Watteau, through the Cracks

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Some artists strive to create imperishable objects, immortal monuments destined for posterity. The French painter Antoine Watteau was, by all accounts, not among them. After Watteau died in 1721 at the age of thirty-six, nearly everyone who remembered him offered the same complaint: Watteau was a careless, hasty painter, and his pictures soon cracked and darkened as a result. Twenty-five years after his death, the damage was apparently overwhelming. "This painter enjoyed a great reputation during his life," wrote one commentator in 1746, "but his reputation today has greatly declined; the majority of his works could not sustain themselves, which we attribute to the negligence with which he painted."[1]

According to Watteau's friends and acquaintances, he could have avoided these problems had he been interested in doing so. His shortsighted techniques, they all noted, stemmed from some combination of restlessness and indifference. "His paintings suffered a little from the impatience and fickleness that formed his character," his dealer Edme Gersaint wrote.[2] The print merchant and connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette claimed that Watteau simply "did not care to paint properly."[3] The amateur and antiquarian Anne Claude Philippe, comte de Caylus similarly attributed the decay of Watteau's paintings to his "laziness and indolence." Watteau's attitude, Caylus continued, "banished all hope for the future."[4]

These are personal criticisms, but they raise a broader question: How do we make historical sense of an artist who showed so little care for the durability of his paintings? In our own time, the idea of making an impermanent work of art hardly seems strange. We know of countless artists who make temporary works that often last no longer than the duration of an exhibition. But what might such an attitude have meant in the first half of the eighteenth century? What would it mean to think of Watteau as an ephemeral artist in his own time?

Ephemerality has, in some ways, been one of the central themes of writing on Watteau's paintings, primarily in discussions of their style and subject matter. Historians have long pointed to a general iconography of transience in his work, particularly in his celebrated *fêtes galantes* paintings, his *Pilgrimage to Cythera* invariably serving as the emblematic example (Fig. 1). Courting couples enact the phases of love's fleeting charms. Clouds and mist swirl and evaporate into the void of the open sky. Vegetation creeps across the landscape in an ambiguous state between growth and decay. As Erwin Panofsky put it, "[Watteau] depicts the fading away of reality as such. Existence itself seems to be the subject of transience."[5]

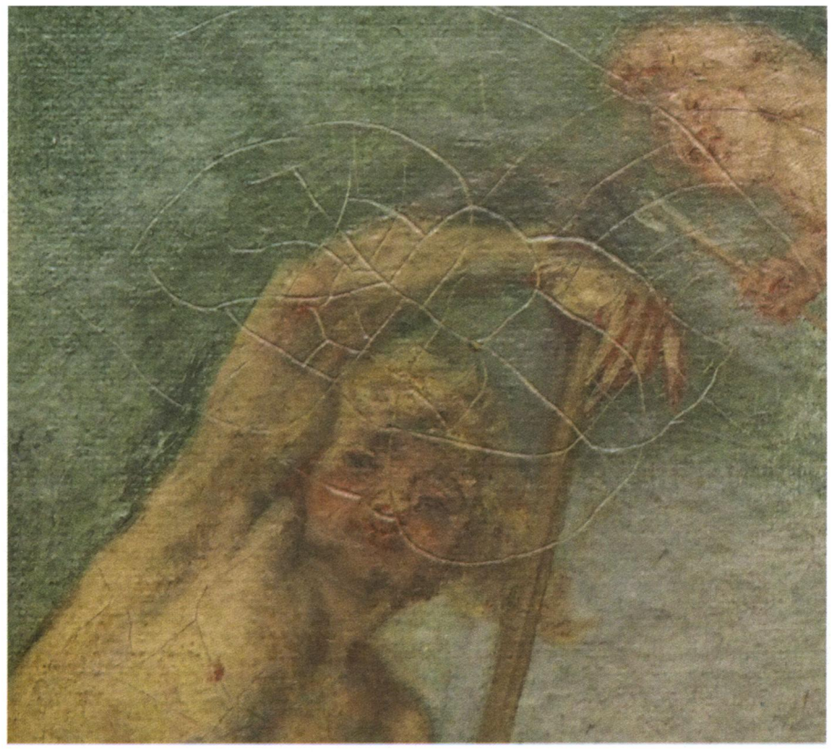
Commentators have differed in their interpretations of this evanescent sensibility. Watteau's nineteenth-century devotees, the brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt most notable among them, saw in his compositions the melancholic vision of a declining aristocracy wistfully longing for a lost past.[6] Historians have since complicated this perspective. In a vociferous critique of the nineteenth-century sources, Donald Posner went so far as to argue that Watteau's initial audience would have understood his pictures in joyous terms and that any sense of loss constituted a Romantic anachronism.[7] Posner called attention to the demographics of Watteau's original viewers, noting that many of them were socially ascendant merchants and financiers, not diminished aristocrats ruminating over bygone days.[8] Norman Bryson, in a methodologically pathbreaking account, further deconstructed the melancholic mythology surrounding Watteau while insisting on its significance, tracing its source to the "semantic void" within the artist's paintings, a sense of absent signification that invites an elegiac response.[9] More recent scholarship has put this meditative mode of spectatorship in terms proper to the eighteenth

1 Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, 1717, oil on canvas, 50¾ × 76⅜ in. (129 × 194 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Stéphane Maréchalle, © RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY)

century, revealing the ways in which Watteau cultivated a subjectively engaged viewer for whom the feelings of pleasure and loss may have been two sides of the same coin.[10]

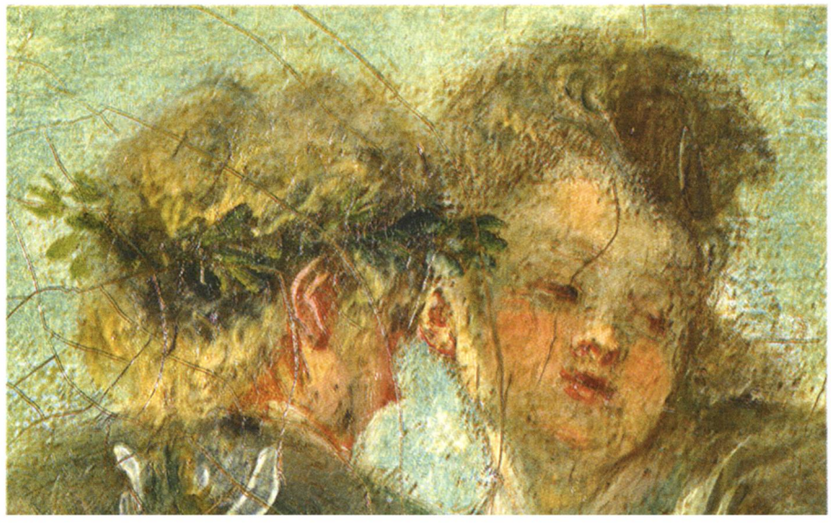
What receives less attention in these accounts is the way transience enters Watteau's paintings on a material level. Instability and loss are part of his pictures' physical makeup, visible in their flaking and fleeting surfaces. Step closer to *Pilgrimage to Cythera* in the galleries of the Musée du Louvre and the evidence of this material evolution becomes difficult to ignore. The painting is, in fact, in comparatively good condition for one of Watteau's works, but it nonetheless bears traces of decay that banished many of his other paintings to oblivion.[11] A network of deep cracks circles around the arced body of the shirtless oarsman (Fig. 2). Like ripples on the surface of a pond, these ruptures in the painted surface fan outward and dissipate. As they move away from the oarsman, they draw our eyes to disturbances on other parts of the canvas. Concentric rings of fractured paint radiate from a section of open sky (Fig. 3). Lower and to the right, gaping crevices cut across the faces of two cavorting lovers (Fig. 4).[12]

Art historians generally treat this kind of decay as a distraction. We tend to regard the original condition of a painting as the historically relevant one. If we consider decay at all, we take it as a sign of the temporal gap that divides us from the true object of our study. This tendency in fact owes much to the eighteenth century, emerging from the period's growing concern for the historical status of art and an increasing appreciation for the irreducible traces of the artist's hand. The lamentations of men like Gersaint, Mariette, and Caylus over the deterioration of Watteau's paintings offer some indication of these nascent priorities.[13] By century's end, a heightened awareness of the aesthetic and historical significance of art's original material



2 Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, detail showing cracks across the oarsman. Musée du Louvre, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph by the author)

3 Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, detail showing cracks across the sky. Musée du Louvre, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph by the author)



4 Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, detail showing cracks across courting couples. Musée du Louvre, Paris (artwork in the public domain; photograph by C. Jean, © RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY)

condition had given rise to the national museum and the profession of art restoration, laying much of the institutional foundation for our discipline.[14]

But these disciplinary values emerged in tension with a countervailing phenomenon, one that Watteau demands that we consider. Watteau's careless techniques bespeak an outlook in which art's physical endurance had little meaning, in which present interest superseded historical considerations. Watteau's biographers tended to frame this attitude as a product of his idiosyncratic personality, his restive and mercurial character. Before we accept these psychological assessments, however, we need to examine the ways in which they fit into a larger transformation in cultural attitudes toward permanence.

The origins of this transformation, I argue, lie in the emergence of a modern marketplace for art. Much has been written about the development of the art market in eighteenth-century France, a period that saw the expansion of private collections, the growth of the auction circuit, and the increasingly professional status of art dealers.[15] These changes were economic, but they were also temporal. What interests me is the fact that the commercial sphere operated with a more uncertain relation to the future than the system of patronage that it supplanted.[16] When royal and religious patrons commissioned art, they generally did so with the assumption that these works would become part of a lasting legacy. Palaces and cathedrals addressed both present and future generations, meaning that the objects adorning them had to meet certain standards of material durability. The market, however, opened other possibilities.

Private collectors bought works of art with more varied expectations than the institutional patrons who had preceded them.[17] Some continued to see the objects that they acquired as tools of self-glorification, a means of establishing a reputation that would resound for posterity. For others, however, the capacity of a painting to communicate with the future was often less important than the pleasures that it provided in the present moment. They treated their collections not as inviolable memorials but as spaces in flux, selling works as readily as they bought them.[18]

These collectors, of course, still had reason to be wary of shoddily crafted paintings—decay affected the resale value of objects, and buyers stood to lose money on works by artists who used unreliable techniques.[19] Yet not all purchases are investments, and not all investments are made rationally. On the contrary, one of the hallmarks of consumer behavior is the tendency to prioritize short-term desires over long-term interests, whether out of deliberate hedonism, irrational decision making, or some combination of the two.[20] Critical reflection on the issue dates back to the eighteenth century, when moral philosophers struggled to understand the role of sentiment in the marketplace.[21] For an emerging group of eighteenth-century art collectors guided by passion and impulse, the seductive but unstable surface of a painting offered a tantalizing stimulus for such present-minded choices. And for a painter addressing this audience, success demanded a brush that was swift and responsive to demand, not necessarily one that produced durable effects.

