

Work, rest & play

Women and children in prints after Chardin

Though the name of Chardin may be familiar to those aware of such paintings as *Woman taking tea* in the Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow and the *Young Schoolmistress* in London's National Gallery, the names of the printmakers who contributed to Chardin's success are less likely to strike a chord. These artists - Lépicié, Cochin, Filloeul, Le Bas and Surugue - also deserve recognition in their own right. They were members of the prestigious French Royal Academy as well as Chardin, and their prints which reproduced his paintings were hung with Chardin's works at the annual Salon exhibition in Paris.

The prints in this exhibition raise several issues regarding the nature of reproductive prints; specifically, about transparency, interpretation and translation of a painter's image into print. As the prints are often seen to impose narratives on Chardin's compositions, the display also explores some aspects of the artist's subject matter and how it relates to preoccupations of 18th-century France.

Chardin and genre painting

By anyone's standard, Jean Siméon Chardin (1699-1779) enjoyed a full and accomplished career. He was made counsellor and later treasurer of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture; he was handed the charge of hanging the annual art exhibition at the Louvre; he was presented to King Louis XV at Versailles; his works were bought and commissioned by royal seats of Europe; and he was appointed living quarters in the Louvre itself. All of this was quite an achievement for the son of a billiard-table maker, who never left Paris, had no academic training and who was admitted into the Royal Academy as a 'painter skilled in animals and fruits'.

Chardin's earliest figure paintings, which brought him so much acclaim, are thought to date from about 1733. However, his great success hinged upon the reappearance of the annual art exhibition (the Salon), which commenced in 1737 after a long break. The Salon was a major, juried exhibition venue, where works would be seen, reviewed and talked about by fellow artists and prospective buyers. Chardin had been five years old when the last Salon had taken place. He exhibited seven figure paintings at the 1737 Salon, leading one reviewer to remark that he had 'no doubt that they will do the public the service of having them engraved soon'.¹ Prints reproducing the paintings appeared for sale the following year.

However, Chardin's success and the proliferation

of his images in the form of prints were not welcomed by everyone, including the connoisseur collector Pierre-Jean Mariette:

*The prints which have been engraved after the paintings of M. Chardin... have become fashionable prints, which... have dealt a blow to serious prints... The public enjoys seeing the events which occur daily in their own homes, and do not hesitate to give those preference over more sophisticated subjects.*²

Like many others, Mariette saw the Royal Academy as an institution to train and promote the careers of its members for the glory of France, and that what should be most popular was History painting. It was tradition that academicians were ranked in a hierarchy according to the subject matter they painted. 'History paintings', the large-scale portrayal of mythological, allegorical or biblical scenes, were deemed the highest calling for artists because they required gifts of imagination and invention. Lower categories, such as landscapes, animals, seascapes, fruits, and flowers, were open to artists capable only of 'imitation' of nature. That the hierarchy was thought to accurately reflect the skills of the painters is clear from the reaction of one commentator after he had seen some of Chardin's first figure scenes: 'There is all the more reason to praise him as he has been received by the Academy as an animal painter'.³

The growing interest in works by Dutch and Flemish artists, who specialised in 'low' subject matter (such as village festivals, carousing couples and people drinking and smoking), was testing the rigidity of the Academy's hierarchy. Some of the leading amateur collectors in Paris acquired large numbers of paintings by artists such as Daniel Teniers, Abraham Brouwer and Van Ostade, which, in the second half of the century were recorded for posterity in *Recueils d'estampes*, bound volumes of prints which reproduced their paintings and drawings (see cat. nos. 30 & 31). This interest in these scenes of everyday life was guaranteed to have an effect on the output of contemporary French artists.⁴

The introduction of the 2003 exhibition catalogue, *The Age of Watteau*, explains that what we now call 'genre painting' (i.e. depictions of everyday life) was not defined in France until the middle of the century.⁵ In fact, many theorists ignored genre painting altogether. Chardin's paintings of women carrying out domestic tasks or of young men blowing bubbles were referred to as 'dans le goût flamand' or 'dans le goût de Teniers' or 'Girardou' (Gerard Dou). The terms were

not meant to denote a similarity in subject matter, but rather to indicate the genre, for lack of a more specific term.

As the words of Mariette suggest, disruption of the hierarchy was considered a moral problem as well as an aesthetic one. Critics worried that this trend for everyday-subjects over and above those portrayed in history painting would divert people to the superficial from subjects worthy of contemplation. In 1756 authors of a sale catalogue complemented the 'subtle execution and elegant colouration' of genre painting, but concluded that 'their composition, making no attempt to seriously engage one's mind and spirit, purveys a merely superficial and momentary beauty'.⁶

Such concern did not stem the tide, however. 'I am aware of the distinction one ought to make between such limited subjects and others which require much greater imagination,' wrote the Commissaire Dubuisson in 1737, 'but also I claim only to be telling you what I enjoyed the most...'.⁷ Analysis of 18th-century archives drawn up by notaries after a person's death reveals he was not alone: Dutch and Flemish genre scenes were commonly found in Parisian households.⁸

Chardin and his printmakers

The prints after paintings by M. Chardin always succeed
Advertisement for *L'instant de la méditation*, October 1747 (see cat. no. 14)

The printmakers who etched and engraved plates after Chardin's paintings were men of high standing with distinguished academic careers. François Lépicié (1698-1755) was secretary and historiographer to the French Academy of Painting from 1736, and ended his career as a professor of history at the *École des Éléves Protégés*. The majority were among the handful of printmakers admitted to join the Academy, a real achievement, since it was only relatively recently that printmakers had been accepted as members.⁹

The exact details of the relationship between Chardin and his printmakers are not known. It is presumed that Chardin received some monetary reward for the sale of the prints, but no records survive to reveal exactly how much this was. However, it is certainly true that Chardin was keen to have his pictures engraved. In 1746 he wrote a letter to the Swedish ambassador Carl Frederick Scheffer, who was eager to relieve the artist of two paintings which had been commissioned by Luise Ulrike, the future queen of Sweden: '... since France will be losing these two paintings and since one owes something to one's nation, I would hope that the count [Carl Gustaf Tessin, the former ambassador] will allow me enough time to have them engraved'. Patriotic endeavour might have been the overwhelming motive for Chardin's request, but he is perhaps hardly likely to complain to the ambassador about a loss of revenue.

The production of prints reproducing Chardin's paintings also benefitted Chardin's countrymen, who lamented not only Chardin's slow working nature, but

also that they were deprived a chance of seeing the works once they were finished. One of the prints was mentioned in the journal *Mercure de France* with the statement 'It is unfortunate that the various paintings by Chardin pass into foreign countries and are lost to us'.¹⁰

The sale of the prints was usually announced in the *Mercure*. The prints were often described as 'very well engraved', but of greater interest is the occasional additional information about how well and how fast the prints were selling. In 1739 readers were informed that Lépicié's *La Gouvernante* had 'succeeded very well', and in 1741 that 'the rapid sale of [Lépicié's *Le Négligé*] is solid proof that it is to the liking of the public'. Later in 1753 in a lengthy advertisement for Cars's print after Chardin's *La Serinette*, the *Mercure* wrote that 'when two artists of great merit are united, one announces their work with great boldness'.

The prints have long been considered contentious by art historians writing about the paintings, principally because they are seen to give Chardin's compositions a subject which was not intended by the painter, via the addition of poems beneath the image. When the verses have been mentioned in the past, scholars frequently criticise their content, stating that they do not possess any literary quality and they 'undervalue Chardin's work and point to a general lack of comprehension'.¹¹

We do not know how involved Chardin was in the production of the prints, or what he thought about the addition of the verses. Perhaps, in the absence of evidence, we can say that he did not actively disapprove of the printmakers' interpretations. Most of the verses aren't prescriptive, but written subjectively in the first person ('I consider', 'I bet', etc). The poems were often described in the *Mercure* as well matched to the images: 'the subject is given in Lépicié's verse at the bottom of the print' stated the announcement for *La Bénédicité*. The verse for *La Mère Laborieuse* (which is in fact written in the voice of the mother), was also described as explaining perfectly the subject of the painting.

These verses should not be disregarded as they are written by Chardin's friends and are to be found on the majority of the prints. As well as composing quatrains for his own prints, Lépicié also supplied a verse to a print by Surugue: (cat. no. 14). Chardin's friend Pesselier, who supplied the verses for a couple of prints, was a poet and contributor to the *Encyclopedie*. Perhaps Chardin accepted that the poems, sometimes including names from French theatre and literature, would add further interest to the compositions and attract more sales. That purchasers of the prints also accepted them is testified by the fact that so many impressions survive with the margins untrimmed.

