

CLASS 4 : HER MAJESTY'S COMMAND

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Class title 1 (Catherine the Great)
2. Francesca Caccini: *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, opening [0:46]
3. Christine of Lorraine and Maria Magdalena of Austria

Let's start with a very short piece of music. I didn't play much, partly because it is a college performance, as you saw, and partly because we have heard it before: it is the opening of *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina* (1625) by **Francesca Caccini** (1587–1641), the first opera ever written by a woman. But I included it because of the two women who had made the performance possible: **Christine of Lorraine** (1565–1637), who brought Caccini to the Medici court, and the dedicatee here, her daughter-in-law **Maria Magdalena of Austria** (1589–1621); at this time, the two women were co-regents of Tuscany during the infancy of Maria Magdalena's son, Ferdinando III.

4. Patronage roles

In researching this class, I came to realize that being a patron of the arts could mean several things. Most simply, to **collect**, building up holdings of already-existing art without necessarily causing new art to exist. Another is to **inspire**, to accept the gracious dedication of works without having played any earlier role in their creation. A third is to **commission** new works from artists of all kinds, and provide the necessary funds and facilities. A fourth and much rarer role is to **advise**, taking some active part in shaping the work in question while it was still being made. It seems that Maria Magdalena was an example of this fourth category; there is a document in which she casts a particular singer in one of the roles, and expresses confidence that "*La Cecchina will compose for her an appropriate aria for the words that have been changed.*"

4z Overview of entire class

The class today will be devoted to women in all these categories, whether Queens, Archduchesses, or merely royal mistresses. The first hour will look at two genres which can be taken as direct records of the Queen's intent: the buildings they had constructed, and the portraits they had painted. Each will begin with an overview followed by brief vignettes. In the second hour, we shall look at five women in a little more detail: two more British queens (**Elizabeth I** and **Queen Anne**), two mistresses of French kings (Mmes de **Montespan** and **Pompadour**), and "The Great Collector," **Catherine the Great** of Russia.

B. THE QUEEN BUILDS [10:05]

5. Section title B: The Queen Builds

While we are going to keep coming up against ambiguities in the role of our patrons, there are two areas, I think, where their direct role is pretty clear: in the buildings they built and the portraits they had painted. Each of the six buildings shown here will go down in history in expressing the will of the queen who commissioned it. I shall tell you briefly about each, and show at least one portrait of the queen in question (three empresses and three royal consorts).

6. SUBTITLE 1: HATSHEPSUT

7. Hatshepsut

This building is the mortuary temple near Luxor built by **Pharaoh Hatshepsut**, in the second millennium BCE. Yes, she was a woman, although the beard on this statue might indicate otherwise. But even when the pharaoh was a man, this beard would be a tie-on item, as much a part of the royal regalia as the crown and the scepters crossed on his chest. No doubt because of her extensive building work and statuary, Hatshepsut is mentioned in more than one website as the first great patron of the arts. But the truth is that for her patronage was a matter of survival—maintaining the legitimacy of her rule—rather than artistic expression. I'll let historian **Joann Fletcher** explain more in this video.

8. Video, *Lost Queens* (Joann Fletcher), section on Hatshepsut [4:13]

9. SUBTITLE 2: ROXELANA

10. Haseki Sultan complex, Istanbul

If you just look at her buildings, the patronage of the sixteenth-century Turkish Sultana known as **Roxelana** (1505–58) was not artistic either, but philanthropic. The works that she set into motion were things like mosques, a bath-house for women, and a soup kitchen for pilgrims in Jerusalem.

11. Roxelana portraits

But there are a surprising number of portraits of her. This is not necessarily because she commissioned them; it could equally well be that her Cinderella story excited the imagination. “Roxelana” apparently means “the Ruthenian one,” meaning that she came originally from Ruthenia, a district in present-day Ukraine. I said “came,” but in reality she was brought by force, as a slave in the harem of **Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent**. But she caught a hold on his affections, to the point where he had the constitution changed so that he could marry her. Her official title is thus **Haseki Sultan** (the equivalent of Queen) or her new given name **Hürrem** (the cheerful one).