Watteau provides an opportunity to track these broader shifts in the way artists and their viewers understood the significance of material permanence. He emerges as a crucial figure in this history, both participating in and reflecting on a burgeoning culture of consumption in which material stability ceased to be a universal assumption. His success in this market also sheds light on an alternative notion of artistic longevity, one based less on art's physical immutability than on its continued circulation. This kind of endurance could even transcend the original products of an artist's hand, coming to include the endless chain of imitations and printed reproductions that the market demanded. The eighteenth century may have been a moment when our disciplinary devotion to art's physical preservation began to emerge, but

it was also a time that called attention to more nebulous forms of survival achieved through dissemination. To look at Watteau through the cracks, then, is to consider a moment when the meaning of permanence itself was open to question.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PERMANENCE

For centuries before Watteau's time, French painters had little doubt about their obligation to produce work that would physically endure. When artists formed the first guild to regulate painting and sculpture in Paris in 1391, they established clear guidelines ensuring the durability of their productions. Fourteen of the nineteen original statutes of the guild pertained to the necessity of using good-quality materials and preparing the painting surface properly.[22] Rotten and worm-eaten wood was forbidden as a support, as was any wood still saturated with fresh sap. Only colors and primers of an established standard were acceptable, and materials were subject to inspection and guild approval. These measures served as a guarantee to patrons of the arts, the church chief among them. When Henry III confirmed the guild's statutes in the sixteenth century, the decree came with a preamble that explained how the regulations protected the church from the decay of shoddily manufactured objects meant to honor God.[23]

By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, the guild's technical guidelines were no longer universal prescriptions. When a group of artists received permission from the king to break from the guild and establish the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, they did so on the grounds that art was an intellectual pursuit, not simply a mechanical one.[24] The academy shied away from detailed discussion of materials and techniques in order to emphasize the status of painting as a liberal art. This development was a crucial step in the loosening of craft standards, but it was not enough to free artists from the expectation of making works that would last. Much to the contrary, the academy's right to exist came from the king, and the productions of all its members were meant to stand as lasting testimony to his glories. To justify their work, academicians needed to immerse themselves in a rhetoric of royal eternalization. André Félibien, chronicler of the arts under Louis XIV and secretary to the academy, made this logic clear when he told the king, "painting . . . only needs to find a material durable enough to conserve what it marks, to render immortal the name of your majesty."[25] Félibien reminded painters that their livelihoods depended on their ability to produce permanent representations of great men, the royal patron above all others.[26] Artists thus entered into an implicit deal with their sponsor: he would provide them with the financial and institutional protection to sustain their profession, while they gave him immortal material form in their work.

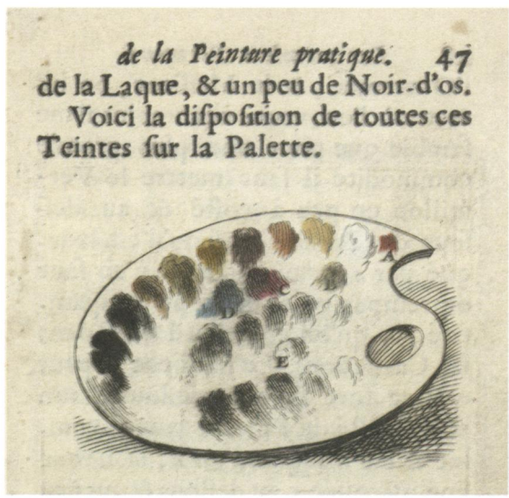
When Watteau entered the academy in 1712, though, this agreement was increasingly open to question. In the final years of Louis XIV's reign, with the country in financial disarray after disastrous military campaigns, royal sponsorship for the arts was in decline.[27] The church continued to commission paintings, but at a much slower and more irregular pace than in the preceding century.[28] Artists, faced with these economic pressures, increasingly turned to an emerging private art market to support themselves. The buyers in this marketplace could, in some respects, take the place of the great patrons of previous generations, but their relationship to the objects they acquired was, in temporal terms, significantly different. Whereas perpetual accumulation and the promise of eternal magnificence had guided the old institutions of patronage, the growing market allowed for a new degree of exchange.

Various attempts have been made to quantify this increase in the rate of commercial circulation during the eighteenth century.[29] Scholars have mined trade almanacs and shop inventories for statistics, often coming to different conclusions about precisely when and where a "consumer revolution" occurred in Europe.[30] But if we restrict our perspective to the

collecting culture through which Watteau's works circulated, we quickly see the degree to which his pictures were subject to regular trade. Provenance records indicate that most of his paintings passed through multiple collections over the course of the eighteenth century.[31] *Les plaisirs du bal*, for instance, changed hands no fewer than ten times (Fig. 5).[32] Watteau's most devoted collector, the amateur Jean de Jullienne, offers a particularly clear demonstration of the phenomenon. By 1756 he had bought and subsequently sold at least thirty-six of Watteau's paintings.[33] Jettisoning works appears to have been a common practice for Jullienne, who deaccessioned 119 paintings from his collection during his lifetime—more than a third of what he owned at the time of his death.[34] This kind of collection, in other words, functioned according to a different sense of time than the old repositories of art that it was coming to displace. A private collection was not necessarily an enduring monument destined for the future, but a space in which pictures came and went.

5 Antoine Watteau, *Les plaisirs du bal*, 1715–17, oil on canvas, 20⅝ × 25⅝ in. (52.5 × 65.2 cm). Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (artwork in the public domain; photograph © by permission of the Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, provided by RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY)

The rhythm of this commerce did not, on its own, dictate any change in the durability of art. A thriving art market had arisen in the Dutch Republic a century earlier with no appreciable decline in the permanence of paintings.[35] Dutch painters continued to operate under strict guild regulation, which ensured that commercial forces had little effect on the soundness of craftsmanship.[36] In France, where artists enjoyed the possibility of working outside the guild and its craft traditions, circumstances were different.[37] Artists' materials and techniques were less easily sequestered from the temporal pressures of commerce. Painters were free to make more choices in their working methods, ones that would make clear the shifting status of permanence in the open market.



6 Roger de Piles, the arrangement of colors on the palette, from *Les premiers élémens de la peinture pratique*, Paris: Langlois, 1684, 47. Ghent University Library, BIB. 1490047 (artwork in the public domain; photograph published under a Creative Commons license, CC BY-SA 4.0)

PERMANENCE IN DOUBT

Let us turn to where the problem began: with Watteau at work on a painting. Watteau followed few of the commonly accepted practices of the period for ensuring the longevity of his paintings. He worked with oil paints, a medium that was widely recognized to require special precautions.[38] By the beginning of the eighteenth century, artists had painted in oil for more than two hundred years, a sufficiently long period for them to notice that pictures in the medium could degrade over time. Technical guides emphasized, however, that any such deterioration was largely avoidable through the use of proper techniques.[39] Fastidious work habits were understood to be especially important. A painter's palette, for instance, needed to be clean and well ordered to avoid contamination of colors (Fig. 6). Artist manuals described elaborate daily palette cleaning rituals, which ensured the purity and integrity of one's materials.[40] It was necessary to remove paint from the palette at the end of the workday and store it properly if it was to

be reused.[41] Depending on when the artist planned to work again, some colors could be transferred to a fresh palette for later use, whereas others had to be submerged in water for safekeeping. With the colors removed from the palette, the artist then needed to scrub it clean and coat it with oil. Only then was it fit for another day's work.

Watteau, we are told, followed these steps infrequently, if at all. He replaced the colors on his palette only on rare occasions and he cleaned it even less often.[42] Grime soon accumulated not just on Watteau's palette but also in the cup of oil where he wiped his brushes, which became a mix of "filth, dust, and colors."[43]

Unkempt working conditions were not the only problem that Watteau's contemporaries lamented about his techniques. Particularly troublesome, they all remarked, was his excessive use of *huile grasse* ("fat oil"), a medium that could be mixed with oil paint to speed the drying process.[44] Watteau was hardly the first artist to have used this medium—recipes for it abound in artist manuals going back to the early seventeenth century.[45] The trouble arose from the reckless abandon with which Watteau availed himself of it. Caylus recounted how Watteau, in an effort to work more quickly, "rubbed *huile grasse* indiscriminately all over his canvases and repainted on top."[46] Gersaint provided similar testimony and detailed the disastrous results: Watteau's "paintings perish from this day by day; they have totally changed color or they become cracked [*très-alès*] beyond repair."[47]

The destructive effects of *huile grasse* set in quickly. When the painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry warned of its dangers in a lecture to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1752, he remarked that paintings made with excessive *huile grasse* "conserve their freshness for very little time and become unrecognizable by the end of a couple of years and sometimes even sooner."[48] Such dramatic deterioration stems from the unequal drying speed of the different levels of paint. As the *huile grasse* dries and contracts, it pulls the surface of the picture apart. In contrast to the fine craquelure that naturally develops on the surface of paintings over a long period of time, these fast-forming cracks open wide and run deep.[49] Just how many of Watteau's paintings fell victim to the damage of *huile grasse* remains unclear. Mariette wrote that "nearly all have suffered," and Gersaint admitted that paintings by Watteau immune from these effects "are rare, in truth."[50]

Today, cracks from *huile grasse* are visible on some of Watteau's best-known paintings. The crevices in *Pilgrimage to Cythera* are among the less extreme examples, restricted as they are to the few areas that Watteau repainted. On other works, such as *The Village Bride*, a network of deep fissures runs across much of the picture's surface (Fig. 7).

Art historians, looking past the cracks, have sometimes seen in the subject matter of this painting another one of Watteau's meditations on "time's passage," whether in the "inevitable sense of movement" that characterizes the winding wedding procession or in the diaphanous trees and ethereal clouds that hover above them.[51] But if time is a depicted subject of the painting, then it has long been overwritten by time's material effects. Wedding attendants break into a fragmented mass of oil and pigment, becoming an almost illegible mosaic of paint chips (Fig. 8). Edmond de Goncourt called the painting a "sad ruin" in the late nineteenth century, and its problems had become clear well over a century before that.[52] After having passed through the homes of several French collectors in the first half of the eighteenth century, the painting entered the collection of Frederick the Great in Prussia by 1750, when it was described as "torn through the faces, hands, and clothes."[53] Attempts to restore the painting go back at least to that date, perhaps even earlier.[54]

Watteau's friends and acquaintances saw cracks like these as the unfortunate product of his desire to finish paintings quickly. The body of more than two hundred paintings that he is thought to have produced during the period of roughly a decade when he was active gives

7 Antoine Watteau, *The Village Bride*, 1710–12, oil on canvas, 25⅝ × 36¼ in. (65 × 92 cm). Stiftung Preussische Schlösser & Gärten, Berlin (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Jörg P. Anders, provided by bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY)

some indication of his speed, but it was his studio habits that particularly called attention to his haste.[55] His entire working process was designed to create paintings with a minimal investment of time. We know of almost no compositional sketches that he executed in preparation for paintings.[56] He preferred instead to draw from life without a particular painting in mind, filling his sketchbooks with figure studies that he could reuse across multiple works.[57] To make a painting, he would apparently flip through his drawing albums to find a few stock figures that he could insert into the composition.[58]

It is tempting to take these hasty work habits as nothing more than confirmation of Watteau's impatient and indifferent personality, corroboration of the psychological characterizations offered by his contemporaries. Yet Watteau was not the only artist of the period to have been accused of taking technical shortcuts and showing an insufficient interest in future generations. In fact, the criticisms leveled against him belong to a broader conversation from the period, one that helps to shift our focus away from the domain of Watteau's idiosyncratic personality and toward the changing market conditions in which he worked.

