunting horses had docked tails). Claudia Schönfeld has pointed out that while the standing horse has the character of a life study, it also bears a resemblance to horses by Paulus Potter (1625–1654), one of the many seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish artists with whose work Oudry was probably acquainted. His reliance on



FIGURE 1
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Sheet of Studies with a Horse and Four Horses' Heads*, 1730–35. Black, white, and red chalk on blue paper, 31.5 × 44.5 cm (12³/₈ × 17¹/₂ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 1147.



FIGURE 2

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Dog Attacking a Bittern*, ca. 1725. Pen and brown ink and brush with brown wash over red chalk, squared in red chalk, 23.5 × 30.8 cm (9¼ × 12⅛ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 4575.



FIGURE 3
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Dog Attacking a Duck*, 1726. Black and white chalk on
beige paper, 19.3 × 23.6 cm (7⁵/₈ × 9¹/₄ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 4576.

such models has long been noted.¹⁹ As Opperman has pointed out, Oudry's horses only appear in his hunt subjects—there are no portraits of the royal horses as there are for the dogs, and equestrian portraits were not in his repertoire—and therefore Oudry may have had one of Potter's horses, or that of another artist, in mind when drawing the horse on the present sheet.²⁰

A magnificent study for the 1725 painting of a *Dog Attacking a Bittern* (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm) demonstrates another type of hunt subject featuring the moment when the chasing animal finds its prey (fig. 2). The drawing demonstrates several steps in the preparation of the composition, which Oudry first drew in red chalk, then refined using pen and ink and applying brown wash in subtle gradations, and finally squared it for transfer in red chalk. The brown wash is applied in both broad passages, as in the foreground and background, and in small, precise strokes to articulate the dog's fur and the bird's feathers. The diffuse, natural-light effects more commonly associated with Oudry's Arcueil drawings are on display here, achieved through modulated shades of brown throughout the composition. Despite mastering the technique, Oudry rarely employed brown wash to such great effect in his drawings made after the 1720s, in which he primarily used white chalk to render natural light sensitively when drawing on blue paper. In this composition, the dramatic moment of the dog capturing its prey is conveyed not through the dog's action, which does not seem particularly vicious, but through the bittern's more demonstrative reaction. Oudry drew the bird with its wings fully outstretched, its free leg extended up, and its mouth open as though screeching—all elements that help animate the bird as a living, feeling, and frightened creature. Oudry similarly conceived the prey in *Dog Attacking a Duck*, a 1726 composition sketched in black and white chalk. The duck's open mouth shows its long tongue, giving it an expression more of surprise than of fear (fig. 3).

Although no other studies by Oudry specifically depicting the birds and dogs in these works are known, it is logical to assume that the compositions assemble individual motifs that Oudry had already studied and drawn. Besides the portraits of the king's hunting dogs, Oudry had already made many still lifes of dead game birds that must have generated a number of preparatory studies to which he could refer. Oudry's presentation of the birds in the drawings with wings fully extended so as to articulate every feather recalls motifs in Oudry's still-life paintings, as well as motifs going back to

seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish kitchen pieces and hunting still lifes. Oudry's statement in his 1752 *conférence* at the Académie royale that the models he worked from were rarely living and were subject to decay²¹ might suggest that he primarily drew studies after actual, though dead, animals; in fact a significant number of his models were created by other artists. The lively expressiveness associated with Oudry's animal compositions resulted from a combination of the artist's study of dead specimens, his observation of living ones, and his reliance on the example of other artists.

The powerful drawing of a dead leopard is one exception in Oudry's drawings of individual animals, which are almost always depicted frontally, standing, and seemingly alive (fig. 4). Oudry has drawn the leopard at the top of a large sheet of blue paper, first using black chalk in free, irregular strokes and then broadly applying white chalk on the animal's head and body. Although the subject and handling of the sheet both suggest that Oudry drew directly from a dead specimen, Xavier Salmon recently pointed out that he relied on a dead leopard painted by his older contemporary Alexandre-François Desportes (1661–1743) for this drawing made around 1740.²² Oudry also employed a free and broad technique while using a rich, dense application of chalk in his large drawing of a frightened duck, which was also inspired by a Desportes oil sketch (fig. 5).²³ Oudry's handling of the chalk lends a sense of immediacy to the drawing, with the repeated outlines of the duck's upper and lower bill and the rapidly drawn diagonal lines around the bird's extended wing helping to convey its agitation. After revising Desportes' model for his own use, Oudry focused on the contrast and modulation of lights and darks in this study, balancing the dense white passages of the extended wing with the black of the duck's head and blending the chalks on the body into lighter and darker grays, all of which were translated into the painting. Oudry executed these drawings with the freshness and spontaneity associated with drawing after nature and the *première pensée*, using black and white chalk in a broad manner that sharply contrasts with the regular and precise hatching of many of his drawn animal studies. That the *Dead Leopard* and *Frightened Duck* are in fact made after pictured animals rather than real ones underscores Oudry's traditional artistic practice of selecting motifs by other artists and drawing them in his own manner for study and for future reference. It also emphasizes that Oudry's interest in animals was almost exclusively artistic as opposed to scientific or documentary. Unlike



FIGURE 4
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Dead Leopard*, ca. 1740. Black and white chalk on blue paper, 33.4 × 55.6 cm (13¹/₈ × 21⁷/₈ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 1168.

some artists before and after him who specialized in portraying animals, Oudry did not travel to study exotic species, and he did not make or copy any animal anatomical studies for incorporation into his compositions. He instead remained in Paris, using that city's significant collections of art and of live animals as artistic resources.

Pieter Boel (1622–1674), an Antwerp-trained animal painter who worked in Paris for the Gobelins tapestry manufactory, was an even more important source for Oudry's animals than Desportes, who himself had often relied on Boel's models.²⁴ Boel is thought to have trained with the great animal painter Jan Fyt (1611–1661), and, after traveling to Italy and returning to Antwerp, he relocated to Paris around 1668/69, working with many Flemish artists at Gobelins under the direction of *premier peintre* Charles Le Brun (1619–1690).²⁵ Like Desportes and Oudry after him, Boel studied

and drew the animals in the royal menageries at Vincennes and at Versailles, the latter being newly constructed and open in 1664. Boel's drawings are executed in black and white chalk with pastel and convey his active study of the animals; he repeatedly drew individual details such as a bird's foot or a bear's paw.²⁶ The majority of Boel's drawings had been in Le Brun's studio, the contents of which entered the royal collections after his death in 1690; Boel's painted oil sketches remained at Gobelins. Oudry's work in the service of the crown could have provided him direct access to these studies, as well as to the *Maisons royales* tapestries which feature animals woven from Boel's models; in addition, Gérard Scotin engraved compositions featuring Boel's animals in the *Ménagerie de Versailles*.

As Salmon has pointed out, although many of Oudry's animal drawings, particularly of birds, have their source in Boel's oeuvre, few of these



FIGURE 5
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Frightened Duck*, ca. 1737. Black and white
chalk on blue paper, 53.5 × 64 cm (21 × 25¼ in.). Schwerin,
Staatliches Museum, inv. 1178.



FIGURE 6
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Two Studies of Parrots*, 1730s.
Black and white chalk and pastel on blue paper,
27.1 × 28.1 cm (10⁵/₈ × 11 in.). Schwerin, Staatliches
Museum, inv. 4579.

animals are then incorporated into any of Oudry's paintings. Oudry's drawings after Boel can be seen as the traditional practice of an artist copying the work of an acknowledged past master in order to understand that artist's vision and technique. His practice of drawing copies was a central and continuous aspect of Oudry's artistic practice from the beginning of his career, when he copied Rubens's Medici cycle in the Luxembourg Palace, through his late years, when he copied landscapes after Nicolaes Berchem (1620–1683).²⁷ Boel's studies of animals that were incorporated into tapestry designs were particularly relevant to Oudry's own work and thus became a resource he would continually rely upon.

Studies of parrots by Oudry, executed in black and white chalk with some pastel, do not directly copy any of Boel's many parrot studies though

they certainly have an affinity with some of the latter's oil sketches (fig. 6).²⁸ In these drawings, which were surely made from life, Oudry's parrots are composed of summary forms using light, long strokes of black chalk for the tails, heavier and shorter ones for the wings, and broad passages of white chalk across the breasts. The parrot drawn using blue and yellow pastel over black chalk is a less familiar kind of study in Oudry's oeuvre in its use of color, which has been applied and blended on the parrot's body and tail to suggest the texture of the feathers and is more precisely placed on the contour of the parrot's head. Just as Oudry may have had Boel's precedent in mind when composing the parrots' poses, he may also have been emulating his drawing technique by adding pastel to black chalk. Although these drawings are dated to about 1729, parrots were in Oudry's animal repertoire much earlier



FIGURE 7
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Reclining Tiger*, ca. 1740. Black and white chalk on blue paper, 32.2 × 56 cm (12 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 22 in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 1167.

and featured as motifs in several early still-life compositions for which he had surely made other studies, either from life or from other painted models.²⁹ Parrots had a long pictorial history in Dutch and Flemish still-life paintings and portraits in the seventeenth century, and Oudry would have been well versed in this tradition after studying with the Antwerp-trained painter Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746), who, besides painting the portraits for which he is best known, was also an accomplished still-life painter.³⁰

Largillière had arrived in Paris around 1679, was accepted into the Académie in 1686 and was elected a full professor in 1705. Oudry entered Largillière's studio two years later, staying for four years. While the stylistic debt Oudry owed to Largillière is well known, it might be suggested that Oudry was also introduced while in Largillière's studio to the Académie's doctrines as established by Charles Le Brun. Oudry's training and initial practice as a portraitist would have necessarily emphasized the rendering of facial physiognomy and expression, and Charles Le Brun's *Conférence sur l'Expression* would have been well known by the early 1700s. The illustrations for Le Brun's conference had been engraved and published many times,

and Le Brun's compositions comparing animal and human physiognomies by juxtaposing a study of a human head with that of an animal would have been extremely relevant for Oudry as he came to specialize as an animal painter. Whether or not Oudry could have known the many animal head studies Le Brun made, often using his colleague Pieter Boel's models, the five prints Louis Simmoneau (1654–1727) made after Le Brun's man/animal comparisons would have been readily available.³¹ The artistic precedent for equating animal and human facial features and expressions could have demonstrated to Oudry the possibilities for rendering highly expressive animals in his own works.

Reclining Tiger indicates Oudry's attention to the rendering of animal expression in order to animate his subjects (fig. 7). Oudry may have been combining a study from life with an idealized expression in his drawing of the tiger, as this study combines a somewhat freer style to render the tiger's body with a more meticulous one for its head. The tiger's anthropomorphic and precisely drawn face, rendered with staring eyes that are almost perfectly circular, might have prompted Opperman's observation that this drawing

seems to be “something more than a study after nature.”³² The drawing, mostly black chalk with some touches of white chalk on blue paper, shows the animal resting in an almost empty space articulated only by the shading to the left of the tiger, probably meant to indicate a tree. Oudry drew an outline of the tiger’s body first, subsequently integrating it into the shadows underneath the animal’s shoulder and belly or obscuring it to change slightly the position of its tail. The tiger’s stripes are drawn using small, irregular strokes of varying density, using a blunter point of the chalk than that used for the thinner lines—the scribbles on the sheet below the tiger’s hind legs may have been made to test the lines before proceeding. The most meticulous work is in the tiger’s face, which is defined with a variety of small strokes and dots. Although the drawing does not relate to any known painting by Oudry, it was probably made around 1740, the same time as the life-size painted *Tiger* (Schwerin) that is part of the *Ménagerie* series.³³ In comparing the drawn tiger with the painted one, it seems that two different animals served as his subjects: a larger male tiger in the painting and a more slender female tiger in the drawing. Although the male and female tigers are similar in conception to Oudry’s paintings *Leopard* and *Leopardess* executed in 1741 (see plates 6 and 7), the differing attitudes of the tigers are less pronounced than those of the active male leopard and the passive female. As in those paintings, the drawn and painted tigers are shown in similar positions, but with their bodies extended in opposite directions. The male is shown with a raised tail baring its teeth, while the female’s mouth is closed and its tail languidly curled. If creating an opposition between the two was Oudry’s intention, the female tiger’s somewhat bewildered expression might have been conceived to accentuate the contrast with the growling male tiger.

Oudry’s interest in rendering animal expression is evident in his *Frightened Fox*, which depicts the animal’s head turned to the right with its mouth wide open (fig. 8). This drawing is remarkable both as a *tête d’expression* and as a finished pastel, one of the few such works in either category of Oudry’s drawing oeuvre known today. Le Brun’s illustrations for his *Conférence sur l’Expression*, each showing a male or female head conforming to his detailed descriptions of how specific emotions are conveyed on the face, gave impetus to the expressive head as an artistic category that gained momentum through the first half of the eighteenth century. Given his experience as a portraitist and his attention to academic tradition and hierarchy, Oudry could have conceived of this work with Charles Le Brun’s famous illustration *Terror* in

mind, as his fox and Le Brun’s expressive head share a wide-eyed stare and wide-open mouth with teeth showing (fig. 9). Although there is no known preparatory work for the pastel, Oudry used the composition for two other works, one in oil on paper (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm) and one in pastel (private collection), each depicting an entire fox with its head in much the same attitude, suggesting that the present sheet might have served as the final preparation for those works or as the artist’s record of them.³⁴ For this vivid drawing, which was probably even more stunning before the blue paper faded, Oudry used green, brown, yellow, pink, and red pastels in addition to his characteristic black and white media.

While Oudry’s mastery of the pastel medium is demonstrated by this drawing, it is unclear how extensive his use of it may have been. Besides the fox and the parrot study discussed above, the Staatliches Museum Schwerin also has a pastel preparatory study, *Head of a Lion*, for the 1732 painting of a lion now in Stockholm. Several unlocated drawings in Opperman’s catalogue are described as being made in *couleurs*, though this description could refer to his works in oil on paper as well as pastel. Three unlocated landscape pastels were among the works Oudry presented at the 1745 Salon, indicating that he used pastel for finished works as well as for studies. From the late seventeenth century, French artists, particularly portraitists, increasingly used pastel, and Oudry may have become acquainted with the medium through his portraiture. He may also have been inspired by fellow artists who made pastel preparatory head studies for narrative paintings, such as his almost exact contemporary François Le Moyne (1688–1737) and particularly his younger colleague François Boucher (1703–1770), with whom Oudry enjoyed a good working relationship, particularly with regard to drawings.³⁵

Oudry’s adaptation of traditional academic practice in the service of his animal subjects, particularly with regard to expression, also extends to his illustrations of La Fontaine’s *Fables*, a great work of French literature in which many of the characters happen to be animals. These drawings, which occupied the artist from about 1729 to 1734, were eventually engraved and published in a luxury four-volume folio edition between 1755 and 1759; as mentioned above, some of the engravings had been completed in time for Oudry to exhibit them with his other paintings and drawings in the 1753 Salon.³⁶ The 276 drawings provide at least one composition for each fable and are all executed on blue paper using brush with black ink, gray wash, and white gouache, all in the same vertical format surrounded by a drawn



FIGURE 8
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Frightened Fox*, 1740s? Pastel on faded blue paper,
26.6 × 41.3 cm (10½ × 16¼ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 4578.

FIGURE 9
Louis Testelin after Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), *Terror*, n.d.
Engraving, 25.3 × 20 cm (9¼ × 7⅞ in.). UCLA, Young Research Library,
Special Collections.



frame. The consistent and large format of the drawings (all are about 31.1 × 25.4 cm [12¼ × 10¼ inches]), as well as the fact that he illustrated all the *Fables*, suggests Oudry from the beginning intended to publish his ambitious project—Abbé Gougenot’s claim that the artist drew the fables for his own pleasure when time allowed notwithstanding.³⁷ The *Fables* required Oudry to draw an extensive repertoire of both common and exotic animals. His drawing *The Plague-Stricken Animals* depicts an eclectic group of beasts—a lion, a fox, a stag, a bear, a wolf, a dog, and a donkey—gathered to discuss which of them will be sacrificed to atone for whatever great sin has brought on the plague (fig. 10).³⁸ While these may not be his most studiously realized animals, Oudry must have understood that illustrating the *Fables* required expressive and active animals enacting the critical point of the narrative rather than naturalistically represented ones depicting the talking beasts in La Fontaine’s texts.³⁹ The animals here seem to hang on the donkey’s every word, though in fact they are turning on him as the lowest beast among those gathered. Although not every fable provided him with such a fraught moment to illustrate, La Fontaine’s *Fables* allowed Oudry, over several years and hundreds of drawings, to conceive of and compose animals as actors performing in established roles in the same way history painters were trained to compose their human actors.

Oudry’s drawings, which were created using a variety of media and which served every function in his artistic process, make manifest his ability to portray naturalistic and expressive animals. Whether drawn from life, from dead specimens, from other artists’ compositions, or through a combination thereof, Oudry’s animals display gestures, postures, and expressions that bring them to life. Oudry was a versatile and dedicated draftsman who produced a vast and varied oeuvre comparable to that of the great figure painters of his time. He would truly have understood when his fellow animal painter Alexandre-François Desportes was eulogized: “very few people know how difficult it is to portray animals, the prodigious variety of studies it requires.”⁴⁰ ♦

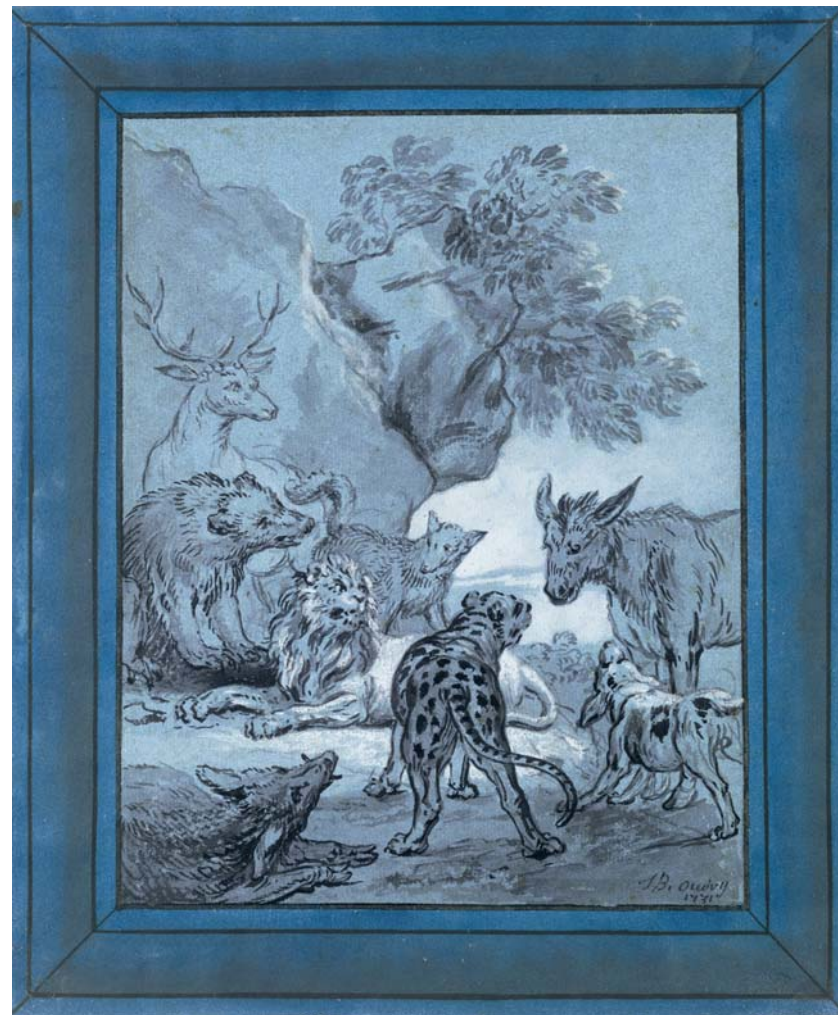


FIGURE 10
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The Plague-Stricken Animals*, 1731. Brush with black ink, gray wash, and white gouache on blue paper, 30.8 × 25.7 cm (12¼ × 10¼ in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002.52.1.

Notes

1. “Ses desseins terminés sont à la pierre noire, très-bien touchés, rehaussés de blanc au pinceau. Ses études sont du même crayon, relevées de blanc de craie.”: Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres* (Paris, 1762; reprint Geneva, 1972), vol. 4, p. 414.
2. Oudry’s drawings in Schwerin are catalogued and illustrated in Schwerin 2000.
3. Opperman 1977, vol. 2, and Paris 1982, pp. 232–35. Oudry’s actual output must have been at least double, and perhaps triple, Opperman’s number.
4. J. Loquin, “Jean-Baptiste Oudry. Peintre et Directeur de la Manufacture royale de Tapisseries de Beauvais,” *Bulletin de la Société d’Etudes*

historiques et scientifiques de l’Oise (1906), part 3, p. 112; Oudry was also consulted on an unrealized project to establish a drawing school in Lyon. See also M. F. Rolle, “Jean-Baptiste Oudry, peintre. Observations, avis et lettres de cet artiste sur l’établissement d’une école de dessin à Lyon (1751–1753),” *Archives de l’art français* (1867), pp. 51–72.

