

Hubert Robert's Decorations for the Château de Bagatelle

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IN 1917 THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM of Art received from the estate of its former president, the banker and philanthropist J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), a set of six Italianate landscapes by the eighteenth-century French painter Hubert Robert (Figure 1). These works (Figures 8, 15, 25, 29, 33, 34) constitute one of the relatively few major decorative ensembles by the artist to have come down to us in its entirety. In terms of their artistic quality, the importance of the patronage that inspired them, and the place they occupy in the context of Robert's complete oeuvre, it is safe to say that the Metropolitan's panels are virtually unrivaled in North American museums. Only the four large ruin fantasies in the Art Institute of Chicago, painted in 1787 for Joseph de La Borde's Château de Méréville, are of comparable interest.¹ Because Robert executed the Morgan paintings as an integral part of one of the true masterpieces of Louis XVI interior decoration, we should attempt to situate them in the setting for which they were originally intended.

Pierre de Nolhac, a curator of the Château de Versailles and one of Robert's principal biographers, understood the necessity of such an approach when dealing with the artist's decorative panels:

Pour apprécier équitablement ses grandes oeuvres, qui parfois à nous-mêmes semblent un peu creuses, il faudrait pouvoir les replacer dans le milieu pour lequel [Robert] les a faites. Quand Diderot leur reproche de paraître peintes à la détrempe, c'est qu'il les juge parmi les autres peintures du Salon, plus empâtées, plus solides, et ne tient pas compte de l'ensemble de décoration dont elles font nécessairement partie. Leurs tons argentins, si remarquables des contemporains, sont d'ordinaire fort exactement choisis pour s'harmoniser avec la claire ornementation des appartements d'alors. La légèreté de leur touche convient aux perspectives bien établies du peintre, à la profondeur de ses ciels, qu'il

aime vastes et remplis de lumière; encastrées aux quatre murs d'un salon du temps, ses bonnes toiles y jouent avec franchise et gaieté leurs rôles de fenêtres idéales ouvertes sur la nature. Ces "tableaux de place," suivant le mot de l'époque, doivent donc être vus à leur place.²

[To judge fairly these large works, which sometimes seem a bit vacuous to us, we need to place them once more within the environment for which Robert created them. When Diderot reproaches them for being painted like gouaches, it is because he is comparing them to other pictures in the Salon with thicker, more densely painted surfaces, and he does not take into account the whole of the decoration of which they are a necessary part. The silvery tones so often mentioned by contemporaries are usually chosen so that they will harmonize with the bright ornamentation of the apartments of the period. The lightness of the brushwork is consistent with the finely worked-out perspectives of the painter, with the depth of his skies, which he prefers vast and filled with light. Set into the four walls of a salon of the period, these genial canvases candidly and cheerfully play out their roles as ideal windows on nature. These *tableaux de place*, as they were called at the time, must be seen in their proper place.]

By the time of the Morgan gift in 1917, it had already been claimed in print that the panels had been painted for Bagatelle, the beautifully designed and decorated late-eighteenth-century pavilion located on the outskirts of Paris between the Bois de Boulogne and Neuilly.³ When it was built in the late 1770s, the Château de Bagatelle and its grounds were the private domain of Louis XVI's youngest brother, Charles Philippe, comte d'Artois (Figure 2), the future king Charles X. The property still exists, although in a greatly altered state. D'Artois was the youngest grandson of Louis XV. By his twelfth year, his father, the dauphin Louis, and his mother, Marie Josèphe de Saxe, were both deceased. As the succession to the throne appeared to be more than secure, it was deemed unnecessary to provide the young prince with a serious education, and he was allowed

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The notes for this article begin on page 179.

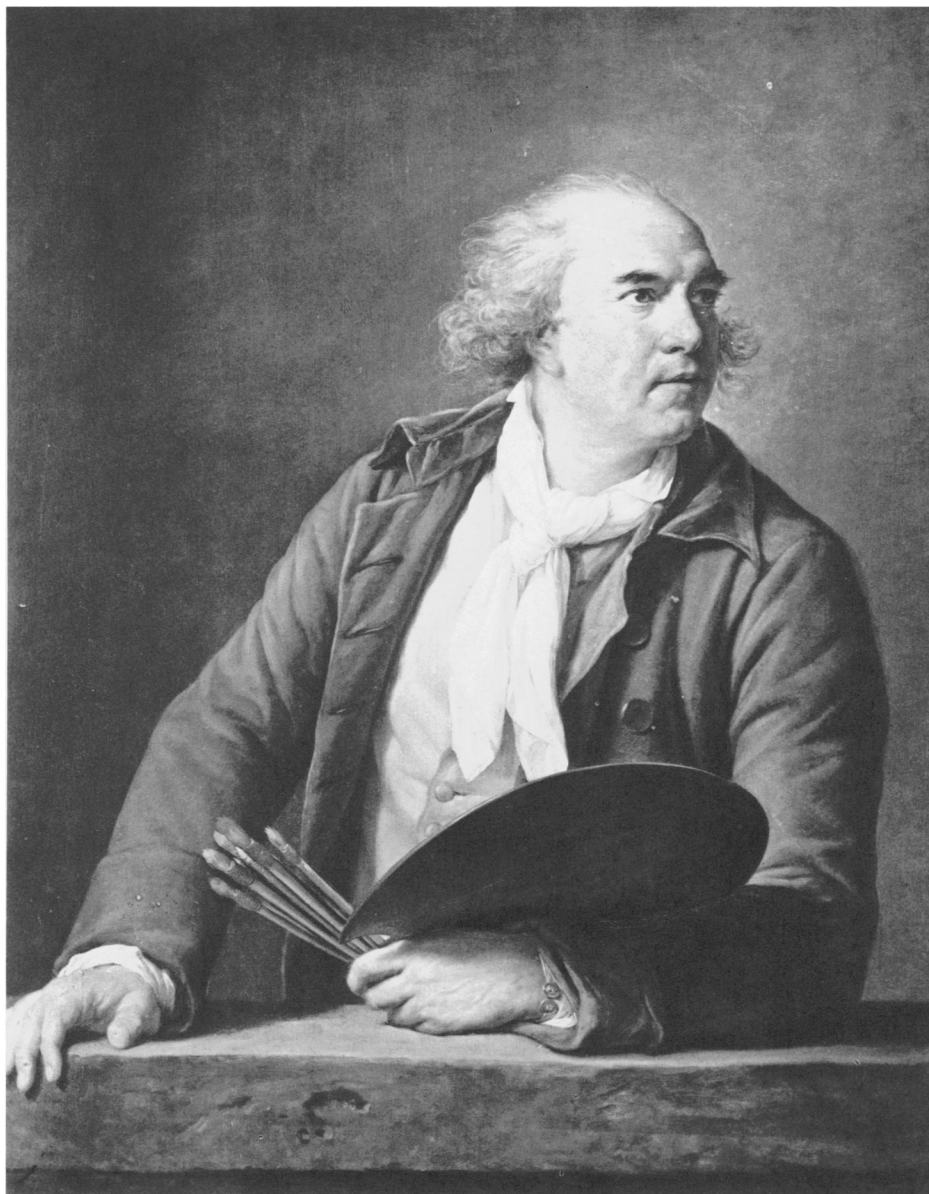


Figure 1. Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842), *Portrait of Hubert Robert* (1733–1808), 1788. Oil on panel. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives photographiques)

to become the spoiled child of the court. He was good-natured, handsome, graceful, and relatively athletic, much more so, in any case, than his two older brothers, the dauphin Louis and the comte de Provence, both of whom were introverted, obese, and physically awkward. Constant permissiveness on the part of his family, his governor, and the inept tutors who had unfortunately been entrusted with his upbringing had made of the adolescent Charles Philippe a self-centered, shallow, intellectually apathetic, morally weak, but altogether charming young fop.

In order to steer him away from affairs of state, certain royal ministers, including the aged comte de

Maurepas, encouraged him to spend money and accumulate debts, pursuits for which d'Artois quickly developed considerable flair. As with all the male members of the French royal family, he was assigned a household staff consisting of bodyguards, chaplains, courtiers, administrators, legal and financial advisers, clerks, secretaries, artists, architects, engineers, landscapists, gardeners, cooks, grooms, and countless personal servants. To guarantee him additional status at court and a greater income than that provided by the king's bounty, the Civil List, and the revenue from his many appanages and landholdings, his grandfather conferred on him one of the most prestigious military appointments

of the realm: he was made Colonel General of the Swiss Guards. Moreover, the largely ceremonial office of Grand Master of the Artillery, extinct since 1755, was revived for him. But d'Artois's talents as a leader of soldiers would always fall seriously short of the mark. He felt much more at ease in a salon surrounded by a coterie of sycophantic courtiers than he did on maneuvers. A disreputable and sexually promiscuous older cousin of the Orléans branch of his family, the duc de Chartres, helped to debauch d'Artois further by introducing him to the gambling dens and fancy brothels of nocturnal Paris.

In 1773 Charles Philippe was married to Marie Thérèse de Savoie, one of the unattractive daughters of Victor Amadeus III of Sardinia, and he dutifully sired three children. By the time his eldest brother had become king in 1774 as Louis XVI, he had resumed his libertine ways. He spent lavishly on his mistresses, among them several celebrated ladies of the stage—Anne Victoire Dervieux, Rosalie Duthé, and Louise Contat—and a liberated Englishwoman, Lady Barrymore. His other Anglophilic tastes drew him into further expense. In the company of Chartres and a group of cronies that included the two captains of his personal bodyguard, the little prince d'Hénin and the chevalier de Crusol (whose splendid portrait by Vigée Le Brun is in the Metropolitan Museum), he encouraged the growing fad for Thoroughbred racing on the Plaine des Sablons and at Vincennes.

Like so many of his ancestors, Monseigneur d'Artois had an insatiable appetite for real estate. Acquiring land and building on a sumptuous scale were passions a Bourbon prince was expected to indulge. His apartments in all the great royal houses—Versailles, Fontainebleau, Compiègne, Choisy, and so on—were judged inadequate, so he received as a personal gift from his brother the stately Château Neuf de Saint-Germain, a late-sixteenth-century palace that he would ultimately demolish in a misbegotten attempt at remodeling. The following year he purchased another magnificent estate, the Château de Maisons, which had been built in the seventeenth century by François Mansart. In Paris he enjoyed the use of the Palais du Temple by virtue of his infant son's title, Grand Prior of the Maltese order of St. John of Jerusalem, and he and his wife owned numerous other properties in and around Paris. Naturally, all of the comte d'Artois's residences were fitted out and maintained in accordance with the most fashionable and luxurious standards of taste.⁴

But it is with the diminutive Bagatelle (Figures 3, 4) that history will forever associate the comte d'Artois, for it is the only one of his houses that was designed and built specifically for him. The main pavilion, its dependencies, gardens, and landscaped park were a *folie* in the truest sense of the word, for they were created at great cost (at a time when the royal finances could ill afford such extravagance) and at breakneck speed as the result of a wager between the young prince and his equally light-headed sister-in-law Marie Antoinette. The original Château de Bagatelle, first called Babiole, had been built during the Regency near the old Renaissance Château de Madrid for the maréchal d'Estrées, who paid for it with profits gained from John Law's manipulations of the coffee and chocolate trade. The ten hectares on which it sat were bordered on the east by the Plaine de Longchamp, beyond which flowed the Seine at hardly more than a stone's throw



Figure 2. Antoine François Callet (1741–1823), *Portrait of Charles Philippe, comte d'Artois (1757–1836), Wearing the Ceremonial Robes of the Order of the Saint-Esprit*, ca. 1779. Oil on canvas. Present location unknown



Figure 3. Jean Démosthène Dugourc (1749–1825), *The Garden Façade of Bagatelle*, 1779. Pen and black ink, watercolor, over traces of black chalk. The window of the bathroom in which Robert's paintings were located is on the right. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Susan Dwight Bliss, 1966, 67.55.17

away. Conceived as a *maison de plaisance*, its very name suggested something small and intimate. After the maréchal's death, it was used by his widow, and later by the marquise de Monconseil, as the locale for elaborate fêtes and as a hideaway for the occasional assignation.⁵ During the reign of Louis XV it also served as a secret love nest for the king and several of his less well-known paramours. By 1774 the prince de Chimay, the brother of the aforementioned prince d'Hénin, had taken full possession of Bagatelle. On November 1, 1775, for the sum of 36,000 livres, Chimay and his wife sold their interest in the property to the comte d'Artois, who at first expected to reside there only when hunting in the nearby Bois de Boulogne. The manor house was in a disastrous state of repair, owing to its proximity to the Seine and periodic inundations, and plans were made to rebuild it.