When Watteau was accepted as a member of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1712, the institution's leadership increasingly spoke about the dangers of impatience and the impulse to paint quickly. Antoine Coypel, soon to become director of the academy, delivered a lecture on brushwork in 1713 that addressed precisely these risks. "One often wishes to paint quickly," he cautioned, "because of the miserable principle of interest; . . . [avarice] is what makes one run after gain sooner than glory and that makes us abandon the care to do things well for the desire to do a lot."[59] Coypel reminded the artists of

8 Antoine Watteau, *The Village Bride*, detail showing cracks across the wedding attendants. Stiftung Preussische Schlösser & Gärten, Berlin (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Jörg P. Anders, provided by bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY)

the academy that true glory awaited them in the future, which meant that they should paint with care. He quoted the words of the ancient Greek painter Zeuxis: "I work so much on what I paint because I paint for posterity."[60] The fact that none of Zeuxis's paintings had actually survived apparently did not bother Coypel. What mattered to him was Zeuxis's *devotion* to the future, a commitment that contemporary artists no longer seemed to be honoring.

A conflict between long-term posterity and immediate economic interest emerged as a key theme in the doctrine of the academy under Coypel's direction in the following years.[61] The old obligation of artists to make durable monuments to their royal patron, Coypel felt, needed to be reestablished in a period of challenging financial circumstances. In 1714, a year before the death of Louis XIV, Coypel called on artists to make objects that would deliver an image of their illustrious ruler to future generations: "may painting and sculpture . . . transmit to the most distant posterity the crowning achievements and virtues of a king whose precious days give us the pleasure of ours."[62] In a reprise of the foundational rhetoric of the academy, he spoke of the "glory of assuring immortality to those who should never die."[63] Such declarations were clearly meant to echo the sort of statements that Félibien had made throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, reiterating the duty of artists to offer immortal testimony of the king's glories in exchange for his continued sponsorship. Unlike the pronouncements of the previous century, though, Coypel's words betrayed an anxiety about the terms of this agreement. In an implicit acknowledgment of declining state funding for the arts after a period of ruinous military expenditures, Coypel spoke hopefully of a "happy peace" that would renew investment in cultural affairs.[64] Such hopes, however, would go largely unfulfilled. In the years after the

9 Antoine Watteau, *Gersaint's Shop Sign*, 1720, oil on canvas, 5 ft. 4⅛ in. × 10 ft. 1¼ in. (1.63 × 3.08 m). Charlottenburg Castle, Stiftung Preussische Schlösser & Gärten, Berlin (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Jörg P. Anders, provided by bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY)

death of Louis XIV, there was no great return to the massive program of state-sponsored artistic production that had defined the height of his reign. During the regency period that followed, and into the early years of Louis XV's rule, patronage had never been more in question. Artists had to pursue alternative sources of income, and a growing commercial sphere offered them new opportunities. In this sense, we can understand the opposition that Coypel saw developing between posterity and avarice—or perhaps simple economic necessity. An object made for the king needed to stand as durable evidence of his glory for future generations, but what expectations existed for an object made for an unspecified buyer, hanging on a gallery wall?

MARKET TIME

By probing the connection between Watteau's working habits and the market in which he operated, I do not wish to insinuate that he was some kind of mercenary huckster. We have little reason to doubt Gersaint, Watteau's dealer, when he claims that the artist became uncomfortable with the enormous revenues that his paintings generated and sometimes insisted on lowering their prices.[65] What I am suggesting, instead, is that the emerging art market was, in a much broader sense, constructed around a different conception of time than the old system of patronage. An economy in which paintings are continually bought and sold, in contrast to a system in which artworks reside indefinitely in an institution that treats them as evidence of its everlasting splendor, presupposes a radically different understanding of art's temporality.[66] It was not the personal acquisitiveness of the artist but the structure of the market itself that challenged the traditional assumptions about the futurity of art. To grasp the full extent of art's temporal reorganization in the commercial sphere and the nature of Watteau's relationship to it, we need to consider his material practices alongside the thematics of his subject matter.

No single work speaks more to the temporal implications of art's entry into the market than the shop sign that Watteau painted for Gersaint's storefront in 1720 (Fig. 9). The picture

presents a moment of bustling activity within Paris's emerging culture of commercial consumption. On the right side, potential buyers admire paintings alongside mirrors and other luxury objects. On the left, objects are literally in circulation: a shopworker carries a large mirror while another handles a portrait of Louis XIV, loading it into a crate for shipment, or perhaps unpacking it for display.[67]

Scholars have devoted much energy to deciphering the significance of these objects and gestures. The portrait of Louis XIV has often served as the focal point for analysis, its position in the wooden crate sometimes being interpreted as a symbolic entombment of the recently deceased king.[68] Subsequent interpretations have resisted such macabre intimations, seeing the movement of the king's portrait as a celebration of commercial circulation, an advertisement for the kinds of pictures that a gallery like this one would have continually bought and sold.[69]

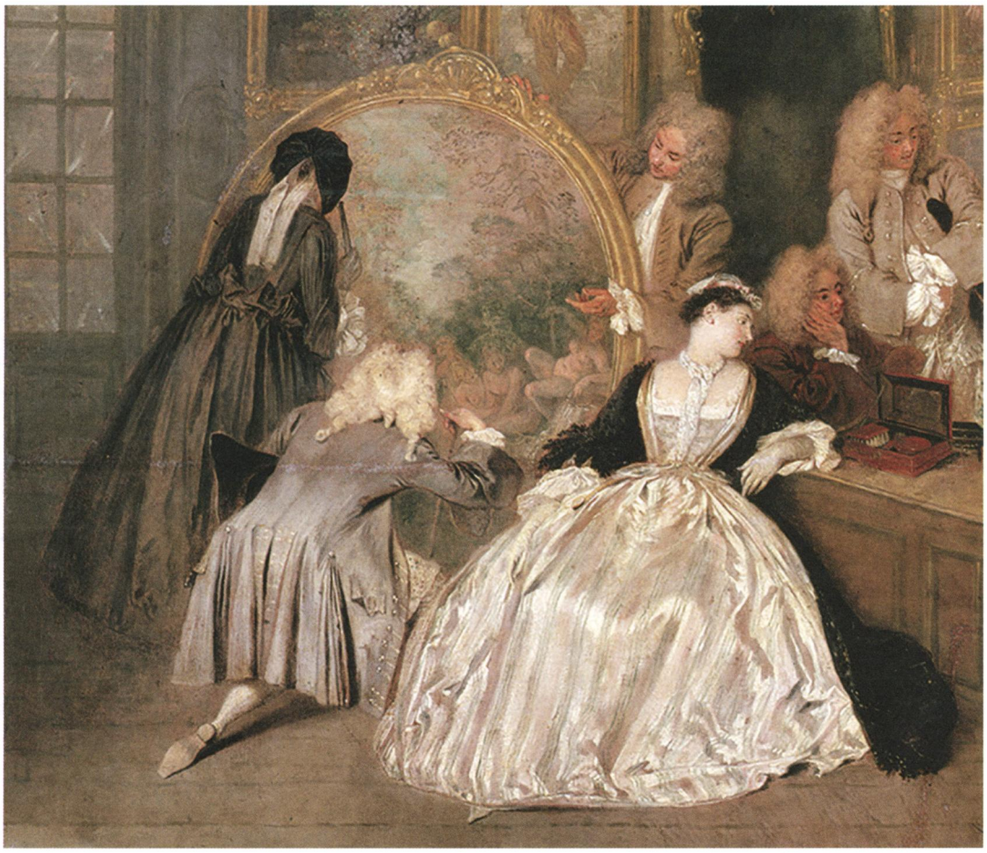
The symbolic reading of the king's entombment and the more literal interpretation of the portrait's sale do not strike me as entirely incompatible. The king's decline and art's commercialization, after all, were not unrelated. Louis XIV's portrait had long stood as an emblem for the system of royal patronage that had structured the artistic economy during his reign and the state support that had sheltered art from the demands of the marketplace. When royal portraits like these appeared embedded within seventeenth-century paintings by members of the academy, they underscored art's stable and enduring status under its institutional sponsor. Typical in this regard is Nicolas Loir's *Allegory of the Foundation of the Royal Academy*... from 1666 (Fig. 10), in which Minerva and Fame hold the king's portrait in the sky while Time unveils the arts of painting and sculpture. The king's portrait is here both a source of inspiration to the arts and an example of the supposedly everlasting imagery that was produced with his support. Loir's painting makes clear that because of the mutually beneficial relationship between the arts and their royal benefactor, time was no threat. This particular painting still hung in the halls of the academy during Watteau's life, but the idea of time that it allegorized had lost its supremacy.[70] If the sale of the king's portrait in Watteau's painting can be said to symbolize any broader historical transformation, it is the weakening of that temporal order, the decline of that institutional stability.

10 Nicolas Loir, *Allegory of the Foundation of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the Progress of Arts of Design during the Reign of Louis XIV*, 1666, oil on canvas, 55½ × 73 in. (141 × 185.5 cm). Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Gérard Blot, © provided by RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY)

Watteau wrests the royal portrait from the absolutist domain of immortal images, incorporating it into the mobile and fluctuating forces of the commercial sphere. In the emerging marketplace, the notion that art is the domain of immortality is reduced to a joke. Watteau shows painting for what it had become: a material object subject to the physical realities of the world, easily packaged and sold. In this sense, the king's portrait in the crate offers both an iconographic symbol and a very tangible depiction of the practical realities surrounding

the life of art in the world of commercial exchange. We might see it equally as an allegory of royal patronage's dethronement and as a matter-of-fact illustration of the physical travails that paintings were expected to undergo as a result. Painting, Watteau shows us, no longer had a permanent home.

In the world of commerce, an artist's work entered an amorphous network where it was difficult to track, often never to be seen again. Gersaint himself spoke of the vanishing status of objects in the emerging art market, describing how paintings in private collections "gradually disperse themselves without one perceiving in what hands they pass."[71] Estate sales of famous collectors, he noted, sometimes provided the last opportunity to see paintings before they disappeared: "one could hardly name today the collections where a tenth of these paintings find themselves placed."[72] Under these conditions, the old obligation of the painter to make materially durable works was called into question. Even the most carefully crafted object could be packed up, shipped off, and rendered untraceable for posterity. A painting, no matter how it was made, enjoyed the same uncertain fate as a bale of hay lying in the street. Material stability had become just one factor in art's contingent relation to the future.



11 Antoine Watteau, *Gersaint's Shop Sign*, detail showing shop visitors inspecting a painting. Charlottenburg Castle, Stiftung Preussische Schlösser & Gärten, Berlin (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Jörg P. Anders, provided by bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY)

In the commercial sphere, painting's survival depended as much on its ability to attract an audience as it did on its material durability. As the right half of Watteau's shop sign makes clear (Fig. 11), a picture needed to beguile a consumer in the present moment before it had any hope of enduring into the future. For an emerging audience of buyers who gravitated toward paintings like Watteau's, the durability of a painting's surface was less their initial point of interest than the subjective flights of imagination prompted by the sensuous application of paint.[73] Watteau's work spoke to a new type of viewer, an amateur, who was guided more by an innate love for art than by specialized knowledge.[74] Though these amateurs often made their own forays into artistic practice, frequently trying their hand in the forgiving media of drawing and etching, such efforts hardly constituted a thoroughgoing technical initiation in the material underpinnings of art—nor was such a background required.[75] The affection these viewers had for particular paintings demanded no more erudition or justification than the attraction that they might have felt for another person. Both forms of desire were understood to be unlearned, and the amateur freely conflated artistic preferences with libidinal impulses.[76] The viewer who stoops before the landscape painting in Watteau's shop sign, it is often observed, may take equal pleasure in the fluid brushstrokes before his eyes and in the nude figures that they depict.[77] In either case, durability is far from the central preoccupation in this indulgence of desire.