12. Titian: *La Sultana Rossa* (c.1550, Sarasota)

13. Letter from Hürrem to the new Polish King, 1549

Titian (1485–1676) painted her portrait and presumably her husband also, although all we have left of that is a studio copy. There is no record of him traveling to Istanbul, so presumably he painted it from a print, perhaps the one on the previous slide; there is in fact a remarkable consistency between the

various portraits, which suggests that this or some other print was circulated widely with the active encouragement of Roxelana herself. Or maybe her husband too; Roxelana was useful to him as a contact with the West (see this letter of congratulation to the newly-crowned King of Poland), so it may be that both collaborated on getting her story out there. She comes over as a remarkable woman.

14. SUBTITLE 3: ANNE OF DENMARK

15. Inigo Jones: *The Queen's House, Greenwich* (begun 1616)

This next one is especially close to my heart, since when I used to live in London, it was just beyond the brow of the hill in the background (the building is the Greenwich observatory, where Greenwich Mean Time comes from). The building, **The Queen's House** by **Inigo Jones** (1573–1652), was begun in 1616 for **Anne of Denmark** (1574–1619). She was the wife of **King James I**, and thus Queen of Scotland until the death of Queen Elizabeth, when the two kingdoms of England and Scotland were united. I have always loved the building for its purity and simplicity, making a total break from the fussiness of Elizabethan architecture—it was the first building in England to follow the precepts of **Andrea Palladio** (1508–80), half a century late, but never mind.

16. Inigo Jones: *The Queen's House, Greenwich, interiors*

16z Orazio Gentileschi: ceiling of the Queen's House

Queen Anne would never have seen it completed, but we can take a peek; it is as pristine inside as out. That ceiling, incidentally, was what **Artemisia's** father **Orazio Gentileschi** was painting when he called her over to help him finish it.

17. Masque designs by Inigo Jones

Anne of Denmark's patronage extended well beyond architecture. It is said that it was she who most supported the Jacobean theatre (Shakespeare and others), rather than her husband, who generally fell asleep. We certainly know that she was an avid fan of court masques and dancing, and would often take part herself. She would commission writers like **Ben Jonson** to draw up the scenarios, and Inigo Jones to provide the even more fantastic designs. Here is a snatch of music from 1611 that she almost certainly would have danced to; the composer is **Robert Johnson** (1583–1633), no relation of Ben.

18. Johnson: *The Fairy Masque* (1611) [0:32]

19. SUBTITLE 4: CATHERINE THE GREAT

20. Catherine the Great and Tsarskoye Selo

I won't spend much time on my next royal patron, **Catherine the Great** (1729–96), since she has a substantial section of her own coming up in the second hour, as you know. She was one of the great collectors of all time, but I mention her now because she was a builder. Her architectural commissions were extensive, many of them on her summer estate at **Tsarskoye Selo**, 11 miles South of Saint Petersburg, and thus the Russian equivalent of Versailles. We will be seeing more of it later.

21. Cameron Gallery at Tsarskoye Selo
22. SUBTITLE 5: MARIE ANTOINETTE
23. Marie Antoinette and the Trianon at Versailles

Catherine was a huge admirer of things British, and for much of the work at Tsarskoye Selo, she employed the Scottish architect **Charles Cameron** (1745–1812). Although there are some formal gardens in the park, the majority of it is laid out in the newly fashionable “English style,” notable for its random-seeming but carefully designed informality. And when **Marie Antoinette** (1755–93) got tired of life at Versailles, she got her own architect, **Richard Mique** (1728–94), to build her an entire rustic village, complete with working farm, where she could go with her ladies-in-waiting, take tea, and imagine themselves as simple shepherdesses. The architecture of escape! More on her later also.

24. SUBTITLE 6: QUEEN VICTORIA
25. Franz Winterhalter: *Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, & their Children* (1846, Royal Coll.)

I don’t think anyone would leap immediately to **Queen Victoria** (1819–1901) herself as a patron of the arts, but the entity of **Victoria-and-Albert** must rank as one of the greatest patrons of all time. He provided the enthusiasm and incessant quest for knowledge; hers was the aegis that made it all happen.

