

Amateur Collections

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The spirit of collecting is closely linked to the museum's history. While François-Xavier Fabre and Antoine Valedau are indeed remembered for the collections of paintings they bequeathed, as enlightened amateurs their tastes extended to other areas of art. Revealing a degree of eclecticism, the objects that they brought together express their all-consuming passion as collectors ; the selection of objets d'art that they chose to single out for the delight of the public is also a most intimate reflection of their personality.

François Xavier Fabre, a learned collector

Made up mainly of paintings and drawings, Fabre was keen to supplement his collection with some objets d'art – their remarkable quality making up for their limited quantity. Strictly speaking, these works did not form a homogeneous whole representative of a particular style or period, but testify to the artist's interest in the aesthetic and decorative qualities of these objects. As a neoclassical artist, he was interested in antique ceramics, in keeping with the vogue for all things antique that had prevailed since the end of the eighteenth century and the excavations undertaken at Herculaneum and Pompei aroused collectors' interest in Greco-Roman archaeology. In this respect, the Attic amphora (n°1) is particularly noteworthy as it was presented to the countess of Albany in 1811 by Caroline Murat, queen of the kingdom of Naples. Dating to the Archaic Period, it is the first example of Greek ceramics in a Southern French collection ; the front depicts a Bacchic scene with Dionysus surrounded by his satyrs, while the back features a quadriga reminiscent of the trophies presented to the winners of the Ancient Games.

As in painting, Fabre cultivated a taste for Italian art and acquired several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century bronzes. Ancient copies of famous sculptures intended to adorn patrician residences, Fabre wanted them to bring an aristocratic dimension to the collection, and it is interesting to note that he kept them in his apartments within the museum to decorate his various lounges. Yet, as with the paintings, the pieces he chose to have displayed in the museum were sometimes real Renaissance masterpieces, such as the extremely rare plate from the Fontana Workshop in Urbino, the *Abduction of Helen*. Fabre also bequeathed a more personal set of miniatures and portraits to the museum, in what was probably his most moving gesture. They recall in turn the growing affection between the painter and the countess of Albany and her companion, the poet Alfieri (n°7 to 13) ; these works also evoke Fabre's friendship with the sculptor Corneille (1760-1812) in Rome in the 1790s or with Santarelli (1801-1886) when he lived in Florence. By earmarking these objects for public display, Fabre committed to posterity these tokens of his existence and the memory of those he loved and who had helped to shape his personality as an artist and collector.

Antoine Valedau, a self-taught aesthete

As a token of his fondness for genre painters, this collector added to his bequest a selection of works also redolent of this taste for nature and reality. Attracted by the mannered workmanship of the objets d'arts, he brought together several reverse glass paintings (*fixés sous verre*) in keeping with his affection for Netherlandish art, as shown by the two paintings of flowers by Van Pol (1752-1813)* or the genre scenes by Demarne (1752-1830)*.

Antique ceramics and Italian bronzes are to be found here as with Fabre, yet – their ornamental vocation aside – with Valedau there is a more pronounced desire to build up a collection, rather than the simple accumulation of decorative objects. The Greek vases are therefore on show in his Parisian apartment in a display cabinet or on shelves. Each vase has a specific name : the Appulian pelike with its décor inspired by Orphic poetry (n°20) is thus called the *Present*, or the hydria (n°21) *Hercules and Omphale*. For both Fabre and Valedau archaeological objects were part of the order of the day of nineteenth-century collectors, yet each of them would treat these objects in his own way : for the artist-collector, they were indispensable attributes, while for the avid collector with no real artistic culture, their worth lay simply in the personal aesthetic satisfaction they procured.

This taste for fine objects is likewise apparent in the bronzes he acquired – the group of *Apollo and Daphne** after Bernini (1598-1680), probably contemporary with the original and kept at the Villa Borghese is in this respect one of the masterpieces of his collection.

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European Art
from the Fourteenth
to Eighteenth Century

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Cartels de la salle 12

1. Attique

VI^e siècle av.J.C.

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Amphore

Terre cuite, dite à figures noires

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.357

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Ce vase rappelle par son décor les amphores panathénaïques, trophées remis aux vainqueurs des jeux se déroulant à Athènes à l'occasion de la fête des Panathénées, en hommage à Athéna. Sur la face principale est représentée la divinité honorée, ici Dionysos, et au revers, le char révélant la discipline du vainqueur.

2. Etrurie

VI^e siècle av.J.C.

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Cratère en cloche

Terre cuite, dite à figures rouges

Legs François-Xavier Fabre, 1837 / 837.1.1109

3. Apulie

3^e quart du IV^e siècle av. J.C.