Desire, of course, can be fleeting. Part of what defined the new generation of art buyers was the mercurial nature of their whims, which could be as ephemeral as the paintings that they acquired. Gersaint compared some aspiring collectors to adolescents who are drawn to "beauties that soon fade away."[78] Later in the century, Denis Diderot would offer in his "Salon of 1765" what is perhaps the bluntest description of the impetuous urges that came to be seen in matters of art and love: "One leaves the loveliest woman for no other reason than the duration of her favor, one becomes bored with the sweetest of pleasures without quite knowing why. Why would painting have any advantage in the matter?"[79]

The market of fluctuating desires through which Watteau's paintings circulated was, in this sense, not so different from the world of fleeting flirtations that his *fêtes galantes* are so often said to depict. It is sometimes claimed that Watteau's enchanted landscapes show love not as an enduring bond between people but as a process subject to perpetual change, temporalized and inherently unstable.[80] This temporal understanding of desire links the world within the *fêtes galantes* to the commercial reality outside them. Watteau's shop sign makes this connection clear enough. The figures within the gallery space could just as easily belong to one of his pastoral scenes. Here in a commercial showroom, they take part in another kind of courtship ritual, one conducted not simply among people but also between buyers and objects. The large oval landscape painting around which some of them gather performs the role of the principal seducer. Its beguiling effects may be short lived, but so may love itself. Change and exchange, in Watteau's world, is the logic of love and commerce alike.

This economy of ephemeral attraction would soon be subjected to harsh criticism. By the 1740s it was becoming increasingly obvious that Watteau's paintings were visibly degrading. As such, they became an icon for the corrupting effects of the marketplace on the material integrity of art. In expressing these complaints, no voice was stronger than that of the art critic Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne. In his first major piece of art criticism, published in 1747, he positioned Watteau's paintings at the center of a systemic analysis of the relation between the marketplace and the material permanence of art:

> Might it be permitted that I make several reproaches on behalf of the public to nearly all of our painters at present on the little durability of their coloring that ten years at most removes and effaces to the point of bringing to nothing paintings that were bought at high prices and that used to enchant us. Such are those of the charming Watteau, who would be the most seductive and striking of all the moderns if he were not lacking in this one area. What are most of his paintings today? An unformed assemblage of discordant colors that leaves neither life nor resemblance in the figures.[81]

For La Font, permanence had no place in the market's system of value. Price and durability, he noted, had no relation to each other. Watteau's work confirmed for him that, in the absence of state sponsorship for the arts, painters had no need to consider the future of their work. He observed that the most prized objects in the commercial sphere were among the most ephemeral, the tastes that they satisfied nearly as fleeting.

What makes La Font's criticisms so telling is the way that they connect the physical instability of art to other forms of flux brought on by the marketplace. The ephemerality of materials was, in his account, inseparable from the transitory demands that artists were forced to satisfy. He linked art's physical fragility to the modish taste for pinkish hues, describing the colors as a symbol for fleetingness across the arts: "everything is the color of roses and conserves the same durability."[82] The short-lived techniques of oil painters were just one example of the problem. He decried the proliferation of pastel portraits: "the volatile beauties of

crayons . . . are as fragile as the glass that protects them, and will disappear upon the first drop of the picture, or upon the penetration of the least humidity in the location where they are placed."[83] Delicate portraits like these, along with breakable mirrors and ornamental moldings, had taken the place once occupied by the great historical paintings of the previous generation. Admirable works of the past now found themselves under "the dust of attics and the filth of coach houses" or, worse still, turned into carriage decorations, "dragged in the streets, to be subjected there to the ravages of the mud, and to be exposed every day without any defense to the threat of being left in pieces by the knock of the dirtiest wagon, street carts, or the impetuous march of these carriages."[84]

All of these criticisms point to a central complaint: the mobility of the market was antithetical to the stability of art. The physical movement of paintings, the shifting proclivities of buyers, and the unstable materials used by artists were all part of a broader system in which art's circulation trumped the needs of its preservation. La Font longed for the halcyon days of Louis XIV's patronage in which the royal collection offered art an enduring home. He derived some consolation from the contemporary collectors whose enormous private cabinets performed part of the role once filled by the royal patron, but he recognized the limitations of their cultural stewardship.[85] A private collection lasts only until its owner dies or decides to sell its contents, and what La Font ultimately desired was the revival of a stable sanctuary for the arts that survived across generations. To restore a truly durable future for the arts, he called for the creation of "a vast gallery or several contiguous ones, well illuminated, in the superb palace of the Louvre."[86] The works within this space would be "maintained in their best state by the care of an intelligent artist, charged with looking after their perfect conservation."[87]

The answer that La Font offered to art's growing impermanence was, in other words, something very much like the museum that now sits in the center of Paris. The idea was forward-looking, and it helped shape the museological discourse that would lead to the foundation of the modern Louvre.[88] But in another sense, the concept was an attempt to return to the past, to restore art to a stable home modeled on the glorious royal collections of a bygone era. And in this respect, it was an effort to bring back conditions similar to those that artists had experienced before men like Watteau had ever picked up a brush.

This response to art's ephemerality, however, was not the only one that emerged at the time. Others saw in Watteau's decaying work another possible future, one that was in many ways more modern. It was a vision in which art's survival was not necessarily incompatible with its commercial dissemination, in which circulation itself might prove a guarantor of a different kind of permanence.

PERMANENT CIRCULATION

We tend to think of the permanence of art in physical terms, defined by the material stability of objects over time. By this standard, Watteau's paintings could only be regarded as ephemeral. Yet even as his pictures started to decay, they embarked on a second life in another form. Reproductions of his work began to circulate, giving his imagery an existence that transcended the original products of his hand. This process made clear an alternative model of endurance, one found in replication and dissemination.

Much has already been written about Watteau's afterlife in reproduction, particularly the printed volumes produced by the collector and amateur Jean de Jullienne.[89] From the moment of Watteau's death in 1721, Jullienne began assembling a team of etchers and engravers to reproduce the artist's entire body of work. The result was a four-volume edition, two volumes of Watteau's drawings and another two focusing on his paintings, totaling more than six

hundred plates.[90] The *Recueil Jullienne*, as it came to be known, remains the most comprehensive record of Watteau's output, including many works thought lost or destroyed.

It is not necessary to rehearse the entire history of Watteau's posthumous reception or the dissemination of his work in print. What interests me, instead, is the way the persistence of Watteau's work in reproduction complicated what it meant for art to endure. On the one hand, the various reproductions of Watteau's work could never fully replace the decaying paintings. If anything, the distribution of copies would lead to growing interest in the originals. On the other hand, these secondary iterations of Watteau's pictures played an important role in defining his body of work for future generations. They yielded a representation of the artist's corpus whose reproducibility made it more durable than any object Watteau had created himself. What made this reproductive model of durability especially powerful was that commercial circulation only served to fortify it. The more that these copies were bought and distributed, the better their chances of survival became. The mobility of the market may have posed a threat to art's material permanence, but it proved to be the sustaining force behind its existence in reproduction.

Watteau's work highlighted, in other words, a growing bifurcation in the art market between two different conceptions of artistic longevity: one premised on the physical survival of original objects; the other defined by their reproduction and dissemination. To understand this divide, we need to devote more attention to the efforts of Jullienne, whose publication of Watteau's work helped mediate the split.

Jullienne was Watteau's most assiduous collector and among the most active figures in the early eighteenth-century art market more generally.[91] The son of a linen merchant, he amassed a small fortune as a textile dyer and manufacturer. Thanks to the favor of an ennobled uncle, he became the director of France's famed Gobelins tapestry manufactory, a position that brought him into contact with many of the major artists of the period. By the late 1710s he started to stockpile Watteau's drawings and paintings, and he soon began what would become the decades-long project of translating the artist's work into print.

When Jullienne set out to reproduce Watteau's work, he sensed a commercial opportunity. The announcement for the first volume of the *Recueil* in 1726 was explicit about the role of the market in shaping the project. The text noted that collectors were seeking Watteau's work "more and more with a great avidity," and Jullienne described his publication as an answer to this pent-up demand.[92] He especially targeted those who might not otherwise be able to afford Watteau's pictures, promoting the first volume to a public that "for a modest sum will be able to satisfy its curiosity without the originals, and to possess the most beautiful works of this able master."[93] Conscious of the various audiences that existed for reproductive prints, Jullienne modified the price of the volumes to target different markets while also making individual prints of the paintings available for sale.[94]

The project also presented Jullienne commercial benefits beyond the sale of the prints themselves. Because Watteau's paintings made up a significant portion of his own collection at the time, he stood to profit from the interest that the reproductions would generate in the originals. On each print, he made sure to specify the current owner of the painting—very often himself—which served the dual function of documenting the picture's provenance and making its current location known to any potential buyer. Some scholars have gone so far as to call the painting volumes of the *Recueil* an illustrated sale catalog, one designed to enhance the value of the very objects that it offered for purchase.[95] We might therefore be tempted to see the reproduction of Watteau's work as one more example of the ways in which market circulation served the interests of the present over the good of posterity. What makes Jullienne's project revealing, however, is the fact that it sought to satisfy both goals simultaneously.

12 Nicolas Henri Tardieu after Antoine Watteau, *Assis auprès de toi*, 1731, etching with engraving, 16⅞ × 12¼ in. (43 × 31.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert N. Straus, 1928, 24.63.1085 (artwork in the public domain; photograph © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, provided by Art Resource, NY)

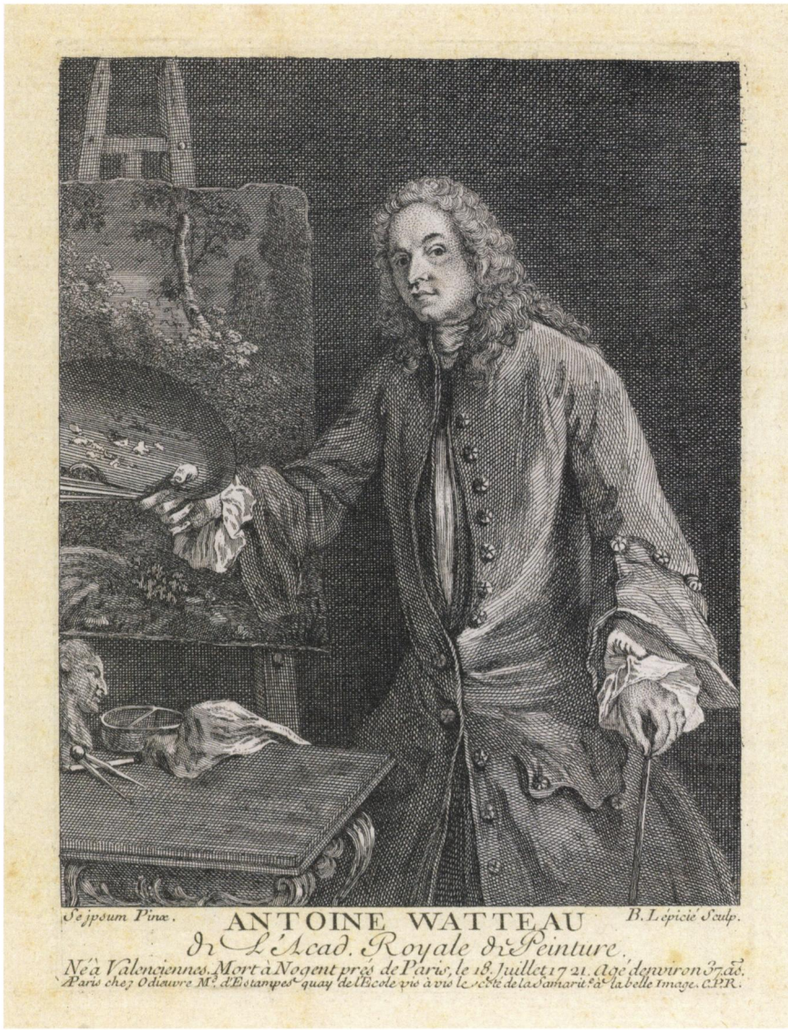
Jullienne quickly recognized the role that prints could play as a backup system for Watteau's decaying work. In the first image that he included among Watteau's paintings (Fig. 12), he highlighted his own role in perpetuating these transient productions. The double portrait shows Watteau and Jullienne together under a canopy of trees. Jullienne's inscription below makes the preservative function of the print clear:

> Seated beside you, under these charming shadows,
> From time, my dear Watteau, I hardly fear the damages,
> Only too happy if the marks of a faithful burin,
> In multiplying your works,
> Instruct the universe of the sincere homage
> That I render to your divine art!