In addition to the verses, the prints have other methods of shaping interpretation of Chardin's designs. Ryan White has described how some of the details in *Le Bas*' *Le Négligé* are significantly altered from those in the painting. White argues that with the swirl of smoke rising from the candle *Le Bas* clearly took particular care to preserve and extend the

painting's meaning, while answering the formal demands of his own medium'.¹² By adding this detail, Le Bas encouraged the interpretation of other objects in the picture in terms of *vanitas* symbolism. Thus the presence of the clock is not just a piece of furniture, but rather a symbol of fleeting time.

Anne L. Schroder has examined the differences between the painting of *La Mère Laborieuse* and the print by Lépicié (cat. no. 9). The printmaker made several alterations, including sharpening the lines on the mother's face, darkening the little girl's forehead ('the seat of imagination and learning'), and isolating the two figures using the heavily shaded panels of the screen. In the verse beneath the image, Lépicié assumed the voice of the mother admonishing her daughter for spoiling her embroidery. 'Evidently Lépicié felt compelled to alter the emotional expressions and interrelationship of Chardin's figures to correspond with the message of the confrontation in his appended verses'.¹³

Etching and engraving

Chardin's pictures, which were admired for their colours as well as their 'broad, full and loose' handling, constituted a major challenge for printmakers. Using only etched and engraved lines, they had to reproduce the works of a painter who declared that he 'must work at representing the general mass as accurately as possible, the shades and colours, the contours, the effects of light and shade'.¹⁴

Chardin's printmakers reproduced Chardin's shades and colours using a combination of the linear techniques, etching and engraving. Engraving involves manually digging lines and dots out of a metal plate using a special tool called a burin, whereas etching uses acid to corrode the plate where it has been exposed through an acid-resistant ground (for further details see p.6). In the 17th century artists such as Rubens and Van Dyck preferred to collaborate with engravers rather than etchers because the latter was likely to impose too much of their own style into the design. However printmakers began to use etching in combination with engraving in order to sketch out the basic design on the plate, before 'finishing' the design with engraved lines. Etching part of the design also helped to speed up production, as it is a less laborious (though more dangerous) technique than engraving.

From the 1720s printmakers in France realised that the inherent properties of etching - the freer, more spontaneous line - were particularly suitable for reproducing contemporary paintings which featured expanses of landscape, such as those by Jean Antoine Watteau. Some art historians even refer to the printmakers who produced these plates as the 'Watteau School' of engravers: 'their tones ... are more sensitive, more delicate; - their figures have more life and spirit, and they are more sensitive and more sympathetic reflections of the originals ...'¹⁵

The printmakers in this exhibition used different combinations of etching and engraving in their plates. Those of Fessard, Filloeuil and some of Cochin's prints are predominantly etched, while Lépicié's plates are

mostly engraved. His attempt to reproduce the tonal quality of Chardin's paintings was to produce highly worked networks of lines. In contrast, Cochin did not work his plates to such a great degree, letting the white of the paper play a part in the composition (see cat. no. 20).

In 1745 Cochin's son, who became one of the most prolific printmakers of the century, produced an extensively revised edition of an etching manual written by Abraham Bosse in 1645/3. Interspersed within Bosse's original text were detailed instructions on how to etch different aspects of a design, such as figures, drapery and landscape, followed by further information about the best method for adding engraved detailing. Of particular interest regarding the question of how etching was considered in the 18th century is this passage from Cochin's introduction, where he explained the special qualities that etching added to engraving:

...we could say that if the burin finishes and perfects etching, it also receives in return great taste and merit. Etching gives engraving a soul that it otherwise lacks, or at least achieves with difficulty without it. Etching draws its contours with assurance and wit; it renders shadows with an awareness of surface plane that varies according to the different types of subject it represents, such as land, rocks, landscapes or fabrics of a different thickness, which the burin can achieve only unsatisfactorily, through evenness of tone and colour. Finally, etching renders flesh using preparatory dots that differ from the long strokes made by the burin, and from those made using drypoint, which are too uniformly round. By contrast, those produced by etching are more irregular and produce a different sort of blackness, and a mixture of the two produces a very agreeable surface texture. Certainly, before the invention of etching, engraving left something wanting in rendering History paintings when they are executed with ease and bravura.

Work

A good servant should know her meats well, and how to buy them; cook appropriately for the type of people she serves; ensure that the dishes and pots and pans are always clean; and ... Be prompt and diligent in returning from the errands she is given.

Audiger *La maison réglée* (1692)

In France, at the time Chardin was painting, domestic servitude was one of the largest employment sectors for the lower classes. Servants hoped to work in larger households where duties would be lighter, but most were employed by smaller households where they would be expected to turn their hand to most tasks. The titles given to the prints after Chardin - 'scullery maid', 'turnip peeler' - are usually condensed versions of the titles given to the paintings, and do not reflect the job titles most servants actually had.

The governess was one exception. The duties were described in Audiger's *La maison réglée*: a governess should feed and clothe the children of the household; keep them, their clothes, and their rooms clean; and make certain that they woke up and went to bed at the

correct times. She was to teach them to pray and take them to Mass. Chardin's governesses in *La Gouvernante* (cat. no. 11) and *La Bénédicité* (cat. no. 8) seem to be accurately portrayed. In *La Gouvernante* the young woman has been watching the boy as he played (cards, racket and shuttlecock lie on the floor of the room), and she is speaking to him before he goes off to a lesson (as shown by the books he holds under his arm). In *La Bénédicité* the woman is watching the younger child say grace before they start their meal.

The women in *La Ratisseuse* (cat. no. 2) and *l'Écureuse* (cat. no. 5) are of the type of unspecialised, unskilled female servant. The *Maison Reglée* is largely unconcerned with their duties, but the young women would have been expected to carry out the cleaning of the house. It recommends that the servant scrub the kitchen floor each morning, by 'throwing water everywhere'.¹⁶

Girls usually started work as servants in their late teens, and over the next 10-15 years would try to amass as large a dowry as possible in order to attract a husband who could offer economic security. They could earn relatively good money as servants, as food and lodging were provided for. However, they could achieve their goal only after great risk, as they were away from home and out of the protection of their families. In *La Pourvoyeuse* (cat. no. 1) the female servant in the foreground, who wears a portrait medallion around her neck, appears to be listening to the conversation of a man and woman behind her. One author summed up servants' success thus: 'Those who managed to marry were not only savvy – they were extremely lucky'.¹⁷ Marriage was extremely important to female servants as it meant they could stop work and become their own mistress (employers did not like to take on married couples as it presented a conflict of interests). The stereotype of a female servant dreaming of her future husband abounded in contemporary literature.

Until the end of the 18th century, servants did not receive wages in the modern sense. A fixed sum (a *récompense*) was agreed upon before they entered a household. This was part of the Old Regime mentality, of seeing work for a superior as a duty, not a commodity to be exchanged for cash. A servant would only see their money if they asked for a loan, which would be deducted from their final wage, or if they left their employer. The inevitable consequence of this was that servants often changed employers, which contributed to the negative stereotype that they were disloyal and fickle. The verse in the Fitzwilliam's impression of *La Ratisseuse* (cat. no. 2) suggests two alternatives for the maid's reverie: she is either dreaming of her future husband or of her money.

Servants saw the act of purchasing items for the household as a great privilege and opportunity to make a little extra money. The practice of padding accounts and 'making a market penny' was so prevalent that two vivid phrases were coined: *ferrer la mule* ('to shoe the horse') and *faire danser l'anse du panier* ('to make the basket handle dance'). The stereotype of the

profiteering servant has echoes in Lépicié's verse for the female servant in *La Pourvoyeuse* (cat. no. 1).

The idea of a bad servant was a compelling one for authors and playwrights. A crime committed by a servant was worse than by any other member of society because it involved betraying the trust of their masters or mistresses. The type was common in plays of the period, such as those by Lesage, Dancourt and Regnard. At its height the character developed into the *fourbe*, a deceitful schemer ready to betray everyone in the pursuit of his own interests. In 18th-century fiction, however, authors began to write of servants as intruders and spies. For instance, Marivaux's Marianne, plagued by doubts about her social origin, feels uncomfortable when she feels a servant looking at her.