In the summer of 1777 Marie Antoinette visited Bagatelle. She and her gallant nineteen-year-old brother-in-law, who seemed to escort her everywhere, had already been portrayed in the scandal sheets as a pair of incorrigible gamblers. The comte d'Artois bet a large sum of money that an elegant new château and all of its appurtenances could be designed, constructed, and decorated during the court's annual six-week stay at Fontainebleau. Furthermore, he vowed that it would be finished in time to offer her a reception when she returned to Versailles. The queen readily accepted the wager. These circumstances are briefly recounted by Pidansat de Mairobert:

Il y a dans le bois de Boulogne, une espèce de vuide-bouteille appelé *Bagatelle*, qui par divers arrangements se trouve aujourd'hui appartenir au comte d'Artois. Ce

prince annonce un goût décidé pour la truelle; & indépendamment des bâtiments de toute espèce qu'il a déjà entrepris, au nombre de quatre ou cinq, il a eu le désir d'étendre et d'embellir celui-ci, ou plutôt de le changer complètement, & de le rendre digne de lui. Il a pris une tournure fort ingénieuse pour se satisfaire aux frais de qui il appartiendrait. Il a parié cent mille francs avec la reine que ce palais de fée seroit commencé & achevé durant le voyage de Fontainebleau, au point d'y donner une fête à sa majesté au retour; il y a huit cents ouvriers, & l'architecte de son A.R. espère bien le faire gagner.⁶

[In the Bois de Boulogne there is a sort of country house called *Bagatelle*, which by various means has now come to belong to the comte d'Artois. This prince exhibits a decided taste for construction, and besides the buildings of all kinds that he has already undertaken, which number four or five, he wishes to enlarge and embellish this one, or rather to change it entirely and make it worthy of him. He has found a very ingenious way to satisfy himself at someone else's expense. He bet the queen one hundred thousand francs that the fairy-tale palace would be built and completed during the

stay at Fontainebleau so that he could give a reception for her majesty on her return. There are eight hundred workers employed, and his royal highness's architect hopes to allow him to win his bet.]

D'Artois summoned his chief architect, François Joseph Belanger (1744–1818), who realized straightaway that he would have to muster all his organizational skills.⁷ He gathered around him an impressive contingent of architects, draftsmen, masons, carpenters, plumbers, engineers, gardeners, inspectors, and supervisory personnel. The duty of overseeing the costs fell to the officers of His Royal Highness's Bâtiments—the corrupt superintendent of his finances, Radix de Sainte-Foy, his intendants Chalgrin and Briasse, his controller Moyreau, his treasurer Bourboulon, and the chief custodian of his properties, Jubault. But it must have been decided early on that no expense would be spared, for when a final reckoning was made years later, it was clear that Bagatelle had cost more than 3,000,000 livres, many times the original estimates.

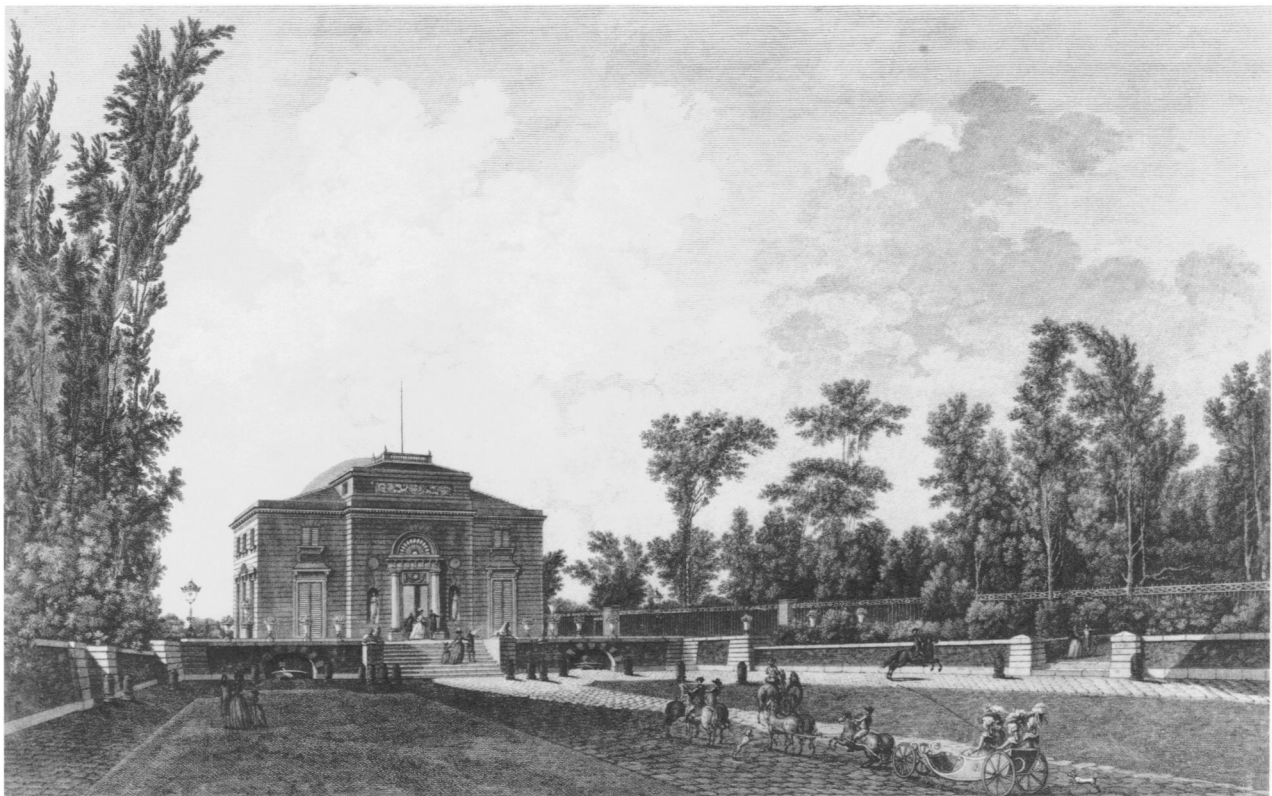


Figure 4. François Denis Née, after François Joseph Belanger (1744–1818), *View of the North Façade of the Château de Bagatelle from the Cour des Princes*. Etching

It took no more than two days for a master plan to be drafted, and it was approved on September 1. The old house was razed to the ground. On its site was to be erected a two-storied Palladian villa containing the apartments of the comte d'Artois, his chief equerries and special guests, and lodgings for his personal valet and footmen. A long courtyard was to separate this building from the so-called pages' wing, which was to include stables, carriage houses, kitchens, laundry, and wine cellars, as well as quarters for the porter and the house staff and, on the second floor, accommodations for the gentlemen and officers of the *picquet d'honneur* that usually accompanied the prince on his visits. To ensure efficient and discreet service, an underground passageway was to connect the main house with the pages' wing. Various outbuildings, a hydraulic machine, and a pump house were also planned. The grounds were initially limited to a formal French garden facing the north façade of the pavilion (Figure 3); in 1779, however, they would be greatly expanded to the south and the east to accommodate an Anglo-Chinese park filled with thought-provoking *fabriques*—sham ruins, an obelisk, a pagoda, primitive huts, grottoes, and bridges—and an elaborate system of streams and waterfalls.⁸ The French garden was laid out by Belanger himself, while the park was eventually landscaped by a Scotsman, Thomas Blaikie (1750–1838). This enchanting land of illusions would in time come to be thematically and conceptually linked to Robert's idealized landscapes.

Pidansat de Mairobert did not exaggerate: more than eight hundred laborers worked night and day in order to accomplish this miracle in the time allotted. The citizenry in the immediate vicinity was resentful when patrols of mounted Swiss Guards snatched up along the highways whole convoys of the building materials of which there happened to be a shortage. Actual construction work began on September 21 and continued day and night until November 26. The astounding performance had taken only sixty-four days, and d'Artois had won the wager. But the inaugural reception in honor of the queen had to be postponed until May of 1780, by which time the haste with which the project had been carried out had become virtually imperceptible.⁹ A seldom-quoted passage from Blaikie's diary provides an amusing anecdotal account of the reception, which typifies the lively and elegant entertainments for which the Bagatelle of the ancien régime became renowned:

... the 20th May [1780] the count gave a great fete at Bagatelle to the King and Queen and the court which was at this time at La Meutte; here was the Superbe Band of Musick placed upon a scaffold on a thicket of trees which as the company walked round to see the Gardins played which with the echo of the trees made an enchanting affects and in differant parts of the wood was booths made of the Branches of trees in which there was actors who acted differant pieces agreeable to the scene; on the further side towards Longchamp there was erected a Pyramide by which was a Marble tomb; this part of the wood being neuely taken in to the grounds there remained the wall of the bois de Boulogne and to rendre this scene More agreeable Mr Belanger had an invention which made a Singulare effect by undermining the wall on the outside and placing people with ropes to pull the wall down at a word; at this pyramide there was an acteur who acted the part of a Majician who asked there Majestys how they liked the Gardins and what a beautifull vue there was towards the plaine if that wall did not obstruct it, but that there Majestys need only give the word that he with his inchanting wand would make that wall disappear; the queen not knowing told him with a Laugh "Very well I should wish to see it disappear" and in the instant the signal was given and above 200 yards opposite where the company stood fell flat to the ground which surprised them all. This fete terminated with a ball in the Pavillion at which they all danced except the King who amuzed [himself] in playing at Billiards at half a crown a game; at this rate he could never ruin his fortune; the whole terminated by iluminations all round the Gardin. This day the King came from La-muette to Bagatelle afoot; this fete was conducted with great Order and decorum with mirth; this was the first day that Bagatelle begane to make its apearance; this day I was presented to the King & Queen as Inspector of the counts Gardins who complimented me on what I had already done.¹⁰

The process of refining the landscape and the interior decoration of the château continued over the next decade. But by the mid-1780s, most of the work had been completed, and the estate was periodically opened to those privileged enough to obtain one of the special passes that were printed up. Bagatelle was a little temple of pleasure devoted to both Cupid and Mars. Many of the Neoclassical motifs adorning the walls of the pavilion, in the form of painted or stuccoed "grotesques," illustrated the temptations of erotic love and sensual gratification to which the hedonistic young prince was by this time thoroughly addicted. But the master bedroom was made up to resemble a commander's tent, and in it the symbols of d'Artois's military rank were

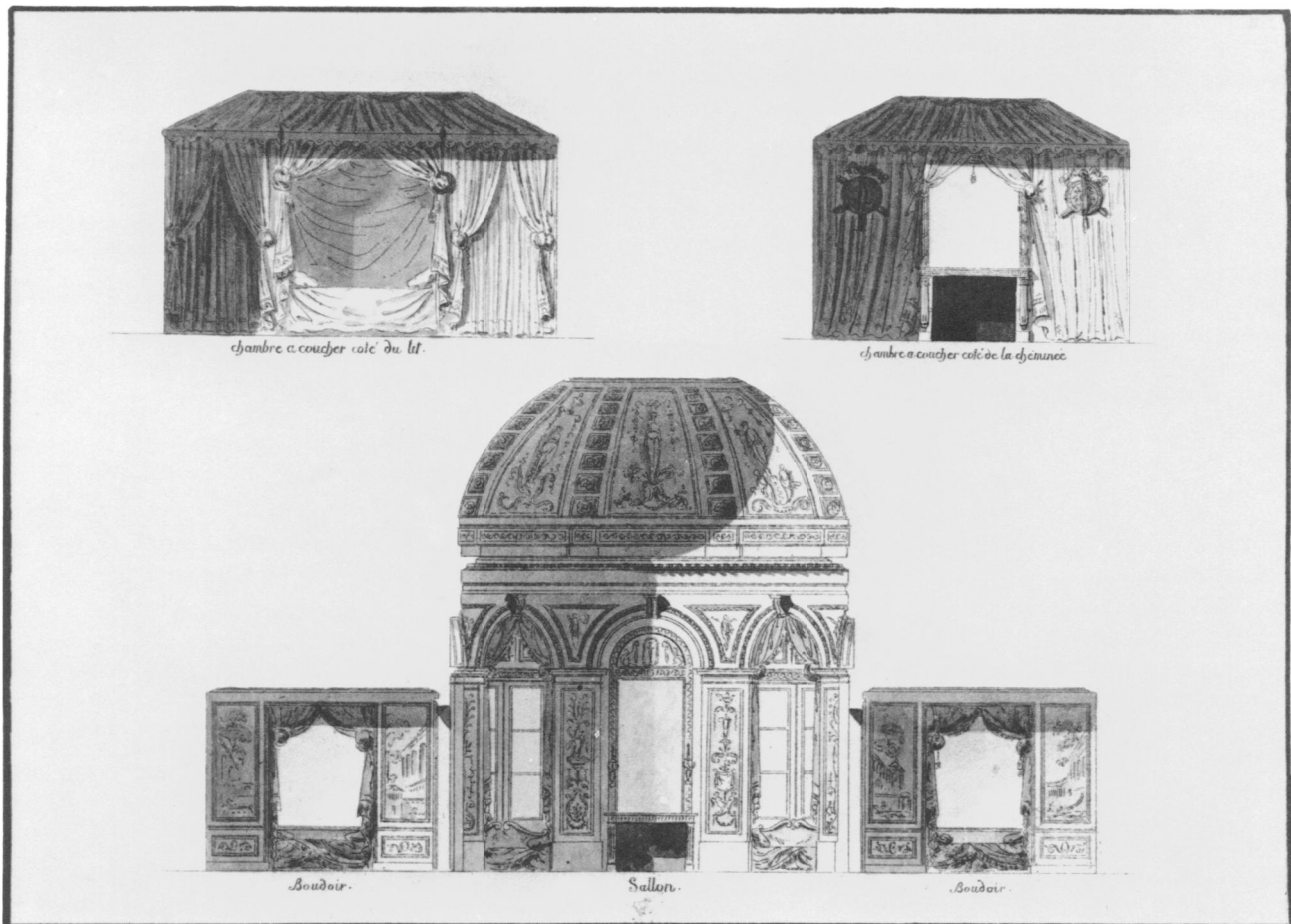


Figure 5. François Joseph Belanger, *Cross-sectional View of Rooms in the Château de Bagatelle*, 1778. Watercolor. Robert's paintings were set into the boiserie of the boudoir to the left of the domed music room. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale (photo: Bibliothèque nationale)