Jullienne emphasizes the capacity of the engraver's burin, whose marks are endlessly reproducible, to preserve paintings for the future. As a result of prints like this one, he tells Watteau that he no longer fears the ravages of time.

The message is particularly apropos in the case of this particular painting, which has never been found. Previously thought to have been Jullienne's invention, the painting in fact existed but underwent significant transformation before deteriorating beyond recognition.[96] Shortly after Jullienne had it engraved, the canvas was apparently cut down to include only Watteau, in all likelihood to rescue a portion of the work as the rest of it decomposed. It was last seen at Jullienne's estate sale in 1767, where Mariette said it was in "a deplorable state," describing it as nothing more than "the wreck" of the original painting.[97] He explained that the picture had been transformed into a scene of Watteau at work in his studio. An image of this "wreck" survives in another print (Fig. 13). In this smaller version of the picture, a worktable appears at Watteau's side, strewn with a haphazard arrangement of tools and studio props, a subtle indication of his careless habits. Among the objects on the table we find a *pincelier*, the cup in which Watteau kept his *huile grasse*. Next to it lies a rumpled rag, which hangs off the edge of the tabletop. The table itself bears several smears of paint. Whoever transformed the original painting must have taken a perverse pleasure in adding these signs of Watteau's shortsighted techniques. These sloppy methods, after all, may have been the very reason that the picture needed to be cut down and reconfigured in the first place. Here in print, they offer an explanation for the picture's making and unmaking, a wry acknowledgment of its unusual life—a life that continues thanks to its circulation in reproduction.

Jullienne was not the first person to observe the role that prints could play in saving fragile works of art from oblivion. The idea had become increasingly prevalent over the previous decades, a period that witnessed significant developments in the publication of reproductive prints and illustrated art books.[98] Among the earliest such volumes to reflect on their role in preserving works of art for future generations were those produced by Louis XIV's cultural ministry, which framed mechanical reproduction as an important tool in assuring that the glories of the monarchy would reach posterity.[99] When in 1677 the royal printers published a massive tome reproducing the major paintings in the king's collection, Félibien wrote a preface



13 Bernard Lépicié after Antoine Watteau, *Antoine Watteau*, 1736, etching, 5¼ × 4⅛ in. (13.3 × 10.6 cm). Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, b Typ 715.21.517 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Houghton Library)

that underscored the way that these prints granted newfound permanence to the artworks that they depicted:

> by the means of many prints pulled from a single plate, one perpetuates and one multiplies nearly to infinity a painting that would otherwise remain unique and that could only subsist a certain number of years. For this reason, among such excellent works that the King has made, it is very certain that the plates that we engrave should rank highly. It is by them that posterity will one day see in agreeable figures the history of the great actions of this august Monarch.[100]

As Félibien's comments make clear, the ultimate goal of the endeavor was less the preservation of an artist's work than the perpetuation of royal splendor. Art functioned as a metonymic extension of the royal body, and, as such, its preservation remained incidental to the objective of eternalizing the king.[101] But within such propagandistic rhetoric is the kernel of an emerging consciousness about the role of reproduction in shaping history. Félibien's remark that a unique painting "could only subsist a certain number of years" acknowledges that not all of the king's commissions and collections were fated to survive. An awareness of the material realities of historical transmission cuts through the obligatory platitudes about the eternity of all royal productions.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, it had become common to speak of the printing press as the means of delivering paintings to the future.[102] The idea of what prints preserved also gradually shifted away from the illustrious owner of the paintings and toward the individual authors of the paintings themselves. A crucial transitional project in this respect was the *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux desseins qui sont en France*, more commonly known as the *Recueil Crozat*.[103] Created over the course of the 1720s under the direction of the financier and collector Pierre Crozat, the print compendium depicted the most famous drawings and paintings in Crozat's personal collection along with works belonging to the king and the ruling regent, the duc d'Orléans. The introductory text to the first volume draws on much of the language found in Félibien's writing on the permanence of prints but detaches it from the rhetoric of royal immortalization. Reproductions, the preface explained, offered a greater promise of survival than any isolated object ever could: "the number of prints pulled from the same plate and the manner in which we keep them, will make them outlive the majority of the paintings that they represent."[104] The emphasis here is not on protecting the glory of the paintings' owners but on preserving the creations of individual artists:

> The art of engraving . . . can pass to every country on the earth and transmit to centuries to come what is most precious and most divine in the works of excellent painters, to give them students in places where there are none of their paintings and to put the remotest posterity in position to render justice to their merit . . . even when all the works of their hands would have been destroyed.[105]

When Jullienne wrote of the "faithful burin" that protects Watteau's paintings from time's damage, he therefore borrowed from a conception of prints as a pictorial preservative that had gradually emerged within the printmaking culture of the preceding decades. In extending this logic to the artist's entire body of work, Jullienne's project went much further. Whereas the *Recueil Crozat* had brought together centuries-old work by dozens of artists from three elite collections, Jullienne's compendium of more than six hundred plates focused on a single artist. The commemoration of Watteau's work played no subservient role to the immortalization of a patron, nor did the importance of his work derive from the collection to which it belonged. The sole qualification for an object to be reproduced was Watteau's authorship of it. Other artists had been the subject of monographic print projects before, but Jullienne's enterprise was unusual for both its comprehensiveness and the fact that the person at its center had died only a few years before. Rarely, if ever, had a contemporary artist been the subject of such an exhaustive act of individual memorialization.[106]

Structured around an emergent understanding of the "oeuvre" as a cohesive summation of an artist's life, the *Recueil Jullienne* treated Watteau's work as a quasi-sacred body that both contained and survived the man who produced it.[107] The notion that the oeuvre served as a vessel for Watteau's continued life found its most explicit statement in a line from the epitaph at the front of Jullienne's first volume: "He lives in his friends, he lives in his works."[108] If Watteau continued to live in the many objects that he had made, then it fell to friends like Jullienne to assemble the pieces of this living body into an aggregated whole. "We will find the entire oeuvre of Watteau," Jullienne proclaimed when the project's first volume was published in 1726, vowing to compose a complete corpus from the scattered pieces in distant collections.[109]

This totalizing ambition had commercial implications for Jullienne. It gave him the implicit authority to certify Watteau's official body of work, allowing him to elevate the reputation of the objects that he reproduced and to undermine the legitimacy of those that he excluded.[110] In this respect, the prints helped fetishize the original objects on which they were based, effectively acting as a tool of authentication for buyers looking to acquire Watteau's work.

In another respect, though, the comprehensiveness of the *Recueil Jullienne* gave Watteau's oeuvre an existence that was autonomous from these original works. In emphasizing the completeness of his volumes, Jullienne suggested that the oeuvre was something that could exist as much in its collective representation as in its original form. This dual status was captured in Jullienne's simultaneous use of the word "oeuvre" to refer to both the objects that Watteau had made and the prints that depicted them, a semantic slippage that would become a regular feature of the eighteenth-century discourse on prints.[111] The oeuvre was both a physical thing and an idea, simultaneously material and virtual. Watteau's original paintings and drawings remained desirable objects—the prints only served to elevate their status and reputation—but the oeuvre was also independent of them. It existed through replication and circulation, not just in a delimited set of physical artifacts.

This conception of the oeuvre liberated Watteau's images from their fragile material substrates. It granted the virtual body of work a fate separate from the physical one, turning Watteau's productions into something that was limitlessly renewable and extendable. Some scholars have even suggested that Jullienne imagined his *Recueil* functioning as a pattern book to aid other artists in further disseminating Watteau's images.[112] Jullienne's decision to isolate each figure from Watteau's sketchbooks on its own plate instead of preserving the integrity of the entire drawing may have been at least partly intended to transform the images into discrete units that could be easily inserted into new works.[113] Whatever the intention may have been, the

result was clear: the prints soon became a generative force for legions of copyists and imitators. Just as Watteau had used his own drawing folios as a library of figures that could be repeatedly inserted into a variety of different paintings, Jullienne's reproductions came to operate as a mobile annex of this library for other artists who could create new works in his manner.

Of particular interest to copyists were the arabesques and decorative motifs that Watteau had painted for various Parisian apartments. Gersaint, who supervised the reproduction of many of these works for Jullienne, encouraged buyers of the prints to recycle their imagery. "Subjects like these," he wrote in announcing the release of two new prints after Watteau in 1727, "painted on white backgrounds, are marvelously suited to the decoupage with which women today make such pretty furniture."[114] With the publication of a new batch of prints in 1731, Gersaint suggested even broader applications for the appropriation of Watteau's work. Not only were such prints of interest to collectors, he explained, "but they were even of a great use for painters, fan makers, sculptors, metalsmiths, upholsters, embroiderers, etc."[115] According to Gersaint, Watteau himself anticipated this reuse of his work and adjusted his imagery with it in mind:

> Watteau, through the fertility of his genius... knew so well to adapt his subjects to his ornaments and his ornaments to his subjects, varying the entirety in an infinitely ingenious manner, joyful and new, such that one can say with justice that up to this day we did not have ornaments so gallant and so well imagined.[116]

As Gersaint's comments attest, the line between Watteau's ornamental works and his painted subjects was far from clear, and the prints of his paintings soon became source material for decorative objects ranging from tapestries to porcelain.[117]

Thanks to Jullienne's *Recueil*, Watteau's paintings also found a second life through artists who began painting full-color copies of his work based on the prints. In documents and inventories beginning in the 1740s, we find numerous references to paintings "d'après Watteau," sometimes even with the specification that they "conformed to the prints."[118] A small industry of Watteau copyists emerged across Europe, some adhering as closely as possible to the original compositions, others following Watteau's own practice of recombining figures in order to create novel pastiches.[119] The results were often impressive. Mariette went so far as to claim that the copies painted from prints by the German artist Johann Georg Heinrich Theodor Leichner were so admirable that "the originals by Watteau... appear inferior to his imitations."[120]

This is not to say that the distinction between the originals and the copies had become unimportant, nor is it to imply that such imitations had made the decay of Watteau's original paintings irrelevant. Mariette may have believed that Leichner's copies were better than their prototypes, but he still cherished the traces of Watteau's brush and deplored the pictures that had decomposed. When Jullienne's collection went up for sale after his death, Mariette annotated the copy of the auction catalog with comments on the condition of the paintings, paying particular attention to the remaining works by Watteau. He rued the sorry state of Watteau's self-portrait, and he delighted in the few paintings "that have escaped time, which has destroyed so many others."[121]

Mariette's admiration for the copies produced after Watteau's work indicates the degree to which artistic posterity had become a divided phenomenon. The decaying products of Watteau's hand were only one way to define his afterlife. The market, in creating a pervasive network of reproductions and imitations, had turned Watteau into a brand that could be endlessly expanded. Mariette's paradoxical suggestion that another artist could make a better Watteau than Watteau himself points to the fact that the artist was more than objects of his creation. He was a type, a vessel to be inhabited and extended. While critics of the commercial

sphere like La Font de Saint-Yenne regarded circulation as the enemy of posterity, this reproductive afterlife presented another possibility. When circulation was combined with the tools of reproduction, it offered a different and much more powerful form of permanence than any set of drawings or paintings could provide.