5. “La collection des desseins est très-nombreuse, & ils sont d’autant plus précieux, que l’Auteur qui prenoit plaisir à travailler avec un soin extrême, n’en vendoit aucun.” *Announcement* published on June 30, 1755; reproduced in Paris 1982, p. 39.
6. An inventory was drawn up on May 7, 1755, with Jean-Joseph Dumont and François Jouillan providing values for the drawings and prints, and Claude-Jean-Baptiste Bauche providing values for the books. See Colin Bailey’s essay in this

catalogue and J. Guiffrey, "Scellés et Inventaires d'Artistes," *Nouvelles Archives de l'art français* (Paris, 1884), p. 212.

7. The albums are now in the Cabinet des dessins of the Musée du Louvre.

8. See C. Bailey, "Toute seule elle peut remplir et satisfaire l'attention . . ." pp. 75–77, in Alan Wintermute, *Watteau and His World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750*, exh. cat. (New York, Frick Collection, and Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1999).

9. For the *Fables* drawings, see Opperman 1977, p. 84.

10. The five drawings and six prints in the 1753 Salon were exhibited without numbers.

11. Opperman (Paris 1982, pp. 232–33, nos. 129–38) suggests that Oudry may have made as many as one hundred drawings of Arcueil. The *Partie de l'Aqueduc d'Arcueil* exhibited in 1753 may be the sheet now in the Musée de l'Île de France, Sceaux. The other drawings are only described in the *livret* as *Vue du dedans d'Arcueil* and *Autre vue du dedans d'Arcueil*. An album of forty-six drawings depicting Arcueil is mentioned in the inventory of Oudry's studio, to be published by Colin Bailey.

12. Opperman ("Oudry aux Gobelins," *Revue de l'Art* 22 [1973], pp. 57–65) suggests Oudry made the twelve drawings to secure a commission for a tapestry cycle to be woven at Gobelins, which was never undertaken. Besides the Vienna sheet, other drawings from the series are now in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Musée Arger, Montpellier; and Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.

13. For Dézallier d'Argenville's disparaging remarks about the taste for finished drawings, see C. Bailey, "Toute seule elle peut remplir et satisfaire l'attention . . .," in Wintermute (see note 8 above), pp. 76–77.

14. "Qui auroit cru que deux dessins d'Oudry, vendus très chèrement à sa vente en 1755, doubleraient presque de prix l'année suivante; la mode y est; ils sont terminés; cela suffit pour quelqu'un dont les connoissances ne sont pas fort estendues.": Philippe de Chennevières and Anatole de Montaiglon, eds., *Abecedario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes* (Paris, 1851–60), vol. 4, pp. 65–66.

15. This is in contrast to Alexandre-François Desportes, who was accepted into the Académie as a *peintre d'animaux*, a much lower rank; see Iriye 1994, p. 168.

16. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 91.

17. Opperman (1977, vol. 1, p. 86) cites the June 1730 *Mercur de France* description of the painting (now in the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse), which states that eight of the horses and all of the dogs are portraits. In his catalogue entry for the *Chasses royales* (p. 156–73), he quotes a letter from Oudry describing the commission and stating that "the horses and dogs will be true portraits."

18. Christoph Frank recently discovered two copies of this drawing, as well as others after Oudry, made by Crown Prince Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in the Schwerin state archives, raising the possibility that the present drawing is also a copy.

19. See Schwerin 2000, no. 42, and H. Opperman, "The Genesis of the 'Chasses royales,'" *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970), pp. 216–18. Dézallier d'Argenville (see note 1 above, pp. 411–13) described how Largillière instructed Oudry to copy Rubens's work in the Luxembourg Palace and that he was pleased with Oudry's hunt paintings, "copiées d'après un Hollandois," one of which has been identified by Georges de Lastic as after a composition by Abraham Hondius; see Georges de Lastic, "Nicolas de Largillière, documents notariés inédits," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (July 1981), p. 8, fig. 7 (previously attributed to Largillière) and n. 41.

20. Paris 1982, pp. 133–35. Besides Potter's animals, Pieter van Laer's and Jan van Aken's series of prints depicting horses might also have served as models.

21. "... les modèles dont je me sers pour mon talent, étant rarement en vie, sont sujets à se corrompre promptement": Eugène Piot, "J.-B. Oudry: Discours sur la Pratique de la Peinture et ses procédés principaux: Ebaucher, Peintre à Fond et Retoucher," *Cabinet de L'Amateur* (Paris, 1861), p. 114.

22. See Droguet in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 62, where the Desportes painting in the collections of the Manufacture nationale de Sèvres, *Combat between a Tiger and an Elephant*, is also illustrated.

23. Desportes used the duck in this oil sketch in another composition, *Buzzard Discovering Several*

Birds (Sevres), on which Oudry may have based his own *Birds of Prey Attacking Ducks* now in Schwerin. See Pierre Jacky, *Alexandre-François Desportes, tableaux de chasse (1661–1743)* (Paris, 1998), no. 46, and Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 44.

24. Hal Opperman (1977), Elisabeth Foucart-Walter (Paris, 2001), and Xavier Salmon (Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4) have all identified works by Oudry made after models by Boel.

25. See Hans Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture 1585–1700* (New Haven and London, 1998), pp. 215–17.

26. For discussion and reproductions of Boel's animal life studies, see Madeleine Pinault Sørensen, *Sur le vif. Dessins d'animaux de Pieter Boel* (Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001).

27. See note 17 above and Françoise Joulie, *Boucher et les peintres du nord* (Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), pp. 85–87.

28. Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, nos. 57–59.

29. Two Oudry drawings in the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, reproduce his lost pendant *Still Life with Fish and Parrot* paintings, which were exhibited in the 1724 Salon de la Jeunesse. See Perrin Stein and Mary Tavener Holmes, *Eighteenth-century French Drawings in New York Collections*, exh. cat. (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), no. 19.

30. For an overview of the parrot in art, see J. Douglas Stewart, "Hidden Persuaders: Religious Symbolism in van Dyck's Portraiture, with a note on Dürer's 'Knight, Death and the Devil,'" *Review d'Art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review (RACAR)* 10 (1983), pp. 67–68. The most recent work on Largillière is the catalogue of a monographic exhibition at the Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, in 2003.

31. Oudry may also have known Giacomo della Porta's 1586 *De Humana physiognomoniam*, which probably served as Le Brun's inspiration for the man/animal comparisons. See Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's 'Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière'* (New Haven, 1994), p. 20. For Le Brun's drawings, see Lydia Beauvais et al., *Charles le Brun 1619–1690. Inventaire General des dessins, école française*

(Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000), vol. 2, nos. 2086–2257.

32. Opperman 1977, vol. 2, D 724.

33. The painting is currently being conserved at the Getty Museum. Oudry's *ricordo* drawing of the painting was with the dealer Eric Coatalem, Paris, in 2004.

34. The pastel drawing in a private collection is reproduced in Bailey 2004, fig. 69.

35. Oudry hired Boucher to provide tapestry designs for Beauvais in 1734. Boucher used Oudry's composition of a reclining leopard in his painting *The Leopard Hunt* in 1736. (Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 61) Both artists made landscape drawings at Arcueil and made copies after the same drawings by Nicolaes Berchem (see Joulie [note 27 above] nos. 56 and 57).

36. See Paris 1982, pp. 157–58, nos. 76–85, for a concise discussion of Oudry's fable drawings. The six engraved illustrations exhibited in 1753 were not individually identified in the *livret*. The Staatliches Museum Schwerin does not have a fable illustration among its Oudry drawings.

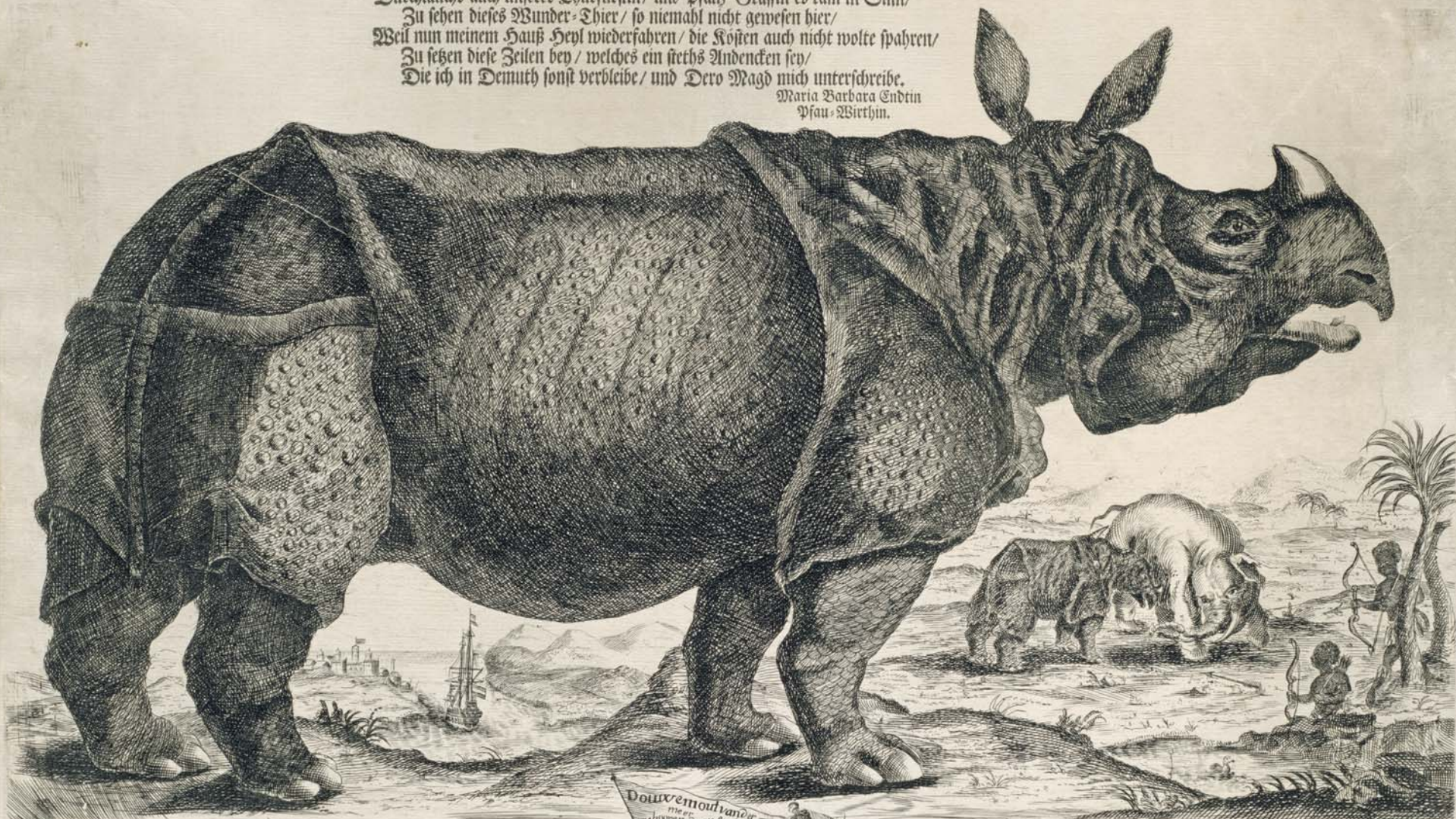
37. Paris 1982, p. 158.

38. Book VII, Fable 1.

39. David J. Adams, "Theme and Technique in the 'Oudry' edition of La Fontaine's 'Fables,'" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 81, no. 3 (1999), pp. 377–78, and R. J. A. te Rijdt, *De Watteau à Ingres. Dessins français du XVIIIe siècle du Rijksmuseum Amsterdam* (Paris, 2003), pp. 67–69.

40. "Peu de personnes connoissent toute la difficulté du genre des animaux; quelle prodigieuse variété d'études il exige, et quelles peines il faut se donner pour les faire.": L. Dussieux et al., *Memoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. Volume 2* (Paris, 1854), pp. 108–9. Claude François Desportes, the artist's nephew, delivered the eulogy published here.

In dem 1747ten Jahr / CARL THEODOR Durchläucht im Pfau war /
 Den zwanzigsten Tag Novembris Sie diesen Tag sich außertieff /
 Herzog Christian Prinz Friederich auch / beyde Durchläuchten nach Gebrauch /
 Zu gleicher Zeit sich funden ein / wo der Rhinoceros solt seyn /
 Durchläucht auch unserer Churfürstin / und Pfalz-Gräffin es kam in Sinn /
 Zu sehen dieses Wunder-Thier / so niemahl nicht gewesen hier /
 Weil nun meinem Haus Heyl wiederfahren / die Kosten auch nicht wolte sparen /
 Zu setzen diese Zeilen bey / welches ein sechs Andencken sey /
 Die ich in Demuth sonst verbleibe / und Dero Magd mich unterschreibe.
 Maria Barbara Endtin
 Pfau-Birthin.



Vera Effigies Rhinocerotis qui in Asia, et quidem in terris Magni
 Mogulis, in regione Asem captus est et Anno 1741 cum tres annos
 vixerit, a Capitán Douvemout van der meer ex Bengala in Belgia trans-
 latus est.

Le véritable Portrait d'un Rhinocerot vivant lequel dans l'année 1741
 quand il avoit trois ans à été pris en Asie dans l'Empire du Grand Mogol
 a la Province d'Asem et a été ammené de Bengala en Holland par le Capitaine
 Douvemout van der meer.

Dat boven genoemde Dier is geweest in de maand may 1747
 2 1/2 Jaar oud en 5 Voet en 7 duym hoog en 12 Voet lang en 12 Voet dick.



Waare Afbeelding van Een leevendijhe Renoceros of Naashooren
 die int Jaar 1741 als hel drie Jaar oud is geweest door den Capleyn
 Douvemout van der meer uyt Bengalen in Holland is overgebragt en
 is in Asia gevangen int Gebiet van den Grooten Mogul in Land Schopp Asem

A true Delineation or Pourtraiture of a living Rhinoceros (by some
 called Unicorn) which, in the third year of its age, was brought out of Ben-
 gal in Holland by Captain Douvemout Anno 1741. It is caught within
 the Great Mogul territories in the Province of Asem.

FIGURE 1

H. Oster, engraving after Anton August Beck (German, 1713–1787), *A True Delineation or Pourtraiture [sic] of a Living Rhinoceros (by some called Unicorn)*, 1747. Engraving, 39.2 × 52.5 cm (15³/₈ × 20⁵/₈ in.). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Rijksprentenkabinet, FM 3786, inv. RP-P-OB-75.363. Photo: © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

◆ “ANIMAL LOVERS ARE INFORMED” ◆

CHARISSA BREMER-DAVID

ALL ANIMAL LOVERS IN LEIPZIG ARE INFORMED

That now has arrived a Living RHINOCEROS, which many people believe to be the Behemoth as described in the book of Job, chapter 40, verse 10. It is worth seeing to all those who come to visit it. It is the first animal of this species which has come to this town; it is about 8 years old, and therefore still a calf, as it will continue to grow for many years, because these animals can reach an age of 100 years. It is almost 5000 pounds in weight, and much larger and heavier than in 1741, when it was brought from Bengal to Holland by Captain DOUWEMOUT, only about 3 years old at the time. It was caught in Asia, in the dominions of the Great Mogul, in the region of Asem, which is some 4000 miles distant from here. This wonderful animal is dark-brown, has no hairs just like the elephant, except for some hairs at the end of the tail; it has a horn on the nose, with which it can plough the ground much faster than a farmer with a plough; it can walk fast, and also swims and dives in the water like a duck; the head is pointed in the front, the ears are like those of a donkey, and the eyes are very small compared to the size of the animal, and only allow it to look sideways; the skin looks as if it is covered with shells, which lay a hand breadth over each other, about two inches thick; the feet are short and thick, like those of an elephant, with three hoofs. The animal is an archenemy of the elephant, and when the two species meet, the rhinoceros tries to hit it with its horn under the belly and kill it in that fashion. For daily nourishment, it eats 60 pounds of hay and 20 pounds of bread, and it drinks 14 buckets of water. It is tame as a lamb, because it was only one month old when it was caught with snares . . . When the animal was very young, it walked around the dining room, when ladies and gentlemen were eating, as a curiosity. The animal secretes some potion, which has cured many people from the falling sickness.

The animal can be seen from 9 am to 12 noon, and again from 2 pm to 6 pm in the afternoon. Persons of rank can pay according to their desire, while others pay 1 Gulden or 4 Groschen, according to the view. [A] woodcut can be bought at the same place for 1 Groschen. Also available are large engravings for half a guilder while the small engravings with the Indian cost 2 Groschen.

All are advised that the animal will stay only 10 or 12 days in this town.

1747¹

THE ARRIVAL OF AN INDIAN RHINOCEROS (*RHINOCEROS UNICORNIS*) in the Dutch port of Rotterdam in July 1741 was a pivotal moment in the European empirical encounter with an almost mythical beast (fig. 1). No rhinoceros had been seen on the Continent within living memory, indeed not since the sixteenth century, when two such animals reached the Iberian peninsula, the first in 1515 and the second in 1579.² Until the appearance of the “Dutch” rhinoceros, the species was little known except to naturalists, chiefly by means of written report and the presence of rhino horns, either left in their original state or carved and mounted, in *wunderkammer* (cabinet of curiosities) collections (fig. 2). For the majority of Europeans, the creature, along with the biblical behemoth and the fabulous unicorn, existed almost entirely in the realm of the imagination. From the moment of its disembarkation, it was a wonder to all who beheld it.

The Dutch rhinoceros’s long life span in captivity (from 1738 to 1758) and extensive travels around Europe and across the Channel to England, during which it was seen by thousands, did much to dispel the animal’s unfamiliarity. Advertisements as well as commemorative prints and medals bore its likeness to an even wider audience so that, while the creature remained an astonishingly exotic phenomenon, it became famous—and very popular with the public. Thanks to the survival of these souvenirs, along with contemporary scientific and artistic studies, the story of this rhinoceros is well documented.³

The adjacent excerpt, taken from a German advertisement printed to announce the animal’s pending arrival in Leipzig, recounts the history of this particular rhinoceros and provides some facts regarding its appearance, diet, and temperament. The anonymous author of the text clearly took pains to portray this foreigner in agrarian terms that would be familiar to prospective viewers, describing its “ears like those of a donkey,” the horn on its nose that could “plough the ground much faster than a farmer,” and its temperament



FIGURE 2
Artist unknown, *Horn, Tooth, Vessel, and Skin of Rhinceros*, ca. 1580–90. Oil on parchment, 40.5 × 30 cm (16 × 11⁷/₈ in.). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Picture Archives, Cod. Min. 129, fol. 10. Photo: © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

as “tame as a lamb.” Other characteristics required more inventive imagery; its skin, for instance, looked “as if it is covered with shells,” while its feet were “short and thick, like those of an elephant.” The author was informed about rhino lore and communicated his erudition readily. The reputed enmity between the rhino and the elephant derived ultimately from the ancient Roman historian and naturalist Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23–79), whose tale of the animals’ combat in his *Natural History* (*Naturalis historia*) was passed down through the literary and scientific press until the eighteenth century, while the supposed medicinal benefits of rhinoceros horn and secretions against epilepsy and poison derived from traditional Eastern folklore, transmitted through travelogues like the 1719 publication by Peter Kolb on the Cape of Good Hope (*Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum*). Some of the author’s statements, however, were entirely novel, such as the report that the rhino dove “in the water like a duck,” as well as erroneous, as in the comment that said it could “reach an age of 100 years.”