26. Tea room at the Victoria and Albert Museum (top right)

It was he who thought up the **Great Exhibition** of 1851, designed to showcase the British Empire, but with contributions from all over the world; the small picture shows Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. That was such a success that he decided that London must have a *permanent* exhibition of all that is best in British Empire science, craft, and culture. The result is the extraordinary grouping of institutions at South Kensington (then popularly referred to as *Albertopolis*). The larger photograph shows the interior of just one of them, the **Victoria and Albert Museum**; it is not a gallery but the tea-room—and even this is filled with the products of contemporary artists working to commission. This is true patronage.

27. Royal Albert Hall, opened 1871

Albert died of typhoid in 1861; he did not live to see most of his vision completed. Victoria went into mourning, and wore black for the rest of her life. When the Royal Albert Hall, the musical component of Albertopolis, was completed in 1871, she came to perform the official ceremony, but did not attend the opening concert for fear of losing control of her feelings. But we can. The headline was a cantata by **Sir Arthur Sullivan** (1842–1900) called *On Shore and Sea*. So far as I know, it has not been performed since. But it has been recorded, so I have taken the liberty of throwing in a few minutes of the rousing final chorus, “Sink and scatter, clouds of war,” accompanied by some images of the Victoria Memorial, constructed outside Buckingham Palace after the Queen’s death. [I’m not *sure* I have the titles right.]

28. Sullivan: *On Shore and Sea*, final chorus [3:07]

C. THE QUEEN'S PORTRAIT [10:32]

29. Section title C (all six portraits)

I know I have shown portraits of all the queens so far, in connection with their buildings, but I want to say a bit more about a few portraits in themselves, as the other form of patronage in which the female potentate indubitably has some control over what the artist will paint. I am arranging the portraits in pairs, each couple illustrating a different function of the state portrait. I have touched on **Marie Antoinette** and **Victoria** (bottom left) already, but there is more to say. At the top are two Empresses far apart in both geography and time: the Empress **Theodora** in the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century, and **Cixi** [*chee-dzee*] in China in the late 19th. The other two figures are both Italian: **Isabella d'Este**, who commissioned Leonardo and Titian in the 16th century, and **Marie de Medicis**, who got Rubens to do her a whole cycle of paintings in the 17th.

30. THE PORTRAIT AS REHABILITATION

One function of a commissioned portrait is to rewrite history. Both these Empresses had a particular need to do so.

31. Empress Theodora at San Vitale

The biographical sources on **Theodora** (497–548), wife of the Byzantine Emperor **Justinian**, veer widely between canonization and scurrility, even in the work of the same author! Theodora is venerated as a saint by the Eastern Church, yet it seems she began life as an actress, which at that time more or less meant prostitute. Justinian, like **Suleiman** later, would have to amend the constitution in order to marry her. But she seems to have reformed, and the best known image of her, a mosaic in the 6th-century basilica of **San Vitale in Ravenna**, shows her not merely as a queen but as a celebrant, holding the chalice and preparing to enter the Holy of Holies.

32. Katharine A. Carl, and portrait of Cixi

The **Dowager Empress Cixi** (1835–1908) has gone down in history as being ruthless and even murderous in the steps she took to keep hold of the reins of power and push through her programs of reform. To offset this, she took particular pains to cultivate the West, including having a western artist, **Katharine A. Carl** (1865–1938), paint her portrait for the Saint Louis World's Fair (1904). I know nothing else about her, but these details from the portrait (now in the Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian) show that she had great skill in applying western techniques to the obvious formal requirements of a Chinese portrait.

33. THE PORTRAIT AS IDEAL

Isabella d'Este and Queen Victoria: I am looking at them now through a particular lens, whose nature I hope will soon become obvious.

34. Titian: Isabella in Black (1536, Vienna), undated

35. — the same with dates

Here is **Isabella d'Este** (1474–1539), Marchioness of Mantua, as painted by **Titian**. She is a real beauty, and as real as could be; you can see why so many artists wanted to paint and sculpt her. How old would you guess her to be here? Young, surely. Yet if you look at the dates, you will see that she is 62! Clearly Titian has imagined what the actual woman in front of him must have looked like in her youth, and that is what he painted. Rich contemporary women get face-lifts; Renaissance women got artists to do it for them! [The Wikipedia article on her goes into the problem of Isabella's portraits in great detail; what I am giving you here is a summary.]