Watteau himself could hardly have imagined the permanence that his paintings would find through reproduction. He had witnessed the breakdown of the old system of patronage and the assumptions of material durability that had undergirded it, but he did not live long enough to see the extent to which market circulation would give rise to an alternative form of artistic endurance. Perhaps this outcome would not have interested him, indifferent as he supposedly was to the future of his work. Or maybe indifference is precisely the reaction that we would expect in response to a system in which the survival of an artist's work remains so far out of his hands.

It would be impossible, in the end, to separate Watteau's personality from the market in which he operated. Character develops in relation to circumstance, and in this sense the psychological explanations for Watteau's careless techniques are perhaps less inaccurate than they are incomplete. Watteau's indifference demands to be understood as an effect of his environment, as a set of attitudes and behaviors shaped by the new commercial realities that determined artistic fates. If the decaying surfaces of his paintings tell us something about his temperament, then they also reveal the consequences of these broader historical conditions. They direct our attention to the forces of economic uncertainty that were coming to restructure art's relation to time, and they remind us that the meaning of permanence is no more stable than history itself. What ultimately emerges from the cracks in Watteau's pictures is not just a personality but also an idea: in the modern marketplace, longevity may depend less on paint, pigment, or canvas than it does on the continued dissemination of an image.

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NOTES

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1. François Marie de Marsy, *Dictionnaire abrégé de peinture et d'architecture*, 2 vols. (Paris: Nyon, 1746), 2:376.

2. Edme-François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné des diverses curiosités du cabinet de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère* (Paris: Chez Jacques Barois, 1744), 187–88.

3. Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Abecedario de P. J. Mariette: Et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, 6 vols. (Paris: J.-B. Dumoulin, 1853–62), 6:106. Mariette's notes were undated, though Pierre Rosenberg has suggested 1745 as a possible date for the drafting of his note on Watteau. Rosenberg, ed., *Vies anciennes de Watteau* (Paris: Hermann, 1984), 2.

4. Anne Claude Philippe, comte de Caylus, "Vie d'Antoine Watteau" (1748), in *Les conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, ed. Jacqueline Lichtenstein and Christian Michel, 6 vols. (Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 2007–15), 5 (2012): 96–97.

5. Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia Ego: On the Conception of Transience in Poussin and Watteau," in *Philosophy & History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 247.

6. The Goncourts spoke of Watteau's paintings as depicting the "moods of an aging humanity, languor, gallantry, reverie," and compared them, most poignantly, to the "toys of a sick child who has died." Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *L'art du dix-huitième siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: A. Quantin, 1880), 1:5–6.

7. Donald Posner, "Watteau mélancolique," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1973, 346–61.

8. Donald Posner devotes particular attention to the makeup of this audience in *Antoine Watteau* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984), 121–28.

9. Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58–88.

10. Aaron Wile, "Watteau, Reverie, and Selfhood," *Art Bulletin* 96, no. 3 (September 2014): 319–37; see also Julie Anne Plax's broader work to resituate Watteau in the cultural context of the period: Plax, *Watteau and the Cultural Politics of Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and see Mary Vidal's efforts to historicize the open-ended sensibility in Watteau's works through their relation to the period's conversational norms; Vidal, *Watteau's Painted Conversations: Art, Literature, and Talk in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

11. The painting has undergone multiple cleanings and restorations beginning in the eighteenth century. For an overview of its condition and historical treatment, see Nathalie Volle, "Les restaurations des tableaux de Watteau: Une histoire à écrire," *Technè*, nos. 30–31 (2009): 97–106; and Ségolène Bergeon and Lola Faillant-Dumas, "The Restoration of the *Pilgrimage to the Island of Cythera*," in *Watteau, 1684–1721*, by Margaret Morgan Grasselli and Pierre Rosenberg (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1984), 460–64.

12. The cracks in *Pilgrimage to Cythera* (Figs. 2–4) show features of both "drying cracks" stemming from Watteau's excessive use of drying oil and "impact cracks" that result from some disturbance of the picture after completion. For the classification of such patterns, see Spike Bucklow, "The Description of Craquelure Patterns," *Studies in Conservation* 42, no. 3 (1997): 129–40; and idem, "The Description and Classification of Craquelure," *Studies in Conservation* 44, no. 4 (1999): 233–44.

13. Mariette offered particularly clear statements of his desire to see paintings survive in their original material condition. Benjamin Salama, "Les cas de conservation et de restauration de peintures dans l'*Abecedario* de Pierre-Jean Mariette," *Technè*, no. 33 (2011): 9–17.

14. Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Noémie Étienne, *La restauration des peintures à Paris: 1750–1815* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012); and Ann Massing, *Painting Restoration before La Restauration: The Origins of the Profession in France* (London: Hamilton Kerr Institute, 2012). On the early history of "cleaning controversies" in this period, see also Randolph Starn, "Three Ages of 'Patina' in Painting," *Representations* 78, no. 1 (2002): 86–115.

15. Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Paul Mattick, "Art and Money," in *Art in Its Time: Theories and Practices of Modern Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2003); and Patrick Michel, *Peinture et plaisir: Les goûts picturaux des collectionneurs parisiens au XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010).

16. I am not alone in relating commercial notions of time to eighteenth-century painting. Nina L. Dubin, in particular, has provocatively suggested the ways in which economic conceptions of futurity altered the artistic understanding of temporality. Like Dubin, I emphasize the degree to which market forces contributed to a broader sense of historical uncertainty. But where Dubin concerns herself with the manifestations of these changes in subject matter and formal effects, my interest lies with the physical evolution of paintings themselves. And where Dubin addresses an array of economic changes beyond the sphere of artistic production, I concentrate on the temporal implications of commercial shifts within the domain of the artist. Dubin, *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010).

17. On the varied motivations of private collectors in Paris during the first half of the eighteenth century, see especially Rochelle Ziskin, *Sheltering Art: Collecting and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012); for an account more heavily weighted toward the second half of the century, see Colin B. Bailey, *Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

18. Recent studies have testified to the circulatory instability of eighteenth-century French collections. Chief among them is Isabelle Tillerot, *Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps: Un regard singulier sur le tableau* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2010). See in particular the chapter titled, "La motilité de la collection," 111–58. See also Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 93–117.

19. As Patrick Michel has indicated (*Peinture et plaisir*, 246–50), the eighteenth-century art market ultimately discounted the price of Watteau's paintings because of their unstable properties. Watteau's work sometimes earned lower bids at auction than comparable paintings by imitators who used sounder practices.

20. Economists have long scrutinized these behaviors. For an overview of the literature, see Shane Frederick, George Loewenstein, and Ted O'Donoghue, "Time Discounting and Time Preference: A Critical Review," *Journal of Economic Literature* 40, no. 2 (2002): 351–401.

21. David Hume had already begun grappling with the problem of impulsivity in the market beginning in the 1730s. Ignacio Palacios-Huerta, "Time-Inconsistent Preferences in Adam Smith and David Hume," *History of Political Economy* 35, no. 2 (2003): 241–68.

22. For the text of the original statutes, see *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1892), 2:192–95; on the importance of material durability in the foundation of the guild, see Jules Marie Joseph Guiffrey, *Histoire de l'Académie de Saint-Luc*, Archives de l'Art Français 9 (Paris: E. Champion, 1915), 6.

23. The stated reason for confirming the regulations was "to guard against the abuses and deceptions contrived and committed by any poor and inexpert workers in painting, gilding, ornamenting, and sculpting of images and other embellishments depending on these arts of painting and sculpture, to the detriment of God, his glorious virgin mother, the saints of paradise, decoration of churches and sacred sites dedicated in honor of God, and of us, princes of our blood and our nobles." *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris*, 2:195.

24. On the academy's efforts to transform painting from a mechanical to a liberal art, see Nathalie Heinich, *Du peintre à l'artiste: Artisans et académiciens à l'âge classique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1993); Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 82–100; and Donald Posner, "Concerning the 'Mechanical' Parts of Painting and the Artistic Culture of Seventeenth-Century France," *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 4 (December 1993): 583–98.

25. André Félibien, "Les reines de Perse au pieds d'Alexandre, peinture du Cabinet du roy (1663)," in *Recueil de descriptions de peintures et d'autres ouvrages faits pour le Roy* (Paris: Veuve de S. Mabre-Cramoisy, 1689), 28.

26. For André Félibien's technical recommendations to painters, see Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes*, 5 vols. (Paris: Chez Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679), 3:8–18.

27. The financial resources available to painters during this period were first given scholarly attention in Pierre Marcel, *La peinture française au début du dix-huitième siècle: 1690–1721* (Paris: G. Baranger Fils, 1906), 121–54. Though dated, Marcel's study continues to offer a useful overview of the economic realities that French artists faced in the early eighteenth century. Marcel's arguments have not gone unchallenged in the time since they appeared, however, undergoing notable revision in the work of Antoine Schnapper. When it comes to the economic challenges that artists faced at the end of Louis XIV's reign, Schnapper nuances Marcel's claims more than he offers a wholesale revision. Schnapper, *Le métier de peintre au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004); and idem, *Jean Jouvenet (1644–1717) et la peinture d'histoire à Paris* (Paris: L. Laget, 1974), 71.

28. Martin Schieder, *Jenseits der Aufklärung: Die religiöse Malerei im ausgehenden Ancien régime* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1997), 145: "in comparison with the *Grand Siècle*, interest in religious painting distinctly decreased in the eighteenth century, not only from the state but also from the clergy. If we look for important commissions undertaken in the first half of the eighteenth century, we are limited to eight paintings that were executed between 1715 and 1717 [for the choir of Notre-Dame]. . . . In the following thirty years, with few exceptions, all major clerical decorative projects were abandoned or no longer even initiated."

29. Fernand Braudel offered an initial statistical overview of what he called the "accéleration des échanges" in early modern Europe, placing particular emphasis on the increasing volume and rapidity of commercial circulation beginning in the late seventeenth century. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme: XVe–XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1979), 2:54–57. Natacha Coquery has built on these empirical findings, again identifying the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a period of crucial transition. Coquery, *Tenir boutique à Paris au XVIIIe siècle: Luxe et demi-luxe* (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2011), 21–22.

30. On the problem of dating the origin of a consumer consciousness, see Coquery, *Tenir boutique à Paris*, 261–66.

31. For the early provenances of Watteau's paintings, see the individual catalog entries in Grasselli and Rosenberg, *Watteau*, 246–458.