In addition to providing a detailed narrative about this rhino’s capture in the northeastern Indian province of Assam, its early captivity in Bengal, and subsequent transport by a Dutch East India Company cargo vessel to Holland, the text also reveals the secondhand knowledge of sixteenth-century humanists and naturalists, who repeatedly cited or plagiarized the ancient sources on the subject to imbue their publications with credibility and authority. Pliny’s work, reprinted in twenty-five editions before 1500, was readily available and those Europeans fortunate enough to confront the rare living specimen commonly annotated their portrayals of the beast with the Roman’s account of its ferocity.⁴ It is telling that an eyewitness, upon viewing the renowned “Lisbon” rhinoceros in 1515, enhanced his very brief physical description with a much longer summary of the classic animal fight:

In the year 1513 [sic] upon the 1st day of May there was brought to our King at Lisbon such a living Beast from the East-Indies that is called Rhinocerate: Therefore on account of its Wonderfulness I thought myself obliged to send you the Representation of it. It hath the Color of a Toad and is close covered with thick Scales in Size like an Elephant, but lower, and is the Elephant’s deadly Enemy; it hath on the fore part of its Nose a strong sharp Horn; and, when this Beast comes near the Elephant to fight him, he always first whets his Horn upon the Stones; and runs at the Elephant with his Head between his fore Legs; then rips up the Elephant where he hath the thinnest Skin, and so gores him: The Elephant is terribly afraid of the Rhinocerate; for he gores him always, where-ever he meets an Elephant; for he is well armed, and is very alert and nimble. The Beast is called Rhinocero in Greek and Latin; but, in Indian, Gomba.

1515⁵

Given that the passage originally accompanied a life sketch of the rhinoceros, it would not have been necessary to further elaborate the verbal description of what the eye saw and the pen drew. A Moravian printer, Valentim Fernandes, who was working in Lisbon between 1495 and 1518, sent both sketch and text to the merchant community in Nuremberg, where it reached in turn an artist living there, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). The same words captioned Dürer’s own pen-and-ink drawing (now in the British Museum, London) and most editions of his 1515 wood-block print that immortalized the animal (fig. 3). As Dürer did not personally see the male Indian rhinoceros before its demise in January 1516, when the ship carrying it to Italy

Nach Christi geburt/ 1513. Jar/ Abt 1. Mañ. Hat man dem grose mechtigen Kñig Emanuel von Portugal/ gen Lysabona außs India pracht/
ein solch lebendig Thier. Das nennen sie Rhinocerus/ Das ist hie mit all seiner gestalt Abonderfear. Es hat ein farb wie ein gespreckelte Schildkrot/ Vnd ist von dicken Schalen vber/
lege sehr fest. Vnd ist in der grös als der Helffande/ aber niderlicher von Baynen/ vnd sehr wechaffig. Es hat ein scharpff stark Horn vorn auff der Nafen/ das begunde es zu wezen
wo es bey staven ist/ Das da ein Sieg Thier ist/ des Helffanden Todtseynde. Der Helffande fürcht es fast vbel/ dann wo es Jhn antompt/ so laufft Jhn das Thier mit dem Kopff
zwischen die fordern Bayn/ vnd reyst den Helffanden vnten am Bauch auff/ vnd erwürge ihn/ das mag er sich nit erweym. Dann das Thier ist also gewapnet/ das ihm der Helffande nichts
thun kan. Sie sagen auch/ das der Rhinocerus/ Schnell/ Fraydig/ vnd auch Listig sey.

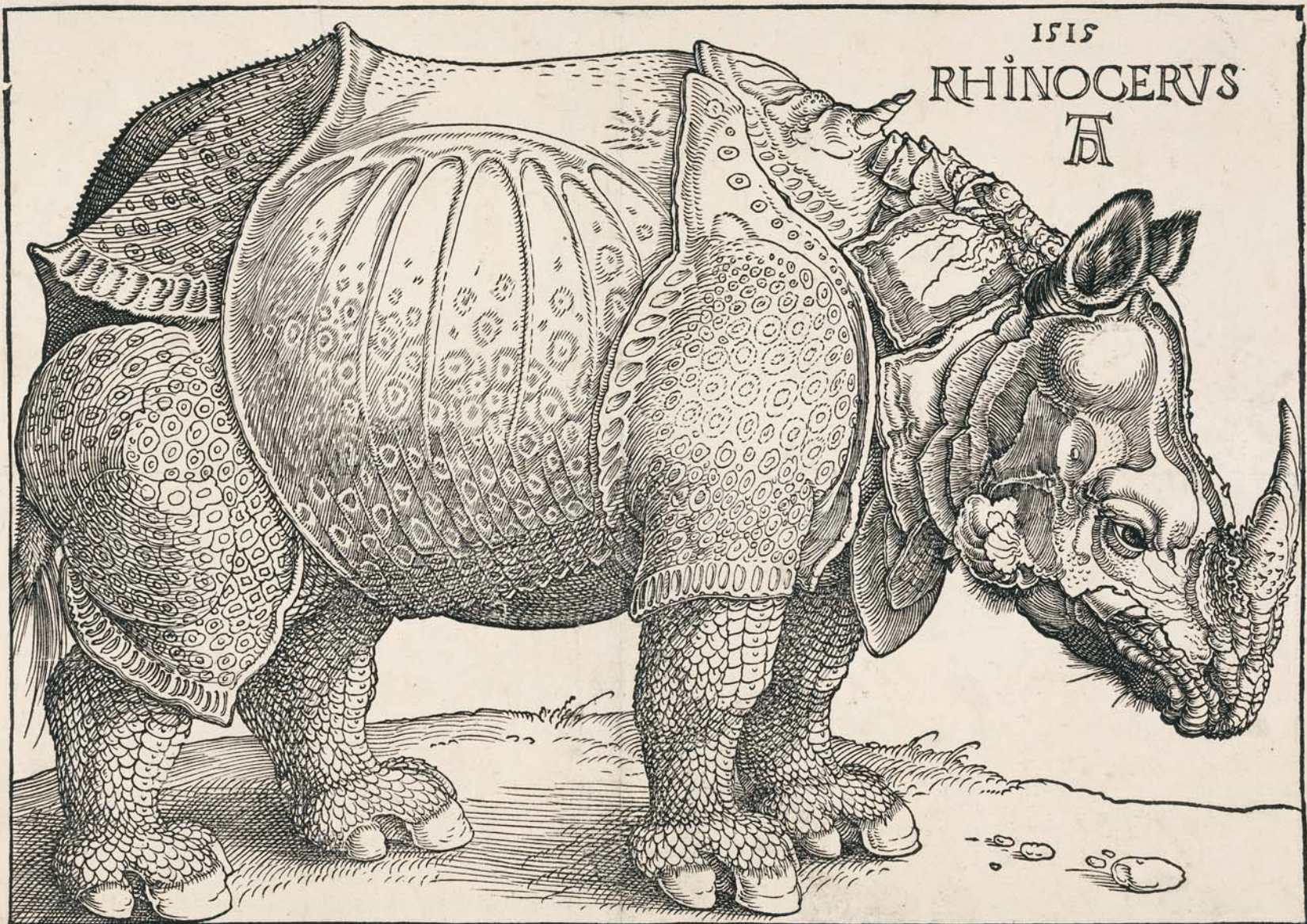


FIGURE 3

Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471–1528), *Rhinoceros*, 1515. Wood-block print, 21.4 × 29.8 cm (8³/₈ × 11³/₄ in.).
London, The British Museum, inv. 1895-1-22-7 14. Photo: © Copyright The Trustees of The British Museum.

sank during a storm in the Ligurian Sea, the lost sketch from which he drew inspiration must have been a fairly accurate rendering of the creature, except for some distinctive anomalies. The most unusual features of Dürer's rhino are its armorlike hide, the reptilian scales on its legs, and the extra "dorsal" horn protruding from its spine just above the shoulders. It is difficult to know whether these idiosyncrasies were the invention of Dürer himself or his source. Some historians have speculated that perhaps the Lisbon rhino had been dressed in ceremonial parade armor, which would account for the unnatural plating encasing the beast's torso; another explanation might be found in the fact that Dürer lived next to the armorers' quarter and provided designs for that craft, so it would not be entirely surprising if his rendering reflected this interest.

Dürer's image of the Lisbon rhinoceros long outlived both the animal and the artist. Distribution of the print, issued in five editions before 1600 and two more in the next century, reached far and wide. It became the dominant representation of the creature as generations of artists, miniaturists,

engravers, sculptors, armorers, tapestry designers, and embroiderers copied and interpreted its form in paint, ink, stone, metal, earthenware, porcelain, leather, papier-mâché, and wool, as well as exotic materials such as tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and ivory. The power of the image rested not only in the novelty and exoticism of the rhinoceros but also in its remote origin in the distant East. The rhinoceros came to be associated with allegories of the Four Continents, representing either Asia or Africa, or even America. Some of the rare, luxurious materials used by artists and craftsmen to portray the creature were appropriately suggestive of its foreignness (fig. 4). The thick skin of the rhino, its sharp horn, and its reputed antidotal properties against poison and disease were also taken to allude to the virtues of strength, health, and invincibility. Soon after 1515, rhinos appeared as emblems on armor and princely devices and as figural symbols in scientific, medical, and anatomical books.

The persistence of Dürer's influential image endured even after the arrival of the Dutch rhinoceros and its long perambulations across Europe during the decades of the mid-eighteenth century. Perversely, promoters of the living animal continued to use Dürer's rhino literally as their poster child. Unlike the fierce beasts of Pliny and Dürer, however, the tame and docile Dutch rhinoceros permitted acute observation over prolonged periods so that all ranks of spectators, from members of royalty to local citizenry and children, from learned doctors and naturalists to court artists, could and did see it up close and personally. Growing up before the public, the rhino endeared itself to the crowds of visitors as it increased in size. Repeated weighings and measurings at almost every tour stop recorded its continued growth and good health despite the stress of captivity and travel. A female, the rhino eventually acquired its own identity and the name *Jungfer Clara* (Miss Clara), while in the German town of Würzburg in August 1748.

Proper animal husbandry for the "wild" rhinoceros was a challenge to shippers and importers (the care of Indian elephants, in contrast, was better understood, as these domesticated creatures usually arrived with their trained keepers, or mahouts).⁶ Of the eight or so Indian rhinos that reached the European continent and England between 1515 and 1799, the Dutch rhinoceros had the second longest life span in captivity. Douwe Mout van der Meer, a retired Dutch East India Company captain, obtained her in 1740 from Jan Albert Sichterman, the company's director of the Bengal region,



FIGURE 4
Rhinoceros, Meissen porcelain manufactory (modeled by Johann Gottlieb Kirchner [German, 1706–after 1738]), ca. 1731. Hard-paste porcelain with oil paint, 68 × 109.5 cm (26¾ × 43⅞ in.).
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Porzellansammlung, inv. N=256-W.

who had received the baby rhino as a gift in 1738. From its infancy, the animal was accustomed to humans, roaming within the Sichterman residence (near present-day Calcutta) until the age of two years, by which time she had grown too large to visit the house without causing damage. Her familiarity with humans and trust in her handlers must have eased somewhat the nerve-racking complexities of transporting such a large and cumbersome beast during the seven-month sea voyage around Africa. Aboard ship, an ointment probably shielded her skin from the marine air and salt water, much as mud served a protective purpose in the animal's natural habitat. While in transit and after landing, Douwe Mout van der Meer provided an herbivore's diet consisting mainly of hay, bread, orange peels, and freshwater, sometimes substituted by or supplemented with beer.⁷ And to ensure her good health, according to the prevailing veterinary wisdom of the period, it seems that he blew tobacco smoke for her to inhale as a prophylactic.⁸ Upon arrival, the captain leased a stable and pasture in Amsterdam and/or Leiden to provide housing for her in a climate much cooler and milder than her tropical birthplace. It was not until after a period of several years' adjustment (and, undoubtedly, an accumulation of capital from showing the animal in Holland) that he began touring her farther afield. The first report of the Dutch rhino abroad was in Hamburg in 1744 when one wonders whether news of the animal might have first reached Duke Christian Ludwig II at the nearby court of Schwerin, who was later to acquire her life-size portrait. From that point forward, it seems that transportation was arranged over water when possible and over land when necessary, in a specially constructed enclosed, sturdy carriage drawn by six pairs of oxen or twenty horses.⁹

Many of the quotidian details about Clara's care, diet, and public viewings are drawn from a small collection of paintings portraying stops during her Italian itinerary, especially in the early months of 1751 when she was in the Veneto region. The subjects of these scenes and the circumstances surrounding their commission attest to the intense local interest in the animal. The painter of the principal canvas, Pietro Longhi (1702–1785), depicted the rhinoceros in its booth at Carnival time in Venice, after she had sheared her horn by rubbing against the boards of her enclosure in Rome the previous year (fig. 5). The booth is a substantial structure, seemingly covered and enclosed, with tiered viewing for visitors. A notice nailed to the right provides the following information:

*A true portrait of a rhinoceros conducted to Venice in the year 1751,
painted by the hand of Pietro Longhi at the commission of Our Most
Honored, Giovanni Grimani dei Servi, Venetian patrician.*
1751¹⁰

The visitors, said to be Grimani family members, are flanked on the left by the animal's handler, who holds up the shed horn, and on the right by, presumably, Douwe Mout van der Meer, who smokes a pipe. Clara, with her stubby nose, stands placidly, chewing hay. True to life, the artist included piles of her dung. The second painting (fig. 6), attributed to the circle of Pietro Longhi and showing another tour stop from about the same period, illustrates a pen set inside a stable, paved with stones, with its door and window open to the fresh air. Clara's snout has a pale nub, suggesting new growth, while the old horn is displayed on a shelf on the rear stable wall. Within the low-walled pen is a handler who fills a half-cask with clean water, while a good supply of both hay and loaves of bread rest on the floor to the right. Douwe Mout van der Meer appears again as the red-coated figure among the cluster of visitors; he gestures with a cane. The rhino's sturdy, enclosed, wooden carriage has been pulled into the stable, behind the pen.

More than just a crowd-pleaser, the Dutch rhinoceros was of the greatest interest to contemporary men of science, or what was then called natural philosophy. The animal's presence, first in Holland and then abroad, drew doctors and students who relied on empirical observation coupled with knowledge and reason to understand the laws of nature. The eighteenth-century discovery of—or encounters with—living rhino specimens required that the animal be first studied methodically and then fitted into the perceived order of the natural world, under the expanding classification of quadrupeds, four-legged terrestrial animals. In keeping with Enlightenment principles, notes on the physical characteristics of the creature, along with reports on the strengths and weaknesses of its five senses, its agility, temperament, behavior, diet, life cycle, and reproduction were balanced against a thorough review of the related literature from antiquity to modern times and an inventory of preserved horns among the known natural history collections. The personal observations of these scientists made new contributions to the field, as did the artistic renderings that illustrated their publications. Two of the earliest life portraits of the Dutch rhinoceros, produced as engravings in Amsterdam by Jan Wandelaar (1690–1759) in



FIGURE 5
Pietro Longhi (Italian, 1702–1785), *The Rhinoceros*, ca. 1751. Oil on canvas, 62 × 50 cm (24 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.). Venice, Museo del Settecento Veneziano, Ca' Rezzonico, inv. 1312.



FIGURE 6
School of Pietro Longhi, *The Rhinoceros in Its Booth*,
ca. 1751. Oil on canvas, 56 × 72 cm (22 × 28³/₈ in.).
Vicenza, Banca Intesa Collection, inv. A.A.-00088A-C/BI.
Photo: © Banca Intesa Collection.

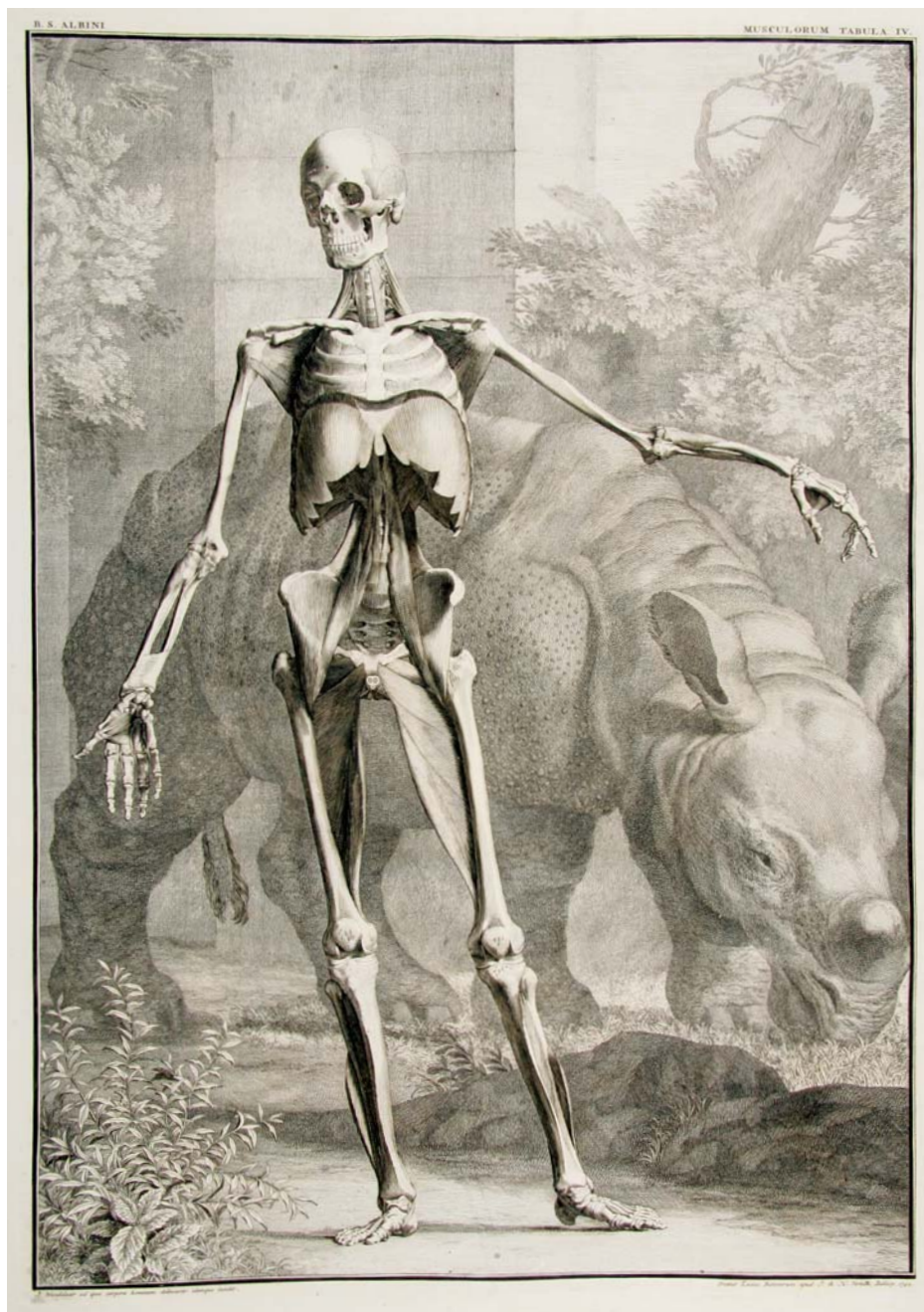


FIGURE 7
Jan Wandelaar (Dutch, 1690–1759), *Human Skeleton with a Young Rhinoceros* from *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis*, 1747. Etching, 76.8 × 54.6 cm (30¼ × 21½ in.). Los Angeles, University of California, Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library, History and Special Collections Division, inv. 485502.

1742, are best understood in this context of art in the service of Enlightenment science.¹¹ They show the animal naturalistically, standing in a confined, open-air enclosure. In both the frontal and posterior three-quarter views, the rhino appears incongruously behind a human skeleton similarly portrayed standing in frontal and back poses, extending its arms as if to make an introduction between the viewer and the animal. Representing the latest developments in scientific research, these engraved sheets (fig. 7) appeared soon after as plates in a 1747 book on human anatomy, *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani*, written by the famed Leiden university professor Bernhard Siegfried Albinus.

Milestones and minutia, such as the simple act of yawning, from the life of the Dutch rhinoceros on its travels were captured by artists (fig. 8). Apparently no aspect of this wondrous creature was beneath consideration. Images made over time collectively chronicled the growth of the rhino's horn from its stubby beginnings to its loss in June 1750 and slow regrowth.¹² But no rendering conveyed the sheer scale and presence of the animal as did the life-size portrait by Jean-Baptiste Oudry, "painter of the hunt" to the French king Louis XV (plate 11). Oudry had extended opportunities to view the rhino locally, in Versailles during the month of January 1749 and in Paris from the following February to April.¹³ Working from sketches, he completed at least one finished drawing on blue paper and then executed a full-size painting for the Salon of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, which was held from August to October 1750 (when it might have been seen by Prince Friedrich of Mecklenburg, who was in Paris that summer). Oudry's unparalleled portrait communicates the impressive volume and mass of the rhino, the folds and textures of its thick skin, the sensitivity of its prehensile upper lip, the alert tension of its ears held upright, and its three-toed, padded hooves. The canvas dwarfed viewers attending the Salon (located in a gallery of the Louvre), much as the Dutch rhinoceros had done in life when shown at the fair of Saint Germain (held annually from February 3 to Palm Sunday in Paris, on the left bank of the river Seine). Oudry was artistic director of two tapestry manufactories, and his knowledge of tapestry design, particularly of the Old and New Indies series (*Anciennes et nouvelles Indies*), which included woven versions of Dürer's rhinoceros, undoubtedly taught him about the power of large-size imagery and gave him the assurance to execute the subject at this scale.¹⁴ No other portrayal of the



FIGURE 8
Johann Elias Ridinger (German, 1698–1767), *Rhinoceros Resting on Its Side*,
1748. Graphite on blue paper, 26.3 × 42.5 cm (10³/₈ × 16³/₄ in.). London,
Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, inv. D1952.RW.2164.