everywhere in evidence. Belanger was extraordinarily demanding with respect to the quality of materials and craftsmanship. First among his assistants was his own brother-in-law, Jean Démosthène Dugourc (1749–1825), a veritable jack-of-all-trades, who assisted him in designing and coordinating the decoration of the individual rooms, and their collaboration proved to be particularly successful. He called on major suppliers of furniture and objets d'art, the *marchands-merciers* Boucher, Constantin, Daguerre and Francotay, Delaroue, Germain, Guérout, Jacquemart, Le Dreux, and Pirotte, and he engaged the services of a veritable army of talented independent artisans, craftsmen, and manufacturers of luxury items.¹¹ These included the ornamental painters Dusseaux, Félix, and Pion; the sculptors Auger, Lhuillier, Monnot, and Roland; the *stucateur* Reynier; the gilt-bronze founders Gouthière, Rémond, and Thomire; the gilders Aubert and Pre-

germain; the cabinetmakers Berger, Boulard, Bremaire, Delaroue, Denizot, Jacob, Maclar, Ramier, and Rode; the harpsichord manufacturers Miville and Perrin; the locksmith Gariby; the mirror-maker Presles; the lamp designer Basile; the clock-maker Lepaute; the marble-cutters Bocciardi and Carbel; the tile-layer Boudet; the paper-hanger Robert; the carpet weaver Pommier; and such suppliers of fabrics and trimmings as Bailly, Fizelier, Frémont, Guillard, Nau, Oberkampf, and Mme Sollet. Finally, he commissioned works from two prominent painters of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. Charged with six paintings each for the twin boudoirs flanking the spectacular domed music room were the comte d'Artois's painter in ordinary, Antoine François Callet,¹² and the recently appointed designer of the royal gardens, Hubert Robert.

The pavilion at Bagatelle was soon acknowledged

as a singularly perfect example of harmonious design in all of its parts. Luc Vincent Thierry's *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris* includes a brief description of the major architectural and decorative features of the château as it appeared in 1787:

Le vestibule est orné de quatre bustes de marbre blanc, au-dessus desquels des bas-reliefs forment camées. Le fond de la salle à manger qui est à gauche, est occupé par une superbe cuvette à laver, près de laquelle on passe dans le grand salon de forme ronde. Toute cette pièce, décorée de glaces & d'arabesques en bas-reliefs, est terminée en coupole. L'élégance de l'ameublement répond à la richesse du décor [sic]. La salle de bains placée à gauche de ce salon, est ornée de glaces & de six tableaux charmans, peints par M. Robert, peintre du Roi, l'un des gardes du Museum, & dessinateur des jardins de sa majesté. Un délicieux boudoir, de l'autre côté du salon à droite, est pareillement orné de glaces & de six tableaux de M. Callet, peintre du Roi. La porte que l'on trouve entre ce boudoir & la cheminée, communique à la salle de billard, intéressante par son décor. On y voit une superbe pendule, dont le cadran forme le milieu d'un trophée. Cette pièce rend au vestibule, dans le fond duquel deux colonnes servent d'entrée à l'escalier qui conduit à l'étage supérieur: il est d'une très jolie coupe & éclairé par le haut. L'antichambre de la gauche, mène à la chambre à coucher du prince, représentant l'intérieur d'une tente, des mortiers servent de chenets. Trois autres chambres à coucher, placées dans cet étage, ont leurs lits en perse pareille aux tentures. Tous ces appartements jouissent d'une superbe vue, tant sur le jardin françois contigu au château, que sur le jardin pittoresque, qui est à gauche & sur la rivière de Seine, Surène, Puteaux, le Calvaire & Neuilly, qui sont sur la droite.¹³

[The vestibule is ornamented with white marble busts above which low reliefs simulate cameos. The far end of the dining room at the left is occupied by a superb washbowl near which you pass into the large circular-shaped salon. This whole room, decorated with mirrors and arabesques in low relief, is topped with a cupola. The elegance of the furnishings is equal to the richness of the decoration. The bathroom located to the left of the salon is adorned with mirrors and with six charming pictures painted by M. Robert, painter to the King, one of the curators of the Museum and designer of his majesty's gardens. A delightful boudoir to the right of the salon is adorned in like manner with mirrors and with six pictures by M. Callet, painter to the King. The door between this boudoir and the fireplace connects with the billiard room, which is interestingly decorated. In it are seen a superb clock whose face is the center of an arms trophy. This room opens

onto the vestibule, at the rear of which twin columns serve as the entrance to the stairwell leading to the upper floor. It is beautifully designed and illuminated by a skylight. The anteroom on the left leads to the prince's bedchamber, made up to resemble the interior of a tent, with mortars used as firedogs. Three other chambers located on this floor have bedcovers in printed linen identical to the wall hangings. All these apartments enjoy a superb view, not only of the French garden next to the château but also of the picturesque garden on the left, and of the river Seine, Suresne, Puteaux, the Calvaire, and Neuilly, which are on the right.]

From this and other informative texts of the period we know that the room that is most relevant to a discussion of the Metropolitan's panels is the small boudoir to the left of the circular music room. The memoranda in the *Livre des comptes de Bagatelle*¹⁴ allow us to reconstruct the château's so-called *chambre des bains*. It measured approximately thirteen and a half feet in length and ten feet in width (4.39 m by 3.50 m). The floor was paved with slabs of white marble inlaid with red cabochons. The moldings of the cornices, cast in a honeysuckle and floral pattern, were gilded. Jean Marie Dusseaux executed most of the ornamental painting in pastel tones on an off-white ground. The ceiling was decorated with a blue sky, and on the paneling of the door leading to the salon was depicted a female bather upheld by water nymphs, whose lower anatomies twisted into extravagant arabesque shapes terminating in urns and cameos. The recess of the window looking out onto the formal garden, the doorframes, the cornices, and the borders of the ceiling were edged with delicate painted friezes of striped ribbons and flowers. On the far side of the room stood Augustin Bocciardi's magnificent mantelpiece carved in Egyptian green marble and elaborately embellished with gilt-bronze fixtures by Pierre Gouthière. Its mantel, resting on fluted columns and surmounted by a mirror, was flanked by painted pilasters. The window was hung with curtains of sheer muslin fringed with lace, and the window seat was topped with bolsters and cushions. In the center of the opposite wall was an alcove containing a sculpted oval bathtub, which, when not in use, was disguised as an ottoman. On either side of this niche were mirrored doors, one real and one painted in trompe-l'oeil. The real door opened onto a stairway leading to the comte d'Artois's private dressing room. The bathroom was furnished with a pair of screens, a set of four *chaises à la reine*, and ten less voluminous chairs, six of them

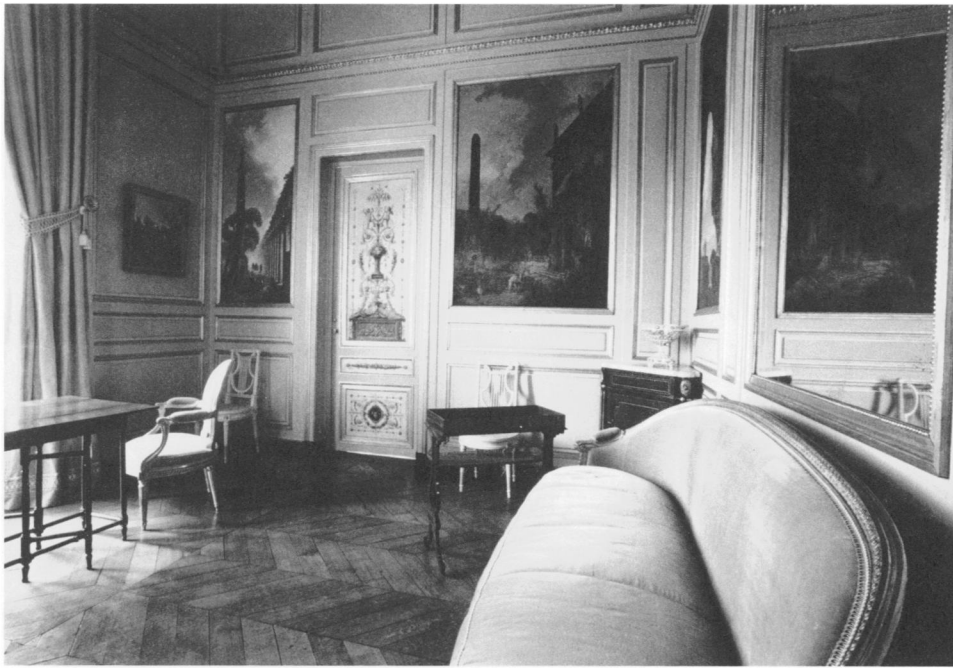


Figure 6. Photograph of the interior of the bathroom at Bagatelle as it appears today. Twentieth-century copies of Robert's paintings decorate the room, which now bears no resemblance to the comte d'Artois's *boudoir-chambre des bains*. Even Dusseaux's ornamental panel is not the one that originally decorated the door leading to the music room (photo: Mairie de Paris)

cane-backed and covered in apple-green linen and white taffeta. From the workshops of Georges Jacob, these pieces were carved by Jean Baptiste Rode and gilded by Aubert. Most of the upholstery fabrics and hangings came from the shop of the *marchand-mercier* Le Dreux, while the silk cords, tassels, and other accessories were supplied by the house of Fizez frères. Such was the sumptuous environment in which the comte d'Artois could take his bath surrounded by Robert's Italian capriccios (Figure 5).¹⁵ Of the original decoration of the room, nothing survives. One of Dusseaux's panels decorates the door leading to the music room, but it is not the one described in the artist's memorandum (Figure 6). The initial payment for Hubert Robert's pictures, documented in the *Livre des comptes*, was issued on May 9, 1779 (see Appendix, Document I).

We can be fairly certain that Robert executed the Bagatelle panels in the enclosure of the Grand-Arsenal du Roi, where he and his family resided between 1770 and the summer of 1778 and where he kept a studio until late December 1779. He was forty-five years old at the time of the commission and was at the peak of his form. The artist had been born in Paris in 1733, the son of a steward in the household of the marquis de Choiseul-Stainville, the representative of the duc de Lorraine at the French court. From birth Robert could rely on the protection of the powerful and influential Choiseul

clan. It was first decided that he would enter the clergy. Between 1745 and 1751 he studied at the Collège de Navarre, where he acquired a solid grounding in the classics. Whereas the boy showed no signs of a religious vocation, he did reveal a decided talent for *les arts du dessin*, and for a short time he seems to have trained as an apprentice in the studio of the Flemish-born sculptor Michel-Ange Slodtz.

In late 1754 the twenty-one-year-old Robert joined the large retinue accompanying the marquis de Stainville, the son and heir of his father's old employer, on his mission to Rome as ambassador to the court of Pope Benedict XIV. Stainville's sponsorship removed many hurdles in Robert's path; he was given room and board at the Académie de France, a signal privilege for an aspiring artist who had never even competed for the *prix de Rome*. Under the paternal guidance of the school's director, Charles Joseph Natoire, he followed the traditional cursus of the students, which included copying from the antique. By September of 1759 the progress he had made encouraged Louis XV's minister of the fine arts, the marquis de Marigny, to make him an official *pensionnaire*. A tireless worker, Robert recorded in innumerable drawings and oil sketches the topography of Rome, Naples, and their environs, the remnants of ancient civilizations, as well as many aspects of contemporary Italian life. Throughout his

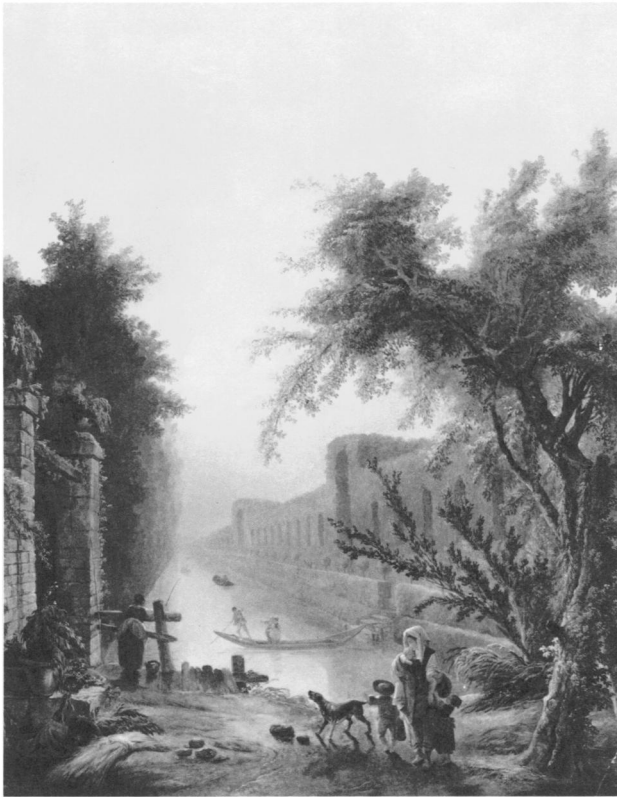


Figure 7. Hubert Robert (1733–1808), *The Canal*, 1774. Oil on canvas. New York, private collection

long and prolific career, the artist would glean much of the imagery of his paintings from these early studies. His work at this stage betrays the strong influence of Italy's foremost *pittore di vedute*, Gianpaolo Panini, the Académie's master of perspective. Furthermore, the spirit of emulation derived from the companionship of his fellow pupils, especially Jean Honoré Fragonard, provided a stimulus to his creative energies.

