THE WENTWORTH COLLECTION

Opening on June 17, and continuing through the summer and early fall, there will be held in Gallery D 6 a special exhibition of some six hundred distinguished objects of art bequeathed to the Museum by Catherine D. Wentworth of Santa Barbara. During long residence in France Mrs. Wentworth assembled one of the most important and extensive private collections of French silver in existence, of which more than four hundred examples, chiefly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are shown in the exhibition. French silver has never been extensively collected in America, and our museums are sadly deficient in it. By virtue of Mrs. Wentworth’s bequest, the Metropolitan Museum now possesses a collection unrivaled in this country and comparable to the finest abroad.

Mrs. Wentworth was also a discriminating collector of eighteenth-century goldsmiths’ work, and a group of some ninety superb examples, including boxes, étuis, nécessaires, carnets de bal, knives, and navettes, mostly of French workmanship, may be seen in the exhibition. With the great collection of French goldsmiths’ work presented in 1917 by J. P. Morgan, the Museum’s collection of this material now ranks among the three or four finest in the world.

The Wentworth bequest also includes a large group of necklaces of beautiful semiprecious stones and numerous rare textiles, embroideries, laces, costumes, and costume accessories. To have included all of these in Gallery D 6 would have resulted in overcrowding, and a selection only of some of the finest eighteenth-century brocades, chiefly Italian, is shown. Their incredible richness and highly imaginative designs provide colorful accents in the gallery. The items not shown in the exhibition may be seen upon application in the Textile Study Room.

ABOVE: Silver soup tureen with the arms of the Orleans family. Made by Edme Pierre Balzac, famous Paris silversmith, 1757-1758

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Ewer made by Thomas Germain, Paris, 1736-1737
Covered dish by Jean Louis Bertrand (?), Metz, probably 1781. Cup, one of a pair probably by Jacques Filassier, Paris, 1729-1730. Milk pot by Mathieu Bouvier, Trévoux, about 1750
Three-branched candlestick made by Robert Joseph Auguste, Paris, 1767-1768

Italian figured silk, middle of the xviii century