FIGURE 9
Rhinoceros Mounted with a Chinoiserie Figure. Porcelain: Meissen porcelain manufactory (modeled by Johann Joachim Kändler [German, 1706–1775]), ca. 1735–48; mounts: French (Paris), ca. 1750. Hard-paste porcelain with polychrome decoration and gilding; gilt-bronze mounts, 27 × 35 × 22 cm (10⁵/₈ × 13³/₄ × 8⁵/₈ in.). Frankfurt, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, inv. 12335.

rhinoceros embodied, to this extent, the essential empirical experience demanded by Enlightenment principles.

The arrival of the Dutch rhinoceros in Paris in 1749 coincided with the printing of the first three volumes of a monumental encyclopedia of natural history by France's greatest contemporary naturalist, mathematician, biologist, and cosmologist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon. Buffon's remarkable *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière: avec la description du cabinet de roi* (a work of thirty-six volumes printed over nearly forty years (1749–88), with eight additional volumes published after his death by his colleague, the comte de Lacépède) rivaled the other seminal publication of the Enlightenment, the seventeen-volume *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (printed from 1751 to 1765). The *Histoire naturelle* was comprehensive and profusely illustrated with engravings, some 1,500 of them after drawings by Jacques de Sève (d. 1795) based on life studies of animals and birds in the royal menagerie at Versailles or on stuffed specimens

preserved in the royal collection (*cabinet du roi*) and the botanical garden in Paris, the Jardin des plantes, of which Buffon was director. Although the entry on the rhinoceros did not appear until the eleventh volume, printed in 1764, it included direct observations, dating back to 1749, by Buffon's respected collaborator on quadrupeds, Louis-Jean Marie Daubenton, in addition to an extensive summary of rhinocerotid literature and two illustrative plates. The full, side view of the rhino, standing in an open landscape, was engraved by Jean-Charles Baquoy (1721–1777) from the 1750 intermediary drawing, showing a narrower horn, by de Sève after either one of Oudry's life studies or his painting shown at the Salon in that year (see fig. 8, page 143).¹⁵ As it is probable that the engraving was ready in advance of the 1764 publication, individual loose prints could have been available earlier.¹⁶ The lucid writing style of Buffon appealed to a wide readership beyond the scientific community, and his work was popularly discussed in literary salons. The extensive distribution of this serial publication and its translation into other languages (an English edition came out as early as 1781), ensured that Oudry's version of the Dutch rhinoceros, drawn from life, also reached a large audience and eventually supplanted the pervasive iconic image of Dürer.

Between 1744 and 1758 the Dutch rhinoceros, or Clara, as she came to be affectionately called, traveled as far as Copenhagen in the north, Warsaw in the east, and Naples in the south. During the years 1746–48, she made a whirlwind tour of the German states, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Swiss cantons, stopping in Hanover, Berlin, Breslau, Vienna, Munich, Regensburg, Freiberg, Dresden, Leipzig, Kassel, Frankfurt-am-Main, Mannheim, Bern, Zurich, Basel, Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Würzburg, and Ansbach. She also reached the Italian peninsula (1749–51) and went to England on three occasions, in 1751–52, again in 1756, and a last time, dying there, in 1758. Despite Clara's public visibility, she remained an exotic phenomenon. Artists and *marchands-merciers* (dealers who commissioned and sold luxury goods) attempted to render her presence naturalistically yet were challenged in depicting her natural habitat, a location to which they had never traveled. Two- and three-dimensional representations situated her in strange landscapes suggestive of her remote birthplace. Consequently, portrayals of Clara sometimes mixed an Enlightenment interest in naturalism with inventive fantasy. Inspired by travelogues describing the topography, flora, fauna, inhabitants, and customs of the East, such as Johannes Nieuhof's

1668 account of the Dutch East India Company's 1665–67 trade mission to China (*Legatio batavica ad magnum Tartariae*), Clara was portrayed against palm trees and sometimes in the presence of chinoiserie figures (fig. 9). Historically, until about 1600, rhinos were sent as tribute or diplomatic gifts to both the Chinese and Persian courts, where they were kept in animal parks, menageries, and stables.¹⁷ Seventeenth-century European travelers to the Persian city of Esfahan and to the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, reported seeing specimens of the animal in both locations, so it was fitting that small porcelain sculptures of Clara were also modeled with a Turkish rider on her back. Just as Dürer's rhino became part of the emblematic vocabulary representing paradoxically two—even three—of the Four Continents, so, too, did Clara become associated with both chinoiserie and *turquerie*.

In the winter and spring of 1749, when Clara visited the two centers of French patrician culture and plebeian fashion, Versailles and Paris, the German critic and writer Baron Friedrich Melchior von Grimm wrote to Diderot: "All Paris, so easily inebriated by small objects, is now busy with a kind of animal called the rhinoceros."¹⁸ Rhino-mania, and specifically Clara-mania, overtook both cities. She reigned in interiors, in the streets, in fashionable attire and accessories. Whimsical elements of interior decor included her likeness among other exotic animals and costumed figures in "pilasters" embroidered with colored glass beads, so that she sparkled in the candlelight (fig. 10). Sophisticated clock movements and musical mechanisms were mounted together with small, finely cast and chased patinated bronze sculptures of Clara, thereby joining the current technology in time-keeping with the latest research in the study of quadrupeds (fig. 11). Coiffures and even horse harnesses alluded to the animal, with curling feathers as the horn and colorful pendant ribbons as the tail. Dresses and ribbons *à la rhinocéros* adorned women of fashion, while snuffboxes, decorated with Dürer's rhino in miniature, slipped into the pockets of gentlemen.¹⁹ The rich materials and superior craftsmanship of these surviving pieces indicate that they were created expressly for the luxury goods market and that they were purchased by the wealthiest members of society. For instance, a 1765 state portrait by Laurent Pécheux (1729–1821) depicted Maria-Luisa Bourbon-Parma, a granddaughter of Louis XV and the future queen of Spain, at about the age of fourteen, standing in a formal interior next to a marble topped, gilt-wood console table that supports a clock mounted on a



FIGURE 10
 Maker unknown, *Beaded Panel* (detail), ca. 1755. Multicolored glass beads on a textile support, 390 × 50 cm (12 ft. 9½ × 19⅞ in.). Paris, Bernard Steinitz.

bronze figure of a rhinoceros. The actual clock, whose enamel dial bore the name of the Parisian clockmaker Le Roy, was listed in the 1805 inventory of the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, undoubtedly having been acquired by Louise-Elizabeth de Bourbon, Madame Infante, daughter of Louis XV and later duchesse de Parme, during one of her famed Parisian shopping sprees in 1749 and 1752–54. Its present location is unknown, although a near contemporary elephant clock survives from that collection.²⁰

Clara earned mention, as well, in the Republic of Letters as correspondence about her appeared in the press.²¹ As early as February 13, 1749, a letter from the librarian at the Sorbonne, Abbé Jean Baptiste Ladvocat, reported that the creature's tongue was as soft as velvet and that its voice sounded like a wheezing cow, surely comments drawn from direct sensory experience of the docile rhino. His informative letter/pamphlet, some thirty pages in length, could be purchased at the animal's booth at the fair of Saint Germain.²² But other literature, contemporary poetry and memoirs of the period, revealed the mania's satirical nature and its incorporation of amorous or sexual innuendo. Foremost among the latter was the 1750 poem titled *Le Rhinocéros. Poème en prose divisé en six chants*, in which a cuckold imagines himself, during a nightmare triggered by his wife's infidelities, as an erotic rhinoceros. The poem's frontispiece bore a banner inscribed *Le Rhinoceros, Tragedie du temps* (The Rhinoceros, a Tragedy of the Times) above a papier-mâché model of Dürer's antiquated beast (representing a kind of Trojan horse by which his wife brought home her lovers) alongside a portrayal of the husband, whose head has been transformed into that of a rhinoceros.²³ The comic and bawdy Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), on the other hand, recounted in his memoirs how a certain noblewoman mistook a burly human, collecting admission money at the rhino's enclosure, for the animal itself.²⁴

For all her celebrity, Clara's death in England on April 14, 1758, went relatively unmarked by history. The only apparent announcement seems to have been in the form of two separate editions of a print showing Clara in the foreground of an arid landscape, captioned with the standard texts in German and French and further inscribed with a simple, supplemental sentence reporting her demise in London on that day. These engravings, printed in Germany and circulated after her death, must have met a posthumous demand for commemorative images. Other than this presumed acknowledgment of loss, there was no other notice of her death, not from commentators of the day or from the community of naturalists nor from Douwe



FIGURE 11
Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain (French, 1719–1791) and François Viger (French, 1704–1784), *Rhinoceros Musical Clock*, ca. 1750. Patinated and gilt bronze, enameled copper, glass, and wood veneered with tortoiseshell, clock: 58 × 40 × 18 cm (22 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.); base: 23.5 × 50 × 25 cm (9 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des objets d'art. Gift of Monsieur and Madame René Grog-Carven, 1973, inv. OA 10540. Photo: © Jean-Gilles Berizzi/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

Mout van der Meer himself. Inexplicably, no record of Clara's 1758 sojourn across the Channel survives in the papers of James Parsons, the leading English rhinocerotist authority at that time.²⁵ There is no indication that her body was donated to science, dissected, or preserved, as was the case with her near contemporary, a male Indian rhinoceros, longtime resident of the royal menagerie at Versailles from 1770 to 1793, whose preserved skin and skeleton were placed in the Musée d'histoire naturelle, Paris (where they remain today).²⁶

Despite the quiet disappearance of the Dutch rhinoceros from the public parade, the animal left an indelible mark on eighteenth-century European society, science, art, and literature. Until her arrival in Holland and her subsequent, prolonged tours across the Continent, the rhinoceros was almost a mythical creature, the plated and horned beast of Dürer's imagination. Clara, however, changed forever that perception. She was a gentle giant whose larger-than-life presence fascinated and delighted all, from the learned doctors of natural philosophy to the common citizenry. Her imprint on contemporary culture was recorded through the numerous painted portraits, life drawings, engraved profiles, ceramic and metal sculptures, prose and scientific reports. Yet, for all her familiarity in visual and printed forms, she remained a living wonder in the Age of Enlightenment. ♦

Notes

The author extends sincere thanks to Scott Schaefer for proposing this essay, to Mark Leonard and Mary Tavener Holmes for their encouragement, and to Bieke van der Mark and John David for their invaluable research assistance and constructive review of the manuscript.

1. Translation of the German text accompanying a woodcut sold in Regensburg, Germany, in 1747, as quoted in Rookmaaker and Monson 2000, p. 318.
2. Two Indian rhinos did reach London in 1684 and in 1739, but neither came to the Continent.
3. Ridley 2004, pp. 53–63.
4. There has been some debate as to whether Pliny's account referenced the one-horned Indian rhinoceros or a double-horned species, most likely the African black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*), as both were known to the ancient Romans. Chronicles of the ferocity of the double-horned beast survive from the period. For instance, *Liber de spectaculis martialis* (A.D. 40–102) recorded a combat that took place in the Roman Coliseum in the year A.D. 80 in which a double-horned rhinoceros tossed a heavy bear.
5. Translated in 1743 by James Parsons, quoted by Clarke 1986, p. 20.
6. Ridley 2004, pp. 1–13.
7. Given that the single-stomach digestive tract of the rhinoceros is most similar to that of the horse, among all the domesticated animals, Clara's diet of mostly grass hay was not inappropriate. In the wild, the Indian rhinoceros consumes a mix of grasses, shrubs, and forbs or weeds.
8. On the medicinal use of tobacco smoke in eighteenth-century veterinary practice, see <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/drydrunk/herbals.htm>.
9. Ridley 2004, pp. 45, 109–10, 125–28.
10. *Art in the Eighteenth Century: The Glory of Venice*, exh. cat. (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1994), p. 281 and no. 182, p. 463. Translation by the author.
11. Ridley 2004, pp. 18–25.
12. The horn of the Indian rhinoceros is composed of compacted keratin (a tough, fibrous, insoluble protein that makes up skin, hair, and nails). Poor enclosure design is one of the primary reasons why captive rhinos shear, shed, or wear down their horns, as they catch their noses under lateral crossbars on gates and fences or abrade their horns on enclosure walls. See Murray E. Fowler and R. Eric Miller, *Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine* (Saint Louis, 2003), pp. 558–69.
13. T. H. Clarke, "Two Rhinoceros Drawings Re-attributed," *Burlington Magazine* 127 (October 1984), pp. 623–29.
14. Charissa Bremer-David, *French Tapestries and Textiles in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles, 1997), pp. 10–19.
15. Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du cabinet de roi* (Paris, 1764), vol. 11, p. 181.
16. A brief entry on the rhinoceros and an illustrative plate, derivative of the Oudry/de Sève model that appeared in Buffon's work, appeared in Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1765), vol. 14, p. 251.
17. L. C. Rookmaaker, *The Rhinoceros in Captivity: A List of 2439 Rhinoceroses Kept from Roman Times to 1994* (The Hague, 1998).
18. Maurice Tourneux, *Correspondence Littéraire, Philosophique et Critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, etc.*, vol. 1, *Nouvelles Littéraires 1747–1755* (Paris, 1877), nouvelle XLIII, pp. 272–73. Translation by the author.
19. Clarke 1986, fig. 95 and n. 95, p. 202.
20. This clock was inspired by an elephant that reached Paris around 1760. See Chiara Briganti, "Documents sur les arts à la cour de Parme au XVIIIème siècle," *Antologia di Belle Arti* 4 (1977), pp. 380–401. The elephant clock is presently in the collection of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.
21. The term Republic of Letters (*La République des Lettres*), used by Buffon and others during the Age of Enlightenment, referred to the communication of ideas and information between philosophers and other intellectuals by means of personal and public correspondence.
22. Robbins 2002, p. 95 and n. 99, p. 268.
23. Detlef Heikamp quotes J. B. Guiard de Servigné's 1750 poem *Le Rhinocéros* in "Seltene Nashörner in Martin Sperlich's Nashorngalerie und anderswo," *Schlösser Gärten Berlin: Festschrift für Martin Sperlich zum 60. Geburtstag 1979* (Berlin, 1980), pp. 301–25.
24. Giacomo Casanova, *Memoirs of My Life*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1966), vol. 3, p. 164.
25. L. C. Rookmaaker, "Two Collections of Rhinoceros Plates Compiled by James Douglas and James Parsons in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* 9 (November 1978), pp. 17–38.
26. Ridley 2004, pp. 214–16.



NOTES ON THE RESTORATION OF JEAN-BAPTISTE OUDRY'S RHINOCEROS AND LION

MARK LEONARD

RESTORATION PROJECTS FOLLOW PATHWAYS—AT TIMES simple and straightforward, at other times complicated and convoluted—which more often than not lead to new understandings of and new perspectives on the works of art that inspired and guided the projects. The study and treatment of two of the paintings from Jean-Baptiste Oudry's menagerie series in Schwerin, the *Rhinoceros* and the *Lion*, followed a particularly circuitous route. In the case of the *Rhinoceros*, the animal herself, affectionately known as Clara, was quite a celebrity in her day, as were her many contemporary portraits—but she, like the largest of her portraits, had retreated into obscurity over the centuries. However, her largest and perhaps most famous likeness emerged from that obscurity coincidentally—and fortuitously—about the same time as a new history of Clara's life appeared in the literature,¹ reflecting a renewed interest not only in the animal herself but in Oudry's portrait of her and coinciding as well with some new studies of this famous series of pictures from Schwerin.

In March of 2001, a few representatives from the J. Paul Getty Trust² were invited by a Berlin-based organization, the Kulturstiftung der Länder,³ to visit several former East German museums to explore the possibility of partnering with an institution on a paintings conservation project. These visits, which spanned the course of several days, included a trip to Schwerin, a small town, surrounded by lakes, in the northern part of the country, which during the eighteenth century had been the seat of the Mecklenberg court and today is the capital of the state of Mecklenberg (see Colin Bailey's essay in this catalogue).

The focus of the visit were the works of art in the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, whose collections are displayed in the exceptionally beautiful galleries of the museum building (which opened in 1882), as well as in an eighteenth-century *schloss* known as Ludwigslust, the castle where many of the collections assembled by the duke of Mecklenberg-Schwerin were originally installed.

A number of interesting projects were discussed (and several were eventually supported by the Getty Foundation⁴), but none seemed to be the right fit for a paintings restoration project to be undertaken at the Getty Center. However, as the visit came to a close, two paintings were mentioned almost in passing: life-size animal portraits, a *Lion* and a *Rhinoceros*, by Jean-Baptiste Oudry. The pictures were closely related to the suite of eleven other animal portraits in the menagerie series in Schwerin (see Mary Morton's essay in this catalogue), but their poor condition had precluded any interest in them, and they had never been studied properly. The only photographs of the two pictures to have been published were both small—yet tantalizing—black-and-white illustrations in one of the museum's exhibition catalogues,⁵ photographs that were presumed to have been taken some time during the first half of the twentieth century.

Not only did the pictures sound quite interesting, they seemed likely to be an appropriate project for a conservation project involving the Getty Museum, where such partnerships have traditionally involved projects that are unlikely to attract offers of support from other venues.⁶ There are excellent conservators working in Schwerin (as well as in nearby Hamburg), but the facilities to deal with such large canvasses are not available there, and the amount of time required to work on the paintings would overwhelm the small staff at the museum and prevent them from carrying out all of the other necessary care and treatment of the collection. It was obvious that without Getty involvement the paintings were destined to simply languish in storage.

Over the next few months, the pictures were taken out of storage, unrolled (and, in the case of the *Lion*, also unfolded), and a report on their condition was prepared by the professional staff at Schwerin; this report was sent, along with photographs, to the Getty Museum. Although the project appeared daunting, it also held great promise, so arrangements were made for a return visit to Schwerin in December of 2001.

The two paintings had been laid out on the floor of the restoration studio, where they covered nearly the entire space (fig. 1). The pictures were difficult to read—due not only to the fact that a good vantage point was not available in the small, crowded room but also because of the extremely darkened and discolored varnish layers on their surfaces—but it was clear even at this first viewing that they remained remarkably fresh and lively. They were, miraculously, unlined (meaning that the original linen canvas had not been backed with a secondary fabric support). This is a rare condition for any eighteenth-century canvas painting, and rarer still for pictures of such enormous scale.

The *Lion* was the more damaged of the two paintings, having suffered more paint loss. Before being rolled, it had been folded along the middle seam (the original canvas is made from two large pieces of fabric sewn together vertically down the middle of the composition) and then at some point in the past must have been crushed along one side of the roll, resulting in a series of long horizontal areas of damage spaced evenly across the vertical dimension of the composition. In addition to the extensive flake losses, there were numerous tears throughout the entire canvas (fig. 2).

The *Rhinoceros* had suffered fewer paint losses—a remarkable finding in light of its exceptional size. It is possible that this was because it was considered too unwieldy for even occasional viewing during the past century—and was thus unrolled and handled less frequently than the *Lion*. The large canvas is composed of four pieces of fabric, sewn together with vertical seams. These original seams—which were skillfully executed with great precision, delicacy, and refinement, resulting in extraordinary strength—remain completely intact and have not split or weakened over time. The only major damages occurred at the right edge, where two large sections of canvas were missing on either side of the middle of the composition. These missing sections corresponded approximately to where one would place one's hands when unrolling the canvas—and it seems likely that the damages may have been due to a rough unrolling at some point in the past, when the missing sections were torn away and discarded. The piece of canvas in between these two sections had also become completely separated from the rest of the painting but fortunately had been saved.

There was no doubt that the pictures were suitable candidates for study and treatment at the Getty Museum. The *Lion* came to Los Angeles first, as it was the smaller and therefore the more manageable of the two paintings.



FIGURE 1
The Rhinoceros and the *Lion* on the floor of the restoration studio at the Staatliches Museum in December 2001. Photo: Mark Leonard.

FIGURE 2
The *Lion* after completion of the structural work but before cleaning and restoration. Photo: Jack Ross.