In July 1765 Robert's unusually long sojourn in Italy came to an end, and he returned to Paris. A year later, he was admitted without the usual preliminaries to full membership in the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture as a painter of architecture. In July 1767 he married Anne Gabrielle Soos, by whom he would have four children. That year he showed his work for the first time at the Salon, where his exhibits inspired Diderot to compose his famous discourse on the painting of ancient ruins. Robert's success was almost immediate. Royalty, the nobility, and the wealthiest members of the bourgeoisie began to commission "Robert des ruines" to design their gardens and decorate their interiors. By 1778 he had remodeled the installation

of the Bains d'Apollon at Versailles; as a reward he was granted an official position in the royal administration of the fine arts as Designer of His Majesty's Gardens, and was assigned lodgings in the old palace of the Louvre. He was also made assistant curator of the king's collections and sat on the first committee charged with the creation of a royal museum. As the vogue for his paintings increased, his large output attained ever higher levels of quality and inventiveness. Louise Vigée Le Brun, Robert's close friend and colleague, commented on his great skills as a decorative painter and the resulting vogue for his work: "Il était de mode, et très magnifique, de faire peindre son salon par Robert; aussi le nombre des tableaux qu'il a laissés est-il vraiment prodigieux. Il s'en faut bien, à la vérité, que tous soient de la même beauté; Robert avait cette extrême facilité qu'on peut appeler heureuse, qu'on peut appeler fatale: il peignait un tableau aussi vite qu'il écrivait une lettre; mais quand il voulait captiver cette facilité, ses ouvrages étaient souvent parfaits."¹⁶ [It was fashionable, and very grand, to have one's salon painted by Robert, and so the number of pictures he has left behind is really prodigious. In truth, all are not of equal beauty. Robert was endowed with that extraordinary facility that can be considered either fortunate or fatal: he could paint a picture as fast as he could write a letter. But when he was willing to hold this facility in check, his works were often perfect.]

In August 1779 Hubert Robert sent eleven oil paintings and an unspecified number of watercolors to the Salon of the Académie Royale. Etiquette required that the artist give precedence to three landscapes belonging to his illustrious royal patron, "Mgr le COMTE D'ARTOIS," and they are the first of his works mentioned in the exhibition's handbook.¹⁷ Two of them, measuring five by three feet, were paired under number 89 and were described as depicting *Une Pêche sur un canal couvert d'un brouillard* [Fishing on a Canal Covered with Fog] and *Un grand Jet d'Eau dans des Jardins d'Italie: on voit, sur le devant du Tableau, des Femmes qui jouent à la main-chaude* [A Large Fountain in an Italian Garden: in the foreground of the painting can be seen women playing hot cockles]. It is unknown which of d'Artois's many residences these pendants were meant to decorate, and they have apparently never resurfaced since their brief appearance at the Salon. The composition of the fishing scene, however, probably reflects that of *The Canal* (Figure 7), a significantly larger painting dating from 1774.



Figure 8. Hubert Robert, *The Wandering Minstrels*, 1777–79. Oil on canvas, 174.5 × 122.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.30



Figure 9. Hubert Robert, *A Fête at the Villa Medici in Rome*, 1765–70. Oil on canvas. Present location unknown



Figure 10. Hubert Robert, *Study of the Courtyard of an Italian Palazzo*. Black and red chalk. Formerly collection of Louis Deglatigny; present location unknown

A picture of the same height as the aforementioned pendants, but wider by one foot, was catalogued as number 90 and entitled *Une partie de la Cour du Capitole, ornée de Musiciens ambulans près d'une Fontaine* [Part of the Courtyard of the Capitol, animated with itinerant musicians near a fountain]. It is indisputable that the handbook entry designates one of the two widest panels in the Metropolitan's series (Figure 8), and its presence in 1779 in the collection of the comte d'Artois is proof enough that it was indeed part of the Bagatelle decor. None of the many journalists who commented on Robert's contributions to the Salon that year made specific mention of the picture.¹⁸ Most of the reviewers were content to reproach the artist for employing a facile technique that led him to neglect detail and the high degree of finish that were hallmarks of the grand style of history and classical landscape painting, criticism that had frequently been leveled at him since he had joined the Académie.

Typical was the following commentary from the author of an article printed in the *Journal de Paris*:

Le fécond M. Robert a garni le Sallon d'une multitude de grands Tableaux d'Architecture & de Paysage. Ses compositions ont de la noblesse & de la variété. Il règne dans son exécution une facilité qui plaît généralement. Il ne paroît pas être au pouvoir de cet Artiste de porter ses ouvrages à un certain degré de fini, en sorte qu'ils ont tous l'air de grandes esquisses avancées, où brillent une couleur aimable & un bon effet. Si cet Artiste pouvoit rendre un peu plus les détails & soigner davantage ses figures, ses Tableaux doubleroit de mérite aux yeux des Connoisseurs, & lui acquerroient une réputation à l'abri des caprices de la mode. Ce sont, en tout genre, les ouvrages finis qui conduisent les noms de leurs Auteurs à l'immortalité.¹⁹

[The prolific M. Robert has furnished the Salon with a multitude of large architectural and landscape paintings. His compositions have grandeur and variety. His



Figure 11. Detail of Figure 8 showing group of musicians



Figure 12. Hubert Robert, *Sheet of Studies*, ca. 1760–65. Black chalk. Formerly collections of Hippolyte Destailleur and Louis Deglatigny; present location unknown

skillful technique is generally found pleasing. This artist seems incapable of carrying his works to a certain degree of finish, and so they all look like large advanced sketches, distinguished by lovely coloring and the pleasant impression they make. If this artist would only concentrate more on details and take more care with his figures, his paintings would double in merit in the eyes of connoisseurs and would warrant him a reputation safe from the vagaries of fashion. In every genre it is finished works that lead the names of their authors to immortality.]

Robert's six *Bagatelle* paintings, which all measure approximately 174 centimeters in height, can be grouped in three pairs according to their width: *Wandering Minstrels* (Figure 8) and *The Bathing Pool* (Figure 15) form a first pair, *The Swing* (Figure 25) and *The Dance* (Figure 29) a second, and *The Fountain* (Figure 33) and *The Mouth of a Cave* (Figure 34) a third. The two widest panels are also the most elaborate in composition.

The slight narrative unfolding in Robert's *Wandering Minstrels* takes place in a setting cleverly fabricated by the artist from sites and monuments he had sketched in and around Rome. A study of the painting reveals something about the eclectic manner in which Robert went about piecing together the disparate parts of such a picture into a harmonious, beautifully integrated but totally contrived and artificial whole. In a courtyard three musicians stand at a fountain composed of an Egyptian obelisk, its base flanked on all sides by statues of nymphs holding vases from which water pours into the basin below. Here the shaft of the obelisk creates the upward sweep that characterizes all six of Robert's *Bagatelle* compositions and that was imposed, as it were, by the vertical shape of the canvases. The wandering minstrels—two flute players and a singing guitarist—serenade the women looking down on them from the windows of a palace. The distinctive façade of the building allows us to identify it as



Figure 13. Detail of Figure 14 showing a flutist

either the Palazzo dei Conservatori or the Capitolino, which Michelangelo and Giacomo della Porta had designed for the Campidoglio. In the right-hand corner of the canvas, the colossal statue of a goddess (then identified as Flora and now as Aphrodite), said to have originally adorned the Baths of Caracalla and which in Robert's time was preserved in the Palazzo Farnese, serenely surveys the amusing proceedings from atop her high pedestal. The ground below this vestige of classical Roman art is littered with broken chunks of ancient masonry. In the background, a series of cascades in a hilly landscape evokes the lush gardens of Tivoli. The scene is bathed in warm, golden sunlight.

There are many works relating to the *Wandering Minstrels*.²⁰ Earlier in his career Robert had created a similar festive atmosphere in a picture of musicians and dancers performing in front of the Villa Medici (Figure 9), which probably dates from soon

after the artist's return to France from his Italian sojourn.²¹ Robert may have partially worked out the composition of the *Bagatelle* painting in a black-and-red-chalk drawing (Figure 10), which was originally part of a sketchbook owned in the nineteenth century by the architect Hippolyte Destailleur.²² A black-chalk study of the singing guitarist on the Piazza del Campidoglio is in the Musée de Valence.²³ When it came to portraying the two flute players (Figure 11), Robert simply referred to a study dating back to about 1760–65, which at some point became part of a composite sheet (Figure 12).²⁴ In 1775 the artist had inserted the figure of the flute player with the wide-brimmed hat (Figure 13) in a



Figure 14. Hubert Robert, *The Portico of a Country Mansion*, 1773. Oil on canvas. Exhibited at the Salon of 1775, pendant to Figure 37. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Lucy Work Hewitt, 1934, 35.40.2



Figure 15. Hubert Robert, *The Bathing Pool*, 1777–79. Oil on canvas, 174.5 × 123.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.29

panel entitled *Portico of a Country Mansion* (Figure 14), a picture commissioned by the financier Bergeret de Frouville, which, like *Wandering Minstrels*, is in the Metropolitan Museum.

The second of the two widest canvases, *The Bathing Pool* (Figure 15),²⁵ is in one respect the key picture in the series, for its aquatic subject reflects the nature of the little boudoir it was meant to decorate. Female bathers were, of course, a common theme in French eighteenth-century painting, but whereas most artists concentrated their attention on voluptuous nudes—for example, Carle Van Loo's famous *Bathers* of 1759 literally fill the large canvas (Figure 16)—Robert employs such figures as incidental accessories. In this outdoor nymphaeum, we have an idea of the type of artfully designed and rusticated *fabrique* one might expect to come across while strolling through the Anglo-Chinese park of a late-eighteenth-century folly like Bagatelle. In a forest glade, a temple consecrated to Venus, the goddess of love, is visited by a company of elegant ladies and their servants. The classical architecture can be associated with one of any number of round, monopteral buildings that Robert had recorded in drawings made in Italy (for example, the Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli or Bramante's Doric Tempietto at S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome), and Charles Sterling claimed that it is specifically modeled on the so-called Temple of Jupiter Serapis at Pozzuoli, near Naples.²⁶ It also brings to mind such contemporary French structures as the Temple de l'Amour, which had been built in 1777 by Richard Mique for Marie Antoinette's English gardens at the Petit Trianon.

Marble steps lead down to a pool fed by jets of water spouting from bronze lion masks. Two of the women have discarded their clothing and are swimming in the pool, while a third prepares to join them. As these are the figures that give the picture its meaning, light is strongly focused on them. Reflecting tenets of the "picturesque" ideal, little is whole in either nature's profusion or the man-made structures. Tree limbs are shattered, while the cornice and Tuscan columns of the temple, the steps, and the pedestals of the statues are pitted and have begun to crumble. The complex geometry of the composition—the sharp vertical lines of the rotunda's columns are broken by the gnarled trunks of the trees projecting diagonally into the pictorial space—and even the spontaneous brushwork conform to the same proto-Romantic aesthetic. All this implies the slow disintegration accompanying the passage of time, but the light and airy atmosphere

of the scene prevents us from lapsing into any metaphysical speculation on the inexorable fate of civilizations. Here Robert gives free rein to his whimsy, decorating the scene with boxed and potted plants, as well as with examples of ancient and contemporary sculpture. The statue in the temple is a conflation of the Venus Pudica and the Venus de' Medici. On high pedestals dominating the pool are Jean Baptiste Pigalle's famous *Venus* (Figure 17) and *Mercury* (Figure 18), the life-size examples of which were in Potsdam but which Robert probably copied from small-scale replicas.²⁷ *Mercury* also appears in Robert's painting traditionally entitled *The Terrace of the Château de Marly* (Figure 19), which also dates from the late 1770s and may very well depict the terraced gardens of the comte d'Artois's Château Neuf de Saint-Germain.²⁸ Robert took the figure of the bathing woman seen from behind, with her knees protruding from the water (Figure 20), from Balechou's print of Joseph Vernet's *Bathers* (Figure 21).²⁹

After Panini, François Boucher was the painter who had the most enduring influence on Hubert Robert. The latter thought nothing of animating his



Figure 16. Carle van Loo (1705–65), *Bathers*. Shown at the Salon of 1759. Oil on canvas. Private collection