36. Andrea Mantegna: *Madonna della Vittoria* (1496, Paris Louvre)

Look at this a picture by **Andrea Mantegna** (1431–1506) celebrating some victory or other by Isabella's husband, Francesco d'Este. Normally, you would expect husband and wife to kneel opposite one another at the foot of such a picture, yet Mantegna has replaced Isabella with an elderly woman, Saint Elizabeth. We have it on record, though, that she refused to pose because Mantegna had painted her in the past "so badly done... with none of my similarities." It would not have been age in this case; she would only have been 22. [Though it may also have been that she was pissed with her husband, who at this time was carrying out an affair with her sister-in-law, **Lucrezia Borgia**.]

37. Comparison of portrayals of Isabella

Here are three more portrayals of Isabella, all around 1500, when she would have been 26, including a drawing by **Leonardo da Vinci** (1452–1519). I would not have you think, though, that it was Isabella's beauty alone that made one of her contemporaries describe her as "First Lady of the World." It seems she was highly intelligent and educated and a far better statesman than her husband, and that she took the trouble to further educate herself on the duties of principedom when her husband died and she took over as head of state.

38. Victoria by Winterhalter (1859) and Von Angeli (1875)

38z — close-ups of the above

39. Victoria by Von Angeli (1899)

Given what we learned of Isabella's reactions, what would you think Queen Victoria thought of these? Of course that is a loaded question, for if she had not liked them both, there's no point in my asking! The one on the left, by **Franz Xaver Winterhalter** (1805–73) is a conventional state portrait, meant to depict a *role* rather than the individual filling it. Yet the portrait of the older Victoria by **Heinrich von Angeli** (1840–1925), whom I can't believe I'd never heard of, is very much a depiction of an individual. According to biographer **Giles St Aubyn**, she admired it for its "honesty, total want of flattery, and appreciation of character." Which really seems an ideal relationship between artist and patron. She even went back to him for the last portrait she ever had painted, in 1899; I find it very moving.

40. THE PORTRAIT AS NARRATIVE

Portraits can also tell a story, whether it is one authorized by the patron or not. First, let's look at three paired depictions of **Marie Antoinette** that have special resonance with what we know of her life.

41. Joseph Ducreux: *Archduchess Maria Antonia at Age 13*

Marie Antoinette was a mail-order bride. The marriage between her and the Dauphin (the future Louis XVI) was arranged largely for political reasons, to cement an alliance between France and Austria, when Maria Antonia was only 13; the wedding actually took place by proxy. These two portraits were part of the mail-order process, the one on the left sent from Vienna to Versailles, and the one on the right sent back to Vienna three years later, to show that she had settled in.

42. Portraits of Marie Antoinette by Élisabeth Vigée Lebrun

The next pair were painted by a female artist, the remarkable **Élisabeth Vigée Lebrun** (1755–1842). If I tell you that they carry a message, what do you think it might be? It is once more an exercise in character rehabilitation, I think. By this time, Marie Antoinette had been gaining a reputation as a frivolous snob and spendthrift; these two portraits seem designed to counteract that. The first shows her in a muslin dress and straw hat with her hair down, arranging flowers; it is deliberately informal. Apparently, though, it was criticized for not being sufficiently regal; well, you can't have everything. The second is more formally posed, yet it shows her with her children, with one of them pulling back the cover from the crib to show us that the youngest infant has died.

43. David: *Marie Antoinette on her Way to the Guillotine* (1793, Louvre)

Vigée Lebrun's propaganda was not enough, as we know. The Revolution is already brewing and the history was unstoppable. Not even Marie Antoinette's plebeian bonnet and revolutionary cockade were enough to save her. **Jacques-Louis David** (1748–1825) drew her on her final journey.

44. Rubens: *Marie de' Medici* (1622, Prado)

Marie de' Medici (1575–1642) was another mail-order bride. **Henri IV** had divorced his first wife and needed a second, the richer the better. Marie filled the bill. As was to happen with Marie Antoinette, they were married by proxy and met up only once they were man and wife; this was in 1600. It was not until 1610, however, and after she had borne him three children, that Henri arranged for a formal coronation. He was assassinated the very next day, however, leaving Marie to rule as regent for her young son. All these events are portrayed in a huge cycle of paintings by **Peter Paul Rubens** (1577–1640), her favorite among the numerous artists she patronized at court. Her motive was to tell her story as though it were all the work of the gods, thus legitimizing her precarious position as regent, which she had refused to give up when her son came of age. I'll let it tell its own story in a montage I made for another class, set to music by **Lully**, albeit a few decades later.