32. Ibid., 369.

33. Tillerot, *Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps*, 135–36.

34. Ibid., 154.

35. On consciousness of permanence among Dutch artists during this period, see Margriet van Eikema Hommes,

"Methods Used by Painters to Prevent Color Changes Described in 16th to 18th Century Sources on Oil Painting Techniques," in *Changing Pictures: Discoloration in 15th–17th-Century Oil Paintings* (London: Archetype, 2004), 17–50. The Dutch market did create demand for simpler and more rapidly executed works, but not less durable ones. On changes in Dutch painting techniques stimulated by commerce, see J. Michael Montias, "Cost and Value in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," *Art History* 10, no. 4 (December 1987): 455–66.

36. On guild directives, see van Eikema Hommes, "Methods to Prevent Color Changes." See also the dated but classic W. Martin, "The Life of a Dutch Artist: Part VI—How the Painter Sold His Work," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 11, no. 54 (September 1907): 357–69.

37. In this respect, the situation in France resembles contemporaneous conditions in England, where the waning influence of the Painter-Stainers' Company resulted in looser craft standards. The rapidly decaying paintings that Joshua Reynolds produced later in the eighteenth century exemplify the effect. Matthew C. Hunter has recently situated Reynolds's techniques within England's culture of chemical experimentation, but his study also calls attention to the underlying factors that I wish to foreground here: diminished guild authority, limited state patronage, and an expanding commercial sphere. Hunter, "Joshua Reynolds's 'Nice Chymistry': Action and Accident in the 1770s," *Art Bulletin* 97, no. 1 (March 2015): 58–76.

38. Van Eikema Hommes, "Methods to Prevent Color Changes."

39. For a survey of technical manuals from this period, see Ann Massing, "French Painting Technique in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries and De La Fontaine's *Académie de la peinture* (Paris 1679)," in *Looking through Paintings: The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art Historical Research*, ed. Erma Hermens (London: Archetype, 1998), 319–90. Massing observes that it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that artists began to think of oil painting as an inherently flawed medium, one whose instability could never be overcome. See also Massing's indispensable annotated bibliography, "Painting Materials and Techniques: Toward a Bibliography of the French Literature before 1800," in *Die Kunst und ihre Erhaltung: Rolf E. Straub zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. K.W. Bachman, W. Koch, and U. Schiessl (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 57–96.

40. Roger de Piles, *Les premiers élémens de la peinture pratique* (Paris: Langlois, 1684), 61–62.

41. I base this description on the advice offered by de Piles, who provides one of the more detailed accounts of these cleaning procedures from the period. Massing ("French Painting Technique," 338) has situated his recommendations within the broader technical literature.

42. Caylus, "Vie d'Antoine Watteau," 94.

43. Ibid., 96.

44. *Huile grasse*, despite what its name might suggest, is not especially high in fat. It is prepared by heating oil with oxidized metals, a process that actually reduces the grease content of the oil. The resulting product is more brown and viscous than the oils ordinarily used in painting, which may explain the name. On the chemical composition of *huile grasse* and the problems involved in its translation, see Ursula Baumer, Johann Koller, and Irene Fiedler, "Fette Öle, trocknende Öle und Trockenöle: Die Bindemittel bei Watteau, Pater und Lancret," in *Französische Gemälde*, ed. Christoph Martin Vogtherr (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 51–59.

45. We find references to *huile grasse* as early as Pierre Le Brun's *Recueil des essaies des merveilles de la peinture*, first published in 1635, reprinted in Mary Philadelphia Merrifield, *Original Treatises: Dating from the XIIth to XVIIIth Centuries on the Arts of Painting, in Oil, Miniature, Mosaic, and on Glass; of Gilding, Dyeing, and the Preparation of Colours and Artificial Gems. . . .*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1849), 2:815–17. For a survey of seventeenth-century recipes for *huile grasse*, see Massing, "French Painting Technique," 345–46.

46. Caylus, "Vie d'Antoine Watteau," 94.

47. Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné du cabinet de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère*, 187–88. Guillaume Glorieux points out that Gersaint provides a definition of *très-alès* in his catalog of Louis-Auguste Angran's collection from 1747, writing in response to a painting by Adriaen van de Velde: "We call a painting *trezalé* when there are small cracks or imperceptible furrows on its surface. This ordinarily stems from dryness that too quickly follows humidity, and sometimes from having excessively employed *huile grasse*. This is what ruined the majority of the paintings of Watteau"; quoted in Guillaume Glorieux, *À l'enseigne de Gersaint: Edme-François Gersaint, marchand d'art sur le Pont Notre-Dame, 1694–1750* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 105. Antoine-Joseph Pernety offered a definition of *trezalé* that was almost word for word the same as Gersaint's in 1757, and he similarly pointed to Watteau's paintings as an example. Pernety, *Dictionnaire portatif de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (Paris: Bauche, 1757), 544–45.

48. Jean-Baptiste Oudry, "Sur la pratique de peindre" (1752), in Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences*, vol. 6 (2015), 67.

49. The cracking effects of *huile grasse* have been well documented in the scientific literature. See, for instance, Ségolène Bergeon, "Quelques points de technique picturale," in *Antoine Watteau (1684–1721): Le peintre, son temps et sa légende*, ed. François Moureau and Margaret Morgan Grasselli (Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1987), 135–39; see, more recently, Elisabeth Martin and Claudia Sindaco-Domas, "La technique picturale des peintres de fêtes galantes dans le contexte du XVIIIe siècle," *Technè*, nos. 30–31 (2009): 32–33; and Eva Wenders de Calisse, "Zur Maltechnik von Antoine Watteau," in Vogtherr, *Französische Gemälde*, 77–78.

50. Mariette, *Abecedario*, 6:106; and Edme François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné des bijoux porcelaines, bronzes . . . provenans de la succession de M. Angran* (Paris: Chez Pierre Prault & Jacques Barrois, 1747), 265–66. Gersaint, Mariette, and Oudry suggest that the problems of *huile grasse* are not just a matter of cracking but also involve color and tone. To my knowledge, conservators have not fully explored the latter effects.

51. Michael Levey, *Painting and Sculpture in France, 1700–1789* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 34.

52. Edmond de Goncourt, *Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre peint, dessiné et gravé d'Antoine Watteau* (Paris: Rapilly, 1875), 134.

53. Restoration report, quoted in Paul Seidel, "Friedrich der Grosse als Sammler: Fortsetzung und Nachtrag," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 15 (1894): 57; and for the painting's provenance, see Vogtherr, *Französische Gemälde*, 123.

54. Restoration work may well have occurred while the painting was in private hands before 1750, but such interventions were rarely documented. For the multiple restorations that took place in the years following this date, see Vogtherr, *Französische Gemälde*, 125–26.

55. The precise number of paintings in Watteau's oeuvre has been the subject of some dispute. A body of 215 works was presented in Hélène Adhémar, *Watteau: Sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: P. Tisné, 1950); this number was subsequently reaffirmed in Ettore Camesasca, *Tout l'oeuvre peint de Watteau* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982). Jean Ferré leveled a serious challenge to many of these attributions, drastically reducing the number of original Watteaus to just thirty-nine; Ferré, *Watteau* (Madrid: Arthéna, 1972). Ferré's arguments were met with great skepticism and have not been widely accepted in the field. See early criticisms in Jean Cailleux, "A Strange Monument and Other Watteau Studies," *Burlington Magazine* 117, no. 865 (April 1975): 246–49; and Donald Posner, "*Watteau* by Jean Ferré," *Art Bulletin* 57, no. 2 (June 1975): 292–93.

56. On the few exceptions, see Martin P. Eidelberg, "Watteau's Drawings: Their Use and Significance" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1977).

57. This open-ended drawing process resulted in studies that often seem to track the temporal experience of drawing itself. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth has called attention to the effect, suggesting a compelling connection between Watteau's draftsmanship and an empirical understanding of time that emerged in the early eighteenth century. While my interests ultimately lie with the market pressures governing Watteau's sense of time and material permanence, these two conceptions of temporality are hardly mutually exclusive. Lajer-Burcharth, "Drawing Time," *October* 151 (2015): 3–42.

58. Caylus, "Vie d'Antoine Watteau," 96. Technical analysis of Watteau's paintings indicates that his practices may have been somewhat more varied than Caylus suggests. Guillaume Glorieux, *Watteau* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 2011), 191.

59. Antoine Coypel, "Commentaire de l'Épitre à son fils: Le coloris et le pinceau" (1713), in Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences*, vol. 4 (2010), 87.

60. Ibid., 83. The quotation is attributed to Zeuxis in Plutarch's *Moralia*, bk. 2, chap. 7 ("De amicorum multitudine"), 5.

61. Candace Clements has called attention to the rise of personal speculation among artists during these years, focusing on the example of Coypel's son Charles Coypel, who became a member of the academy in 1715. Clements, "Noble Liberality and Speculative Industry in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris: Charles Coypel," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 2 (1995): 213–17.

62. Antoine Coypel, "Commentaire de l'Épitre à son fils: Les anciens et les modernes" (1714), in Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences*, 4:125.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Edme-François Gersaint, "Abrégé de la vie d'Antoine Watteau," in *Catalogue raisonné du cabinet de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère*, 182–83.

66. Works in the royal collections had occasionally been sold and deaccessioned, but this practice ended definitively in the seventeenth century under the Superintendent of Royal Buildings Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who recognized its incompatibility with the notion of art's glorification of the king. Arnauld Brejon de Lavergnée, *L'inventaire Le Brun de 1683: La collection des tableaux de Louis XIV* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1987), 45.

67. Commentators have generally assumed that the picture is being loaded into the crate, but, as has recently been pointed out, nothing rules out the opposite action. Christoph Martin Vogtherr and Eva Wenders De Calisse, "Watteau's 'Shopsign': The Long Creation of a Masterpiece," *Burlington Magazine* 149, no. 1250 (2007): 304.

68. Robert Neuman, "Watteau's *L'Enseigne de Gersaint* and Baroque Emblematic Tradition," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, no. 104 (1984): 153–64. Some have gone so far as to see the entombment as an invocation of seventeenth-century *vanitas* imagery, a meditation on mortality and the transience of human endeavors. See, in particular, Oliver T. Banks, *Watteau and the North: Studies in the Dutch and Flemish Baroque Influence on French Rococo Painting* (New York: Garland, 1977).

69. Vogtherr and De Calisse, "Watteau's 'Shopsign,'" 304. See also Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art out of Time* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 202–3.

70. The painting appeared in the 1715 description of the academy by the secretary of that body, Nicolas Guérin. Guérin, *Description de l'Académie royale des arts, de peinture et de sculpture: Par feu M. Guérin, secrétaire perpétuel de ladite Académie* (Paris: Jacques Collombat, 1715), 99; see also Hélène Guicharnaud, "*Le progrès des arts du dessin sous le règne de Louis XIV*, par Nicolas Loir (1624–1679)," *L'Estampille* 401 (2005): 19–20.

71. Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné du cabinet de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère*, 10–11.

72. Ibid.

73. On the audience for Watteau's work and their interest in the material surface, see Posner, "Concerning the 'Mechanical' Parts of Painting," 596–97.

74. When the term *amateur* first appeared in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* in 1694, it was defined as "someone who loves [*qui aime*]," an emphasis on natural affection that distinguished it from the cultivated discernment of the connoisseur. For a sociological account of these terms, see Charlotte Guichard, *Les amateurs d'art à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2008).

