

# ACKLANDARTMUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

## Ackland Art Museum Examines Womanhood in the Enlightenment

*Spring exhibition features French Art from The Horvitz Collection*

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Chapel Hill, N.C. — While eighteenth-century France was the crucible for some of the most elegant, sophisticated, and refined art ever made, it was also a hotbed of philosophical and cultural reflection on many major issues, including what became known as the “woman question.” On January 26, the Ackland Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will present [\*Becoming a Woman in the Age of Enlightenment: French Art from The Horvitz Collection\*](#), a comprehensive exhibition investigating these topics.

Against a backdrop of powerful conventional thinking that assigned women to limited and secondary roles based on the presumed dictates of biology, some voices of the time began arguing for an alternative view, one that saw woman as the potential equal of man in intelligence, creativity, responsibility, and power.

Borrowing from the now famous line in Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) – “one is not born, but becomes a woman” – this exhibition, in part, reflects on and pushes back against the traditional understanding of women as subjugated by men and reveals the agency that French women did have during the eighteenth century. Women could have identities beyond beauty, motherhood, and emotional susceptibility, and *Becoming a Woman* examines these roles through stunning art of the period.

With over 130 paintings, sculptures, and especially drawings, selected from one of the world’s best private collections of French art, *Becoming a Woman* includes works by some of the era’s most highly regarded artists, including François Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, and Jacques-Louis David. The exhibition also offers a view of talented lesser-known and female artists, including Anne Vallayer-Coster, Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, and Pauline Auzou.



“The Ackland is truly delighted to present this major exhibition selected from the extraordinary private collection of our friends Jeffrey and Carol Horvitz. *Becoming a Woman* will delight the eye, stimulate thought, and provoke rich discussions about contemporary issues that could not be more pressing,” said Katie Ziglar, director of the Ackland Art Museum. “This exhibition is especially near to our hearts as we honor the show’s co-curator, the late Mary D. Sheriff, who was among UNC-Chapel Hill’s most prominent faculty members and a mentor to generations of graduate students.”

The exhibition’s thematic sections portray the many stages of a woman’s life and address cultural attitudes and conditions that shaped how women were defined in the Enlightenment period. *Becoming a Woman* delves into class differences, marriage, motherhood, work, the pleasures women pursued, and aging, in sections entitled “Women in Training,” “What’s Love Got To Do With It?,” “Married with Children,” “Dressing the Part,” “Aging Gracefully,” “Pleasurable Pursuits,” “Private Pleasures,” and “Work: Leaving it to the Professionals.”

*Becoming a Woman* will be on view at the Ackland Art Museum from January 26 through April 8, 2018. It is curated by Melissa Hyde, Professor of Art History, University of Florida Research Foundation Professor, University of Florida, and the late Mary D. Sheriff, W.R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Art History, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *Becoming a Woman* is organized by Alvin L. Clark, Jr., Curator, The Horvitz Collection and The J.E. Horvitz Research Curator, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg.

A 200-page illustrated catalogue with an essay by curator Melissa Hyde accompanies the exhibition.

The Ackland presentation of this exhibition has been made possible in part by generous support from the Randleigh Foundation Trust (established by William R. Kenan Jr.), Betsy Blackwell and John Watson, and Richard D. Pardue.

### **Media Preview**

**Thursday, 25 January, 9-10 AM**

Members of the media are invited to enjoy light refreshments and a guided tour of *Becoming a Woman* by Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs Peter Nisbet.

### **Featured Programs**

**Introduction to *Becoming a Woman* by exhibition curator Melissa Hyde**

**Thu, 1 February, 6 PM**

Open to the public. No registration necessary.

**Taking Exception: Women, Gender, Representation in the Eighteenth Century,**

**The 2018 Bettie Allison Rand Symposium in Art History**

**UNC Department of Art and Art History, 1-3 February**

Symposium information and registration: [rand2018.web.unc.edu](http://rand2018.web.unc.edu)

### **Music in the Galleries**

**Sunday, 4 March, 2 PM**

UNC Baroque Ensemble led by Professor Brent Wissick, Music Department, UNC-Chapel Hill.

### **2nd Friday ArtWalk celebrating *Becoming a Woman***

**Fri, 9 March, 6-9 PM**

Featured program: “*Dangerous Liaisons* in the Ackland: An Evening of French Enlightenment Art and Literature,” presented with Carolina Public Humanities.

More information: [ackland.org](http://ackland.org)

### **Special Event**

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Ackland ARTINI!**

**Sat, 7 April, 7-9 PM**

An elegant, art-inspired evening featuring signature cocktails and delicious appetizers from esteemed local venues. Guests will enjoy live music and a visit from 18th-century artist and connoisseur Madame Adèle Pastel.

### **About the Ackland Art Museum**

Featuring a year-round calendar of special exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Ackland Art Museum—located on the historic campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—encourages visitors to engage with the rich legacy of the artistic past as well as with living artists from around the world. The Ackland’s holdings consist of more than 18,000 works of art, featuring significant collections of European masterworks, twentieth-century and contemporary art, African art, North Carolina pottery, and folk art. In addition, the Ackland has North Carolina’s premier collections of Asian art and works on paper (drawings, prints, and photographs). This universal collection of artworks from antiquity to the present makes the Ackland uniquely able to advance the teaching and research missions of the University.

The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 South Columbia Street, just south of Franklin Street, on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus.

Museum hours are Wednesday through Saturday 10-5, and Sundays 1-5. The Museum is open until 9 PM on second Fridays of the month for Chapel Hill-Carrboro’s 2nd Friday ArtWalk.

Admission to the Ackland Art Museum is free. More information is available at [ackland.org](http://ackland.org).

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Image: Antoine Vestier, French, 1740-1824: *Allegory of the Arts*, 1788; oil on canvas, 80 x 63.5 cm. The Horvitz Collection.