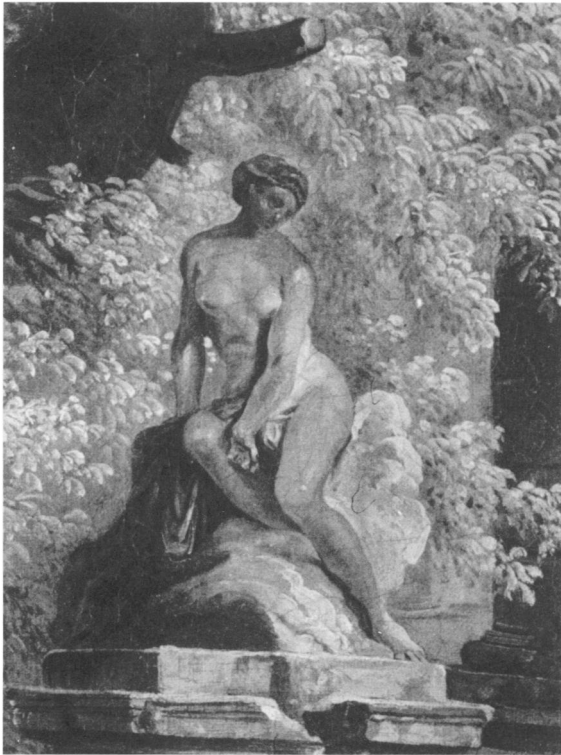


Figure 17. Detail of Figure 15 showing Pigalle's *Venus*

Figure 18. Detail of Figure 15 showing Pigalle's *Mercury*



Figure 19. Hubert Robert. *The Terrace of the Château de Marly*, ca. 1779. Oil on canvas. Kansas City, Missouri, The Nelson-Atkins Museum (photo: Nelson-Atkins Museum)



Figure 20. Detail of Figure 15 showing female bathers



Figure 22. Detail of Figure 15 showing female bather removing her stocking



Figure 21. Jean Joseph Balechou, after Claude Joseph Vernet (1714–89), *Bathers*, 1757. Engraving with etching



Figure 23. Nicolas de Larmessin, after François Boucher (1703–70), *Le Fleuve Scamandre*, 1742. Engraving

compositions by borrowing liberally from the works of the older master with whom he had collaborated immediately after his return to Paris from Rome in 1765.³⁰ The blonde woman removing her stockings (Figure 22) is simply cribbed from Boucher's *Le Fleuve Scamandre*, which he knew from Nicolas de Larmessin's print (Figure 23).³¹ At earlier stages of his career Robert had made good use of the motif, which occurs for the first time in a painting of a lone bather (Figure 24) dating from the end of his stay in Italy. We find it also in one of a group of decorative panels purportedly commissioned in 1776 by

Mme Rouillé de l'Etang, *Washerwomen at a Pool near Antique Ruins*.³²

In *The Swing* (Figure 25) Robert illustrates an episode in a game played by lovers, a particularly fitting subject for the comte d'Artois's boudoir-bathroom at Bagatelle. The scene is staged on the balustraded terrace of an Italian garden in which a marble statue, a section of a broken column, and a stele are incidental reminders of the antique past. Amid the shady luxuriance of high rising trees, a woman on a swing soars into the air. Groups of bystanders look on amusedly as the young swain in the left fore-

ground pulls the cord to which the swing is tethered; at each and every pull, his lover flies to vertiginous heights (Figure 26). The theme was common in eighteenth-century painting and print-making. More than anyone else, Watteau popularized it, and it is in all likelihood one of his lost arabesque panels, *La Balanceuse*, commemorated in an engraving by Jacques Philippe Le Bas (Figure 27), which served as Robert's immediate inspiration for the two main figures. Both women are seen on swings, with their skirts fluttering in the breeze, and each of the male protagonists suggestively holds the end of a rope. Donald Posner has demonstrated that the image of a woman swinging back and forth related specifically to the rites of carnal love, and it frequently carried with it the connotation of female inconstancy.³³ With typical brio, Robert's friend Fragonard fully explored the possibilities of the theme in several paintings, most notably in the naughty *Swing* in the Wallace Collection, London, in which the sexual overtones so subtly understated in the work of Watteau and other painters in the *fête galante* tradition are made relatively explicit. In the *Bagatelle* panel the statue of a young male nude (Figure 28), a recollection of the Marble Faun in the Capitoline, seems to be eyeing the scene with a lascivious smirk on his face. With this witty conceit, Robert is poking fun at the metaphor. In subsequent years, even quite late in his career, Robert painted a number of variations on the composition, a fact that may suggest that he had easy access to it after completing the *Bagatelle* painting.³⁴

The locale of the painting entitled *The Dance* (Figure 29) is a rugged mountain pass through which a river flows. In the upper register of the composition a caravan of travelers crosses a natural stone bridge (one of Robert's favorite motifs) and enters a tunnel. This type of spectacular scenery had important precedents in such landscapes by Joseph Vernet as the so-called *View of the Alps*, engraved by Jean Ouvrier (Figure 30), which was itself dependent upon the mountainscapes of Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet.³⁵ At the foot of a rocky precipice, near the pool formed by the cascading waters of the river, a guitarist draped in a long cape accompanies the gestures of a young couple executing an "Allemande," a lively German folk dance that the French transformed into a sequence of slow and stately movements accompanied by elaborate intertwinings of arms and hands. Once again Robert lifted his principal figures (Figure 31), poses and costumes alike, from a work by Boucher, *La Danse allemande*, of

about 1765. Because the dancers are not shown in reverse, it can be surmised that Robert referred to Boucher's original drawing (Figure 32) and not to Demarteau's engraving of it.³⁶ The inventory made of Robert's effects after his death accounted for more than a hundred individual sheets by Boucher, so it is not impossible that he even owned *La Danse allemande*.³⁷

The scene depicted in one of the two narrowest panels, *The Fountain* (Figure 33), takes place on a flat terrain dotted with umbrella pines. A group of washerwomen and water carriers busy themselves around a fountain at the base of a column surmounted by the statue of a female deity, one of those free improvisations on imperial Roman triumphal columns—the most likely prototypes being those of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius—that abound in Robert's work. From the right, a roseate light streams through the arched openings of the two-tiered brick-and-concrete façade receding into the depths of the picture. This nonspecific construction may be modeled on Septimius Severus's substructures on the Palatine Hill, or the outer shell of one

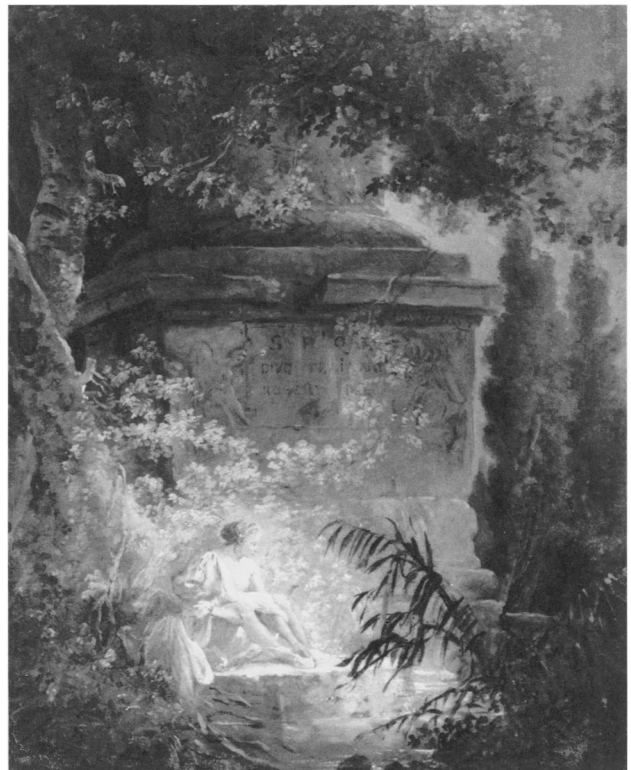


Figure 24. Hubert Robert, *The Bather*, ca. 1762. Oil on canvas. Zurich, private collection



Figure 25. Hubert Robert, *The Swing*, 1777–79. Oil on canvas, 173.5 × 88 cm. Signed lower right on base of statue:
H. ROBERT PINXIT. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.27



Figure 26. Detail of Figure 25 showing woman on a swing

of the imperial baths, or the remains of an aqueduct. A fragment of a broken statue is propped against the foremost pier of the arcade, while a large slab of stone leans against the fountain. In the distance, tiny figures on foot and on horseback advance through a haze of dust and vapor. Ruined monuments are again exploited as picturesque accessories, the setting for the everyday activities of contemporary Romans. And once again Robert's real study is the effect of sunlight on moldering ruins.

The last panel, *The Mouth of a Cave* (Figure 34), depicts a seaside grotto with walls overgrown with moss and hanging vines. Among the lambent shadows of the interior, a fisherman and two women discuss the day's catch, while in the foreground a figure carrying a basket on his back plods through a pool left behind when the tide receded. On the unruffled surface of the sea, far off on the horizon, floats a

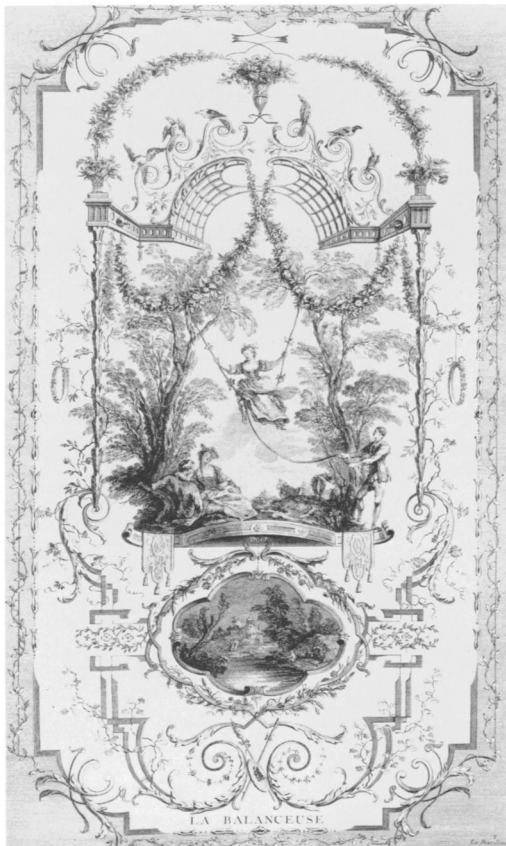


Figure 27. Jacques-Philippe Le Bas, after Jean Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), *La Balanceuse*. Etching. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert N. Straus, 1928, 28.113

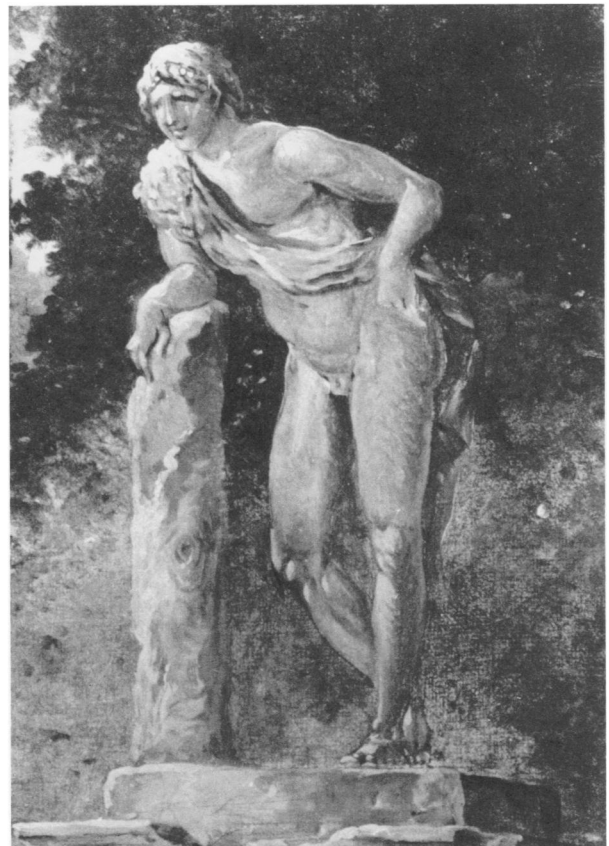


Figure 28. Detail of Figure 25 showing Marble Faun



Figure 29. Hubert Robert, *The Dance*, 1777–79. Oil on canvas, 173.5 × 85.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.28



Figure 30. Jean Ouvrier, after Claude Joseph Vernet (1714–89), *A View of the Alps*. Engraving

pair of fishing vessels. This is undoubtedly a fanciful re-creation of one of the caverns the artist had visited in 1760 with his friend and patron the Abbé de Saint-Non during their trip to the kingdom of Naples.³⁸ Such natural curiosities are represented in other marine pictures—for instance, in the *Grotto of Folignano* (Figure 35)—but the high vaulting of the cave and the dramatic contrasts of light and dark add considerable monumentality to the Bagatelle composition. Robert had achieved similar effects in a far more fantastical *veduta* in which St. Peter's basilica in Rome is seen from inside a grotto (Figure 36) and, in architectural terms, in the Metropolitan's *Return of the Cattle* (Figure 37).