The plan was to see how work would progress on the *Lion*, and, if it proved successful, to then have the *Rhinoceros* come for treatment.⁷

In light of the difficult treatment histories of many of the paintings in the collections at Schwerin,⁸ it was very important to ensure that the unlined and essentially untouched character of the paintings remains preserved. This was the guiding principle throughout the design and execution of the treatments.

The *Lion* was prepared for proper rolling, crating, and shipment by the conservator in Schwerin. Temporary mends were placed on particularly fragile areas, the picture was placed on top of a layer of cotton muslin (which acted as a cushion) then rolled face out (so as not to compact or crush the delicate paint surface) onto a large hollow tube approximately thirty inches in diameter. The rolled painting was suspended within an airtight crate and traveled to Los Angeles, with a courier from Schwerin, in April 2002. It was unrolled onto a large table in the paintings conservation studio, face up, for initial study. After a few weeks of study, contemplation, and photography, it was then rerolled and unrolled face down so that structural treatment could begin.⁹

The painting had numerous tears and flake losses that had developed largely as a result of repeated folding and rolling in the past, and the canvas had become badly distorted. Because of the large scale of the picture, it was possible to carry out a variety of treatment procedures simultaneously across the entire reverse of the painting. The irregularities in the fabric support were repeatedly humidified (either with light sprays of water or with damp blotter paper) and relaxed while drying under minimal weights. In some areas, tabs made from polyester fabric and a heat-activated adhesive¹⁰ were applied in order to temporarily hold the separated canvas in place. Torn threads scattered throughout the reverse were relaxed, realigned, and repaired with an adhesive,¹¹ and in some cases new linen threads were woven into the damaged areas. Old canvas patches used to reinforce old repairs (which, fortunately, had not transferred as impressions to the front of the canvas, as often happens with old, heavy patches) were removed and replaced with proper mends. In several small areas at the edges, aged canvas inserts were applied in order to fill the areas of lost fabric. After the initial series of mends were completed, additional temporary reinforcement tabs¹² were

applied in selected areas in order to reinforce the unrepaired or partially repaired damages so that the picture could be stretched eventually onto a working strainer. This would allow the picture to be placed upright, so that continued repairs of some areas could be carried out from both the front and the back of the canvas.

As the treatment progressed, it became increasingly clear that the picture could be properly mended and repaired without having to resort to lining. The original canvas remained remarkably flexible and fresh. This may have been due in part to Oudry's recommendation (in his lectures to the academy)¹³ that canvasses be prepared without the application of a glue sizing. Glue size is traditionally brushed into a canvas in order to seal the threads and prevent the ground from staining and saturating the canvas. However, sizing has the unfortunate consequence of filling up the fibers with a natural material that becomes brittle over time. In his lectures, Oudry not only recommended that the practice of sizing be eliminated but that the additional step of "thoroughly washing the canvas"¹⁴ be taken in order to remove any sizing that may have been applied by the canvas maker during its fabrication. Oudry may have followed his own advice in this case (and with the *Rhinoceros* as well), leaving the canvas unsized prior to the application of the ground layers in order to avoid brittleness in the future. As a result, the canvas fibers have remained remarkably supple and flexible.

The edges of the painting were reinforced with thin strips of new synthetic fabric that extended into the reverse of the painting for a few inches, a technique known as strip-lining.¹⁵ The painting was then stretched in a temporary working strainer. The working strainer had been constructed of aluminum bars with a wooden tacking strip attached to the outer edge. Once the painting was attached to the temporary strainer, the temporary patches were removed and mending of the torn areas continued with the painting in a vertical position.

After the picture was standing upright, and the complicated structural issues had been addressed, the treatment turned to the issue of cleaning. The darkened surface of the picture appeared to result from the presence of at least two indistinct layers of old varnish. A thin, older layer (lying directly on top of the paint film) must have been applied very early on in the life of the picture, as it appeared to have swollen the paint film. This was seen in some

of the cross-section samples taken for study under the microscope: scattered pigment particles from the original paint film were found to have migrated into the varnish layer, suggesting that the paint film was either still fresh, or was still young enough—perhaps only a few years old—to have been swollen by the solvents used for the varnish. In one sample, under ultraviolet illumination, it was possible to see the strong fluorescence of the varnish penetrating the paint layer. This evidence suggested that the lower layer of varnish was, in fact, the first layer of varnish to have been applied on the painting (although it does not offer conclusive proof that it was applied by the artist and could therefore be considered an “original” coating). A second layer of very discolored varnish, lying on top of this much older first coating, had been applied much later in the life of the picture. Preliminary cleaning tests indicated that it would be possible to substantially thin the existing upper varnish layer without removing it completely, and without breaking through to the older—perhaps even original—layer below. Completion of this step resulted in a breathtaking change in the appearance of the picture.

In the meantime, due to the ongoing success of the treatment of the *Lion*, plans were made to have the *Rhinoceros* come to Los Angeles as well. The portrait of Clara arrived at the Getty Museum in May 2003, and work began on the structural problems, following the same course of treatment as had been developed for the *Lion*.¹⁶

The painting was prepared for shipment in an identical fashion to the *Lion* and arrived rolled on a very large hollow tube. After uncrating, the *Rhinoceros* was unrolled face up in the paintings conservation studio (figs. 3a and 3b).

After an initial period of inspection and study (and following the same pathway as the treatment of the *Lion*), the picture was rerolled and then unrolled face down so that the structural repair work could take place from the reverse. In order to support the large canvas, extensions were built around the surface of the largest available work table in the studio (which measured only ten by twelve feet, several feet shy of the dimensions of the painting, which exceeds ten feet by fifteen feet). An aluminum bridge was constructed to allow access to the center of the painting during the structural treatments (fig. 4).



FIGURES 3A AND 3B

The *Rhinoceros* arrives at the paintings conservation studio rolled onto a large drum and is then unrolled onto a prepared work surface.



FIGURE 4
After the *Rhinoceros* was placed face down, a bridge was constructed to allow for treatment of damages in the central area of the canvas.

Fortunately, aside from two large losses at the right edge (noted above), the picture suffered from only a few areas of distorted canvas and a scattering of very minor flake losses. Once again, fabric distortions throughout the canvas were repeatedly humidified, relaxed, and flattened over a period of many weeks. After successfully returning the distorted canvas into plane, repair of the many small tears on the reverse was begun. The original canvas support on the *Rhinoceros* was found to be even more well preserved than that of the *Lion*, and the extent of the canvas damages—both in the number of tears and in the size of the losses—was considerably less than the *Lion* as well, so a somewhat simpler repair procedure was followed. After relaxation and realignment of torn or broken threads, a lightweight patch of Japanese tissue paper was applied to the reverse with a water-based adhesive.¹⁷ After this dried, a second patch was applied, made from a synthetic, nonwoven paper product, known commercially as Nomex,¹⁸ using a heat-seal adhesive.¹⁹ The type of Nomex chosen was originally designed for use as an insulating material in the interior compartments of high-speed electrical generators and had been developed to provide exceptional strength and rigidity, despite its thinness, and to resist the effects of high heat and pressure. It also resists creasing and distortion, which means that it should stay very flat and will help to keep the torn areas in plane in the future, without adding any extra weight to the reverse (as is often the case with heavier canvas patches).

As with the *Lion*, the original canvas remained exceptionally pliable and flexible (in fact, it was even more supple than the *Lion*, perhaps reflecting a more protected storage during the past century). Given the strength and flexibility of the original canvas, there was simply no doubt that the picture could remain in an unlined state.

New pieces of linen fabric were cut and inserted into the missing sections at the right edge, and the large piece of original canvas that had become completely separated was reattached between the two inserts. Because of the complicated and extensive nature of these structural repairs, it was decided to apply a continuous strip of Nomex across the entire right vertical edge of the picture as a means of reinforcing the assembled parts.

After completion of the structural repairs, a strip-lining was applied to the reverse of the four edges, following the same procedure as for the *Lion*,

using a lightweight polyester fabric that had been infused with a heat-seal adhesive.²⁰ The strip-lining extends only a few inches into the painting on the reverse, with the exception of the right edge, which, once again in order to provide some additional support for the complicated inserts and repairs, required an additional layer of the strip-lining material.

The newly reunified canvas was stretched onto a lightweight aluminum working strainer, which, like the strainer for the *Lion*, allowed for easy mobility and maneuverability of the painting during the rest of the treatment.

The picture was now ready for cleaning (fig. 5). Preliminary studies had suggested—as with the *Lion*—that there were two distinct layers of varnish on the surface. An upper layer of very darkened soft resin appeared to have been applied when the painting was contained within a frame at some point in the past, as thin strips of a lighter color were visible along the entire left edge. This discolored upper layer of varnish proved to be readily soluble in very mild solvents. A lower layer of varnish—which was undoubtedly much older and covered the entire surface—proved to be more intractable. It was found to contain a high degree of drying oil and, as also demonstrated in studies of numerous cross sections, was intimately bound to the paint surface. Removal would have required the use of very strong solvents—and the darker areas of original paint in the picture (notably all of the dark greens in the lower portion of the landscape) were found to be quite soluble in all but the mildest solvents. Fortunately, the older layer of varnish was quite thin, and, although somewhat discolored, it did not have a disfiguring effect. It was decided to remove the upper layer of varnish and to leave the older (again, perhaps even the original) layer intact. This would produce a stunning improvement in the appearance of the picture, despite the conservative nature of the approach.

As the cleaning progressed, it became clearer how the picture was originally created. Oudry prepared the canvas with a double ground—a deep red lower priming, followed by a beige-colored coating—and then the figure of the rhinoceros was painted and brought to a fairly high degree of finish. The sky and landscape were painted in around the animal (perhaps with the help of studio assistants), and then a number of finishing details were applied to the rhinoceros (such as, for example, the thin wisps of hair that are found at

her ears). During painting of the landscape, a few corrections were made to certain details of the rhinoceros, notably to the flap of skin hanging below her neck, which was made somewhat smaller (and can now be seen emerging through the landscape as a pentiment).

Extensive cross section studies revealed a very straightforward and comparatively uncomplex layer structure. The majority of the sky appears to have been underpainted with a deep blue tone, and this was modified across the picture with single layers of lighter or darker paint as needed. Almost all other parts of the composition were painted with only one or two layers of paint, applied in a free, direct, and uncomplicated fashion.

The visual evolution during the cleaning process underscored the fact that Oudry approached his subject as a true portrait. The fresh, cool-toned atmosphere of the landscape was revealed, and the rhinoceros regained a presence that was not only the result of her now more visible weighty forms but also of her engaging—and engaged—direct contact with the viewer. Her eye stares directly out of the picture, inviting (and perhaps demanding) a dialogue.

After completion of the cleaning, the long tasks of filling, varnishing, and retouching began. All of the losses were filled with a white gesso putty to bring them up to the level of the remaining original paint. The picture was photographed at the completion of this stage to record the state of the surface (fig. 6).

The losses were underpainted with a water-based gouache paint in a deep red (burnt sienna) color. This was done to imitate the visual effects of the deep red preparation that Oudry used, ensuring that the retouched surfaces of the losses would appear to have the same vibrancy and depth as the original paint surface. After completion of the underpainting, the picture was given a brush coat of a new synthetic resin varnish.²¹ As is often done with large paintings, the varnish was applied by two people in a team effort. The varnish was brushed on in a large section by the first person, and the second person followed along behind and continued to brush out the varnish as the first person moved on to the next section.

Because of the somewhat dry nature of the surface, the varnish tended to soak in quite a bit, and it was decided that a second layer of varnish would



FIGURE 5
The *Rhinoceros* after completion of the structural work but prior to cleaning and restoration. Note the new canvas inserts at the right edge. Photo: Jack Ross.



FIGURE 6

The *Rhinoceros* after cleaning. In preparation for retouching, areas of missing paint have been filled with a white gesso putty in order to bring the level of the loss up to the surface of the remaining original paint. Photo: Jack Ross.



FIGURE 7
During varnishing, the surface of the *Rhinoceros* was divided into manageable sections by placing drafting tape along the original seams in the canvas, which allowed the use of thin sheets of plastic to cover all but the area being worked on. Photo: Mark Leonard.



FIGURE 8
A section of the new house-frame style molding held in place next to the *Lion*, prior to patination of the gilded surface. Photo: Mark Leonard.

have to be applied. This was done in a somewhat different fashion. Drafting tape was placed along one edge of one of the seams and used to affix a thin sheet of plastic film that covered all but one section of canvas (fig. 7).²² The exposed section of canvas was then brush varnished. Each section was allowed to dry, and the neighboring section was then varnished while the rest of the picture was covered. The end result is that the surfaces of all four sections of the canvas are similar, and the seams provide a natural boundary line that prevents any discrepancies from being visible.

After completion of the varnish applications, retouching began in earnest and was completed after nearly two years of work. The paint used for retouching was a synthetic resin-based variety, specifically developed for use in the field of conservation,²³ which makes use of pigments of exceptional stability and lightfastness (so they will not fade or change in appearance) suspended in a resin that is exceptionally stable but very easily reversible (so

that it can be removed with mild solvents at any point in the future, leaving no trace). Particular care was paid to retouching of losses that were to be at eye level. Losses along the distant top edge were painted in more freely, as they would only be seen from a great distance by all viewers (other than future restorers who may work on the picture—at some point quite far in the future one hopes!).

As the retouching neared completion, it became apparent that the more subtle work on the surface—always reserved for the final stages of treatment—would have to be carried out in a space where the large painting could be viewed not only from a normal viewing distance but with good top light. The paintings conservation studio at the Getty Museum only allows for side light from the windows, which is usually not a problem with smaller pictures, as the light from the windows can be easily altered and controlled through a combination of blinds and window shades, but presents quite a challenge with oversized canvasses. In the studio setting, it is simply not possible to get a good vantage point to see the picture as a whole, free of reflections, and from a proper, uninterrupted distance. The subtle glazing and scumbling that was needed to pull the picture together visually could only be done in a gallery setting with proper overhead lighting (skylights and natural light, in this case), and so the picture was taken into the public galleries for a three-week period (with the public present) and the retouching brought to conclusion (see plate 11).

After completion of the retouching, the picture was moved to a large spray booth (normally used by the preparations department, this is the only booth on site at the Getty Center large enough to accommodate Clara's girth) and again divided into varnishing sections along the original seams. Final layers of varnish were sprayed onto the individual sections of the surface over a period of several days, giving the picture a fully saturated and unified appearance.

The painting was then returned to the conservation studio, removed from its temporary strainer, and restretched onto a traditional wooden stretcher with keys; a similar stretcher was used for the *Lion*. In order to provide some extra support for both paintings, pieces of linen sized with rabbit-skin glue were stretched onto small strainers that fit within each of the openings of the stretcher from the reverse. A heavy layer of sizing on the linen gives it "tooth," a feeling somewhat like rough sandpaper, providing tex-

ured, gentle support for the original canvas. This linen layer will also help to guard against vibration when the painting is moved (both in the gallery and on the journey home to Schwerin).

The pictures were lacking frames, so a new set of moldings was constructed (fig. 8). Fortunately, most of the collections at Schwerin have been exhibited in the past in a house-frame style,²⁴ so the choice of the style of molding to be used was considerably simplified. The house-frame motif was used, although it was expanded in scale in order to accommodate visually the larger scale of these paintings (the *Rhinoceros*, the *Lion*, and a third picture in the series, not yet treated, a *Tiger*, all received the new moldings). The large frames were each made in four pieces so that they could be easily disassembled for movement, particularly during transit and shipping. The frames were constructed and gilded by a frame maker in London,²⁵ but the final patination of the gilded surfaces was done at the Getty Museum so that it could be brought to an appropriate level with the paintings close at hand.²⁶

During their stay at the Museum, these pictures—as great works of art often do—catalyzed not only some innovative and creative approaches to treatment but also generated enough interest for members of the Paintings and Sculpture and Decorative Arts Departments to develop this exhibition, which reunites the *Rhinoceros* and the *Lion* with their compatriots from Schwerin.

Prior to having the pictures come to Los Angeles, thought was given to how the pictures might return to Schwerin. Their unlined state—and the lengthy care and effort that went into their treatment—precluded the possibility of rerolling them for the return journey. Fortunately, it was determined early on that they could remain stretched and be crated in such a way as to allow them to be transported in a 747 cargo aircraft. In order to minimize the impact of vibrations, paintings are usually transported standing upright rather than lying down. The *Lion* is small enough to be transported this way, and the *Rhinoceros*, once crated, can be placed on a slightly inclined support frame to allow it to be shipped in a nearly vertical position.

When the pictures are returned to Schwerin, they will be installed in newly refurbished galleries in the building that was their original setting in the eighteenth century, the Ludwigslust *schloss*. The *Rhinoceros* may even be reinstalled in what may have been its original venue: the dining room at Ludwigslust.



FIGURE 9
Johann Dietrich Findorff (1722–1772), *Rhinoceros*
(after Oudry), ca. 1752. Oil on canvas, 112 × 140 cm
(44 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 55 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

A contemporary copy of Oudry's painting, made in 1752 by the Schwerin painter Johann Dietrich Findorff (1722–1772) (fig. 9), is significantly reduced in scale from Oudry's original but appears to replicate the original proportions of the composition. A comparison of the two shows that Oudry's painting retains its original dimensions from left to right, and may have lost only a few centimeters at the bottom, but appears to have lost about sixty centimeters (approximately twenty-four inches) from the composition at the top of the picture. Assuming the Findorff copy is accurate, originally Oudry's composition would have had more sky and landscape at the top, making it similar in balance and composition to most of the other paintings in the series. In the painting's current format, the rhinoceros sits at the very center of the picture, and the regularized space on all four sides of the animal makes the composition somewhat awkward. It is possible that a larger expanse of sky would have resulted in a more pleasing and balanced effect (and, in fact, a small area of blue sky can be found at the far right of the

top edge, in between the two hilltops). This, though, is pure speculation. Some contemporary documents contain measurements that would refute this theory; others seem to support it.²⁷

Coincidentally, however, in the dining room at Ludwigslust there is a molding that has nearly the identical dimensions of the *Rhinoceros* from left to right, and if the estimate of the missing section at the top is factored in, the measurements from top to bottom of that molding would have accommodated the presumed original dimensions of the painting perfectly.²⁸ Further research is needed, but it seems likely that the painting was first exhibited in the dining room. If this is indeed the case, reinstallation there would provide an appropriate conclusion to the intriguing pathway that Oudry's *Rhinoceros* has charted, and a fitting end to her journey, when she is finally reunited with the rest of the menagerie in their original home. ♦

Notes

1. In 2004, Glynis Ridley, a professor at the University of Louisville, published a detailed study of Clara's life and travels; see Ridley 2004.
2. The group consisted of the author, conservator of paintings at the J. Paul Getty Museum; Scott Schaefer, curator of paintings; and Joan Weinstein, associate director of the Getty Foundation.
3. The Kulturstiftung der Länder is a Berlin-based organization with a broad mission, ranging from restitution of works of art to supporting conservation projects throughout the German states. The author is particularly indebted to Karin van Welck, former general secretary, and Britta Kaiser-Schuster, of the Kulturstiftung for their support of this project.
4. Funding was provided for the research and treatment of four seventeenth-century paintings.
5. See Schwerin 2000, p. 163.
6. Since 1990, over a hundred collaborative conservation projects have been carried out by the Paintings Conservation Department, providing study and restoration of major works of art from other institutions. For further information, including an illustrated listing of all these partnerships, see the Getty Museum website: <http://www.getty.edu/museum/conservation/partnerships/index.html>.
7. Initial treatment of the *Lion* was made possible by a generous grant from the Friends of Heritage Preservation. Continued support of the Oudry project has been provided by the Paintings Conservation Council of the J. Paul Getty Museum.
8. The collections in Schwerin have been subjected to many well-intentioned but unfortunately misguided treatment procedures in the past. The most notable of these appear to have occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when a popular process of "regeneration" invented by the German chemist Max von Pettenkofer was carried out on a large number of paintings. See Max von Pettenkofer, "On Oil Paint and the Conservation of Painting Galleries Using the Procedure of Regeneration (1902)," in *Issues in the Conservation of Paintings*, ed. David Bomford and Mark Leonard (Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2004), pp. 339–57.
9. Treatment of the *Lion* was carried out by Tiarna Doherty, associate conservator of paintings.
10. BEVA 371, a thermoplastic polymer mixture composed of ethyl vinyl acetate and other ingredients, was used as the adhesive.
11. A mixture of Sturgeon glue and wheat-starch paste was used as an adhesive during the repair process.
12. These additional tabs were made with polyester and BEVA 371.
13. See Oudry 1863.
14. Oudry 1863.
15. The strip-lining consisted of plain-weave polyester fabric that had been coated with BEVA 371. The infused polyester was applied to the reverse of the original canvas with a warm tacking iron.
16. Treatment of the *Rhinoceros* was carried out by the author.
17. A mixture of Sturgeon glue and wheat-starch paste was used.
18. Nomex is a registered trademark for a family of meta-aramid fiber products manufactured by Dupont. For further information, see the Dupont website: <http://www.dupont.com/nomex/>.
19. BEVA 371 was once again used as the adhesive.
20. Oudry 1863.
21. Regalrez 1094, a low molecular weight hydrocarbon resin, was dissolved in a slow evaporating, nonaromatic mineral spirits (Shell D38). This varnish, widely used in the field of paintings conservation, was chosen because of its visual appropriateness for the picture, as well as for its stability and longevity; it can be removed at any point in the future without necessitating the use of solvents that would have any effect upon the existing older varnish layer or the original paint.
22. Dartek (a cast nylon film made by Dupont) was used.
23. Gamblin Conservation Colors were used. For further information: <http://www.gamblincolors.com/conservation/>.
24. The Schwerin house-frame style is a nineteenth-century adaptation of an eighteenth-century French Neoclassical style. The frames are made from architrave moldings with a bundled reed outer-edge ornament covered by ribbon strappings and an inner-edge pearl ornament.
25. The frames were constructed by the firm of Arnold Wiggins and Sons, Ltd.
26. The frames were patinated by D. Gene Karraker, assistant conservator.
27. See Christoph Frank's essay in this catalogue: The mid-eighteenth-century French measurements cited there in note 36 correspond very closely to the current dimensions of the painting, but the German measurements of 1808 cited in note 38 suggest that the picture may have been larger. It should be noted that measurements are often somewhat unreliable, and they may have even been just estimates.
28. The Findorff copy measures 112 × 140 centimeters (44¹/₈ × 55¹/₈ in.). In its current format, the Oudry Rhinoceros measures 306 × 453 centimeters (120¹/₂ × 178¹/₈ in.). If it is assumed that the width of the Findorff is in proper proportion to the width of the Oudry, a mathematical calculation suggests that approximately 60 centimeters (24 in.) are missing from the top of the composition. This would mean that the original dimensions were approximately 367 × 454 centimeters (144¹/₂ × 178³/₄ in.). The molding in the dining room at Ludwigslust is approximately 370 × 455 centimeters (145³/₄ × 179 in.).