75. Guichard has drawn attention to the creative practices of amateurs, but these activities predominately involved media and processes that required limited technical expertise. Drawing and etching, for example, allowed an amateur to experience the physical movements and imaginative pleasures of making a picture without the extensive procedural knowledge required for a medium like oil painting. For more on the technical practices of amateurs, see ibid., 239–99.

76. For a number of personal accounts from amateurs who conflate these kinds of attraction, see ibid., 177.

77. See, for instance, Andrew McClellan, "Watteau's Dealer: Gersaint and the Marketing of Art in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 3 (September 1996): 440.

78. Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné du cabinet de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère*, 3. While Gersaint supported capricious passions, he was careful not to offend those connoisseurs who insisted on the importance of reasoned knowledge. Always balancing the virtues of natural desire with the benefits of trained judgment, he tried to flatter his buyers for what they knew without making them feel insufficient for what they did not. For an analysis of this strategy, see Neil De Marchi and Hans J. van Miegroet, "Transforming the Paris Art Market, 1718–1750," in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450–1750* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 383–404.

79. Denis Diderot, "Salon de 1765," in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Else Marie Bukdahl, Annette Lorenceau, and Gita May, vol. 14 (Paris: Hermann, 1984), 163.

80. For a broader history of the "temporalization of love" in early modern France, see Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); for its application to Watteau, see Christian Michel, *Le célèbre Watteau* (Geneva: Droz, 2008), 234.

81. Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne, *Reflexions sur quelques causes de l'état présent de la peinture en France: Avec un examen des principaux Ouvrages exposés au Louvre le mois d'Août 1746* (The Hague: Chez Jean Neaulme, 1747), 98–99.

82. Ibid., 76.

83. Ibid., 104.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., 29–31.

86. Ibid., 32.

87. Ibid., 41.

88. La Font was not the first person to raise these ideas—the amateur Louis Petit de Bachaumont had privately made similar suggestions to the royal arts administration during the preceding years—but La Font's decision to air his proposals in public served as a catalyst for action. McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 19–24.

89. The foundational study by Émile Dacier and Albert Vuaflart remains an invaluable reference: *Jean de Jullienne et les graveurs de Watteau au XVIIIe siècle*, 4 vols. (Paris: Société pour l'Étude de la Gravure Française, 1921–29). See subsequently Marianne Roland Michel, "Watteau's Work in Prints," in *Watteau, an Artist of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Trefoil Books, 1984), 239–77; Marie Catherine Sahut and Florence Raymond, *Antoine Watteau et l'art de l'estampe* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2010); and Isabelle Tillerot, "Engraving Watteau in the Eighteenth Century: Order and Display in the Recueil Jullienne," *Getty Research Journal*, no. 3 (2011): 33–52. On Jullienne's reproduction of Watteau's drawings in particular, see Marianne Roland Michel, "Watteau et *les Figures de différents caractères*," in Moureau and Grasselli, *Antoine Watteau*, 117–27; Colin B. Bailey, "'Toute seule elle peut remplir et satisfaire l'attention': The Early Appreciation and Marketing of Watteau's Drawings," in *Watteau and His World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750*, ed. Alan Wintermute (New York: Frick Collection, 1999), 68–92; and Isabelle Tillerot, "Graver les dessins de Watteau au XVIIIe siècle," in *Quand la gravure fait illusion: Autour de Watteau et Boucher, le dessin gravé au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Emmanuelle Delapierre and Sophie Raux (Valenciennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2006), 26–55.

90. Dacier and Vuaflart (*Jean de Jullienne et les graveurs de Watteau*, 2:49–56) place the total number of plates at 622, though they observe that there is some variation among the editions.

91. For detailed accounts of Jullienne's life and collecting practices, see Tillerot, *Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps*; Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 173–204; and Christoph Martin Vogtherr, *Jean de Jullienne: Collector & Connoisseur* (London: Trustees of the Wallace Collection, 2011).

92. Jean de Jullienne, advertisement, *Mercure de France*, November 1726, 2528.

93. Ibid.

94. When the first two volumes were issued in 1726 and 1728, they were advertised at a relatively modest price of 48 livres each. By 1734, Jullienne listed the complete four-volume set for 500 livres, placing the publication more firmly in the market for luxury editions. On Jullienne's pricing and targeting of markets, see Bailey, "The Early Appreciation and Marketing of Watteau's Drawings," 70.

95. Roland Michel, "Watteau's Work in Prints," 269; and Tillerot, "Engraving Watteau," 42–43.

96. The hypothesis that it never existed was first put forward by Dacier and Vuaflart, *Jean de Jullienne et les graveurs de Watteau*, 2:107–10, 3:6–7. A clear refutation is presented in Martin Eidelberg, "*Assis auprès de toi*, Watteau and Jullienne Immortalized," *Watteau and His Circle*, January 21, 2011, http://watteauandhiscircle.org/Assis%20final.htm.

97. Pierre-Jean Mariette, annotations to the *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, desseins, & estampes, et autres effets curieux, après le décès de M. de Jullienne* (Paris, 1767), 102, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; reproduced and transcribed in Edouard Kopp and Jennifer Tonkovich, "Appendix to 'The Judgement of a Connoisseur: P. J. Mariette's Annotations to the 1767 Jullienne Sale Catalogue: Part I (Paintings),'" *Burlington Magazine*, no. 151 (2009): 8.

98. On the importance of reproductive prints during this period in the formation of an art historical consciousness, see Ingrid R. Vermeulen, *Picturing Art History: The Rise of the Illustrated History of Art in the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Kristel Smentek, *Mariette and the Science of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate,

2014), 17–91; Francis Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988); and Benedict Leca, "An Art Book and Its Viewers: The 'Recueil Crozat' and the Uses of Reproductive Engraving," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 4 (2005): 623–49.

99. Robert Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV: Artifacts for a Future Past* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 119–24; and Thomas W. Gaehtgens, "The Arts in the Service of the King's Glory," in *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660–1715*, ed. Peter Fuhring et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015), 1–8.

100. André Félibien, *Tableaux du Cabinet du roy: Statues et bustes antiques des maisons royales*, vol. 1 (Paris: Impr. Royale, 1677), 1.

101. On the transubstantiation of art into the royal body, see Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981); and René Démoris, "Le corps royal et l'imaginaire au XVIIème siècle: *Le Portrait du Roy* par Félibien," *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, no. 172 (December 1978): 18.

102. Roger de Piles, for instance, meditated on the subject in his *Abregé de la vie des peintres*: "If the ancients . . . had transmitted to posterity by means of prints all that they had of beauty and of curiosity, we would know clearly an infinity of beautiful things of which historians have only left us confused ideas." De Piles, *Abregé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un Traité du peintre parfait, de la connoissance des desseins, & de l'utilité des estampes* (Paris: François Muguet, 1699), 90–91. To take another example, when in 1714 the king granted members of the academy the privilege to publish and reproduce their works, he did so expressly "in order to preserve them for posterity [*afin de les conserver à la postérité*]." Nicolas Guérin and Antoine-Nicolas Dézallier d'Argenville, *Descriptions de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* (Paris: Société de Propagation des Livres d'Art, 1893), 5. References to the burin's capacity to make images as durable as bronze appear in engraved portraits at least as early as the 1710s; W. McAllister Johnson, *French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture Engraved Reception Pieces: 1672–1789* (Kingston, ON: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1982), 16.

103. Scholars have long noted the importance of Crozat's publication in extending the popularity and function of reproductive prints during this period. Haskell (*The Painful Birth of the Art Book*) has gone so far as to call it the first "art book" because of the way that it integrates text and image, using words to explicate individual pictures. More recently, Leca ("An Art Book and Its Viewers") has highlighted the importance of the *Recueil* in reshaping the pedagogical function of prints, systematizing the study of art's past through its mode of organization.

104. Pierre Crozat, *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux desseins qui sont en France: Dans le Cabinet du Roy, dans celuy de Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, & dans d'autres cabinets* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie Royale, 1729), i.

105. Ibid.

106. On the uniqueness of the endeavor, see Sahut and Raymond, *Antoine Watteau et l'art de l'estampe*, 35.

107. On the equivalence of the man and his work in the early eighteenth-century understanding of the "oeuvre," see Katie Scott, "Reproduction and Reputation: 'François Boucher' and the Formation of Artistic Identities," in *Rethinking Boucher*, ed. Melissa Lee Hyde and Mark Ledbury (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 91.

108. Jean de Julienne, *Figures de différents caractères, de paysages, d'études dessinées d'après nature par Antoine Watteau* (Paris: Audran & Chereau, 1726), n.p.

109. Jean de Jullienne, advertisement, *Mercure de France*, November 1726, 2528.

110. Perhaps the most cynical account of Jullienne's project in this respect is the one offered by Ferré (*Watteau*, 287–92), who holds Jullienne responsible for forever distorting and adulterating the body of work that we attribute to Watteau. Whether or not we accept Ferré's doubts about the authenticity of Jullienne's attributions, the financial implications of his decisions are undeniable.

111. On the importance of printed volumes in giving rise to this reproductive understanding of the "oeuvre," see Smentek, *Mariette and the Science of the Connoisseur*, 17–18.

112. Bailey, "The Early Appreciation and Marketing of Watteau's Drawings," 69–70; and David Pullins, "Images as Objects: The Problem of Figural Ornament in Eighteenth-Century France," in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, ed. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Alexandra Payne (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 220–21.

113. Roland Michel has noted that a variety of factors may explain Jullienne's reformatting of the drawings. On a basic level, she notes that the decision to place each figure on its own plate allowed Jullienne to sell more prints. She also observes that an aesthetic interest in giving the sketches a more finished and autonomous status may have motivated the choice. Roland Michel, "Watteau's Work in Prints," 250–52; and idem, "Watteau et *les Figures de différents caractères*," 117–27. Bailey ("The Early Appreciation and Marketing of Watteau's Drawings," 69) has placed particular emphasis on the possibility that Jullienne wished to make the drawings more accessible for reuse.

114. Edme-François Gersaint, advertisement, *Mercure de France*, November 1727, 2492. On the popularity of decoupage at this time and the techniques involved, see Daniëlle O. Kisluk-Grosheide, "'Cutting up Berchems, Watteaus, and Audrans': A 'Lacca Povera' Secretary at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 31 (1996): 81–97.

115. Edme-François Gersaint, advertisement, *Mercure de France*, June 1731, 1564.

116. Ibid.

117. The Meissen porcelain manufactory alone employed eleven "Watteau painters" by 1744. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, "Graphic Sources for Meissen Porcelain: Origins of the Print Collection in the Meissen Archives," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 31 (1996): 111.

118. Dacier and Vuaflart, *Jean de Jullienne et les graveurs de Watteau*, 2:155.

119. These developments have been documented in a variety of country-specific studies. For copyists and imitators in England, see Robert Raines, "Watteau and 'Watteaus' in England before 1760," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6, no. 89 (February 1977): 51–64; and Brian Allen, "Watteau and His Imitators in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," in Moureau and Grasselli, *Antoine Watteau*, 259–68. For Germany, see Harold Marx, "Watteau de seconde main: 'Adaptation' et 'Imitation'; De l'expression du 'goût à la Watteau' dans la Saxe du milieu du XVIIIe siècle," in ibid., 291–300.

120. Mariette, *Abecedario*, 3 (1856): 122.

121. The comment appears in response to lot 251 ("Antoine Watteau. Six Figures de caractere dans un jardin"), transcribed in Kopp and Tonkovich, "Appendix to Mariette's Annotations," 8.