This heightened sensitivity to the presence of servants is also found in the prints after Chardin. The poem on the first published state of *La Ratisseuse* reads: 'When our ancestors took from Nature's hands / These vegetables, proof of their simple way, / The art of making food into poison / Had not seen the light of day'. Poison seemed a natural weapon for a domestic, and the concern that servants would be able to identify poisons was one of the reasons why some authorities complained about the spread of literacy.

Rest

Leisure was the topic of a lively debate in 18th-century France. It was thought that people were entitled to leisure time as a break from their main, serious work, which was likely to be tiring. A small number of Chardin's women are portrayed in this mode (see cat. nos. 13-16). The woman in *Les Amusements de la vie privée* (cat. no. 13) is depicted with her feet up reading a book, but the presence of a sewing machine beside her suggests that she is taking a break from a more industrious activity.

Reading was encouraged by proponents of female education, especially if the text was in Latin, but certainly not if the language was Italian or Spanish (which would 'aggravate the faults of women'). The verse on *L'Instant de la méditation* (cat. no. 14) suggests that the woman is reading something practical.

The composition of cat. no. 14 was described in the *Mercur*e as a woman *dans son cabinet*. A *cabinet* could describe a variety of spaces within an 18th-century dwelling and could even refer to a space using a partition. The woman has created a small, private space by a fireplace using a screen.

The inclusion of a woman drinking tea (cat. no. 16) is an interesting addition to Chardin's portrayals of women enjoying private moments (there is also a tea pot and upturned cup with saucer in *La Mère Laboreuse*, cat. no. 9). Inventories of 18th-century households suggest that tea was not as widely consumed as coffee. Coffee became a craze in the 1730s and 1740s, following the fashions at Court, but tea drinking 'seemed to interest only the most cultivated levels of society'.¹⁸ Porcelain cups and saucers were also only found in the wealthiest households. Tea was more

likely to be consumed with friends in a social setting, rather than as something to be done in private.

Play

Unlike the work of Chardin's contemporaries, who often depicted men and women playing games with deliberate overtones of courtship and flirtation (see cat. no. 35), in Chardin pictures game-playing is the preserve of children. François Fenélon wrote in his *De l'éducation des filles*, 'Let children vary their studies from time to time by little turns of amusement... the ones they like best are those in which the body is in motion... a shuttlecock or a ball is all that is needed'. Some of Chardin's children have started to play as an obvious interruption of their more serious activities, implying that their games are approved (and perhaps witnessed) by an adult. The little girl in *The Girl with the shuttlecock* (cat. no. 22) is described in the added verse as 'without cares' but has scissors and a miniature pincushion attached to her waist by a ribbon, just as is seen on the mother in *La Mère Laborieuse*.

However, some authors see the games differently. Lesley H. Walker in *A Mother's Love* explains that the toys and game-playing in Chardin's pictures stand as warnings against the dangers of idleness, and which compete with the virtuous examples set by mothers and governesses.¹⁹ Indeed, the verses on *Le Négligé* and *La Maîtresse d'École* (written by the same man, Pesselier) suppose that there is no innocent condition of childhood for little girls, who are born vain and capable of deceit (cat. nos. 12 & 26).

The verse *Le Jeu de l'Oye* (cat. no. 24) declares that children are never too young to reflect on the capricious nature of life, which is reminiscent of the symbolism of children's games in Dutch and Flemish 17th-century paintings. In Paris in the 18th century, games of chance were considered deeply inappropriate because they led to bad behaviour, set a poor example to children and increased the likelihood of crippling debts. Card games were most notorious as a pastime for servants, especially male lackeys, who whiled away their spare time and money. Writers customarily cautioned parents against allowing their children to spend large amounts of time with servants, who would ruin their children's characters by exposing them to deceit and dishonesty.

Kate Tunstall has suggested that Chardin's depictions of games of chance are kept to an absolute minimum. In *Le Chateau de carte* the little boy is seated at a table which has been used for gambling, complete with a gambling chip and coin. However, if the child has been exposed to 'bad examples', he puts no thought to them, as he concentrates on building his castle of cards. Tunstall further notes that the child is using the cards not for gambling, but for a game where an element of skill is still involved.²⁰

Whatever the interpretation, the toys in Chardin's works certainly form a useful historical record. *The Birth of Intimacy* states that these small-value items were not often recorded in inventories, and 'pictorial sources are much richer in information'.²¹ Toys appear

quite frequently in Chardin's pictures: there are racquets and shuttlecocks (in *La Gouvernante, little girl with a shuttlecock*), packs of cards (in *La Gouvernante, Le Chateau de Carte*), drums (the little soldier, and *La Bénédicité*), dolls (*l'Inclination de l'âge*), a board game (*Le Jeu de l'Oye*) and a toy top (*Le Toton*).

NOTES

1. Anon [Jean-Florent-Joseph de Neufville de Brunaubois-Montador], *Description raisonnée des tableaux: exposés au Louvre. Lettre à Mme la marquise de S.P.R.*, 1738, p.8.
2. Quoted in Roland Michel *Chardin*, 1996 p.238.
3. Chevalier de Neufville in 1738. Chardin supposedly tricked his future sponsors at the Acadmy into thinking some of his still lifes were by a Flemish 17th century artist.
4. Only a fraction of Vence's collection of 200 paintings was by French artists, but he had several canvasses by Chardin. The second version of Chardin's *La Bénédicité* was painted 'with an addition so that it can serve as the pendant to a Teniers'. The addition was a long-handled copper pan containing two eggs (painting now in the State Hermitage Museum St Petersburg).
5. *The Age of Watteau, Chardin and Fragonard*, 2003, p.2.
6. Quoted in *ibid*, p.87.
7. Letter to the Marquis de Caumont on 20 November 1737. Quoted in Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.253.
8. Paradailhé-Galabrin, *The Birth of Intimacy*, p.159.
9. Artists first became associate members and were finally accepted as full members on the successful submission of a piece of work, which was usually assigned by the Academy. Cochin became a full member in 1731, Cars in 1733, Surugue in 1735, Lépicicé in 1740, and Le Bas in 1741.
10. Advertisement in the *Mercure* for Louis Surugue's print, 'Les Amusements de la vie privée', June 1747.
11. Paris, Düsseldorf, London, New York 1999: p.244, 234.
12. Ryan White in *Word and Image in the Long Eighteenth Century*, p.47.
13. Schroder, in Hanover, Toledo, Houston 1997, p.74.
14. Cochin, Charles-Nicolas. 'Essai sur la vie de M. Chardin.' 1780. publ. by Beaurepaire in *Precis analytique des travaux de l'Academie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Rouen 78 (1875-76): 417-41*.
15. T.H. Thomas, *French portrait engraving*, 1910, p.100.
16. Audiger, *La Maison réglée* p.85.
17. Fairchilds, *Domestic enemies*, p.91.
18. Paradailhé-Galabrin, *The Birth of intimacy*, p.93.
19. Walker, *A Mother's Love*, p.56.
20. Tunstall 'Chardin's Games' p.131-141.
21. Paradailhé-Galabrin, *The Birth of intimacy*, p.36.

Selected further reading

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- Tunstall, Kate E.**, 'Chardin's Games' in *French Social History/Games in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Anthony Strugnell, Voltaire Foundation 2000, p.131-141.
- Walker, Lesley H.**, *A Mother's Love: crafting feminine virtue in Enlightenment France*, Bucknell University Press, 2008.
- White, Ryan**, 'Undertanding Painting, Print and Verse: Chardin's Le Négligé ou Toilette du matin' in *Word and Image in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Renata Schellenberg, Cambridge Scholars 2008, p.44-54.

NOTE ON THE PRINTS IN THE EXHIBITION

Most of the prints come from the collection of John Charrington, who was Honorary Keeper of Prints at the Fitzwilliam Museum from 1909 until his death in 1939. In 1936 Charrington gave the Museum his large collection of portrait prints as well as generous donation to build a Print Gallery (Gallery 16) and an adjacent office. Each of his prints is dry stamped with his collection mark; the letters 'JC' encircled. However, the prints after Chardin were not part of the gift. They were acquired for the Museum at Charrington's posthumous sale in 1940. Christie's auction house called the sale 'a tragedy', as the lots went for well below their estimated value, on account of the war. For instance, in 1924 and 1925 Charrington had paid a combined £130 for impressions of Lépicié's *La Bénédicité* (£40), *La Gouvernante* (£35), *La Mère Laborieuse* (£35) and *Maîtresse d'Ecole* (£20). All of these sold for just £10.10.0 in 1940. Some of them were auctioned in their frames, suggesting they were among Charrington's favourite prints.