45. Rubens: *Marie de' Medici cycle*, (1622, Louve) [2:13]

46. Van Dyck: *Marie de' Medici in Exile* (1643, Lille)

Once again, the propaganda failed. Marie's son took the reins as King and banished his mother, cutting off her sources of revenue. She died in Cologne, impoverished, and staying in a room rented from a friend of Rubens's. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

D. TWO MORE BRITISH QUEENS [11:10]

47. Section title D (Elizabeth and Anne)

The rest of the class will consist of five vignettes: two more British queens, two French mistresses, and the redoubtable Catherine the Great of Russia. It's mostly fact, but we'll start with a bit of sheer fiction, the 1998 movie *Shakespeare in Love*. **Shakespeare** (Joseph Fiennes) has become involved with the beautiful **Viola de Lesseps** (Gwyneth Paltrow), who comes to the theater dressed as a boy to play Juliet. She is married to Lord Wessex (Colin Firth), who in this scene presents her to **Queen Elizabeth I** (1533–1603), played by Judi Dench; Shakespeare is also present, disguised as Viola's old nurse. This sequence ends in a bet; I will ship straight on to the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, when, as it turns out, the bet becomes due.

48. *Shakespeare in Love*, Viola meets the Queen [2:20]

49. *Shakespeare in Love*, applause for *Romeo and Juliet* [2:47]

50. Three versions of *Shakespeare Reading before Queen Elizabeth*

There is a persistent myth that Queen Elizabeth was directly involved in shaping Shakespeare's plays; someone even wrote an academic treatise about how the idea has cropped up through the centuries. But the truth is probably a lot simpler. The Queen, loved the theatre, yes. Shakespeare's company played several times at court, yes, so presumably he was at least presented to her. The story that the Queen was so amused by the character of Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays that she asked for him to star in a play of his own, imposing at two-week timeline, at least explains why Shakespeare wrote such a poorly-constructed play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, among so many strong ones. But it doesn't seem to have been much more than that.

51. Morley: *The Triumphs of Oriana* [0:31]

Queen Elizabeth is a prime example of **patronage by aegis**. Because of who she was, and because she cultivated the idea that hers was an exceptional era, the Elizabethan Age, most artists of any kind would dedicate some of their finest work to her, whether or not she actually heard or read it. So when the composer **Thomas Morley** (1557–1602) published a book of madrigals by himself and others in 1601, he called it *The Triumphs of Oriana*—Oriana, like Gloriana, being one of the mythological names given to the Queen in praise—and every song in the book ends with a couplet in her praise. I will put a link to one of these madrigals on the web.

52. Aemilia Lanyer: *To The Queenes Most Excellent Majestie*

But I can't leave her reign without mentioning a remarkable woman, **Aemilia Lanyer** (1569–1645), the first female poet in England to publish a volume of her poems, most of which were in praise of the strong women of her lifetime and in history. While this dedication to Queen Elizabeth is as conventional as anything in *The Triumphs of Oriana*, it does show what we shall see as a familiar trope, the author simultaneously apologizing and asserting herself in the matter of her gender. These are the first two and last three stanzas. No recording; I'll read them myself.

53. Handel and text of the *Birthday Ode*

Here is the opening of another highly conventional tribute to a reigning queen, in this case **Queen Anne** (1665–1714). She had a terrible life, with 19 miscarriages in her younger years and crippled with gout in her older ones. But she did patronize the arts, paying well for frequent and lavish entertainments at her court, even when she did not attend them herself. The occasion for this text is the 48th birthday of the Queen in 1713. The “peace on earth” refrain has to do with the signing of the **Treaty of Utrecht**, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession; Anne of course had nothing to do with his herself, but it was negotiated by her government, so she gets the praise. You would expect such a conventional text to be set to equally conventional music, but the young **George Frideric Handel** (1685–79) treats it quite originally, especially the opening, in which both the countertenor singer and solo trumpet seem to be coming from vast spaces. It is not known whether the Queen actually attended the performance, but she did give Handel a very generous pension for life. [I added a few titles until it gets too complex.]