The Mouth of a Cave (Figure 34) is the only painting in the series that bears both a signature and a date.³⁹ That date, 1784, is some five years after the commission was completed and payment made to the artist, and five years after *Wandering Minstrels* (Figure 8) was exhibited at the Salon. This discrepancy in chronology is explicable in view of the fact

that by 1783 the humidity endemic to Bagatelle had taken a toll on the furnishings of both ground-floor boudoirs. More heat was required to dry the rooms than could be provided by the hearths, so wrought-iron stoves had to be installed. The artist was asked by the comte d'Artois's new and more conservative superintendent of finance, Marie Jean Jacques de Verdun, to “redo” (*refaire*) the two panels flanking the mantelpiece in the *chambre des bains*, as these had incurred serious harm from the dampness. The new commission is recorded in a report dated May 18, 1784 (see Appendix, Document III). It is conceivable that the damaged pictures in question were in fact the two now-lost pendants in the collection of the comte d'Artois that were shown at the Salon of 1779, *Le Canal* and *Un grand jet d'eau dans des jardins d'Italie*,⁴⁰ and that these were in such poor condition they had to be replaced. Such a hypothesis would mean that *The Mouth of a Cave* (Figure 34) was actually painted in 1784, and this would account for its pristine, apparently unrestored condition. The problems caused by excessive humidity persisted, and in 1787 Robert's paintings had to be removed so that the wainscoting in which they were set could be covered with a protective lining.⁴¹

The subsequent history of Robert's paintings for Bagatelle is somewhat muddled. In 1785 the château ceased to be the haven where d'Artois freely indulged his sexual appetites. A liaison with Louise d'Esparbès, vicomtesse de Polastron, had a stabilizing effect on him. In the fevered political atmosphere of the late 1780s, his reputation as the most reactionary member of the royal family made his name anathema to the masses. During the meetings of the Assemblée des Notables and the États Généraux, he aggressively opposed any reform of the monarchy and championed absolutism. The comte d'Artois became a symbol of the court's decadence and a prime target for the radical press, which launched blistering attacks against him. In the summer of 1789, having learned that d'Artois was a candidate for assassination, that there was actually a price on his head, Louis XVI urged his younger brother to leave the realm. With his family and closest allies, he fled Versailles under the cover of night on July 16–17, only forty-eight hours after the fall of the Bastille. His hasty departure began the great exodus that came to be known as the Emigration. He would not return to France until Napoleon's debacle in 1814.

Behind him the comte d'Artois left his many properties and the colossal debts he had accumu-



Figure 31. Detail of Figure 29 showing peasant couple executing an Allemande



Figure 32. François Boucher (1703–70), *La Danse allemande*, ca. 1768. Red chalk. Private collection

lated during his wasted youth. The estate of Bagatelle was nationalized by the Assemblée, and by the spring of 1792 it had been incorporated into the commune of Neuilly. Briefly opened to the public, it was requisitioned in order to billet a detachment of volunteer troops from the Armée du Midi. In 1793, following the abolition of the monarchy, the Convention decreed that certain of the former royal houses were to be torn down, among them the nearby châteaux of Madrid and La Muette. Fortunately Bagatelle was spared this fate, but to satisfy d'Artois's creditors, between 1793 and 1794 most of the movable effects remaining in the château were auctioned off by order of the municipal officials of Saint-Denis and Neuilly. During much of that time, Robert had been incarcerated in the revolutionary prisons of Sainte-Pélagie and Saint-Lazare. On 29 germinal an III (April 18, 1795), he appealed to the Commission des Arts for the return of the pictures he had painted for the comte d'Artois at Bagatelle. It was decided, however, that the paintings in the boudoirs were part of the wall decoration and as such had to be left in place.⁴²

Although the Maison Nationale de Bagatelle was officially acknowledged as an establishment "beneficial to the Arts and to Agriculture," the state could not afford to maintain it, so it was sold in 1796 to Claude Leuthereau, an erstwhile wigmaker turned arms dealer, who had also acquired the Hôtel de Salm in Paris. This unsavory character kept Bagatelle for less than a year, vulgarly flaunting his new-found wealth in the company of his glamorous mistress, the actress Anne Françoise Elisabeth Lange. (Citizen Leuthereau was eventually arrested and imprisoned for forging documents.)

The government once more put the château up for sale, and on May 26, 1797, it was taken over by a consortium of investors headed by a restaurateur, André Lhéritier, who promoted it into a popular banqueting establishment and amusement park, an elegant rendezvous where the *muscadins* of the Directoire and the disgruntled royalists who yearned for the return of the Bourbons came to dine, to eat the ices of the Italian *glacier* Garchi, to listen to music, or to wander through the botanical gardens, which at night were illuminated. Yet the venture was costly and yielded little or no profit. The insolvency of several of the partners and growing friction between them led to the dissolution of the company. The estate was the subject of a complicated legal dispute, and its buildings and their contents were placed under judicial seal until Lhéritier was able to

form a new group calling itself the Société des Entrepreneurs de Fêtes, which reopened Bagatelle.⁴³ The former royal property was visited at this time by a young Prussian architect, Friedrich David Gilly (1772–1800). His detailed description of the main building provides incontrovertible evidence to the effect that Robert's paintings were still in situ as late as 1797: "To the left, you enter a small and very hospitable room whose walls are decorated with picturesque architectures by the ingenious hand of Robert. On the opposite side an identical room, decorated by Callet and arranged as a bathroom [*sic*] with extraordinary elegance, is its counterpart, and it connects by a small stairway to the bedrooms on the upper floor. The angles and the alcoves are arranged with exceptional skill and provide the greatest comfort."⁴⁴

Throughout the Consulate and the first years of the Empire, Bagatelle continued to operate as a restaurant under the management of a caterer, François Ignace Born, one of Lhéritier's associates. In 1806 Napoleon's Administration des Domaines bought the property, but Born sublet it and stayed on until 1810, when he was finally evicted. For his own pleasure, Napoleon arranged for the Bois de Boulogne to be replenished with game; he then emptied Bagatelle and transformed it into a hunting lodge, which was renamed the Pavillon de Hollande. Most of the new furnishings for the château came from Joseph Bonaparte's Parisian residence, the Hôtel Marbeuf.⁴⁵ The emperor was able to occupy the château by July 28, 1811. We can only speculate that it was during these major renovations that the pavilion was deprived of some of the original wall decorations, including the boudoir paintings.

The precise whereabouts of Robert's panels during a good part of the nineteenth century are a mystery. An old tradition that cannot be supported by any documentary evidence would have it that, following their removal from Bagatelle, they were allocated to the former Empress Josephine, then living in retirement at her Château de Malmaison. Sometime before her death in 1814, she purportedly gave them to her doctor—her personal physician was Dr. C. E. Horeau⁴⁶—as a token of her gratitude for the care he had given her. The panels eventually found their way to the south of France, where they were acquired by Armand Verdier, comte de Flaux (1819–93), who installed them in one of the reception rooms of his château near the town of Uzès (Gard).⁴⁷ The ownership of the Bagatelle panels passed to his son and daughter, comte

Roger de Flaux (died 1898) and Mme Madeleine Berger. The pictures were still at Flaux in 1908 at the death of the dowager countess, née Clémence Pascal, who had kept them in trust for her three grandchildren. Since old and bitter family disputes had made it difficult for the estate to be divided equitably among the heirs, arbitration was required. On Christmas Eve of 1910 the parties came to a final settlement. The entire fortune, consisting mostly of securities and landholdings, was valued at approximately 2,500,000 francs. The paintings by Hubert Robert were appraised at a mere 130,039 francs, and their happy beneficiary was the de Flaux granddaughter Eliane Berger. Involved in the transactions was a certain Maurice de Verneuil, head of a Paris stockbrokerage firm and the late countess's fiduciary agent. It was probably he who had brought the Robert landscapes to the attention of Jean Forestier, the administrator of the Bois de Boulogne, who had published them that very year as the lost Bagatelle series.⁴⁸

In January 1911 de Verneuil proposed the panels to the Metropolitan Museum, along with two unrelated horizontal overdoors by Hubert Robert that may also have been at Flaux.⁴⁹ This was done through the intermediary of the head of J. Pierpont Morgan's banking house in Paris, Henry Herman Harjes. The asking price was 1,500,000 francs, an astronomical figure when one considers that in 1904 the city of Paris had been able to acquire the entire estate of Bagatelle from Sir Murray Scott for 6,500,000 francs.⁵⁰ The offer was declined, so Morgan bought the pictures himself for 1,200,000 francs, a sum he borrowed from de Verneuil and repaid with interest before the end of the year.⁵¹ We can only wonder if Morgan considered the Bagatelle series to be a suitable complement to the magnificent decorative scheme that Fragonard had painted in 1771/72 for Madame Du Barry's pavilion of Louveciennes, *The Progress of Love* (The Frick Collection), which at the time graced the walls of his London town house.⁵² In March of 1912 he allowed the Bagatelle series to be exhibited at Agnew's galleries in Paris, on the Place Vendôme, and in April they were placed on long-term loan to the Metropolitan.⁵³ When Morgan died in 1913, the paintings remained in the Museum. Four years later, on December 17, 1917, they were accepted by the Museum's acquisitions committee as part of the large Pierpont Morgan bequest.⁵⁴

Although Robert's Bagatelle decorations do contain numerous quotations from the architecture and

Figure 33. Hubert Robert, *The Fountain*, 1777–79. Oil on canvas, 173.5 × 79.7 cm. Inscribed on base of fountain: FONTEM / PUBL. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.26





Figure 34. Hubert Robert, *The Mouth of a Cave*. Oil on canvas, 174.5 × 79.5 cm. Signed and dated lower right: H. ROBERT / 1784. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.25



Figure 35. Hubert Robert, *The Grotto of Folignano*, 1775–80. Oil on canvas. Private collection

statuary of ancient Rome, they lack the *gravitas* and Piranesian illusionism that characterize Chicago's Méréville pictures. When Robert painted his Italian caprices for the comte d'Artois, he made no attempt to suggest any lofty moral principles or to elicit in the minds of those who would eventually view them somber meditations on the passage of time, the sublimity of decaying monuments, or human mortality. On the contrary, he intended the six paintings to be so many windows onto a world of exquisite fantasy, the perfect decoration for a boudoir in a princely folly. Their subject matter is therefore entirely frivolous: musicians in a palace courtyard, women bathing in a pool near the temple of Venus, a girl on a swing, lovers dancing at the foot of a waterfall, washerwomen at a public fountain, and fisherfolk in a coastal grotto. Here Robert utilized much of the vocabulary of natural, architectural, and human

forms that he had assembled in sketches and drawings during his eleven-year apprenticeship in Italy, and he combined and contextualized them imaginatively, with little regard for scale or topographical accuracy. Although the staffage is invariably picturesque, Robert subordinates all narrative anecdote to the mood of the landscape, which he interprets sensitively, even poetically, in terms of light and shadow, color, and atmospheric effects. And each of the paintings is notable for a sophisticated interplay between solid forms and spatial recession. Finally, at a time when a slick and polished style was a lauded attribute in an academic painter, he exploited the expressive potentials of the oil medium with particularly felicitous results. In his spirited technique, Hubert Robert proved himself to be one of eighteenth-century France's most natural, uninhibited, and painterly of painters.

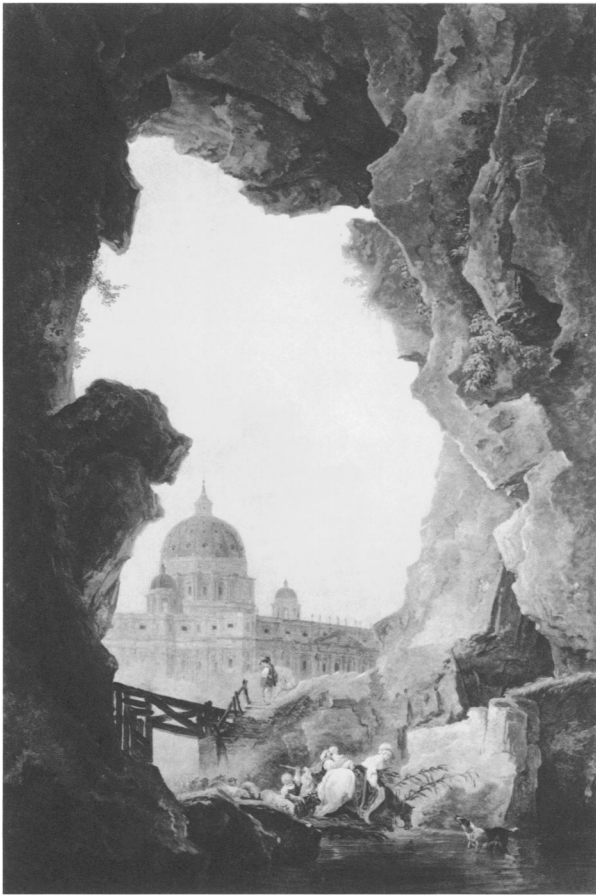


Figure 36. Hubert Robert, *Imaginary View of St. Peter's Basilica from the Interior of a Grotto*, 1773–75. Oil on canvas. Private collection (photo: Galerie Gismondi)



Figure 37. Hubert Robert, *The Return of the Cattle*, ca. 1773. Oil on canvas, pendant to Figure 14. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Lucy Work Hewitt, 1934, 35.40.1

APPENDIX: DOCUMENTS I–VII

I. Documents concerning the commission and conservation of six paintings by Hubert Robert for the *Chambre des Bains* of the *Château de Bagatelle* are preserved with other papers of the comte d'Artois at the Archives nationales, Paris. R¹ 309, *Livres de comptes de Bagatelle*, pièce 47, records payments to Hubert Robert; documents from the *Comte ouvert* dated May 9, 1779, and Jan. 16, 1785:

Robert, peintre.