Louis C. G. Clarke (1881-1960), director of the Fitzwilliam Museum between 1937 and 1946, was instrumental in purchasing prints from Charrington's sale. He also acquired a large number of other French prints for the Museum. The introduction to his Commemorative exhibition (20 Oct-23 Dec 1981) remarked that 'Of the 242 prints recorded by Lawrence and Dighton the Museum had no more than a dozen in 1936. Twenty-five years later the number had increased to one hundred and thirty-five, many of them in more than one state, including several examples of the very rare and greatly esteemed preliminary etchings'.

Incidentally, the founder of the Museum, Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam (1745-1816), had only two prints after Chardin, contained within one of his two large albums of prints by J.P. Le Bas. However, he did place

them close to the front of the first album, perhaps denoting a personal preference.

Printmaking terms

BURIN

A small steel rod with a sharpened point used for *engraving* a metal plate. It leaves a distinctive V-shaped groove in the plate's surface. Printmakers used it to add heavier accents to a plate started in *etching*.

ENGRAVING

Engraving is a form of *intaglio* printing, meaning an image is printed by inking an incised (engraved) surface. The engraver uses a tool called a *burin* to incise lines into the plate. To print an image the plate is inked, and the surface wiped clean so that only the grooves retain any ink. To ensure that all the ink is transferred to the paper they must both be placed in a press which can apply great pressure. To facilitate the transferral the paper is dampened. This process means that the paper is left with an indentation called a plate mark from where the edges of the metal plate were pressed into the sheet. It is a much more physically demanding technique than etching because it not only requires great physical strength but also great skill to incise an even line.

ETCHING

Etching is also an *intaglio* technique, but the recesses in the plate are achieved chemically rather than manually. The plate is heated and coated with an acid-resistant ground. The artist then draws with an etching needle, which easily scrapes through the ground leaving lines of exposed metal. Van Dyck used a soft ground as he was able to move the etching needle very easily. The disadvantage of the softer ground is that it can be dislodged more easily. The plate is then immersed in acid, which bites (corrodes) into the copper plate where it has been exposed. If the artist wants some lines to appear deeper than others so that they will print more heavily, these lines can be exposed for a second immersion whilst protecting the other lines with an acid-resistant varnish. When the ground has been cleaned off, the plate is then ready for printing.

IMPRESSION

An *impression* is a single pull printed from a plate.

MEZZOTINT

The plate is roughened all over with a tool which is rounded at one end, called a 'rocker'. It is rocked in multitude directions until the whole surface is covered in pits. A completely rocked plate would print a solid black. A printmaker achieves an image by rubbing away the roughness on the plate with a burnisher or scraper, so that the pits in the metal hold less ink.

STATE

The condition and appearance of the plate when a number of impressions were printed. If alterations were subsequently made to the plate, any further impressions would represent a different or later *state*.

CATALOGUE

BN Inventaire [reference to *Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes. Inventaire du fonds français; graveurs du dix-huitième siècle*, vols. I-XIV, Paris 1930-77]

Bocher [reference to Emanuel Bocher, *Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin*. Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1876]

Provenance: [previous collectors where known (reference to F. Lugt, *Les Marques de Collection de dessins et estampes*, Amsterdam 1921, *Supplément*, The Hague 1956) and source of acquisition]

1 *La Pourvoïeuse*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published November 1742 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 61

Provenance: Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], February 1925; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 82. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940 (P.105-1940)

*From your look, my dear young girl
I calculate that, recklessly,
You borrow from the housekeeping
The cash you need to clothe yourself.*
(Chardin, 2000, p.234)

La pourvoïeuse was the title given to the first version of the painting which Chardin exhibited at the Salon in 1739 (a *pourvoyeur* or *pourvoïeuse* is a supplier, in the sense of the English word 'purveyor'. The painting is usually translated into English as 'The Return from Market'). The composition was described in the journal *Mercure de France* as 'a cook who comes into her kitchen from the market carrying bread and meat'. Commentators who have admired the painting for its formal qualities have been irritated by the verse Lépicié added to his print, which accuses the woman of stealing from the household expenses. One of the privileges of the cook in a French household was to run errands at the market, so that they would have the opportunity to collect the change. The activity was so prevalent that two phrases were coined in connection: *ferrer la mule* and *faire danser l'anse du panier* (see p.4). Lépicié cleverly played into the existing stereotype of the dishonest servant, which no doubt gave the print more appeal.

In contrast to some of the other printmakers in this exhibition, Lépicié only used a minimal amount of etching. One of the uses of etching in combination with engraving was to lightly sketch out the design on the plate. Some etched lines are detectable in the vegetables, but most have been covered over by the dense network of engraved lines.

2 *La Ratisseuse*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published January 1742 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 60

Provenance: John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 23. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.106-1940)

*Of you, modest kitchen maid,
My judgment is uncertain
Perhaps you are in love?
Or are you dreaming of your earnings?*

Chardin's painting of maid distracted from the task of preparing vegetables was shown in 1739 with the title *La ratisseuse de navets* ('the turnip scraper', although the paintings - there are three versions - are better known in English as 'the Turnip peeler' or 'the Kitchen maid'). Again, Lépicié adds a verse at the bottom of the plate, pondering the reason for the maid's vacant stare. Lépicié added poems to all of his prints after Chardin (and even supplied one for a plate by Surugue, see no. 14). What Chardin thought about the verses is not known but it has been assumed that since they *are* there he can't have objected too strongly. However, in an earlier state of this print Lépicié played up to the concern that the increasing literacy among servants would make it easier for them to poison their masters: 'When our Forebears took from Nature's hands/ these vegetables, proof of their simple way,/ The art of turning our food into poison /Had not yet seen the light of day' (translation from Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.258). The inscription on this impression has been printed from a separate plate. For the verse about poisoning to have been replaced entirely, the content must not have been to someone's taste, although it should be said it is much rarer to find impressions with this, milder quatrain.

3 *La Fontaine*

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published June 1739 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 258

Rousseau, Paris; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], May 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 26. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940 (P.94-1940)

The cistern was the main water supply for the household, located in the kitchen (one also appears in no. 1). They came in a variety of materials, though the one immortalised in Chardin's painting was copper. Copper cisterns were expensive items and found only in affluent households. The capacity was measured in *voies* (1 *voie* equalled 30 litres), and the most common sizes were 1 or 2 *voies*. This one looks closer to the latter. They were filled with water from communal wells, or municipal fountains, or bought from water-carriers.

Cochin's print was announced in the *Mercure de France* along with its pendant *La Blanchisseuse* (no. 4) in June 1739. The advert went on to say that the prints were 'well deserving of comparison with the paintings, in the opinion of the enlightened public which saw them exhibited at the last Salon'. This might have been a reference to Cochin's printmaking technique. In his attempt to interpret the texture and fluidity of Chardin's brushwork, Cochin chose predominantly to etch his plates, and the lines have a more lively quality. In 1745 Cochin's son, who was also a printmaker, published a revised edition of a manual on etching technique written by Abraham Bosse in 1645. In the preface Cochin described how a combination of etching and engraving was best for reproducing paintings which were 'free and less polished' (see p.3).

4 *La Blanchisseuse*

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published June 1739 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 257
Bought from the Print Duplicates Fund, August 1945 (P.362-1945)

The inscription on this print and its pendant (no. 3) do not contain verses. Instead they give more traditional descriptions of the printings they reproduce, stating their dimensions and current location. Antoine de la Roque was the editor of the *Mercure de France*, and collector of 17th Century Dutch and Flemish art. The paintings were described in his journal as 'in the style of Teniers'.

Washing was usually done by hired laundresses, who were often ex-servants, as it was one of the jobs open to women after marriage. Laundry maids had a physically demanding job, working with their hands in very hot water, pounding the cloth with wooden bat, perhaps steeping it in urine or lye, before starting the starching, drying and ironing. Because their job required so much space, large items of laundry were often carted off to washerwomen who lived in the suburbs. The child blowing bubbles could be taken as a *vanitas* symbol, a comment on the transience of life, or perhaps his inclusion is an allusion to current Enlightenment thinking, of the necessity of parents instilling their children with doctrines of hard work (see no. 9).