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Cratère à colonnettes

Terre cuite, dite à figures rouges

4. d'après Bologne, Jean de

Douai, 1529 - Florence, 1608

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Mercure volant / Bronze

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.240

5. Italie

XVIII^e siècle

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Faune jouant des cymbales

Bronze

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.242

6. d'après Bologne, Jean de

Douai, 1529 - Florence, 1608

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Hercule tuant le dragon

Ladon / Bronze

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.243

7. Corneille, Barthélémy

Marseille, 1760 - ?, 1812

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Portrait de François-Xavier Fabre, 1790 / Marbre

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.249

8. Italie

XVIII^e siècle

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Le Sacrifice à l'Amour - médaille de mariage de la comtesse d'Albany / Cire

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.352

9. Italie

Fin du XVIII^e siècle

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Portrait de la comtesse d'Albany jeune / Miniature

Legs François-Xavier Fabre, 1837 / 837.1.1114

10. Italie

Début du XIX^e siècle

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Portrait de la comtesse d'Albany âgée

Miniature

Legs François-Xavier Fabre, 1837 / 837.1.1115

11. Santarelli, Giovanni Antonio

Manopello, 1758 - Florence, 1826

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Michel-Ange, 1813 / Cire

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Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.358

Fabre entoura d'une affection quasi-paternelle Emilio, fils de son ami le sculpteur Giovanni Antonio Santarelli : à sa mort, il l'institua son « héritier universel ». Bien qu'habile portraitiste, il passa à la postérité comme collectionneur. Il légua au musée des Offices sa collection de dessins comptant plus de 12000 feuilles.

12. Santarelli, Giovanni Antonio

Manopello, 1758 - Florence, 1826

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Nicolas Poussin, 1819 / Cire

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.359

13. Santarelli, Giovanni Antonio

Manopello, 1758 - Florence, 1826

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Portrait de Vittorio Alfieri

Cire

Don François-Xavier Fabre, 1825 / 825.1.360

14. Santarelli, Giovanni Antonio

Manopello, 1758 - Florence, 1826

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Portrait du docteur Henri Fabre, frère du peintre

Cire

Legs François-Xavier Fabre, 1837 / 837.1.1112

15. Demarne, Jean-Louis

dit Demarnette

Bruxelles, 1750 - Paris, 1829

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Le retour du marché

Peinture fixée sous verre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.10

16. Demarne, Jean-Louis

dit Demarnette

Bruxelles, 1750 - Paris, 1829

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La fermière

Peinture fixée sous verre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.11

17. Pol, Christiaen van

Berkenrode, 1752 - Paris, 1813

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Fruits et fleurs

Peinture fixée sous verre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.45

18. Pol, Christiaen van

Berkenrode, 1752 - Paris, 1813

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Fruits et fleurs

Peinture fixée sous verre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.46

19. Attique

1^{er} quart du VI^e siècle av. J.C.

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Lécythe

Terre cuite, dite à figures noires

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.329

20. Apulie

IV^e siècle av. J.C.

Pélikè, Vers 320-340 av. J.C.

Terre cuite, dite à figures rouges

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.335

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Cette pélikè vase destiné au stockage des liquides, provient de la colonie grecque d'Apulie, actuelle région des Pouilles (Italie du Sud). L'image du jeune homme à la cithare accompagné d'Aphrodite et d'Éros sur le recto et d'un couple sur le verso évoque les pouvoirs des divinités de l'amour, thématique galante qui s'impose au profit des représentations héroïques du V^e siècle av. JC.

21. Apulie

1^{er} quart du IV^e siècle av. J.C.

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Hydrie Kalpis . Hercule et Omphale

Terre cuite, dite à figures rouges

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.338

22. Epoque romaine

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Jupiter

Marbre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.94

23. France

XVII^e siècle

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Pieta / Albâtre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.325

24. France

XIX^e siècle

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Vénus sortant du bain

Marbre

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.96

25. d'après Bernini, Gian

Lorenzo dit Le Bernin

Naples, 1598 - Rome, 1680

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Apollon et Daphné

Bronze

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.86

26. d'après Bologne, Jean de

Douai, 1529 - Florence, 1608

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Hercule terrassant Acheloüs

Bronze

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.82

27. atelier de Dupré, Guillaume

Sissonne, 1574 - ?, 1647

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Statue équestre de Henri IV

Bronze

Legs Antoine Valedau, 1836 / 836.4.90

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Copie de la statue équestre d'Henri IV due à Jean de Bologne et Pierre Tacca, installée sur le Pont neuf et détruite (1792). Ce type de portrait équestre du souverain connut une grande postérité : plusieurs modèles en bronze sont identifiés (musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon; Wallace collection, Londres), de la main d'Antonio Susini ou Guillaume Dupré. La multiplication des images du roi défunt par la régente Marie de Médicis fut un moyen de légitimer le pouvoir de cette reine étrangère.

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