54. Handel: *Ode on the Birthday of Queen Anne*, first two numbers [6:20]

E. IN THE KING'S BED [1 1:2 7]

55. Section title E (Mmes de Montespan and Pompadour)

All the later Louises (*quatorze*, *quinze*, and *seize*) kept mistresses in addition to their official wives. This was in fact an established position; the *maitresse en titre* (the official mistress) would have rooms at Versailles immediately adjacent to those of the King, and almost unlimited spending power so long as she remained in favor. All were married to somebody else, a convenience necessary to give the lady the title of nobility necessary for acceptance at court, and the King was generally quite generous in paying off the old mistress once he had moved on to the new one.

56. Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart

Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart de Mortemart, Marquise of Montespan (1640–1707) had no need of an arranged marriage, as she was already of high noble birth. She was apparently very beautiful, though none of her portraits show this. More importantly, she was intelligent, witty, and *au fait* with current affairs, which made men seek her out for conversation. One of these men was **King Louis XIV**, and at the age of 27 or 28 she became *maitresse en titre*. I can't resist showing a scene from the 2016 film *Versailles*, in which an infinitely more beautiful Montespan (played by **Anna Brewster**) has a run-in with Louis' Spanish Queen, Maria Theresa. I very much doubt its accuracy; mistresses as successful as Athénaïs held their positions through diplomacy, not conflict, but it is still a terrific scene!

57. *Versailles* (movie, 2016): *Mme de Montespan and the Queen* [2:00]

58. François de Troy: *Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre*

The woman shown in this painting by **François de Troy** (1645–1730) certainly does look beautiful and intelligent enough to become the King's mistress. But as the harpsichord would suggest, this is no

courtier but one of the foremost composers of her time, **Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre** (1665–1729). Born in Paris to a family of harpsichord-builders, she was apparently a youthful prodigy on the instrument herself, and first caught the attention of the King performing at the age of 5; “She is unique,” he proclaimed. As a young teenager, she was invited to join the court; her education was placed in the hands of none other than Madame de Montespan, and it was through Montespan’s protection that she continued to flourish. I will give you a couple of scenes from her only opera, *Céphale et Procris* (1794). The first is the opening—pretty music, but nothing to show that the composer was extraordinary. But my second excerpt, part of Procris’s lament on the death of Cephalus, and her forced marriage to someone else, shows something of the emotional depth that Jacquet could achieve. The singer is **Saskia Salambier**; please ignore the setting!

59. **Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre: *Céphale et Procris*, opening** [1:52]

60. **Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre: *Céphale et Procris*, aria** [3:28]

61. **Quentin de la Tour: *Mme. de Pompadour* (1755, Louvre)**

Look at the details of this portrait of **Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour** (1721–64); the artist is **Quentin de la Tour** (1704–88). What do you see? There are books to her left, a musical score in her hand, a guitar on the chair behind her, and a portfolio of drawings at her feet. There are no mere flattery. The mistress of **Louis XV** was well-read, highly intelligent, an active supporter of the arts, and an artist herself, first as an actress and later as an engraver. Unlike Montespan, she was a commoner, born into a middle-class family. But she was almost certainly the natural daughter of the much richer man who became her guardian and gave her the excellent education that made her such a success with the King. There is no better way to summarize her qualities than to say that while her sexual liaison with the King lasted only 5 or 6 years, she remained as his friend and closest adviser for the rest of her life. Almost alone among his courtiers, he relied on her to tell him the truth.

62. **Nattier: *Mme. de Pompadour as Diana***

Pompadour immediately became a fashion icon. Her style of *toilette* and choice of fabrics and colors set the tone for what we now know as the French *rococo*. She became a favorite subject for artists, not least because her non-official status permitted them to portray her in apparently intimate surroundings. Though she would also be depicted in allegorical roles, such as this sculpture by **Jean-Baptiste Pigalle** (1714–85) and painting by **Jean-Marc Nattier** (1685–1766). His depiction of her as Diana is probably a reference to how she contrived to meet the King, first by driving across his path—twice—while he was out hunting, and then appearing at a costume ball as Diana, goddess of the hunt.