5 *L'Ecureuse*

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published 1740 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 265
Daniell; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], April 1923; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 82. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940 (P.92-1940)

Chardin often produced repetitions of successful paintings. The first version, which Cochin reproduces here, was shown at the in 1738 under the title *Une récuruse*; the second in 1757 as *une femme qui écur* (the verb *récurer* means to scrub or scour). In French households servants were not known by such specific names, unless they were chamber maids in wealthy households. Nevertheless, the paintings are usually referred to in English as 'The Scullery Maid', which denotes the lowest ranking of female servants, who had a heavy duty of menial tasks, including cleaning the kitchen, the pantry and all cooking utensils, as well as preparing foodstuffs for meals.

The lettering on the print and its pendant (no. 6) states that the paintings were in the collection of the Comte de Vence at the time they were engraved. He was another important collector of Dutch and Flemish 17th century art. At his sale in 1760 Chardin's paintings were bought by Madame de Pompadour. The painting was destroyed in World War II, although there is another version in the Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.

6 *Le Garçon Carbar[e]t[ie]r*

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published 1740 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 264
Daniell; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], April 1923; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 82. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.95-1940)

Cochin exhibited an impression of the print along with its pendant *l'Ecureuse* (no. 5) in the 1740 Salon. The painting had been shown two years earlier under the title *Un garçon cabaretier qui nettoye un broc* (a tavern-keeper boy who is cleaning a pitcher). A *cabaret* (*à vin* or *à bière*) was a beer or wine tavern. In English the painting is sometimes referred to as 'The Innkeeper', but given the figure's youth, 'tavern boy' is probably more appropriate, and better complements the lowly maid in the pendant print. This is one of the few depictions of a male in the exhibition. Chardin's preference for painting 'women rather than men, children and adolescents rather than adults' has often been noted (Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.189). In reality taverns were incredibly busy places, where people spent their free time, to eat and drink, professional transactions, a meeting venue, for street dealers. However, Chardin's portrayal of a young man apparently working alone is typical of his other single-figure genre scenes.

Cochin again demonstrates his skill in interpreting Chardin's painterly surfaces, although he does so here with more engraved lines, unlike the two earlier prints (nos. 3 & 4). His style is effective in rendering the irregular surfaces of the earthenware jug; just as they are in *l'Ecureuse* in capturing the reflected light in the

imperfections of the metal cauldron and the large ladle.

7 *L'Économe*

Etching and engraving by Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) after Jean-Siméon Chardin 1754

BN Inventaire 130

De Goncourt [Lugt 1089]; John Postle Heseltine (1843-1929) [Lugt 1508]; John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 25. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.103-1940)

*Wonder of wonders! A woman taking her time
For household matters from cares more pleasant by far
We see in this picture of olden days
The way things should be, not the way they are*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.281)

In 1745 Luise Ulrike, the future Queen of Sweden sent instructions to Chardin for him to paint a pair of pictures inspired by the titles 'The Strict Upbringing' and 'the Gentle Upbringing'. It is not altogether clear why Chardin painted two entirely different subjects, that of a woman reading (see no. 13), and 'a lady checking books of household expenses' (as this composition is described on no. 13). Both pictures could not be engraved at the same time, as Luise Ulrike had grown impatient for her purchases, and the paintings were whisked away before the annual Salon exhibition. One of Le Bas's students, the Swedish engraver Jean Eric Rehn (1717-1793), sent him a sketch of the painting and Le Bas exhibited an impression of this print in the Salon of 1755. This is an impression of the state before lettering, and before stripes were added to the woman's dress. It is largely executed in engraving, though Le Bas has made good use of etched lines to draw the wicker basket in the foreground. This impression once belonged to Edmond and Jules Goncourt, 19th century admirers of Chardin, who published long-researched articles in 1864 and did much to spread Chardin's reputation.

One of the activities encouraged by proponents of female education during the Enlightenment was fundamental arithmetic. Some of Chardin's paintings have been analysed in terms of their conformity with Enlightenment thinking, such as the importance of women educating their children, and children being encouraged to play. The verse added to the print negates this interpretation, by questioning the truthfulness of the scene, showing that purchasers of the print would also accept a less 'modern' explanation.

8 *Le Bénédicité*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published December 1744 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 70

Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], 8 December 1924; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 81. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940 (P.87-1940)

*The sister on the sly laughs at her little brother
Who stammers out his grace.
He hurries through his prayer without a hint of bother,
His appetite full reason for his haste.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.267)

The lettering at the bottom of the print states that the 'Original Painting is in the collection of the King'. Chardin had offered the painting (known in English as 'Saying Grace') along with *La Mère Laborieuse* (see no. 9) to King Louis XV in November 1740. Chardin painted two more versions of the painting following the success of the first, and Lépicié's print, which was exhibited in the Salon of 1745, also became enormously popular. The light-hearted nature of Lépicié's verse was adopted in England on a mezzotint by John Simon (1675-1751) copied after Lépicié's print with the title *The Grace*: 'His sharp stomach can't but scorn / This tidious Prayer 'fore meat / For piety's not with us born / But all are born to eat'.

Benedictus is the first word in the Latin grace, the prayer said before meals. Teaching children to pray one of the cornerstones of Christian upbringing, and had been treated by artists in the 17th century. The female figure is now assumed to be a governess due to the number of place settings on the table. One of the responsibilities of a governess was to give religious instruction to her charges (see p.3).

9 *La Mère Laborieuse*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published December 1740 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 58

Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], 8 December 1924; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 81. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.101-1940)

*A trifle distracts you my child:
This leaf work you did yesterday,
By each stitch I can see
How your mind often drifted away.
Believe me, that sloth you must shirk
To discover this truth, as you should:
That steadiness, prudence and work
Are more valued than beauty and goods.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.263)

The announcement in the *Mercure de France* called the print 'well worthy of the painting, since it is to the liking of everyone, even of the most discerning and choosy connoisseurs'. The text also made sure to

mention that the painting was in the collection of the King (see no. 8). This would be sure to add to its appeal.

The mother, wearing improbably comfortable high-heeled mules (or slippers), is examining some embroidery with her daughter. Lépicié's poem is in the voice of the mother, who scolds the girl for day dreaming and spoiling her work. 18th-century manuals on education stressed the importance of mothers providing good examples for their children, to ensure they did not become lazy or vain.

The room has some of the same features as in *l'Instant de la médiation* (no. 14), such as the small screen in front of the fire, and the large folding screen in front of the door. Screens were commonly found in 18th century homes, as a way of dividing up rooms which might have more than one purpose.

10 *La Bonne Education*

Engraving by Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
1757

BN Inventaire 131, state before lettering
Provenance: Christie's 15 October 1948, part of lot 2.
Bought from the Perceval Fund, October 1948.
(P.808-1948)

In a sparsely decorated room, a mother has put her embroidery aside to listen to her daughter as she recites her lesson. Chardin's contemporaries understood that the girl was reciting from the Bible. Enlightenment thinkers considered the religious education of girls of the utmost importance. François Fénelon wrote that 'it is necessary to prevail upon young persons to read the Gospel...and especially to inspire young girls with that sober and temperate wisdom which St Paul commends'.

Le Bas demonstrates his mastery in capturing the light as it filters through the window and falls on the two figures. Le Bas was a successful business man as well as a skilled engraver. Chardin's works were guaranteed to sell well, especially since his works had entered royal collections in France and Sweden. In its published state, the print was dedicated to the Queen of Sweden, who acquired one of the versions of this painting and its pendant, *Etude du Dessin* (see no. 30). The repetitions which Chardin exhibited in 1753 were among the last of his genre scenes, before he returned to still life subjects.

11 *La Gouvernante*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published December 1739 by Surugue
BN Inventaire 54

Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], 8 December 1924; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 81. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.96-1940)

*His pretty face dissembles well,
Obedience in all but name,
But I will bet his thoughts do dwell
On when he can resume his game*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.260)

Chardin's painting of a 'schoolboy scolded by his governess' was exhibited at the Salon in 1739, where it was hung with *La Pouvoyeuse* (see no. 1). Contemplating Chardin's career ten years later, the collector Pierre-Jean Mariette decided that it secured Chardin's reputation. Lépicié's print, which was the first he engraved after Chardin, was exhibited at the 1740 Salon. The inscription records that the painting is in the collection of the Chavalier Despuechs, a banker who owned a number of other paintings by Chardin (including *Jeu de l'oye*, see no. 26), but by the time the print was published, the painting had been snapped up by Prince Joseph Wenzel von Liechtenstein, ambassador to France.

The subject of the picture - adults instructing children - is similar to that of no. 9. However, in this instance Lépicié's verse assumes the voice of an invisible narrator, who 'explains' the scene as a little boy whose thoughts are fixated on his toys, rather than the imagining the reproving words of the adult (as in no. 9). During this period, governesses were employed to look after the general well being of the children in their care. Lessons would have been given by a male tutor.