1779 128 9 may 3 600 Du 1er au 28 février 1789 2 400
du 30 may au 6 juin 1 200

1785 16 janvier 1200 du 17 au 22 janvier 1789

II. Paris, Archives nationales, R¹ 315, pièce 128, document dated 1779 (mentioned in Nebout, Brel-

Bordaz, and Racary, cited below, II, p. 65). Robert was allocated 3,600 livres for six paintings for the *Cabinet des Bains* during the year 1779. Callet was paid the same sum for six paintings decorating the ground-floor boudoir on the opposite side of the music room (see note 12 below).

III. Paris, Archives nationales, R¹ 389. Condition report on two of the narrower panels; document dated May 18, 1784, and addressed to the comte d'Artois's superintendent of finance, M. de Verdun (cited in [L. de Queller] below, pp. 45–46):

M. le surintendant nous ayant chargé de prendre connaissance des tableaux de paysage qui étoient à refaire dans le boudoir de Bagatelle, nous avons été à portée de voir à notre dernier voyage qu'il suffirait de refaire seulement les deux petits qui sont à droite et à gauche de la cheminée: Attendu que celui à gauche de

la croisée peut être encore conservé dans l'état où il est actuellement. Nous engageons en conséquence Monsieur le surintendant à vouloir bien faire passer ses ordres à M. Robert pour refaire ces deux tableaux qui lui ont été payés 25 livres pièce.

[As the superintendent has assigned us the task of assessing the condition of the landscape paintings which were to be redone in the boudoir at Bagatelle, on our last visit we were able to ascertain that it would be sufficient to redo the two smaller ones to the right and left of the fireplace, given that the one to the left of the window can be kept in its present condition. We therefore encourage the superintendent to pass on his orders to M. Robert to redo the two paintings for which he was paid 25 livres apiece.]

Verdun added the following notation to the report:

Bon, pour refaire les 2 petits tableaux, à côté de la cheminée dans la salle de bains; j'écrirai, en conséquence, à M. Robert.

[Approved. The two small paintings next to the fireplace in the bathroom will be redone. I shall accordingly write to M. Robert.]

IV. The paintings are discussed during a session of the Commission Temporaire des Arts that took place on 5 fructidor an III (Aug. 22, 1795). Original document cited in Louis Tuetey, *Procès-verbaux de la Commission Temporaire des Arts* (Paris, 1917) II, p. 321.

Le directoire est chargé d'écrire à Franciade pour inviter l'administration du district à faire conserver avec soin les tableaux qui décorent les appartements de Bagatelle, et qui donnent un nouveau prix à ce domaine national.

[The Directoire is responsible for writing to Franciade to request that the administration of the district preserve with care the paintings decorating the apartments of Bagatelle, and which enrich the national heritage.]

V. On 11 fructidor an III (Aug. 28, 1795), the Directoire of the Commission wrote to the administration of the district of Franciade. Original document in the Archives nationales, F¹⁷ 1046 (Tuetey, *Procès-verbaux*, II, p. 321 n. 1).

La Commission temporaire des arts a nommé des commissaires pour examiner les tableaux et autres objets mis en réserve dans le ci-devant Château de Bagatelle. Le rapport des commissaires portait que ces tableaux seraient transportés à Paris; mais, sur

l'observation de plusieurs membres que ce domaine national était dans le cas d'être vendu, ce serait consulter les intérêts de la Nation en y laissant ces tableaux qui font la décoration des appartements et qui y sont pour la plupart enchâssés dans la boiserie; et que vous seriez invités à veiller à ce qu'ils n'éprouvent aucune dégradation. En outre, par lettre du 19 fructidor, le directoire informait la Commission des arts de laisser en place les tableaux du Château de Bagatelle.

[The Commission Temporaire des Arts has appointed commissioners to examine the paintings and other objects which have been set aside in the former Château de Bagatelle. The commissioners' report indicated that these paintings would be moved to Paris; but as several members observed, the national property was scheduled to be sold and, in the national interest, it would be advisable to retain these pictures which decorate the apartments and which for the most part are set into the woodwork, and you are requested to make sure that they incur no damage. Moreover, by letter of 19 fructidor, the Directoire informed the Commission des Arts to leave the paintings in place at the Château de Bagatelle.]

VI. Minutes of the session of 15 fructidor an III (Sept. 1, 1795) specify that Robert's panels must remain in place at Bagatelle, where they will be restored:

Le directoire fera passer à la Commission d'instruction publique copie de l'arrêté relatif aux tableaux de Robert à Bagatelle et de la lettre écrite à ce sujet au district de Franciade, pour en assurer la conservation dans le lieu où ils se trouvent.

[The Directoire will pass on to the Commission d'Instruction Publique copies of the decree relating to the paintings by Robert at Bagatelle and of the letter written on this subject to the District of Franciade, to make sure that they remain in their present location.]

VII. On 19 fructidor the Directoire wrote to the Commission d'Instruction Publique to confirm the measures he had taken in order to ensure the conservation of the paintings at Bagatelle. (Archives nationales, F¹⁷ 1046; see Tuetey, *Procès-verbaux*, II, p. 330 n. 2.)

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• Carlson—Victor Carlson, *Hubert Robert—Drawings & Watercolors*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1978) p. 136, under no. 55

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• Yriarte, July–Aug.—Charles Yriarte, "Mémoires de Bagatelle," *Revue de Paris* 4 (July–Aug. 1903) p. 21

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NOTES

1. See John D. Bandiera, "Form and Meaning in Hubert Robert's *Ruin Caprices*: Four Paintings of Fictive Ruins for the Château de Méréville," *The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 15, 1 (1989) pp. 20–37, 82–85.

2. Pierre de Nolhac, *Hubert Robert* (Paris, 1910) p. 47.

3. On the genesis and history of Bagatelle, see Duchesne; Pascal; Yriarte, July–August, pp. 1–39; Yriarte Sept.–Oct., pp. 380–

414. Consult also the monograph entitled *La Folie d'Artois*, published by the "Antiquaires à Paris" on the occasion of a commemorative exhibition held at Bagatelle in 1988, which contains essays by Claude Arnaud, "Le comte d'Artois et sa coterie," pp. 14–25; Annie Jacques and Jean-Pierre Mouilleseaux, "La Folie d'Artois," pp. 26–49; Monique Mosser, "Histoire d'un jardin," pp. 50–71; Colin Bailey, "Artois, mécène et collectionneur," pp. 72–79; Jean-Jacques Gautier, "Le goût du prince," pp. 80–141; Christian Baulez, "Bronzes et bronziers de Bagatelle," pp. 142–157; and Daniel Alcouffe, "Les Objets Artois au Louvre," pp. 158–165.

4. See Gautier, "Le goût du prince"; Baulez, "Bronzes et bronziers"; and Alcouffe, "Les Objets Artois."

5. From the time of its construction, ca. 1720, until it was acquired by the comte d'Artois, the original Bagatelle had a number of occupants. It was built by the maréchal d'Estrées, marquis de Coeuvres (1660–1737), on a concession of land over which the Crown held proprietary authority but which was accompanied by a transferable lifetime lease. His widow, the maréchale d'Estrées, née Lucie Félicité de Noailles d'Ayen, lived at Bagatelle until her death in 1745, when the lease was sold to Michel Philippe Levesque de Gravelle, a councillor of the Paris Parlement, who resided there for little more than a year. In May 1747 Levesque ceded his rights to a highborn lady of easy virtue, the marquise de Monconseil, née Cécile Rioult de Cursay (1707–1787), the wife of a military officer who spent most of his time with the army of the Rhine. In 1772 she sold her lease to a M. de Boisgelin, who little more than a year later deeded it to a M. de la Regnière. The latter spent only one summer at Bagatelle, after which he in turn sold the concession to the prince and princesse de Chimay. (Philippe Gabriel Maurice Joseph d'Alsace, prince de Chimay, captain of the comte d'Artois's hunt at Saint-Germain, was the brother-in-law of Mme de Monconseil's second daughter, Adélaïde Félicité Henriette, princesse Charles d'Hénin; Chimay's wife, née Laura de Fitz-James, was *dame d'honneur* to Marie Antoinette.)

6. Bachaumont et al., Oct. 22, 1777, p. 259 (text by Matthieu François Pidansat de Mairobert).

7. The authoritative account of the life and works of Belanger, one of the most fascinating artistic personalities at the end of the 18th century, remains Stern's two-volume monograph. It might be noted in passing that Belanger ultimately married one of the comte d'Artois's former mistresses, Mlle Dervieux.

8. Blaikie's role as landscaper of the Anglo-Chinese park at Bagatelle is analyzed in Mosser's copiously illustrated article "Histoire d'un jardin." See also Duchesne, pp. 131–137.

9. Bachaumont et al., p. 175, entry for May 26, 1780 ("... *Bagatelle* ne se ressent point de la précipitation avec laquelle il a été construit & paroît d'une solidité qui dément son nom").

10. Thomas Blaikie, *Diary of a Scotch Gardener at the French Court at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Francis Birrell, ed. (London, 1931) pp. 166–167.

11. See Duchesne, pp. 139–146, 278–284; Nebout, Brel-Bordaz, and Racary, I, pp. 11–12, and II, pp. 65–67; Gautier, "Le goût du prince," p. 130.

12. Callet was the comte d'Artois's official painter (see Figure 2, a version of which was shown at the Salon of 1779). The six panels he executed for the little boudoir to the right of the music

room have disappeared, but in the Archives nationales is a memorandum for a payment to the artist of 3,600 livres, the same price paid to Robert for his six landscapes (R¹ 315, pièce 129). Not even their subject matter is known, although one historian suggests that they may have included the four pictures auctioned as lots 99–101 in the Sérévile sale of Jan. 22, 1812, under the titles *Une offrande à l'Amour*, *Serment à l'Amour*, *Hommage à Flore* and *Bacchante dans l'ivresse, auprès de la statue de Pan* (Marc Sandoz, *Antoine-François Callet, 1741–1823* [Paris, 1985] pp. 102–103, no. 20, and p. 130, nos. 87–90). A painting entitled *Offrande à Vénus* (oil on canvas, 160 × 79 cm; formerly Delaroff collection and now Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen) may very well be one of Callet's six Bagatelle compositions. (See Centre Culturel du Panthéon, Mairie du V^e Arrondissement, *De Versailles à Paris: le destin des collections royales*, exh. cat. [Paris, 1989] p. 216, no. 008). During the Revolution Callet was included among the major creditors of the émigré prince. A certificate issued by the Directoire at Saint-Denis on Oct. 9, 1793, establishes that he was still owed the sum of 3,365 livres. He presumably received this sum in brumaire an V (Nov. 1796) after the furnishings of Bagatelle had been disposed of and the receipts of the various sales counted (see Duchesne, p. 164). The entry in the *Mémoires secrets* for May 26, 1780, claims that a number of erotic paintings by Greuze, Fragonard, La Grenée, and other artists were to be found in the ground-floor *boudoir*, which in fact housed Callet's six panels. ("Le boudoir offre toutes sortes de peintures voluptueuses de nos maîtres modernes, Greuze, Fragonard, la Grenée, &c. Un lit de roses & des glaces qui répètent de tous côtés les attitudes des amants ne présentent cependant que ce qu'on voit dans d'autres châteaux. . . ." [Bachaumont et al., p. 173].) The erroneous statement is probably a reference to the decor of the comte d'Artois's private upstairs *boudoir rose* (see Gautier, "Le goût du prince," pp. 138–139). This was certainly the room that Général Thiébaut (1769–1846) recalls having often visited in his youth in the company of various ladies: "[Bagatelle] est . . . un des lieux que j'ai le plus visités avant la Révolution. J'avais reçu du prince d'Hénin un billet pour y aller quand je voudrais. J'y menais souvent des dames et je m'amusais parfois de l'embarras que leur causait un boudoir, dans lequel, et au milieu des peintures très peu orthodoxes, le plancher, les murs et le plafond étaient tout en glaces, et où il ne leur restait d'autre parti à prendre qu'à se dépêcher à faire de leurs robes des espèces de pantalons." [Bagatelle . . . is one of the places that I most often had occasion to visit before the Revolution. I had received from the prince d'Hénin a pass to go there whenever I wished. I was often accompanied by ladies and was sometimes amused to see the embarrassment they experienced in a *boudoir* in which—amidst some very unorthodox paintings—the floor, the walls and the ceiling were all mirrored and in which they had no other choice but to turn their dresses into makeshift trousers.] (Paul Charles François Adrien Henri Dieu-donné Thiébaut, *Mémoires du Général Baron Thiébaut* [Paris, 1893] I, p. 156.)

13. Thierry, 1787, pp. 28–29.

14. See Appendix, Documents I–III.

15. See note 11.

16. Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Souvenirs* (Paris, 1835–37) I, pp. 233–234.