♦ OUDRY'S PAINTED MENAGERIE ♦

MARY MORTON

CREATED DURING A HIGH POINT OF ENLIGHTENED ROYAL patronage of both the fine arts and scientific exploration, Jean-Baptiste Oudry's painted menagerie served a complex of purposes. The original function of this suite of animal paintings has been the source of some debate.¹ Painted between 1739 and 1745, each picture was exhibited at the annual Salon in Paris, with the entry in the accompanying *livret* (small catalogue) stating that it was ordered by or for King Louis XV.² In the end, however, the paintings were sold to a patron even more loyal to Oudry than the French king, the great German francophile Christian Ludwig II, the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

According to Oudry, in his letter of March 1750 advertising the suite to Christian Ludwig, the paintings depict "the principal animals of the king's menagerie, all of which I have painted from life on the order of His Majesty and under the guidance of Monsieur de La Peyronie, the king's first surgeon, who wanted to have them engraved and thus form a suite of natural history for the Botanical Garden of His Majesty." Probably intended as a gift of gratitude by François Gigot de La Peyronie to the king for his generous patronage of the surgeon's career, the suite was left in Oudry's studio when La Peyronie died in 1747. Oudry also states that the paintings were to serve as documents of natural history, both as engraved reproductions, and as installations at the Jardin du roi (also known as the Jardin des plantes), the Parisian center for the study of natural history.³ This marvelous suite of paintings, then, must be viewed within the context not only of Louis XV's royal menagerie at Versailles but also of the burgeoning field of natural history in mid-eighteenth-century France, and finally of Oudry's role as one of foremost court painters of the day, not only in France but also in Germany.

♦ THE KING'S MENAGERIE

Life-size portraits of inhabitants of Louis XV's menagerie, Oudry's suite of paintings celebrated some of the star specimens of the king's collection of exotic animals, thus extending the authority and prestige of the French ruler. The menagerie at Versailles was in fact inherited entirely from his great-grandfather Louis XIV, whose construction of a live display of exotic animals in his gardens was inspired by a princely tradition (see Marina Belozerskaya's essay in this catalogue).

The Versailles menagerie, completely destroyed during the French Revolution, was designed by Louis Le Vau between 1662 and 1669 in the southwest corner of the park (see Belozerskaya, fig. 8). Le Vau's design was quite innovative, bringing together the animal exhibits into a centralized area, as opposed to scattering the animals in mini-exhibits across the park. The animal enclosures fanned out from a central courtyard in which stood a small château with an octagonal observation room. The pens were landscaped with flora, decorative sculptures, basins and fountains, creating the world's first zoological garden. Le Vau's creation, then, was a highly organized spectacle offering a splendid visual array of lovely, live luxury objects.⁴

The menagerie never was intended to be an encyclopedic zoo, but rather a gathering of interesting animals compiled through royal commission and gifts of diplomacy, a kind of living *cabinet de curiosité*. Exotic animals were imported on merchant ships alongside sugar, coffee, indigo, and African slaves and were therefore intimately connected to colonialism and the luxury trade. Given the difficulty of transporting, handling, and maintaining them, live animals carried a high premium. As colonial trade to Africa, the Americas, and the East Indies blossomed, specimens from these regions signified the growing reach of French mercantile power.⁵

In addition to its function as ostentatious decoration within the royal architectural complex of Versailles, the royal menagerie served as a source of research for both natural scientists and artists. Scholarly use of princely

menageries added to the prestige of the princes themselves, as such activities supported their role as leaders of the Enlightenment.⁶ Menageries also served as a new source of inspiration for visual imagery and the fine arts. Flemish painters Nicasiaus Bernaerts (1620–1678) and Pieter Boel (1622–1674), both students of Frans Snyders (1579–1657), used animals from the Versailles menagerie as models for paintings and drawings that were in turn developed into decorative tapestries at the Gobelins manufactory. Other artists who visited the royal menagerie included painters Jean-François de Troy (1679–1752), François Boucher (1703–1770), Nicolas Lancret (1690–1743), Carle Van Loo (1705–1765), Claude III Audran (1658–1743), and Hubert Robert (1733–1808), and sculptors Pierre Puget (1620–1694) and Corneille Van Clève (1646–1732).⁷

The fashionable profile of the Versailles menagerie declined when the royal court moved back to Paris during the Regency and the early part of Louis XV's reign.⁸ Although it would eventually regain a place in court life, the menagerie was never of as much interest to Louis XV as it had been to his great-grandfather. He did not continue the practice of commissioning colonial governors and merchant marine companies to import exotic animals, instead expanding and resupplying his collection through the more passive acceptance of tributes from naval and colonial officers.⁹

It is possible that Louis XV's disaffection from the menagerie influenced his lack of interest in acquiring Oudry's series of animal portraits after La Peyronie's death.¹⁰ Equally, La Peyronie's original plan of commissioning the works as a gift for Louis XV was perhaps intended as much to pique the king's interest in his menagerie, zoology, and the Jardin des plantes as to honor and please him.¹¹ Certainly, the king was partial to Oudry as a great painter of hunting, the hunt being one cultural event consistently favored by the king. Oudry had also painted several portraits of His Highness's hunting dogs, painting the name of each beloved canine in clear letters within the compositions.

Oudry was a regular visitor to the royal menagerie, starting in the late 1720s.¹² When he exhibited the animal portraits at the annual Salon, beginning with *Indian Blackbuck* ("Gazelle"), *Mufflon* ("*Bouquetin de Barbarie*"), and *Hyena* ("*Loup cervier de la Louisiane*") in 1739, he mentioned in the *livret* that the subjects lived in the Versailles menagerie, and that their portraits were ultimately intended for the king.¹³ Particularly during a period in which the number of visitors to the menagerie was in decline, the paintings served to advertise the king's collection of exotic animals.

◆ OUDRY'S HISTOIRE NATURELLE

According to Oudry's letter to the duke of Schwerin quoted above (and reproduced in the appendix to Christoph Frank's essay), the paintings were also conceived as empirical documents recording natural specimens. They thus participated in the burgeoning contemporary field of natural history.

Oudry's empiricism was central to his artistic philosophy: In his lectures at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1749 and 1752, he repeatedly emphasized direct study from nature. At every step of the construction of a painting, Oudry counseled, check nature again and again. Although only three of the paintings were engraved for use in natural history texts—*Mufflon*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Lynx* (the last painting has been lost or destroyed)—the precision and sensitivity with which Oudry recorded the details of each animal's appearance was of generally recognized scientific value.¹⁴ The importance at the time of firsthand, empirically based pictorial records of these unusual animals cannot be underestimated. There was a long history of zoological fantasy in European visual culture, including the medieval bestiary in which fantastic animals serve as moralizing symbols. Unicorns and jackalopes appeared in zoological treatises into the sixteenth century, for example, and a fantastic conception of the rhinoceros prevailed until Oudry's corrective portrait of Clara (see Charissa Bremer-David's essay in this catalogue).

The naturalist's enterprise was founded on description. As the sixteenth-century Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi stated, "description yielded definition, definition order, and order knowledge."¹⁵ In line with a venerable tradition, most famously exemplified by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), who combined firsthand experience, artistic recording, and scientific knowledge, natural history texts depended on visual information provided by artists.¹⁶

The great natural historian Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, well understood the power of the illustrative *planche* (plate), for the broad dissemination of scientific information, and for the popular success of his natural history books. Appointed director of the Jardin du roi in 1739, he longed to create a comprehensive illustrated work on natural history.¹⁷ Buffon's thirty-six volume work, *Histoire naturelle* (1749–88) included 1,290 prints, most of which were done after drawings by Jacques de Sève (d. 1795) in order to give the illustrations a uniformity of style (an additional eight volumes were published after Buffon's death, the final and forty-fourth volume appearing in 1804). Some were drawn from living animals at Versailles,

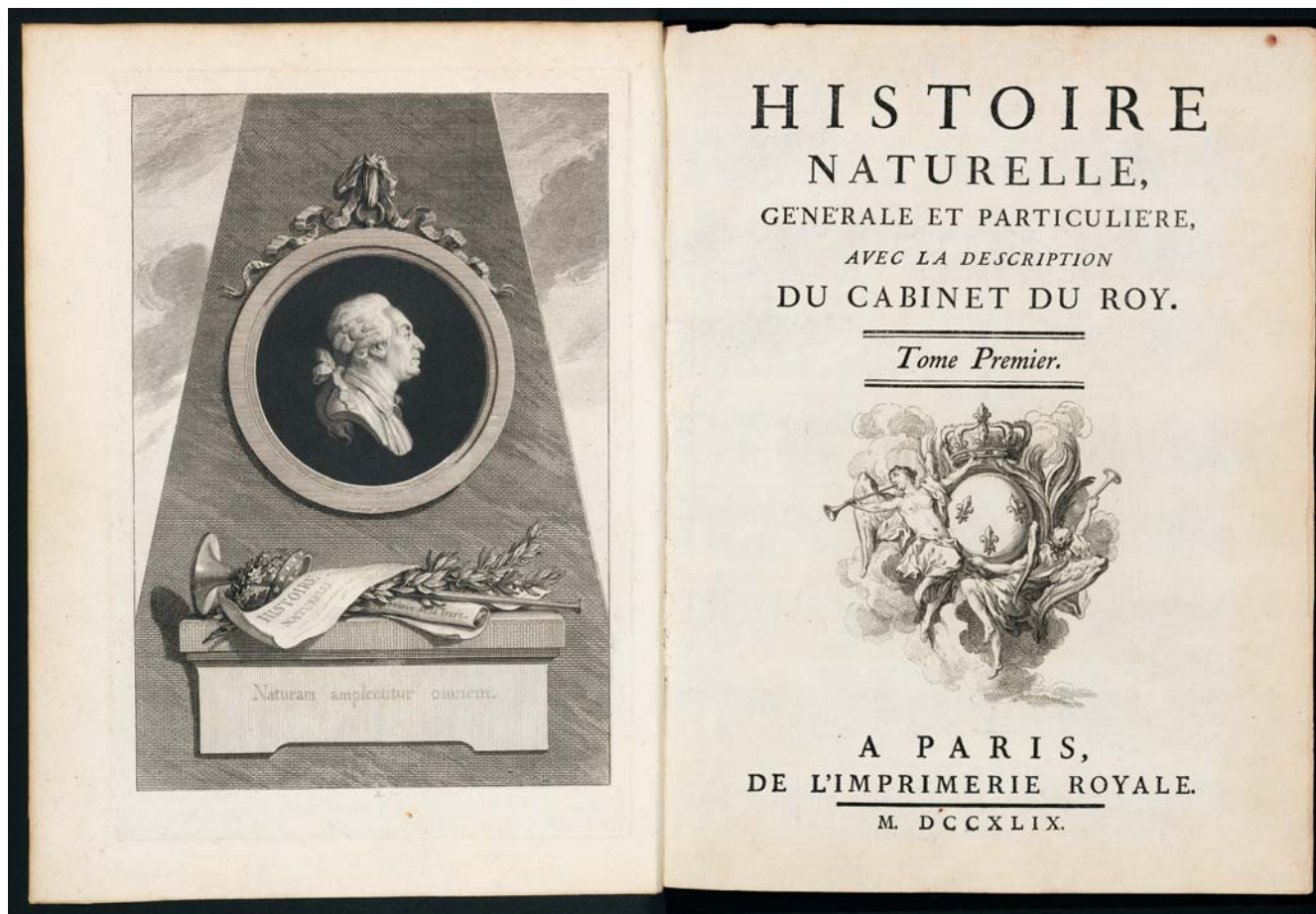


FIGURE 1
Frontispiece from Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1749), including a dedication to King Louis XV. Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 84-B8203.

some from preserved specimens, and some from images by other artists, as in the case of Oudry's *Rhinoceros* (plate 11). Buffon's book was in fact one of the most popular French-language books of the time, rivaled only by Denis Diderot and Jean Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*.¹⁸

Both Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* and Oudry's painted menagerie corresponded to the building wave of interest in natural history among the nobility and cultural elite in the eighteenth century. The vogue for natural history was encouraged by the rise in colonial trade, feeding an avid market for exotic creatures. Between 1710 and 1770, the value of foreign trade quintupled in France, and by the end of the century hundreds of ships traveled each year to the Caribbean, Africa, India, and the Far East.¹⁹ In Paris, exotic animals proliferated on the streets, in homes, and in jokes, poems, stories, posters, and paintings.

Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* was initially inspired by the desire to describe and catalog the king's natural history collection, just as Oudry's suite was initially intended to record central animals in the king's menagerie. Both projects were, on the surface, intended to glorify the monarch, becoming part of a long history of zoological works with royal patronage (fig. 1). (Perhaps the earliest instance of such patronage was when Alexander the Great, eager to

know about all living things, commissioned his tutor Aristotle to create fifty books on the subject.²⁰) Inspired by the contemporary taxonomic impulse, the animals in Buffon's plates and Oudry's paintings are ordered and organized into separate framed spaces.

Oudry's animal paintings and Buffon's textual "descriptions" also shared a sympathetic view of animals, often projecting onto them human sentiments and evoking their "character." In Enlightenment intellectual circles the debate about the character of animals was quite heated, with one camp denying the presence of intellect and soul in animals, the other arguing that there was a similarity between animals and humans, both materially and emotionally/spiritually. Although of an earlier generation, Jean de La Fontaine was a central figure in these debates, positing in such works as his *Fables* an image of animals as reasonable and sentient. Between 1729 and 1734, Oudry created 276 drawings for illustrations of La Fontaine's *Fables*, in which the animals perform as feeling actors in a visual drama.²¹ This training clearly translated to his highly expressive animal paintings. *Histoire naturelle*, in which Buffon treated animals under the same analytical and taxonomic rubrics as he did humans, similarly advanced a conception of animals as capable of behaving beyond instinctual motivations.

Finally, Oudry's paintings and the plates in Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* shared a refined, even decorative presentation. The illustrations for *Histoire naturelle* are exquisitely engraved, endowed with elegance and visual charm. Neither Oudry nor Buffon insert the animals into their natural habitats but rather place them on compositional stages, their backdrops intended to enhance their visual appeal. While both visual strategies foreground the empirical, they are equally affected by an impulse to engage and please.

◆ ROYAL DECORATION

Oudry's animal suite had been intended as a decorative scheme for the Jardin du roi, according to the artist's letter to Christian Ludwig. The death of La Peyronie left the original intention unfulfilled, and the paintings, without a home, were available to the German duke for a negotiable price. An avid francophile, as were many members of European nobility at the time, Christian Ludwig was more than happy to acquire a spectacular group of animal paintings by his favorite French painter. The paintings were shipped to Schwerin and installed in the duke's castle as a decorative, virtual menagerie.

Christian Ludwig may have been attracted to Oudry's offer of the menagerie series for any of a variety of reasons. The prestige of not only the paintings' but also the depicted animals' royal French provenance would certainly have appealed to the duke, who emulated Versailles in the design of his palace and its gardens. He had patronized Oudry for some eighteen years and had a successful working relationship with the French painter, not only as a supplier of his own paintings but also as an agent who led the German duke and his son to other contemporary French artists. Finally, the duke was in the midst of building a new picture gallery for the Schwerin castle, expanding the exhibition capacity for his growing collection.²²

Indeed, whatever the duke's reasons, he acquired in the menagerie series a consummate performance by one of the great court painters of the day. Oudry brought to bear not only his experience working with tapestry designs at Beauvais, where he was a highly productive and influential painter in the tapestry works from 1726, and then director from 1734 to 1755, but also, more importantly, the influence of his first master, Nicolas de Largillière. In his animal portrayals, Oudry adopted the theatrical conventions of stately portraiture: the heightened effects of gesture and pose, dramatized

light effects, imaginary landscape backdrops, and sensual color of the Venetian and Flemish masters.²³

These Rococo elements stand apart from the more straightforward animal paintings by Alexandre-François Desportes, Oudry's main competitor in the genre. Oudry's slightly idealized animals are elegant, dignified, and noble. Although his backdrops occasionally suggest the animals' natural habitat, they are essentially decorative constructions designed to enhance the impact of the "sitter." The details of the animals' real environments have been eliminated—the menagerie walls, the cages—and they have been placed in vague and neutralized settings. Compare, for example, the portrayal of the rhinoceros Clara by an unknown painter of the Venetian school (see Bremer-David, fig. 6), at the Venice Carnevale in 1751, in her pen with her food and water, surrounded by spectators, her cart visible in the upper left of the composition, to Oudry's iconic, majestic portrait, in splendid full scale (plate 11).

Although they share the taxonomic and empirical impulse of natural history illustrations, Oudry's representations are perhaps best appreciated within the context of court portraiture. While the natural history prints were usually engraved in black and white, Oudry had a full range of color at his disposal, as well as the more descriptive medium of oil paint. Furthermore, in contrast to the subdued presentations of animals in the prints, Oudry's subjects have been endowed with personality. They are clearly the individual animals Oudry visited in Versailles, each displaying distinct personas and particular modes of behavior. In a way, then, Oudry was painting the "truth," not just of anatomy and texture and color but also of the perceived character of the animal. Hal Opperman notes that this was a strikingly new kind of animal imagery: "Contemporaries were much more aware of the sentimental qualities of Oudry's animals than we, who have seen [Victorian painter] Landseer and Bambi."²⁴

Oudry's technique was perfectly suited to this "truthful" portrayal. He laid in his compositions with a quick, sure application of thinly applied paint, a process that allowed him to maintain a sense of liveliness about the beast and to give a sense of its personality. He then very carefully applied layers of glazes, building up a highly illusionistic *beau terminé* (polished finish).²⁵

There is a sense of immediacy in these portraits, and of course that is the essential trickery of successful portraiture—the illusion of the subject's real presence. Oudry presents them at full scale, placed in the foreground on a shallow stage. Several of the animals in the suite look back, seemingly

aware of our presence: the blackbuck tensely halted, ears erect; the cassowary's beady eye gazing directly out of the picture plane. Oudry provides the kind of visual contact one longs for on a visit to the zoo, the intimate, tangible proximity to exotic, dangerous beasts that is generally impeded by fences, glass enclosures, moats, or crowds, not to mention the reluctant performances of the animals themselves.