12 *Le Négligé ou Toilette du matin*

Etching and engraving by Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) after Chardin
Published December 1741 by Le Bas
BN Inventaire 129

Provenance: Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], July 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 24. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.102-1940)

*Before the age of reason dawns,
She follows her mirror's seductive counsel.
In the will to please and the art of pleasing,
The fair ones, I see, are never children*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.274)

The painting was commissioned by the Swedish Ambassador Count Carl Gustaf Tessin (1695-1770), and was shown in the 1741 Salon. Le Bas' print was published before the year was out. It portrays a little girl looking at her reflection in a mirror as her mother pins a bonnet to her hair. 18th-century manuals on the education of girls were particularly insistent about discouraging vanity, although this is not the tone adopted in the verse, which was written by Chardin's friend the poet Charles Etienne Pesselier (1711-1763). The verse complements the changes that Le Bas made to Chardin's composition, including the girl's haughty expression and the swirl of smoke from the candle.

These embellishments encourage a reading of the details as emblems of *vanitas*, the idea of the temporary nature of worldly concerns, such as beauty and youth. This demonstrates that printmakers and publishers assumed that prints conveying more traditional old-world views would appeal to purchasers as much as those expressing more modern attitudes (e.g. nos. 20-22).

13 *Les amusements de la vie privée*

Etching and engraving by Louis Surugue (1686-1762) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published June 1747 by Surugue

Bocher 1 II/II

Provenance: Daniell; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], July 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 27. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.86-1940)

The painting was exhibited at the 1746 Salon and sent to the Swedish ambassador, with its pendant *l'Oconome* (see no. 7 for details). The print, which was exhibited the year after the painting, is dedicated to Madame Tessin, the wife of the former Swedish ambassador. In a previous state the castle name Drotningholm was spelled with a 'B'. The mistake was swiftly corrected by Scheffer, Tessin's successor. The Swedish did not take offence. In 1760 Luise Ulrike, the future queen of Sweden, awarded Chardin a medal for two more prints (correctly spelled) which were also dedicated to her (nos. 10 & 28). It was in the advertisement for this print that the *Mercure* lamented the disappearance of Chardin's works to faraway collections.

One contemporary critic thought he could interpret the type of literature the woman was reading: '[the picture] has a sort of languid air which comes across in the woman's eye...; we can tell that she is reading a novel and the tender feelings which this has aroused are making her daydream about some person whom she would like to see arrive soon' (quote in Roland Michel, 1996, p.220). In comparison with the erotically charged paintings on the subject of women reading by Greuze and Lavreince from the 1750s onwards, this statement appears to be quite a leap of the imagination.

14 *L'Instant de la médiation*

Etching and engraving by Louis Surugue (1686-1762) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published October 1747 by Surugue

Bocher 26

Bought from the Print Duplicates Fund, August 1945. (P.366-1945)

*This entertaining work, this pleasing read
Is how the wise Philis spends her leisure.
When one combines the useful with the pleasant,
Innocence is always the path to pleasure.*

The painting (exhibited 1743, and now lost) was actually a portrait of the wife of Jean-Jacques Le Noir, a furniture dealer, cabinet maker and good friend of Chardin. Chardin had already painted one of his sons building a house of cards, which was engraved by Lépicié (no. 19). Interestingly, neither print was advertised as a portrait, in order to broaden their appeal. The verse supplied by Lépicié calls her Philis. Some of the other verses use familiar names from contemporary literature or poetry (see also no. 16).

The image is particularly revealing of an 18th century woman enjoying a private moment. She is seated close to a fireplace, which were traditionally found in the kitchen and in the bedroom of the main occupant. The screen appears to be decorated with Chinese figures, reflecting the contemporary trend for Chinoiserie in France during this period. The well-thumbed book she is holding was called a *brochure* in 1743 Salon, which carries connotations of cheap literature sold by street vendors. However, if the painting was a portrait of a dear friend's wife, it is unlikely that Chardin would have insinuated she was reading anything 'improper', as was assumed of the woman in *Les Amusements*, published the same year (see no. 13).

15 *La Serinette*

Etching and engraving by Laurent Cars (1699-1771) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published November 1753 by Cars

Bocher 47

Given by Louis C. G. Clarke, 1948 (P.131-1948)

La Serinette was Chardin's first commission from Louis XV, for which he was paid 1,500 *livres*. The painting, exhibited in 1751 under the title *Une dame variant ses amusements* ('a lady varying her amusements'), portrays a woman taking a break from her embroidery to play a *serinette*, a type of hand organ used to teach canaries to sing (a canary is *un serin* in French). The commission had been secured by the first painter to the king Charles-Antoine Coypel (1694-1752), and Chardin alludes to this by including a framed print on the wall, Coypel's allegorical work *Thalia pursued by Painting*, which had been engraved by Lépicié in 1733.

Cars's print is dedicated to Marquis de Vandières, brother of Madame de Pompadour, into whose collection the painting eventually went. Vandières also acquired from her versions of *l'Ecureuse* and the *Garçon carbaretier* (see nos. 5 & 6). The print was described at length in the *Mercure* journal, including the statement: 'when two artists of this calibre are united, one announces their work with great boldness'. Cars exhibited an impression in the 1753 Salon.

16 *Dame prenant son thé*

Etching and engraving by Pierre Filloeuil (1696-c.1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published after 1739 by Filloeuil and Le Bas

BN Inventaire 127 state I/III

Daniell; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 21. Given by

the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.90-1940)

*How happy young Damis would be, Climène
If this boiling liquor
Could warm your heart,
And if sugar had the supreme power
Of sweetening in your mood
The sternness that suitor finds.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.216)

The painting 'The Lady taking tea', which is now in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, is thought to form a pair with the one of the versions of the boy building a house of cards, which was also engraved by Filloeuil (see no. 19), despite the fact that they were exhibited four years apart. The woman in the painting is thought to be Chardin's first wife, Marguerite Saintard, who died in 1735, soon after the painting was completed. She is depicted alone, about to enjoy a cup of tea. At this time in France, tea was not yet a common drink. It was usually drunk in company, as it was an expensive luxury. There is also a tea pot and cup in (no. 9).

Filloeuil reproduces Chardin's painting faithfully, even to the point of replicating the awkward perspective. The steam, however, is much more visible in the print, but the verse does not take the opportunity to allude to ideas of transience, as the verse does in (no. 19). Instead Surugue assumes the audience would prefer to imagine details about the woman's romantic life. The names Climène and Damis were used by Molière at the end of the 17th century, and by contemporary writers like Pierre de Marivaux.

The print and its pendant are undated, and appear not to have been announced in the *Mercure*. Filloeuil's other prints after Chardin (see no. 25) were issued in December 1739. The address on no. 25 is the same as appears on this print, but Le Bas is not included in the publication line.

17 [Woman sealing a letter]

Etching and engraving by Etienne Fessard (1714-1777) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published May 1738 by Joullain
BN Inventaire 13
Given by Louis C. G. Clarke, 1951(P.204-1951)

*Make haste then, Frontain: see your young mistress
Her tender impatience sparkles in her eyes
Already she can hardly wait for her heart's desire
To receive this message, her tender feeling's pledge
Ah! Frontain, you act so slowly that it's plain
The God of Love has never touched you heart.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.193)

Thought to be the earliest of Chardin's figure scenes, the painting was exhibited in 1738 under the title *Une femme occupée à cacheter une lettre*, and was engraved by Fessard the same year. Chardin's interior is more opulent than his later domestic scenes. Valets were

usually only employed by the wealthier households. Male servants were roughly twice as expensive to employ as their female counterparts.

Like Cochin, Fessard used a great deal of etching throughout the composition. However, the dog which jumps up at his mistress's side is almost lost in the detail of her dress. The unsigned verse takes up the obvious interpretation (given the fixated state of the woman) that she is waiting impatiently to seal a letter destined for her lover. Sending and receiving love letters was a common theme in Dutch 17th-century art, which continued into the next century.

(table case)

18 *Le chateau de cartes*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published September 1743 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 64
De Goncourt [Lugt 1089]; John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 21
Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.89-1940)

*Charming child, beguiled by pleasure,
We smile smugly at your frail work
But, between us, which is the more solid
Our endeavours or your chateaux?*
(‘Inside /interiors: Chardin's images of the family’ by René Démoris.)

