



DAILY PLEASURES: FRENCH CERAMICS FROM THE MARYLOU BOONE COLLECTION

DIDACTICS

At what point an object transcends a mere utilitarian purpose to achieve recognition as a work of art can be vigorously debated; decorative arts— aesthetically appealing pieces capable of bringing significant pleasure to daily activities—can successfully satisfy both criteria. Countless vessels and wares serve practical needs, yet a dinner service displaying a coat of arms also proudly conveys a family’s heritage, a chinoiserie cup and saucer transports the imbiber’s imagination to foreign ports teeming with exotic goods, and a mustard pot decorated with a cadre of frolicking monkeys delights its users.

The ideal fusion of function and beauty found in French faience and soft- and hard-paste porcelain of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is the essence of what inspired MaryLou Boone to assemble her outstanding collection of more than 130 pieces from the foremost manufactories of the era. This exhibition reveals and celebrates the artistry that exists in the service of the utilitarian, as well as the ability of a discriminating collector to bring together remarkable examples of that artistry.

Fusing Function and Beauty

Though the treasures of the Boone Collection span the reigns of some of France’s most fascinating kings, from Louis XIII to Louis XVI, it is not composed of royal vases and princely gifts but rather wares for dining and taking tea, for storing the many toiletries necessary for a stylish appearance, and for preparing mixtures that comforted in times of sickness. Emphasizing myriad aesthetic influences, chronicling advances in technology, and reflecting the rhythms of domestic life, these objects provide a unique view of French customs and culture—and continue to bring pleasure to daily life.