THE PLATE SECTION THAT FOLLOWS is introduced by Oudry's portrait of Christian Ludwig's son Friedrich, who in the last third of the duke's life played such an important role in expanding the ducal art collection. The prince's portrait is followed by ten of the thirteen paintings listed in Oudry's March 1750 letter to the duke: nine portraits of animals from the Versailles menagerie, plus the portrait of Clara (see Christoph Frank's essay, pp. 52–53). The final plate illustrates Oudry's painting of one of the Versailles lions, completed and sold in 1752 to the duke. Missing is the first painting on Oudry's list, "un léopard" (now titled *Tiger*), also from the Schwerin collection, which is currently undergoing treatment in the Getty Museum's conservation studio (fig. 2). Also missing from Oudry's original list are "le chat-cervier" and "le guide-lion." Both these paintings of lynxes went to Schwerin with the suite of menagerie paintings, but in the tumultuous history of the Schwerin collection, they are no longer accounted for.²⁶ ♦



FIGURE 2
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Tiger*, 1740. Oil on canvas (pre-conservation), 158 × 191 cm (62¼ × 75¼ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.

Notes

1. See the essays in this catalogue by Colin Bailey and Christoph Frank, as well as Opperman 1977 and Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4.
2. See Opperman 1977, pp. 112–13.
3. There has been some discussion as to the suite's intended destination as decoration, whether for a building such as the Trianon at Versailles or for the Jardin du roi in Paris. Opperman takes his cue from Oudry's reference in his 1750 letter to the duke regarding the suite that they were intended for "le Jardin de Botanique de Sa Majesté" and assumes this royal botanical garden is at Versailles. Salmon also originally assumed that the "Jardin botanique du Roi" is at Versailles (see Salmon 1995). By the time of the *Animaux d'Oudry* exhibition Salmon recognized that the garden referred to by Oudry must have been the Jardin du roi in Paris (Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 139). See also A. Schnapper, "Exposition J. B. Oudry, 1686–1755, Paris, Grand Palais, 1er octobre 1982–3 janvier 1983," *Kunstchronik* 36, no. 2 (February 1983), p. 103.
4. Robbins 2002, pp. 38–40. See also Iriye 1994, p. 44, "With the Ménagerie, the modern notion of a zoo as a compound of animals brought together for human contemplation was first realized on a grand scale." See also Loisel 1912.
5. Robbins 2002, pp. 7, 12, and 17; Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 2002, p. 17; and Lacroix 1978. The last article, based on ship diaries in the archives of the French East India Company, makes the point that the import of exotic animals from India dominated over that of Africa during much of the eighteenth century in France.
6. Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 2002, p. 66.
7. Loisel 1912, p. 122.
8. Robbins 2002, p. 45.
9. Robbins 2002, p. 20.
10. Although no known documents trace a formal offer of the paintings to Louis XV, he must have been aware of the suite's availability for purchase, given the fact that they were advertised as having been done for His Royal Majesty at the Salon exhibitions.
11. La Peyronie was a "demonstrator" at the Jardin du roi in Paris and had dissected several species from the Versailles menagerie. He was himself very interested in exotic animals; see Salmon 2004.
12. See Salmon 2004, p. 75, and Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 116.
13. Salmon 2004, p. 82.
14. Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier 2002, p. 66.
15. Kolb 2005, p. 34.
16. Paris 1996, pp. 26, 34.
17. Clark 1977, pp. 65–67.
18. Paris 1996, p. 46, and Clark 1977, p. 65.
19. Robbins 2002, p. 13.
20. Lloyd 1971, p. 77.
21. Iriye 1994, pp. 56–153. For a discussion of Oudry's animal portrayals within the context of current discussions about animal souls, see Sarah Cohen, "Chardin's Fur: Painting, Materialism, and the Question of Animal Soul," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004), pp. 45 and 50.
22. See Christoph Frank's essay in this catalogue.
23. Cohen (see note 21 above), pp. 52–53.
24. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 49.
25. For an explanation of Oudry's technique by the artist himself, see his second lecture at the Académie royale in 1752 in Oudry 1844.
26. See Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 487–88 (p. 347 and p. 348).

✦ Crown Prince Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin ✦

1739

Oil on canvas, 80.5 × 66 cm

(31¹¹/₁₆ × 26 in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

oudry painted this dashing portrait of Friedrich, son of Christian Ludwig II, the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, during the prince's prolonged visits to Paris in 1737–39. The stay in Paris was part of a larger grand tour, an educational polishing trip to the Low Countries, France, England, and Germany.¹ Friedrich arrived in Paris in October 1737, spent ten days visiting various cultural sites, including Oudry's studio, and then went on to Angers for several months to develop his equestrian skills at an academy there. Missing the rich social and cultural life of Paris, he returned to the capital in May 1738 and stayed for more than a year.

Painted in the first months of 1739, the portrait shows Friedrich in armor, hardly the daily dress of the young prince, but firmly in the Roman tradition of the portraits of his uncle, Christian I, and his father.² Friedrich wears a rice-powdered wig, pulled behind the head and tied in a ribbon in the French style.³ Christian Ludwig had originally intended his son's portrait to be done by the most fashionable and noted royal portraitist in France, Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743), who had a strong reputation in the German courts. The duke may have accepted Oudry's offer to paint the prince with some relief, however: Oudry's rates were cheaper, and he was a familiar business partner. On the picture's completion, the prince wrote to his father, "It is, according to everyone, very successful."⁴

Oudry had begun his career as a portraitist, training under one of the century's great practitioners of the genre, Nicolas de Largillière. The highly refined technique, the elegance, and skilled illusionism in his works were all elements Oudry learned from his early master. However, Oudry seems to have been more responsive to animal than to human expressions, an observation made more acute through the comparison of the prince's portrait to the animal portraits in the Schwerin suite. After the early years of his career, Oudry essentially gave up portraiture, and his painting of Friedrich is, in fact, one of the very few human portraits by Oudry that survive.⁵

Friedrich worked on his father's behalf to develop the duchy's art collection in the area of both Dutch and French art (see Christoph Frank's essay in this catalogue). The duke had a significant collection of Dutch paintings, and in his patronage of Oudry he was surely influenced by this taste. Not for him the sensual Rococo pleasures of the *fête galante*, or of the confectations of François Boucher and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806). More austere and morally restricted, and an avid hunter, the stolid German duke preferred scenes of the hunt and of animal combat.⁶ Prince Friedrich shared the duke's taste for the acute observation typical of Dutch painting, as well as for the work of Oudry. During his extended stay in Paris in 1739, he wrote to his father requesting funds to purchase Oudry's *Wolf Caught in a Trap* (see Frank, fig. 4). When his father declined, he bought it himself and remained an ardent devotee of Oudry.⁷ According to Everhard Korthals Altes, Friedrich was "remarkably keen on contemporary art [both Dutch and French]."⁸

Friedrich served as the primary agent between Oudry and the duke in the purchase of the menagerie series in 1750, confirming the acquisition in person on a visit to Oudry. During the same visit, Oudry took the prince to the studio of François-Thomas Germain, one of the foremost silversmiths of the day, which was also in the Louvre. There, Friedrich negotiated the purchase of the spectacular silver centerpiece known as "*La machine d'argent*" (see Frank, fig. 9).⁹

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. I, pp. 109, 364 (p. 8); Schwerin 1986, pp. 10, 14, 55; Von Berswordt-Wallrabe 1995, pp. 196–204; New York 2004, p. 6; Rosenberg 2005, no. 755; Graulich 2006, pp. 297–314.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1982, no. 92; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, no. 48; Schwerin 2000, no. 1; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 23.

Notes

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|---|--|--|
| <p>1. See Altes 2004–5.</p> <p>2. Graulich 2006, pp. 298–99, figs. 1 and 2.</p> <p>3. See Droguet, entry on <i>Portrait du prince héritier Friedrich de Mecklembourg-</i></p> | <p><i>Schwerin</i> in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 92, and Locquin 1906, p. 305.</p> <p>4. Locquin 1906, p. 305.</p> <p>5. Droguet (see note 3 above).</p> <p>6. Locquin 1906, p. 302.</p> <p>7. Graulich 2006, pp. 309–10.</p> | <p>8. Altes 2004–5, p. 239.</p> <p>9. See Solodkoff 2000 and Droguet, "Oudry et la Cour de Schwerin," in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 90.</p> |
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✦ Bustard and Guinea Hen ✦

1739

Oil on canvas, 130 × 160 cm

(51¹/₈ × 63 in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

THE BUSTARD, the larger bird at the left in this composition, used to roam the steppes of Russia and Siberia, with huge flocks found across Europe. So savory a bird is the bustard, however, that it now survives only in Germany, parts of Spain, and eastern Europe, having essentially been superseded by the turkey. Although very large—it is Europe's heaviest bird—it retains an element of glamour. The male is twice as big as the female, and he is generally shy and dignified, until mating season, when, on spotting a female, he puffs up the plumes of his behind and wings and struts around his potential lover, swelling himself up to look even larger.¹ Oudry paints the bustard in this mating dance.

The object of the big bird's attentions is not, however, a female of its own species but rather a guinea fowl. In his representation of two exotic birds in one canvas, Oudry has created a fantasy flirtation—a kind of ornithological *fête galante*. The guinea fowl was imported to Europe from Africa by the ancient Greeks and Romans, who used them in their gardens and aviaries and cooked them as a delicacy. Romans spread them across Europe, but with the fall of the Roman Empire they largely disappeared. Portuguese traders reintroduced them in the fifteenth century from Guinea (a Portuguese colony), and they have been popular domestic birds ever since.

Called a *pintade* in French, the guinea fowl would have been found in the Versailles menagerie in a section with other species of birds, thus Oudry's representation of the two species together is to some degree "natural." The birds' decorative appeal comes from their plumage, white spots on black in overlapping patterns. These spots led to their designation in Latin as *Numida meleagris*, from the Ovidian story of Meleager, the killer of the Caledonian boar. According to the story, the sisters of Meleager were so distraught by the disappearance of their brother that they cried themselves to death. Diana, goddess of the hunt, was so moved by this that she transformed them into birds called *meleagrides*, with plumage representing spilling tears.²

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 497 (p. 374); Schwerin 1986, pp. 25, 55 (with detailed bibliography); Rosenberg 2005, no. 769.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1740; Schwerin 2000, no. 62; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 69.

Notes

1. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 174.

2. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 174.



♦ Hyena Attacked by Two Dogs ♦

1739

Oil on canvas, 130 × 190 cm
(51¹/₈ × 74³/₄ in.)
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO RECORD of a hyena at Louis XV's menagerie, the precision with which the animal was painted indicates that the painting must have been inspired by a live specimen.¹ Called "Loup cervier de la Louisiane," or Louisiana lynx, in the Salon *livret* of 1739, the creature pictured here is actually a striped hyena, which is more rare than the brown or spotted hyena and more exotic within the menagerie than the rather ubiquitous leopards and lions. This species is found in northern and eastern Africa, Arabia, Asia Minor, and India. They are very shy; however, when threatened they erect a dark crest along their back that can make them appear up to a third larger. Oudry may have placed this menagerie animal in a combat scene (the only one in the series) in order to portray this extraordinary phenomenon.

Oudry specialized in animal combat scenes, and this painting is a perfect example of his mastery in this popular genre. In the tradition of Frans Snyders and Paul de Vos (1591–1678), Oudry often composed paintings around the climactic moments of the hunt, involving the violent confrontation between the dogs and a lone animal.² Here, two dogs, barking and

biting, attack the hyena, who, glaring and snarling, ears and fur erect, responds with an electrically charged defiance. The dogs are seen from behind, their coats are neutral in color, and one is cast in shadow while the other coils in counterpoint beneath the hyena, all of which highlights the dramatic centrality of the threatened animal.

Hyena was exhibited at the Salons of 1739 and 1746 and seems to have been quite successful. The composition inspired a terra-cotta by an anonymous sculptor; the sculpture includes only one of the two dogs in the painting but is otherwise very similar (fig. A).³ Oudry also completed three related drawings (fig. B), probably all of them after the painting, which remained in Oudry's studio until the 1750 Schwerin acquisition.⁴

LITERATURE: Opperman 1966, pp. 394–95, fig. 8; Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 425–26 (p. 191); vol. 2, fig. 253; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, pp. 65–67, fig. 37; Schwerin 1986, pp. 394–95; Rosenberg 2005, no. 763.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1739 and 1746; Schwerin 2000, no. 53; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 67; Amsterdam–Pittsburgh 2006, p. 35.



FIGURE A
Anonymous (after Oudry), *Hyena Attacked by Dogs*, 1739. Terra-cotta, 18 × 23 cm (7¹/₈ × 9 in.). Sèvres, Musée Nationale de céramique, inv. MNC 23462. Photo: © Martine Beck-Coppola/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.



FIGURE B
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Hyena Attacked by Two Dogs*, 1743. Black chalk on blue paper, 32 × 45.8 cm (12¹/₂ × 18 in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, inv. 31.495. Photo: © Thierry Le Mage/Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

Notes

1. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 170. At the Salon of 1746, the painting was again exhibited with the following designation in the *livret*, "Autre [tableaux] . . . représentant un Loup-Cervier de la Ménagerie, assailli par deux boules-Dogues; peint pour le Roy." Loisel (1912, p. x) notes that there were no inventories taken of the inhabitants of the

Versailles menagerie, nor records of new arrivals. Locquin (1906, p. 308) claims that this work was not part of the La Peyronie commission.

2. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 170.

3. Paris 1996, p. 33.

4. These are Opperman 1977, vol. 2, D 596, 602, and 603, and fig. 254. One of the paintings is signed and dated 1743 (Musée

du Louvre), another is signed and dated (private collection, New York City), and a third is neither signed nor dated (London, Courtauld Institute of Art). Another version of the drawing at the Courtauld is not signed or dated. For other instances of Oudry drawing copies of his paintings, see Opperman 1996, pp. 394–96.



◆ Indian Blackbuck ◆

1739

Oil on canvas, 130 × 162 cm

(51¹/₈ × 63³/₄ in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum



FIGURE A

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Indian Blackbuck/Antelope*, ca. 1739.
Gouache and oils on blue-green paper, 32.2 × 37.8 cm
(12⁵/₈ × 14⁷/₈ in.). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. 6/1866.
Photo: © National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm.

AMONG THE MOST FAMILIAR PAINTINGS in Oudry's menagerie series, *Indian Blackbuck* is a highly sensitive portrayal of this most elegant of mammals. The Indian blackbuck is a kind of antelope (*Antilope cervicapra*). The distinctive white markings on its face, underbelly, and rump, its twisting, undulating horns, and its physique, designed for speed (it can run as fast as 60 mph in the open plains), offered a perfect subject for Oudry's decorative instincts. As in his painting of the cassowary (plate 8), Oudry created a sweeping backdrop to accentuate the lovely long neck, alert facial expression, and rising V-shaped horns. The animal seems to look directly at the viewer, tensely alert to our attention.

The same animal appears in two drawings by Oudry (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm), both of which were engraved, and in a painting of 1745 that includes dogs, a duck, and a pheasant.¹ Compared to the drawing pictured here (fig. A), probably done from life at the Versailles menagerie, the Schwerin painting is more formal, even monumental. While the drawing is a fairly clear profile, with the blackbuck's head turned somewhat toward the viewer, the Schwerin painting shows the animal slightly from behind, as if he is moving both across and away from the plane of sight, making more visible the antelope's rump. Oudry altered the pencil study in the finished oil painting, resulting in a more elegant, even seductive, representation.²

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 112 (p. 343); Schwerin 1986, pp. 8, 24, and 56; Rosenberg 2005, no. 767; Bonn 2005–6, p. 180.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1739; Leipzig 1978, no. 38; Paris 1982, no. 96; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, no. 49; Schwerin 2000, no. 60; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 66; Amsterdam–Pittsburgh 2006, p. 34.

Notes

1. See Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 485 (p. 342).

2. See Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 168.



◆ Mufflon ◆

1739

Oil on canvas, 162 × 129 cm
(63¾ × 50¾ in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum



FIGURE A
Pierre-Francois Basan (French, 1723–1797), *Barbary Sheep*,
ca. 1745–50. Engraving, 30.7 × 38.1 cm (12½ × 15 in.)
(plate: 32.5 × 39 cm [12¾ × 15⅜ in.]). Paris, Bibliothèque
nationale, cabinet des estampes, inv. DB-23 FOLT2.
Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

THIS PAINTING WAS EXHIBITED at the Salon of 1739 as a “bouquetin de Barbarie” (Barbary ibex), a term which refers to a sheep native to what were then known as the Barbary States: present-day Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, and Libya. In fact, the animal is not a Barbary sheep but a wild ancestor of domestic sheep known as a mufflon, which inhabited the cold, dry desert areas and mountain peaks of Asia Minor, Europe, Corsica, Sardinia, and Cyprus.¹ Gracefully arranged on the ground against a rocky outcropping, which stretches up behind him in dark and light jags, the ram is pictured with an almost human dignity, attentively responsive to an unseen presence. The multiple rings on his monumental horns signify a very mature male.²

Oudry’s menagerie paintings may have been intended, in the original commission from La Peyronie, to be engraved for works on natural history. In the end, only two of the paintings are known to have been engraved for this purpose: this one (fig. A) and one of the lynx paintings formerly in the Schwerin collection, now lost.³ (*Rhinoceros*, not part of the original La Peyronie suite, was used for Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle* [plate II, fig. B]).

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 485 (p. 343); Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, p. 161, fig. 86; Schwerin 1986, p. 55; Rosenberg 2005, no. 766.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1739; Schwerin 2000, no. 59; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 65.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Michael Dee, general curator at the Los Angeles Zoo, for his help in determining the species of the animals in Oudry’s menagerie.

2. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 166.

3. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 485 (p. 343).



♦ Leopard ♦

1741

Oil on canvas, 131 × 160 cm
(51½ × 63 in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

THESE TWO PAINTINGS were clearly based on life drawings done by Oudry of specimens in the Versailles menagerie (figs. A and B). Opperman suggests that Oudry waited for the animals to strike characteristic or interesting poses, then recorded them quickly, in just a couple of seconds, in black chalk. The formal essence of each animal, so well captured in the drawings, is faithfully transferred to the paintings.¹

Despite their empirical origins, Oudry has projected onto his representations of these animals fairly overt gender characterizations. In his letter of 1750 to the duke, Oudry referred to them as “an angry male tiger” (*un tigre male en colère*) and “a tranquil female tiger” (*un tigre femelle dans une attitude tranquille*). (In eighteenth-century French, the term *tigre* was frequently used to designate both tigers and leopards.) Indeed, the male leopard stands in a highly tense, aggressive mode of response, twisting his body around to face an unseen threat, his teeth bared, his tail arching in the light like a menacing snake. The female, in counterpoint, is more passive. She is wary, but the tension is more subdued, and her backdrop is flatter and less visually dramatic than that of the male. (This gendering is only mildly echoed in Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*, where the only difference between the male and female is that the female has her front paws together, while the male has them apart and appears slightly more active.)²

These paintings were exhibited at the Salons of 1741 and 1743, along with two other paintings of large cats by Oudry, *Tiger* (Schwerin, Staatliches Museum) and *Lynx* (formerly Schwerin, now lost).

Leopard

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 486 (p 345); vol. 2, fig. 265; Schwerin 1986, pp. 9, 56.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1741, no. 24; Paris 1982, no. 98; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, no. 52; Schwerin 2000, no. 57; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 70; Paris–Munich–Bonn 2005, no. 103.

Leopardess

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 486–87 (p 346); vol. 2, fig. 267; Paris 1982, p. 187, fig. 98a; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, p. 166, fig. 89; Schwerin 1986, pp. 34, 56; Rosenberg 2005, no. 765.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1741 and 1743; Schwerin 2000, no. 58; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 71.

♦ Leopardess ♦

1741

Oil on canvas, 131 × 160 cm
(51½ × 63 in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum



FIGURE A
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study for a Leopard*, 1740. Black chalk on blue paper, 29.5 × 33.5 cm (11½ × 13½ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 1172 Hz.



FIGURE B
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study for Female Leopard*, 1740. Black chalk on blue paper, 28.5 × 33.5 cm (11¼ × 13½ in.). Schwerin, Staatliches Museum, inv. 1174 Hz.

Notes

1. Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 164, 486–87 (p 345 and 346). The two drawings in Opperman are *Study for a Leopard* (D 725) and *Study for a Leopardess* (D 726).

2. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, vol. 9 (1762).