Lépicié reproduces a painting shown at the Salon of 1741 as *Le fils de M Lenoir s'amusant a faire un chateau de cartes* ('the son of M. Le Noir amusing himself by making a house of cards'). The boy is the son of Jean-Jacques Le Noir and the woman in no. 14, although the identity of the figure was not revealed to prospective purchasers, neither in the announcement in the *Mercure* nor in the lettering on the print itself. The painting is sometimes taken as a pendant to the *La Maitresse d'école*, which was exhibited a year earlier, and was also engraved by Lépicié (see no. 26), prompting the supposition that the children in that picture also belong to the Le Noir family. As a mark of mutual respect Le Noir had a dedication to Chardin added to a print engraved by Le Bas after François Boucher (*Vue des environs de Beauvais*).

In 1762 purchasers of the January issue of the *British Magazine* were offered a free copy of this engraving, demonstrating the early interest in London for Chardin's work (see also no. 33).

(table case)

19 *Le chateau de carte*

Etching and engraving by Pierre Filloeuil (1696-c.1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published after 1737 by Filloeuil and Le Bas
BN Inventaire 144 II/III

Bought from the Perceval Fund, October 1951.
(P.207-1951)

*You are wrong to make fun of this adolescent
And his vain construction
Ready to fall at the first puff of air
Greybeards, even at the age of wisdom
There often comes from our brains
More ridiculous castles in Spain.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.232)

Un jeune homme s'amusant avec des cartes ('a young man amusing himself with some cards') was one of Chardin's paintings exhibited in 1737, at the first Salon exhibition since 1704. Chardin painted at least four versions of this subject in different formats, one of which was engraved by Lépicier, see no. 18). The theme of *vanitas* is touched upon in this poem, but the focus is on the frailty of adult endeavours, rather than the child's game. Enlightenment writers wrote about the importance of children playing.

20 [Little girl with her lunch]

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published July 1738 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 256
Bought from the Perceval Fund, October 1951.
(P.211-1951)

*Simple in my pleasures; in my meals,
I can also find my recreation.*

The painting was exhibited in 1737, at the first Salon since 1704, under the title *une petite fille assise s'amusant avec son déjeuner* ('a little girl, seated, amusing herself with her lunch'). Of the seven works Chardin sent to the Salon that year, four of them depicted children at play (see nos. 19, 21 & 22). The presence of a pincushion and scissors suggests that the little girl is taking a break from work, such as in the scene portrayed in no. 9.

This print and its pendant (no. 21) were the earliest of Cochin's prints after Chardin. Because of the large amount of white in the composition, Cochin could demonstrate his skill at creating contrasts, leaving areas of the plate unmarked. Emile Dacier wrote that Cochin's prints were the models for what was termed *gravure libre*, characterised by lines which are loose and free, on account of the predominant use of etching (as opposed to *gravure rangée* where a printmaker used the inherent properties of engraving to produce regular, systematic lines, see p. 4).

21 [Small child with attributes of childhood]

Etching and engraving by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published July 1738 by Cochin
BN Inventaire 255
John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 26. Given by the Friends of the

Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.99-1940)

*Without care, without sorrow, calm in my passions,
A windmill, a drum, fulfil all my pleasures.*
(*The Age of Watteau*, p.92)

This untitled print reproduces a painting shown in 1737 under the title *Un petit enfant avec des attributs de l'enfance*, ('small child with the attributes of childhood'). Cochin captures a particularly impish expression on the boy's face as he stands with a drum, a drumstick and a paper windmill on a long pole, which he seems to be using as a charger. The print was copied with the title *Le jeune soldat* (the little soldier).

22 [Little girl with a shuttlecock]

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicier (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
Published? 1742
BN Inventaire 63, state before all lettering
John Postle Heseltine (1843-1929) [Lugt 1508]; sale (Sotheby's) 3 June 1935, lot 170; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 26. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940 (P.98-1940)

*Without cares, without sorrows, tranquil in my desires,
A racquet and a shuttlecock form all my pleasure.*
(Paris, Düsseldorf, London, New York 1999-2000 p.222)

Chardin painted the picture as a pendant to one of the versions of the 'House of Cards' (now in Washington DC). The verse in the lettered state is only slightly changed from Cochin's print of 1738 (no. 21). Chardin's composition echoes some contemporary advice for the education of children: 'Let children vary their studies from time to time by little turns of amusement... the ones they like best are those in which the body is in motion... a shuttlecock or a ball is all that is needed,' wrote François Fenélon in his *De l'éducation des filles* (he added that parents should check to see that the child didn't become 'too excited'). There is a little pincushion and a pair of scissors attached to the girl's waist by a ribbon, just as they appear on the girl in no. 9, suggesting that she is taking a break from learning how to sew or embroider.

23 *L'Inclination de l'age*

Etching and engraving by Pierre-Louis Surugue (1716-1772) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
1743
Bocher 25
Bought from the Perceval Fund, October 1951.
(P.208-1951)

Of these frivolous games which occupy this age

*Do not throw scornful glances.
Under what we call by loftier names
What we do is much the same.*

The painting was exhibited in 1738 under the title *Le Portrait d'une petite fille de M. Mahon, marchand, s'amusant avec sa poupée* ('portrait of the little girl of Mr Mahon, merchant, amusing herself with her doll', now lost). Surugue exhibited an impression of the print in 1743, along with two others after Chardin (*l'Antiquaire* and *le Peintre*). The verse is written by Charles Etienne Pesselier, who also supplied the poem for no. 12. In its request to the viewer not to mock the child's games, it is similar to the verses on the prints of the boys making houses of cards (nos. 18 & 19).

24 *Jeu de l'oye*

Etching and engraving by Pierre-Louis Surugue (1716-1772) after Jean-Siméon Chardin
1745

Bocher 27 II/II

Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], 23 April 1925; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 22. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.97-1940)

*Before the game has run its course
With risks to fear and pitfalls to overcome,
Children, you are never too young to reflect
That this is an image of life.*

The painting was exhibited in 1743 under the title *Un tableau représentant des Enfants qui s'amusent au jeu de l'oye*. Surugue exhibited an impression of the print three years later. The game of goose was a board game similar to snakes and ladders.

It is interesting that Chardin did not portray the servants playing games (gambling was considered to be another of their vices along with pilfering, see no. 1). Chardin's contemporaries portrayed adults playing games to depict concepts of flirtation and romance (see no. 36).

25 *Les Bouteilles de Savon*

Etching and engraving by Pierre Filloeuil (1696-c.1754)
after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published December 1739 by Filloeuil

BN Inventaire 87

Rousseau, Paris; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], May 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 25. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.88-1940)

*Consider well, young man,
These little globes of soap.
Their movement so variable,
Their lustre so fragile*

*Will prompt you to say with reason
That many an Iris in this is very like them*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.205)

There are three known versions of the painting, but none of them corresponds exactly to the Filloeuil's engraving, making it likely that the fourth, missing version was the one exhibited at the 1739 Salon with the title *Un petit tableau représentant l'amusement frivole d'un jeune homme faisant des bouteilles de savon* (engravers usually engraved the first version exhibited at the Salon).

A much smaller child blowing soap bubbles appeared in Chardin's painting of the *Blanchisseuse*, which was engraved by Cochin the same year as this print (no. 4). Like many of the activities carried out by the children in Chardin's paintings - soap bubbles, card castles - they had 17th-century precedents as symbols for transience, allegories of fragility and ephemeral nature of human life. The print announced in December 1739, supposedly in the taste of 'Girardow' (Gerard Dou), which is perhaps a comment of the boy's activity as well as the fact that he is leaning out over a ledge (a pictorial device often used by 17th-century artists). There is an English mezzotint of a boy blowing bubbles, supposedly after a painting by Wissing, which plays on the old conventions ('O Charming Shadow! Lovely Bubble! / Thou short liv'd Comfort! Endless Trouble!'). However, in Chardin's work the depictions are emptied of their former associations. Although an 18th-century audience would probably still understand the old symbols (see no. 30), it was considered more in the current taste for the verse to speak of the inconstancies of the female heart.

26 *La Maitresse d'Ecole*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published in October 1740 by Surugue

BN Inventaire 55

Collection of the Albertina [Lugt 5f]; duplicate sale 1922; Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], February 1925; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 81. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.100-1940)

*If this charming child takes on so well
The serious air and imposing manner of a schoolmistress,
May one not think that dissimulation and ruse
At the latest come to the Fair Sex at birth.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.228)

It is possible that these two children are also members of the Le Noir family, portrayed in nos. 14 & 19). However, if they are, then their names were not mentioned in the title for the painting (*La petite maitresse d'école*), or on Lépicié's print, which was exhibited at the same Salon as the painting.