17. The eight additional paintings in Robert's contribution to

the Salon that year were as follows: four 12-foot-high compositions that decorated the "salon doré" of the Hôtel de Brienne on the rue Saint-Dominique, *The Entrance to a Temple, Porticos and Colonnades among Gardens Surrounded by Water, An Ancient Fountain, and A Palace in Ruin, under Its Arcade Can Be Seen the Cupola of St. Peter's in Rome* (nos. 91, 92); a pair of large horizontal landscapes lent by M. de Thésigny, *The View of a Waterfall in Italy* and *A View of Normandy* (no. 93); a painting belonging to the marquis de Véri, *Circular Arcades Surrounding a Pool of Water, with a View of the Roman Coliseum in the Distance* (no. 94); and *Architectural Ruins with an Equestrian Statue in the Foreground* (no. 95). Several watercolor views of ancient and modern monuments were also featured under no. 96.

18. Reviews of the works Robert sent to the Salon of 1779 are anthologized in the *Collection Deloynes*, Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, XI: no. 197, *Premier aperçu des tableaux exposés au salon du Louvre le 15 août 1779*, p. 60; no. 199, *Les Connoisseurs, ou la Matinée du Sallon des Tableaux*, pp. 72–73; no. 201, "Examen au Sallon de l'année 1779," extracted from the *Journal de Paris*, pp. 116–117, 142–143; no. 106, *Le Visionnaire ou lettres sur les ouvrages exposés au Salon, par un ami des arts, lettre seconde*, msp. 265; no. 207, *Encore un Rêve, suite de la Prêtresse*, p. 320; no. 208, *Ah! ah! Encore une critique du Salon! Voyons ce qu'elle chante!*, pp. 352–353; no. 211, "Coup d'oeil sur les ouvrages de peinture, sculpture et gravure de Messieurs de l'Académie royale exposés au sallon cette année," extract from Abbé Grosier's *Journal de littérature*, pp. 428–429; no. 212 [L. J. H. Lefebure], *Janot au Salon, ou le Proverbe*, p. 459; no. 213, *Jugement sur un écrit intitulé 'Janot au Sallon, ou le proverbe'*; no. 216, *Le littérateur au Sallon ou l'examen du paresseux suivi de la critique des critiques*, p. 537; no. 217, *Jugement d'un écrit intitulé 'Le littérateur au Sallon ou l'examen du paresseux suivi de la critique des critiques'*, p. 559; no. 219, *Le Miracle de nos jours: conversation écrite et recueillie par un sourd et muet et la bonne lunette, dans lesquels on trouvera non seulement la critique des ouvrages exposés au Sallon, mais la critique de nos peintres et sculpteurs les plus connus*, pp. 585, 603.

19. "Examen au Sallon de l'année 1779," pp. 116–117.

20. A variant rendering of the Bagatelle composition (244 × 195 cm), in which the figural components have been removed and the landscape modified, was painted by Robert in 1789; it is part of a series of large decorative paintings once in the Paul Durново collection, which are erroneously said to have been commissioned by Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch of Russia; the series is now in the Saint Louis Art Museum (gift of Mrs. Frederic W. Allen). A poor copy of the Saint Louis picture was formerly in the Sturges collection, Wakefield, Rhode Island (Sotheby's, New York, Jan. 12, 1989, lot 160). The palazzo is shown in reverse in a so-called *Roman Fantasy* of 1786, now in the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo (inv. no. P.1977–2). The obelisk fountain is repeated with scarcely a change in a large vertical panel by Robert now in the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (inv. no. 5722). Finally, a much coarser and abbreviated treatment of the subject of a serenade before a Roman palazzo, probably painted from memory in 1794 during Robert's incarceration in the prison of Saint-Lazare, is in the Musée du Louvre. A watercolor rendering of this composition and dating from the same period belongs to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (see Eisler and Carlson).

21. Last recorded in the sale of Eugène Kraemer, Paris, Apr. 29, 1913, lot 52. An oil study, probably executed in Rome, appeared in the sale of Mme Gustave Meunié, Paris, Dec. 14, 1935, lot 87.

22. This capriccio drawing was later auctioned in the Louis Deglatigny sale, Paris, May 28, 1937, as part of lot 91.

23. Illustrated in Cayeux, 1985, p. 290, fig. 106. A counterproof of that drawing, heightened with pen and wash and bearing the date 1776, is in the Ecole Polytechnique in Palaiseau.

24. Last sold, Palais Galliera, Paris, Dec. 9, 1967, lot 6.

25. An anonymous copy of the MMA painting, measuring 173 × 122 cm, appeared in two recent New York auctions: Parke-Bernet, Jan. 22, 1976, lot 199, and Sotheby's, May 30, 1979, lot 60.

26. Sterling suggests that the architecture derives from a red-chalk drawing of the Temple of Serapis now in the Musée de Besançon (illustrated in Maurice Feullet, *Les Dessins de Fragonard et d'Hubert Robert des Bibliothèque et Musée de Besançon* [Paris, 1926] pl. 54). A *Garden Landscape with the Temple of the Sibyl* is similar in composition to the MMA's *Bathing Pool*, and the depiction of the temple may derive from the same source. (See Walpole Gallery, *Treasures of Italian Art*, exh. cat. [London, 1988] no. 26.) A painting dated 1789, in which a statue of a nude Venus is shown in a ruined circular temple, is in the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (inv. no. 4758).

27. On Pigalle's *Mercury* and *Venus*, see Gaborit, pp. 38–47, and Clare Le Corbeiller, "Mercury, Messenger of Taste," *MMAB* 22 (1963) pp. 22–28.

28. See Arnaud Brejon de Lavergnée's discussion of the painting in *The Eye of Thomas Jefferson*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1976) p. 132, no. 208.

29. See Philip Conisbee, *Claude-Joseph Vernet*, exh. cat. (Kenswood, 1976) no. 69.

30. On Boucher's influence on Robert, see Jean Cailleux, "Hubert a pris modèle sur Boucher," *Connaissance des Arts* (Oct. 1959) pp. 100–107; Cayeux and Boulot, pp. 88–89, 238–239.

31. See Pierrette Jean-Richard, *L'Oeuvre gravé de François Boucher dans la Collection Edmond de Rothschild*, exh. cat., Musée du Louvre: Inventaire général des gravures, école française (Paris, 1978) p. 308, no. 1254.

32. Until recently in the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (sale, Sotheby's, New York, June 4, 1987, lot 166).

33. Donald Posner, "The Swinging Women of Watteau and Fragonard," *Art Bulletin* 64, 1 (March 1982) pp. 75–87.

34. All the variants display important differences with respect to the Bagatelle painting; some include the central motif of the woman on a swing, while others are uniquely concerned with the landscape decor and accessory staffage. Notable among these are: (1) a canvas measuring 233 × 144 cm, formerly in the Kergorlay collection and lent by Jacques Seligmann et fils to the Hubert Robert retrospective (Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, 1933; no. 106); (2) one of a pair of large panels measuring 246.5 × 120 cm, last recorded in a Christie's, New York, sale June 10, 1983, lot 171A; (3) an almost identical composition without the figure of the woman on the swing, present location unknown (known to me from a photograph); and (4) a canvas measuring 59 × 38.8

cm, signed and dated 1799, now in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. Other related paintings, by or after Robert, are: one of a pair of decorative panels measuring 255 × 157 cm, in estate sale of the comte de Franqueville, Paris, May 31, 1920, lot 30; one of a pair of park scenes measuring 227 × 108 cm, last sold by Cornette de St Cyr in Paris, Jan. 23, 1989, lot 30; and one of a pair of landscapes in gouache, apocryphally signed "Jean Baptiste Le Prince" and dated 1762, auctioned in New York, American Art Association-Anderson Gallery, Apr. 28, 1938, lot 69.

35. Conisbee, *Claude-Joseph Vernet*, no. 86.

36. See *François Boucher in North American Collections: 100 Drawings*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1973–74) no. 95; Jean-Richard, *L'Oeuvre gravé de François Boucher*, p. 207, no. 769.

37. At the time of his death, Robert owned a considerable number of works by Boucher, including more than two hundred drawings and counterproofs. See list of artworks in Robert's estate sale of Apr. 5, 1809, in Gabillot, pp. 256–271, esp. pp. 266–267.

38. Sterling tentatively identifies the cave as the grotto at Pozzuoli, near Naples, and implausibly suggests that it is related to a drawing done in Naples and today in the Yale University Art Gallery.

39. The anonymous author of the article published in the Jan. 1911 issue of the *Chronique des Arts* mentions that two of the canvases were signed and dated, one in 1777 and another in 1784. In their present state, both *The Swing* and *The Mouth of the Cave* are signed, and the latter painting bears the date of 1784. If *The Swing* was in fact dated 1777, the date has since been removed.

40. These pictures may also have been used as decorations in the comte d'Artois's apartments in the Palais du Temple. On 19 prairial an II and days following, paintings by Poussin, Boucher, Greuze, David, Vincent, Vernet, Robert, and a number of 17th-century Dutch artists were seized at the Temple and catalogued among the belongings of the "émigré d'Artois." (See Louis Tuey, *Procès-verbaux de la Commission Temporaire des Arts* [Paris, 1912] I, p. 296 n. 7.)

41. Gautier, "Le goût du prince," p. 141 n. 1.

42. See Cayeux, 1988, p. 65, and Appendix, Documents IV–VI, above.

43. For the history of Bagatelle between the departure of the comte d'Artois and the fall of Napoleon, consult Duchesne, pp. 157–182.

44. Gilly, p. 22.

45. Denise Ledoux-Lebard, "Le Mobilier Empire du pavillon de chasse de Bagatelle," *Archives de l'Art Français* (Les Arts à l'époque napoléonienne) 24 (1969) pp. 273–307.

46. In a written communication to the MMA (1980), Gérard Hubert, curator of Malmaison, states that no records exist to the effect that Robert's Bagatelle panels belonged to the former empress or that they were given by her to Dr. Horeau.

47. I owe this information to comte Roger de Flaux, to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude.

48. See [Forestier].

49. *Arches in Ruins* (inv. no. 17.190.31) and *A Colonnade in Ruins* (inv. no. 17.190.32).

50. On the purchase of Bagatelle by the city of Paris, see Duchesne, pp. 300–310.

51. The Pierpont Morgan Library preserves the original records of the purchase of the Robert paintings. The first three documents cited below are written on the letterhead of *M. de Verneuil, Agent de Change, Succr de F. Moreau, Rue Montmartre, N° 129 et 46, Rue Notre Dame des Victoires*. The fourth contains notes concerning de Verneuil taken presumably from the diaries of Morgan's secretary.

(1) Paris, le 30 Mai 1911. Monsieur J. P. Morgan, aux soins de M^r H. Harjes, chez M^{re} Morgan, Harjes et C^{ie}, 31 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris. J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que conformément à vos instructions je verserai demain 31 mai à M^r Maurice de Verneuil la somme de *Douze cent mille francs* (1.200.000 fs) dont je débiterai votre compte chez moi. Suivant le désir que vous aviez exprimé, je vous ferai l'avance de cette somme jusqu'à la fin de l'année courante, sauf règlement antérieur à votre gré. Cette avance portera intérêts à 4% l'an. Je vous serai obligé pour la bonne règle de m'accuser réception de cette lettre. Agréez, Monsieur, mes salutations empressées. p p^r M. de Verneuil.

(2) Paris, le 1 Sept 1911. Monsieur J. P. Morgan aux soins de M^r H. Harjes chez M. M. Morgan, Harjes et C^{ie} 31 B^d Haussmann J'ai l'honneur de vous remettre ci joint, conformément à nos conventions, le relevé de votre compte, arrêté au 31 août et se soldant pr Fr. 1.212.000, dont débit, sauf erreur ou omission. Agréez mes salutations empressées. P/p^r M. de Verneuil.

(3) Paris Le 8 Décembre 1911. Monsieur J. P. Morgan aux soins de Monsieur Harjes 31, boulevard Haussmann. J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que Mess^{rs} Morgan, Harjes et C^{ie}, de notre ville, m'ont versé pour votre compte aujourd'hui la somme de Fs 1.224.933, dont j'ai porté le montant; votre crédit pour solde de compte à ce jour. Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. P.P^r M. de Verneuil.

(4) On December 5th, 1911, Mr. M. sent the following cable to Mr. Herman Harjes, Paris:—"Please pay de Verneuil for pictures amount in full. Am remitting Morgan, Harjes & Co. cable transfer."

On December 6th, 1911, Mr. M. said:—"The pictures named in the enclosed correspondence are at present under loan to Agnew for exhibition. Make note of this."

52. See *The Frick Collection, An Illustrated Catalogue* (New York, 1968) II (Paintings, French, Italian, Spanish) p. 116.

53. *Exposition d'oeuvres d'Hubert Robert*, exh. cat., Galerie Thos. Agnew & Sons (Paris, March 12–30, 1912) part of nos. 1–8 (described in the checklist as "Panneaux Décoratifs pour un salon, provenant de la collection de Madame de Flaux. Appartenant à Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan").

54. In the first half of the 1920s, the paintings were set into the woodwork of one of the MMA's period rooms (wing F, gallery 23). (For an illustration, see P. R., p. 9.) Since 1977 they have been exhibited in the Wrightsman Rooms.