SFCC LECTURE

Sunday, March 17, 2019
9:45 a.m., doors open for social time
10:30 a.m., program begins
Gunn Theater, Legion of Honor

Charlotte Jacob-Hanson
Independent Scholar & Author

Flights of Fantasy – The Bird Painting of Louis Victor Gerverot (1747-1849)

About the lecture: Born in Lunéville and apprenticed at Sèvres, Gerverot left France in 1766 to begin an ambitious career as a wandering porcelain decorator and chemist. His travels took him to Germany and the Netherlands, where he developed his highly unconventional style of painting “birds of fantasy.” His work shows best in the examples of Weesp, Höchst, and Loosdrecht porcelain in this lecture.

About the speaker: Charlotte Jacob-Hanson has researched Gerverot for over fifteen years and has published five articles about him. These have corrected the inaccuracies in older literature (including accusations that he was “a master of industrial espionage”), and present a more complete account of his career. She has identified his bird painting at the Fürstenberg, Frankenthal and Höchst factories in Germany and at Weesp and Loosdrecht in the Netherlands, from 1767 to 1775. This work affirms his exceptional talent.

Louis Victor Gerverot, 1747-1829
detail from a Höchst (Germany) porcelain teapot, c. 1771-73
Musée National de Céramique, Sévres (S6 CN 14819)
Photo: Charlotte Jacob-Hanson
Upcoming SFCC Lectures

SPECIAL NOTE: The April and June dates are not our usual third Sundays, because of Easter and of events in or around the Legion of Honor.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28: Shirley M. Mueller, M.D., Associate Professor of Neurology (ret.), Indiana University School of Medicine; ACC member; scholar and collector of Chinese Export Porcelain, “Inside the Head of a Collector.”

SUNDAY, JUNE 2: SFCC member collection talk.

2019 Membership Renewal

Membership dues are the main funding source for our lectures and for our social events. Gifts of any size are also welcome! Unrestricted gifts support the lectures and social events. Gifts to the endowment are directed to the ceramics we donate to the FAMSF. Please renew, and give extra if you can.

In Memoriam

RONALD SCHWARZ
1936-2019

Ronald Schwarz and his late husband, Michael Barcun, were among the earliest members of the San Francisco Ceramic Circle. In 2016, Mr. Schwarz donated a collection of Sèvres porcelain to the Legion of Honor in memory of Mr. Barcun. The Legion’s porcelain gallery hosted a display from this collection in 2015-16.

A New York City native, Mr. Schwarz worked for U.S. intelligence in Germany—spying—during his military service in the 1950s. His time in Germany also introduced him to 18th-century porcelain. After his return to New York, Mr. Schwarz worked as buyer of china and glass at Tiffany’s. He and Mr. Barcun moved to San Francisco in the early 1960s. Mr. Schwarz and a partner opened a store for distinctive tableware, while he developed a career as an interior designer and appraiser. He decorated homes throughout northern California, and in New York, Palm Beach, and abroad. In public service, Mr. Schwarz was also a member of the European Decorative Arts Council at the Legion, and a Vice Chairman of the San Francisco Fall Art and Antiques Show. (Credit: SF Chronicle)
Fantastic birds, and exotic but real birds, were such a popular theme in 18th-century ceramic decoration that some decorators specialized entirely as bird painters. The theme was an offshoot of scenes on Chinese export porcelain. With origins in 17th-century blue & white wares, the subject blossomed in early 18th-century polychrome decoration on earthenware and porcelain.

Attributed to Johann Ehrenfried Stadler, 1701-41, at the Meissen Porcelain Factory
Detail of a tankard, c. 1727-28
Hard-paste porcelain
Promised Gift of Malcolm D. Gutter to the Legion of Honor (cat. 60)

Photo: SFCC
The most specialized bird-painting developed at Sèvres, where several highly accomplished artists focused on scenes with birds. Sèvres fans tend to prefer Aloncle, but Chappuis also has devotees.

Antoine-Joseph Chappuis 1743-87, painter
Sèvres Manufactory
Detail of a wine-bottle cooler, 1767
Soft-paste porcelain
Detroit Institute of Arts (photo: SFCC)

Francois-Joseph Aloncle, active 1758-81, painter
Sèvres Manufactory
Jug, 1780
Soft-paste porcelain, height 21.9 cm
The British Museum (photo: SFCC)

Underside of the jug by Aloncle,
with inscribed names of the bird species
The British Museum (photo: SFCC)