✦ Cassowary ✦

1745

Oil on canvas, 162 × 127.5 cm
(63¾ × 50⅛ in.)
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

oudry exhibited this painting in the Salon of 1745, describing its subject in the *livret* as follows: “This bird is extremely rare; it comes from the Isle of Benda, and has neither tongue, nor tail, nor wings; it will eat anything it is offered, even the hottest coals; it can break a man’s leg with its feet.”¹ The bird’s exotic, dangerous reputation dates back at least to the sixteenth century, and the lust of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II to have this bird in his royal menagerie (see Marina Belozerskaya’s essay in this catalogue). A cassowary was gifted to a Dutch captain in 1596 in the Banda Islands. While in transit, the bird killed the captain but eventually made it to Amsterdam and was presented to Rudolf II. Rudolf was reported to have been delighted with the bird, despite the fact that it did not, as reputed, breathe fire. Jan Brueghel the Elder’s depiction of the bird in *Flora and Zephyr* (Dessau, Schloss Mosigkau) may have been based on Rudolf’s bird or on a specimen in the Brussels menagerie of Archdukes Albert and Isabella, rulers of the Southern Netherlands.²

The cassowary is first documented in France in 1671 when one arrived as a gift to Louis XIV from the governor of Madagascar, who had acquired the bird from Indian dealers. The bird inspired intense interest, and its image was subsequently introduced into tapestry designs.³

The cassowary is a strange bird, whose reputation for violence is well founded. It is among the world’s most dangerous fowl and, based on the frequency and severity of injuries to zookeepers, among the most difficult birds to keep in zoos. Originating in Australia and New Guinea, the double-wattled species pictured here stands over five feet tall and does not fly but can swim. It is glossy black in color, with sharp, bristly feathers. Its feet are three-toed, with a claw on each toe and the innermost claw very sharp and long like a dagger. Though generally shy and evasive, when enraged, cassowaries can be deadly, kicking with both feet at once. A kick can be so strong,

and the spiked toe so sharp, that it can eviscerate an enemy with one thrust. A vertical bony helmet called a casque protects the bird’s head as it makes its way through the thick undergrowth of the rain forest feeding on fallen fruit, insects, and small dead animals on the ground. Its name, meaning horned head, is Papuan in origin.

In his portrait, Oudry isolates the cassowary in its surroundings, appropriate to the way in which these menacing birds are housed in animal collections. This is also the only painting in the menagerie series with water pictured in the background, perhaps a reference to the island origins of this species. The rest of the background, the rocky cliff which arches up to the right, the billowing clouds curling in a halo along the bird’s silhouette, the dusky light at the left, all serve to dramatize this extraordinary bird’s form and presence. Together with the *Indian Blackbuck*, it is among the more striking representations in Oudry’s animal suite.

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 498 (p. 376); Schwerin 1986, p. 57 (with detailed bibliography); Rosenberg 2005, no. 768.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1745; Schwerin 2000, no. 61; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 76.

Notes

1. Quoted in Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 498 (p. 376). In his letter to the duke in 1750, Oudry’s description is equally marked by a sense of unfamiliarity: “a large bird, four feet high, whose head is colored like that of a turkey, who has

the feet of an ostrich but no wings or tail.”: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 498.

2. This observation was made by Anne Woollett, associate curator of paintings at the Getty Museum, and Marina Belozerskaya on examining the Dessau painting in July 2006.

3. Salmon 2004, p. 72. Earlier, Salmon (1995, p. 122) noted the cassowary painted by Desportes as an overdoor decoration for the château de Choisy in 1743, in which the bird is pictured with other birds from India.



♦ Dead Crane ♦

1745

Oil on canvas, 162 × 127.5 cm
(63¾ × 50⅛ in.)
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

THIS IS THE ONLY PAINTING in the menagerie series that could be classified as a *nature morte* (still life). Oudry probably painted the crane dead to add variety to the series and to show off his considerable skill as a still-life painter. In fact, this painting strikes a different tone from the others, one that is quietly melancholic, even tragic. Out of the elegant bird's body, the artist has constructed a decorative arabesque that moves through the crane's neck, breast, body, and legs up into the tree trunk. The head and neck, laid off to the right, together with the partially opened wing at the left connote a sort of dying gesture of surrender, as if this were a scene of human martyrdom.¹

Although delicately beautiful, the crane was one of the least exotic animals in the royal menagerie, having been imported to Europe from India in large numbers. It constitutes, then, the perfect subject for the virtuosic display of Oudry's still-life technique, and indeed it is among Oudry's greatest accomplishments in this genre.² Oudry scholar Jean Locquin eloquently described the work over a century ago: "a veritable masterpiece of color, dazzling with freshness, volume and light, where the whole known scale of grays, from black to white, unfolds. The silkiness of plumage, its reflected light and its luster of blue-tinted steel, slightly cold, are warmed by the russet tones of the background and the earth. The scarlet of the head throws a lively and gay note over the whole. This is truly the work of a virtuoso, and one understands how his contemporaries, who were enraptured by the paintings of Oudry, called him 'a magician in paint.'"³

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 112, 191, 554–55 (p. 514); vol. 2, pp. 946, 1126, fig. 307; M. Faré and F. Faré, *La vie silencieuse en France: la nature morte au XVIIIe siècle* (Fribourg, 1976), p. 126, fig. 174; Schwerin 1986, pp. 9, 18, 57.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1745, no. 36; Paris 1982, no. 104; Fort Worth–Kansas City 1983, no. 74; *Das Stilleben und sein Gegenstand: eine Gemeinschaftsausstellung von Museen aus der UdSSR, der CSSR und der DDR* (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 1983), no. 121, pl. 15; Schwerin 2000, no. 64; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 45; Paris–Munich–Bonn 2005–6, no. 104.

Notes

1. For more on this reading, see Sarah Cohen, "Chardin's Fur: Painting, Materialism, and the Question of Animal Soul," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004), p. 43.
2. Veron-Denise in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 126.

3. "... un véritable chef-d'oeuvre de coloris, éblouissant de fraîcheur, de relief et de lumière, où s'épanouit toute la savante gamme des gris, depuis le noir jusqu'au blanc. Le soyeux du plumage, ses reflets et son brillant d'acier bleuté, un peu froids, sont réchauffés par les tons roux du fond et du

terrain. L'écarlate de la tête jette une note vive et gaie sur l'ensemble. C'est là vraiment l'oeuvre d'un virtuose, et l'on comprend que les contemporains, qui s'éxtasiaient devant les toiles d'Oudry, l'appelassent 'un magicien en peinture.'": Locquin 1906, p. 307.



◆ Demoiselle Crane, Toucan, and Tufted Crane ◆

1745

Oil on canvas, 130 × 160 cm
(51¹/₈ × 63 in.)

Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

THE ROYAL MENAGERIE at Versailles was originally designed to house birds, and it was only sometime later, with the addition of exotic animals and, finally, with the transfer of the more ferocious animals from Vincennes to Versailles in the late seventeenth century, that the collection became more varied. These placid, elegant creatures encouraged the sophisticated visitor to enjoy them as aesthetic, decorative objects.¹

Of these three exotic birds, the demoiselle crane (at left) and the tufted crane (at right) tended to be grouped together, both in the menagerie and in representations (fig. A). Flocks of the two birds shared a yard in the menagerie structure, and they also were allowed to wander freely through the park of Versailles.² Pieter Boel, who painted many of the animals in Louis XIV's menagerie, often pictured the two cranes as a male and female couple, and their elegance and ornamental head gear likened them in the popular imagination to the king and queen, thus they were known as *les oiseaux royaux* (the royal birds). Cranes perform spectacular, elaborate courtship dances, involving head pumping, bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping, all designed to strengthen mated pairs. And cranes mate for life, further enriching the fantastic analogy to the royal couple.

The demoiselle crane, so delicate and lovely, was the signature bird of the royal menagerie. It was also known as *grue* (crane) *de Numidie*, after what was then considered its place of origin, the ancient North African country of Numidia, roughly modern-day Algeria. The demoiselle is the smallest and

second most abundant crane species today. Its distinctive feature is the long, pure white feather plume that stretches from behind the eye to well beyond the head. Both males and females sport the ornamental tufts and are virtually indistinguishable, with males slightly larger.

The particular subspecies of the tufted, or crowned, crane depicted here comes from the savannah region of the Sudan. Oudry plays the distinctive white markings on the crane's upper and under wing off against the tree trunk crossing behind it, and he backlights the regal head of this majestic red-cheeked creature, its crown topped with stiff golden feathers, with blue sky light. Oudry drew a copy in ink and watercolor of one of Boel's oil studies of a tufted crane, which may have inspired the pose of the bird in this painting.³

In this trio of exotic fowl, the toucan trumps the cranes in rarity. Toucans come from Mexico, Central and South America, and the West Indies and do not appear in European texts until the sixteenth century. Drawings of the toucan, along with two drawings of the tufted crane and one of the demoiselle, appear in an album of watercolors by Oudry, probably based on oil sketches by Boel.⁴

LITERATURE: Opperman 1966, p. 390, fig 3; Opperman 1977, vol. 1, pp. 497–98 (p. 375); Schwerin 1986, pp. 25, 56 (with detailed bibliography); Rosenberg 2005, no. 771; Bonn 2005–6, pp. 156–57.

EXHIBITIONS: Paris 1745, no. 38; Schwerin 2000, no. 63; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, no. 75.

FIGURE A

Pieter Boel (Flemish, 1622–1674), *Pavillon central de la Ménagerie de Versailles, depuis la cour des demoiselles* (Birds from the Royal Menagerie [Young Ladies from Numidie]). Engraving from Scotin. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, inv. JB-37 FT 4. Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Notes

1. Iriye 1994, pp. 39–41.
2. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 182.
3. The drawing is in the collection of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University; see Opperman 1977, vol. 2, p. 811 (D 900), and Paris, 2001, p. 88.

Salvi (2002, pp. 173–74) suggests that Oudry's animal compositions were directly influenced by Boel's life studies of the Ménagerie animals, which were kept at the Gobelins manufactory.

4. See A. Mongan, "An Album of Watercolors by Oudry," *Annual Report, Fogg Art*

Museum, Harvard University (1953–54), pp. 10–11. Opperman (1966, p. 390) at first thought these watercolors to be of menagerie animals, and thus done from life, but later indicated (Opperman 1977, vol. 1, p. 498) they were done from Boel's oil sketches.



✦ Rhinoceros ✦

1749

Oil on canvas, 306 × 453 cm
(120½ × 178⅛ in.)
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

THIS EXTRAORDINARY PAINTING, a life-size portrait of a mid-eighteenth-century celebrity rhinoceros named Clara, had, until 2001, not been seen publicly for at least 150 years (see Mark Leonard's essay in this catalogue) and is little known in the literature.¹ Although Clara was not herself a member of Louis XV's Versailles menagerie, this painting was part of the suite of animals acquired by the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1750. The painting hung in the Schwerin castle until the building was renovated in the mid-eighteenth century, when it was displaced to dwellings in town. Of course, a painting this size could hardly be accommodated in storage, so the work was removed from its stretcher, carefully rolled, and placed in a crate, where it safely remained for the next century and a half.²

The great rhinoceros was brought by her Dutch keeper to Versailles early in 1749, reputedly offered to the king for an exorbitant price, and dispatched to Paris, where she stood as a well-attended exhibit at the Saint-Germain fair.³ Clara had been on the Continent since 1741 and was wildly popular, initiating a wave of rhino-mania, manifested in commissions of her image in print, paint, porcelain, bronze, and textiles (see Charissa Bremer-David's essay in this catalogue). Her debut in Paris, the fashion capital of the Western world, was sensational. A Countess Dash refers to a hair-ribbon design inspired by Clara, "ribbons à la rhinoceros." She goes on, "This villainous animal has become involved in everything . . . the little masters have even invented armor of the rhino. Will not someone, some clerk, write an epic poem on the rhinoceros."⁴

Oudry sketched Clara at the fair sometime between early February and late April 1749, working up his submission to the upcoming Salon. The entry in the Salon *livret* of 1750 reads as follows: "No. 38, the Rhinoceros, life size, on a canvas 15 feet long and 10 feet high. This animal was painted in its pen at the Fair of St. Germain: it belongs to the Artist."⁵ Oudry completed several drawn studies (fig. A), carefully analyzing the extraordinary beast.⁶ Born in Assam, Clara was an Indian rhinoceros, the largest of the three rhino

species.⁷ She had a single black horn and a gray-brown hide with skin folds that give her an armor-plated appearance. Her strangely shaped upper lip is semiprehensile, useful in munching on leaves and branches. Given her regular, generous feedings, Clara probably attained the upper reach of the scale of average weight for her species, 1,800–2,700 kilograms.

Rhinoceroses can be dangerous, but Clara was famous for her tame nature, having been raised in captivity from a very early age. Oudry gives an accurate sense of her great girth, silhouetting her profile against the blue-lit background. Her presence is less menacing than melancholic, this great animal having been carted across Europe, permanently on show. Her ears twitch in different directions, she looks directly out of the composition, and the viewer is struck by the profound pathos of this awesome, clearly sensitive and sentient animal.

The rarity of the rhinoceros, and its enormous size and unusual shape, inspired a great deal of mythologizing. The rhino horn was and still is considered to have valuable medicinal powers. In traditional Asian medicine, it serves as an aphrodisiac and is used in the treatment of such ailments as epilepsy, fevers, and strokes.

In the seventeenth century, rhinos were known in the Western world mainly through artists' depictions, drawn from either hearsay or memory and generally embellished by fantastic, exotic, or mythical notions.



FIGURE A
Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study of the "Dutch" Rhinoceros*, ca. 1749. Black chalk on blue paper, 27.6 × 44.4 cm (10⅞ × 17½ in.). London, The British Museum, inv. 1918.6–15.7.





In this context, Oudry's firsthand observation of the rhino, and his carefully skilled recording of every aspect of her physical appearance, can be seen as an act of the Enlightenment, a gathering of scientific knowledge that usefully dispelled misleading or ignorant conceptions of the Asian beast. It was in 1749, the year of Clara's arrival in Paris, that Buffon convinced the Imprimerie royale to begin printing the first volumes of his *Histoire naturelle*. Buffon carefully studied Clara over several visits to the Saint-Germain fair, writing a long and very detailed description of her in volume II (not published until 1764), in which he details her precise measurements, the color and texture of her skin, the shape and constitution of her horn, her diet, and her general mood.⁸ His entry included an engraving of Clara, done by Jean-Charles Baquoy, after a drawing by Jacques de Sève of Oudry's portrait (fig. B).⁹ Thus Oudry's artistic creed and the naturalists' empirical imperative collaborated in disseminating a more accurate understanding of the rhino in Europe.¹⁰

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. I (p. 349); Clarke 1986, pp. 64–68; Schwerin 2000, no. 75; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 141; Rosenberg 2005, no. 776.

Notes

1. In Opperman's seminal and still commanding dissertation (1972; published 1977), he states that although he knows the painting to be in Schwerin, he "has not looked for it." He goes on, "Although supposedly painted from nature, the animal is very close to Dürer's famous woodcut of 1515. But then all rhinoceroses look alike.": Opperman 1977, vol. I, p. 488 (p. 349).

2. In the 1863 Schwerin castle inventory of paintings on view in "Bürgerhäuser" in the Alexandrinenstrasse, the painting is listed as being rolled up in a crate. Mark Leonard

suggests that the painting, large as it is, has in fact been cut down at the top, probably to fit a wall decoration in Schwerin. Leonard made this discovery when studying the much smaller but very accurate copy of Oudry's painting made by the Schwerin court artist Johann Dietrich Findorff in 1752.

3. See Robbins 2002, p. 94 and Ridley 2004, ch. 6.

4. Loisel 1912, vol. 2, p. 279.

5. "No. 38, le Rhinoceros, grand comme nature, sure une toile de 15 pieds de large sure 10 de hauteur. Cet animal a été peint dans sa loge à la Foire de St. Germain: il appartient

à l'auteur.": Collection des Anciennes Expositions, Salon de 1750, vol. 15 (Paris, 1889), quoted in Clarke 1986.

6. There is also a red chalk drawing in a private collection in Paris; see Clarke 1986, p. 66, fig. 42.

7. Initially widespread, found in northern Pakistan, much of northern India (including Assam), Nepal, and northern Bangladesh.

8. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle* (1749–88), vol. II, pp. 174–98.

9. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle* (1749–88), vol. II, p. 202, pl. VII.

10. Clark 1977, p. 65.



FIGURE B
Jean-Charles Baquoy (French, 1721–1777), *Rhinoceros*, 1764. Engraving after Jacques Eustache de Sève (French, d. 1795), 22 × 17.5 cm (8 7/8 × 6 7/8 in.). Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 84–B8203.

♦ Lion ♦

1752

Oil on canvas, 307 × 258 cm
(120⁷/₈ × 101¹/₂ in.)
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum

USED BY THE ROMANS in staged fights, lions were a staple of aristocratic animal collections and were collected by Renaissance princes as symbols of strength and pride. Beginning in the thirteenth century, Florentine aristocrats kept a lion house near the Palazzo Vecchio, giving the nearby Via dei Leoni its name.¹ Lions have been represented across the history of art and illustration, though over the ages they have often been copied by artists from other representations, to the consistent detriment of anatomical accuracy.

In the tradition of Pieter Boel, who completed several very fine life studies of lions in Louis XIV's menagerie, Oudry's paintings of lions are based on empirical study. The Versailles menagerie expanded at the end of the seventeenth century to accommodate lions in a pen next to ostriches.² Artists came to study these great animals. Unlike Alexandre-François Desportes, Oudry went to study the beast as much to capture in powerful, sensitive pastel and pencil the stormy temperament of the king of animals as to transcribe its anatomy.³

Oudry had early success with a painting of a lion, *Le Lion et le moucheron* (The Lion and the Fly) completed in 1732. The painter used a fable from La Fontaine as the basis for this impressive, large-scale lion portrait. He immediately offered the painting to the duke of Mecklenburg, and in 1735 to the court of Sweden. Stating explicitly that work was done "at the menagerie in Versailles, after nature," Oudry was asking the significant sum of 1,200 livres. The painting was exhibited at the Salon of 1737 and finally acquired, in 1747, for the royal château in Stockholm (now in the Nationalmuseum).⁴

Extinct in the wild since 1922, the particular species pictured here is known as an Atlas lion, with a distinctive blonde mane around the face, which turns black and black-brown as it extends down the chest through the

front legs and along the length of the belly to the groin.⁵ This beast comes from the woodlands of the Atlas Mountains in north and northwestern Africa. Roman rulers had hundreds of these cats, frequently using them in Christian martyr mauling for sport.

Here Oudry pictures the massive form of this great beast in a life-size portrait. To accommodate the extraordinary scale, the artist used two pieces of linen sewn together, laying down the lion first and then painting in the landscape around him.⁶ Oudry captured a sense of ferocity in the physical presence of this male, built for fighting more than hunting (most hunting is done by teams of lionesses.) This painting was not part of the original suite of menagerie paintings acquired by the duke of Mecklenburg but rather was added to the group in 1752 after its exhibition that year in the Paris Salon.⁷ Along with *Rhinoceros*, the painting was removed from view in the middle of the nineteenth century and stored away until this exhibition began several years ago.

LITERATURE: Opperman 1977, vol. 1 (p. 350); Schwerin 1986, p. 57; Schwerin 2000, no. 76; Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 141, fig. 3; Rosenberg 2005, no. 777.

Notes

1. Lloyd 1971, p. 47.

2. Loisel 1912, vol. 2, p. 129.

3. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 158.

4. Salmon in Fontainebleau–Versailles 2003–4, p. 158.

5. Michael Dee, general curator of the Los Angeles Zoo, classified this lion.

6. Conservation report, Tiarna Doherty, associate conservator, Paintings Conservation, Getty Museum. Like the image of Clara, the *Lion* had also been folded, then rolled for storage. Unlike Clara, he was then crushed along one side of the folded roll, suffering more extensive paint flakes and losses.

7. See Locquin 1906, p. 308. Opperman (1977, p. 489, p. 350) does not list this picture as having been shown at the Salon, though he states it is possible that a little picture from the Salon of 1753 (p. 492, p. 358) was the sketch for this work.

OPPOSITE

Digitally enhanced image taken during conservation.



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In the 1720s and 1730s, Jean-Baptiste Oudry established himself as the preeminent painter in France of hunts, animals, still lifes, and landscapes. *Oudry's Painted Menagerie* focuses on a suite of eleven life-size portraits of exotic animals from the royal menagerie at Versailles, painted by Oudry between 1739 and 1752. These paintings eventually found their way into the ducal collection in Schwerin, Germany. Among them is the magnificent portrait of Clara, an Indian rhinoceros who became a celebrity in mid-eighteenth-century Europe. Her portrait has been out of public view for more than a century, and it is presented here in its newly conserved state.

With essays by

Colin B. Bailey

Marina Belozerskaya

Charissa Bremer-David

Christoph Frank

Christine Giviskos

Mark Leonard

Mary Morton



FRONT COVER

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Rhinoceros*
(detail), 1749. Schwerin, Staatliches
Museum. (See plate II.)

BACK COVER

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Cassowary*, 1745.
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum.
(See plate 8.)



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