63. **François Boucher: *Mme. de Pompadour* (1756, Munich)**

64. **Boucher (and Pompadour?): *Mme. de Pompadour at her Toilette* (Harvard)**

Pompadour was an artist herself, and a skilled engraver of gemstones. Her relationship with **François Boucher** (1703–70), the painter of the best-known of her many portraits, may have been something akin to student and teacher. There is speculation that this portrait of her at her toilette may actually be a collaboration. Certainly, the portfolio of engravings that she published, such as the one on the right, are based on designs by Boucher, but engraved by her—and very well too.

65. Some examples of Sèvres porcelain

Pompadour was a committed collector of porcelain as well as art. At the time, top-of-the-line porcelain came from **Meissen** in Germany. Pompadour felt that France should maintain its own standards, and enlisted the King's aid in founding the **Royal Manufactory at Sèvres**, near her country estate. Within a few years, *that* became the standard of excellence, in demand internationally. The dish on the next slide is part of a service made for **Tsar Paul I of Russia**, son of **Catherine the Great**, subject of my final section.

66. Sèvres plate for Paul I of Russia (1773)

F. THE GREAT COLLECTOR [1 1:50]

67. Section title F: Catherine the Great

Let's start with a tour of Catherine's summer Palace at Tsarskoye Selo, which we saw briefly in the first hour. This is an iPhone video made by an American visitor; I added a polonaise by a male composer at her court; I'll have music by a female one in a few minutes.

68. Visit to Tsarskoye Selo [0:46]

69. Inauguration of the Imperial Academy of Arts, 1757

The picture shows **Catherine the Great** in 1757, inaugurating the **Imperial Academy of Arts** in St. Petersburg. I show it to support my point that Catherine was probably the greatest royal patron of the arts of all time. In addition to all the things that make her a notorious figure in history—her political ruthlessness, her sexual appetite, and her national expansionism—she was extraordinarily well-read and she *kept* reading to improve herself. She maintained a correspondence with **Voltaire** for 15 years. She wrote opera libretti. And she built one of the finest collections of art assembled by a single collector; her collection of paintings alone numbered 3,926 works, which not only grace the galleries of the Hermitage Museum, but probably fill its cellars as well!

70. Rembrandts in the Hermitage

You wouldn't think of **Rembrandt** particularly in connection with Russian culture, would you? Yet Catherine's collection, now most of the holdings of the Hermitage, contains several fine examples. At the time of her death, she got them when she heard that **Frederick I of Prussia**, who had asked a Berlin dealer to build him a collection of old masters, was having trouble paying for them after fighting so many wars, so she took the lot off his hands. Similarly, when she heard that the French Encyclopedist **Denis Diderot** was short of funds, she bought his entire library and engaged him as her adviser on further reading and other purchases.

71. Charles Cameron designs at Tsarskoye Selo

Catherine wrote to Voltaire that she was mad about everything English. She was tired of formal gardens with straight lines, and wanted everything to seem natural in the English manner. For her expansion to the palace at **Tsarskoye Selo**, which was begun under an Italian architect, she hired an eccentric Scotsman, **Charles Cameron** (1745–1812) who, though basically a classicist, produced some of the most exquisite yet opulent designs to be seen anywhere. [I can't get a bigger picture.]

72. *Vigée Lebrun: Self Portrait and Princess Natalia Ivanovna Kourakina*

However, since this is a course on female artists, I want to end by putting together two women: a painter and composer who met at Catherine's court. We have already seen the portraits that **Élisabeth Vigée Lebrun** painted of Marie Antoinette. Her close association with Versailles spelled trouble in the Revolution, so she fled France and eventually made her way to Saint Petersburg, where she was welcomed by Catherine. In the almost six years she spent there (1795–1801, overlapping Catherine's death), she painted many members of the court, generally in the fresh informal style that had made her name. One of these was **Princess Natalia Ivanovna Kourakina** (1766–1831), who was also a composer. Apparently the princess was quite prolific and performed often at court from her teens on, but I can only find a recording of one song, "Je vais donc quitter pour jamais" (I must leave you for ever). So I have put it together with a number of Vigée Lebrun's Russian portraits; they share the same gentle Romanticism.

73. *Kourakina: "Je vais donc quitter pour jamais," with Vigée Lebrun portraits* [1:53]

74. *Class title 3 (Catherine the Great, mirrored)*

Vigée Lebrun never got to paint Catherine herself. She had an appointment, but the Empress died on the day set for the first sitting.