Philip Conisbee has written about the 18th-century pairing of the Los Angeles version of *Les*

bouteilles de savon with Dublin version of *La Maîtresse d'école*. The paintings, he says, 'juxtapose idleness and labour rewarded, the good and the bad example. In the first painting, the small child is entertained by the soap bubbles blown by the adolescent, in the second the child learns to read through the diligence of the older girl'. This reading is more difficult in the case of the two prints, as the verses do not conform to this interpretation. The verse on this print, which supposes that girls are born with 'female' character traits of deception, has echoes in the verse on no. 12.

27 *Le Tôton*

Etching and engraving by François-Bernard Lépicié (1698-1755) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published November 1742 by Lépicié and Surugue
BN Inventaire 62

John Charrington [Lugt 572]; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 23. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.107-1940)

*In the hands of caprice, to which he abandons himself
Man is truly a top, endlessly spinning;
His fate often depends on the movement,
Which fortune gives to his turning.*
(Paris, Cleveland, Boston 1979, p.240)

This print reproduces another of Chardin's portraits, that of Auguste-Gabriel Godofroy (1728-1813), future controller-general of the Navy. The painting had been shown at the 1738 Salon as *Un petit tableau représentant le portrait du fils de Mr Godefroy, joailler, appliqué à voir tourner un toton* ('a little painting representing the portrait of the son of M. Godefroy, jeweller, watching a top spin'). The boy's identity is not recorded on the print, nor was it mentioned in its advertisement in the *Mercur*, as is the case with other examples in this exhibition (nos. 14, 18 & 23).

Like the little girls in nos. 20 & 22 the boy appears to be taking a break from more serious activities. Books and an inkwell are pushed to one side and a chalk holder of the kind used by the draughtsman in no. 32 is visible in the half-open drawer.

28 *Etude du Dessin*

Etching and engraving by Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

1757

BN Inventaire 132

Colnaghi; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], February 1932; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 24. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.93-1940)

The painting appeared in the Salon of 1753 with the title *Un dessinateur d'après le Mercure de Mr Pigalle*. A young artist sits absorbed before a plaster cast of Jean

Baptiste Pigalle's sculpture of Mercury, sketching on a drawing pad, while an onlooker evaluates his efforts. The painting was a repetition of a previous version in the Swedish royal collection exhibited at the Louvre in 1748. The painting was paired with *La Bonne Education* (see no. 10), which also portrays the idea of teaching from paradigms. The paintings did not receive as much praise as his earlier work, and might have a contributing factor to Chardin's return to still life painting. Impressions of both prints were exhibited at the 1757 Salon. They are dedicated to the Queen of Sweden, who had commissioned the earlier versions of the paintings.

29 *Le Dessinateur*

Etching and engraving by Jean-Jacques Flipart (1719-1782) after Jean-Siméon Chardin

Published December 1757 by Cars

BN Inventaire 24

Daniell; bt. John Charrington [Lugt 572], July 1935; sale (Christie's) 19 June 1940, part of lot no. 27. Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, with the aid of a contribution from the National Art-Collections Fund and from E. E. Barron, August 1940. (P.91-1940)

Flipart produced this print and its pendant, *L'Ouvrière en tapisserie* (not on display) and exhibited impressions at the Salon of 1757, where they appeared with nos. 10 & 28. He uses stippling effect to render the chalk drawing pinned on the wall.

The print reproduces Chardin's painting of another young draughtsman also completely absorbed in his work. The boy hunched over the portfolio has often brought to mind Chardin's description of his own artistic training: 'we were set at the age of seven or eight with a pencil holder in hand... We spent long hours bent over our portfolio... We spent five or six years drawing from the model' (Diderot, Salon of 1765).

30 *Recueil d'estampes gravées d'après les tableaux du cabinet de M. Le Duc de Choiseul*

Published 1771 by Basan

PROVENANCE: Founder's bequest, 1816 (30.H.20)

Etienne-François de Choiseul-Stanville, later the Duc de Choiseul et d'Amboise (1718-1780) was a prominent French statesman. He commissioned Basan, nephew of Etienne Fessard (see no. 17), to supervise the engraving his collection and publish them in a volume. The Duc's collection contained many Dutch and Flemish works, some of which he had bought at the sale of the Comte de Vence, who was also a fan of Chardin (see nos. 5 & 6). This volume is open at plate no. 47, showing the contrasts Gerard Dou makes between innocence with experience. Objects in the picture (the empty birdcage) hint at loss of virtue, while the inclusion of onions is a reference to their being considered an aphrodisiac. The

meanings were still understood in France in the 18th century, shown in a print by Surugue, which is engraved with this verse: 'I am willing to believe that you are / Knowledgeable in the art of preparing stews / But I feel even more appetite for you / Than the stew that you are making'.

31 *Collection de cent-vingt estampes gravées d'après les tableaux & dessins qui composent le Cabinet de M Poullain*

Published 1781 by Basan

Founder's bequest, 1816 (30.H.18)

This volume contains a series of 120 plates reproducing the paintings and drawings belonging to Poullain. As with no. 30, the collection was produced under the direction of Basan. Poullain's collection also contained a good number of Dutch and Flemish 'genre scenes'. The volume is open at plate no. 44, an interior of a kitchen after Willem Kalf. The description of the plates at the front of the collection describes Kalf as an artist who 'devoted himself to painting fruits, vegetables and kitchen utensils. He succeeded superiorly: in them we see nature ... rendered in truth'.

32 *The Young Draughtsman*

Mezzotint by John Faber (c.1695-1756) after Chardin 1740

Bocher 28

Bought 1944 (P.36-1944)

Some of Chardin's paintings came to England during the artist's lifetime. This mezzotint shows that the painting exhibited in 1738 with the title *Un jeune dessinateur taillant son crayon* ('a young draughtsman cutting his chalk') was in England by 1740. Their arrival gave the English printmakers a chance to reproduce Chardin's paintings using mezzotint, a technique considered by the French to be particularly English. The softness of the medium captures a mood of tranquillity as well as the boy's dreamy expression. The verse is supplied by William Hogarth's friend John Lockman.

33 *La Mère Trop Rigide*

Etching and engraving by Étienne Charpentier (1707-1792)

After 1739

BN Inventaire 36 I/II

Given by Louis C. G. Clarke, 1948 (P.804-1948)

Be patient with this young child

And be touched by her innocent air.

Can one be guilty, without possessing judgement?

Despite all your pride and your severe frown,

Climène, I would dare to swear

That you have done more than she can take.

Some printmakers and publishers tried to profit on Chardin's success. Bocher's catalogue (1876) lists sixteen prints purported to be after Chardin, but which are in fact only imitations of his style. This print is a good example, as it is unlike any composition Chardin ever painted. In a later state Chardin's name is replaced by that of Jean Baptiste de Champaigne. Charpentier published two other prints like this, *La Bonne Mère* ('the good mother') and *L'enfant gâté* ('the spoiled child').

34 *La Leçon d'Amour / Amoris documentum*

Etching by Charles Dupuis (1685-1742) after Watteau 1734

BN Inventaire 24

Given by Louis C. G. Clarke, 1948 (P.815-1948)

This is an unfinished preparatory state in pure etching, before the addition of any engraved lines to the plate. Significant areas of the composition are left blank, especially in the figures and architecture. Engraved lines would create volume, and add detail. Those printmakers whose style was termed *gravure libre* are also sometimes referred to as 'Watteau engravers'. Watteau created a new genre of outdoor scenes (*fêtes galantes*), and the freer lines a printmaker could achieve with etching made it particularly useful in drawing landscapes and trees.

35 *Le Jeu de Pied-de-boeuf*

Etching and engraving by Charles Nicolas Cochin (1688-1754) after J F de Troy

Published April 1735

Given by Louis C. G. Clarke, 1942 (P.30-1942)

The game of *Pied de boeuf* (literally, 'cow's foot') involves all the players placing their hands on top of each other, each counting in turn. The person who reaches nine wins, and gets to ask three things of a chosen person, the last being a kiss.

This is proof impression before any lettering was added to the plate. Proofs might have had a practical purpose, to serve as a guide for the addition of engraved lines, but in the 19th century they became popular amongst collectors like the de Goncourts (who owned nos. 7 & 18 in this exhibition).