

THE TESSIN LECTURE 2022

In the Pink: Eighteenth- Century French Portraiture

Melissa Hyde



Though never as ubiquitous in the eighteenth century as the colour blue, pink became the colour *par excellence* of the French Rococo. The colour was intimately associated with the so-called ‘Godmother of the Rococo’, Madame de Pompadour, the famous mistress of Louis XV. But even before Pompadour, pink was a hue much favored amongst elites in France, where it attained an unprecedented level of visibility in the visual and decorative arts and in the fashions worn by women, children and men. This talk will demonstrate why, in the eighteenth-century, to wear pink was to make a statement—a statement made all the more

emphatic and enduring when memorialized in portraiture; and one in which gender, class and/or race played a fundamental role. These matters concerning portraiture ‘in the pink’ will be addressed by way of some very basic, but actually quite complicated, questions: what did pink mean in the eighteenth century? What colors were comprehended by ‘pink’? Who did or didn’t embrace this color and why? In light of the complexities and nuances of pink, what might it have meant for a racially ‘white’ Frenchman to wear this notionally feminine colour (or to have himself depicted wearing it)?

Jean-Baptiste Perronneau (1715–1783), *Olivier Jouven* (1724–1783), 1756. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Public Domain.

Venue: Södra ljusgården (South Courtyard), Nationalmuseum

Date: Thursday 15 September 4 pm–6 pm

Language: English

Free admission, limited number of seats

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Melissa Hyde

Melissa Hyde is Professor and Distinguished Teaching Scholar at the University of Florida. Her scholarly interests include: women artists, and more broadly, the gendering of aesthetic culture, the cultural meanings of color, the history of the Salon and art criticism, self-portraiture, and questions of identity and place. She teaches courses on European art (c. 1650–1830), as well as courses on gender and the visual arts from the late Renaissance to the early nineteenth century.

Professor Hyde's research and publications focus on gender and visual culture in eighteenth-century France. Her work has appeared in *The Art Bulletin*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* and numerous edited volumes; key publications include *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and his Critics* (2006),

Becoming a Woman in the Age of Enlightenment (catalogue for an exhibition she co-curated in 2017) and numerous book chapters and articles. She is author of two recent essays on the contemporary pastel artist, [Nicolas Party](#). She is currently completing a book project entitled, *Painted by Herself: Marie-Suzanne Giroust: Madame Roslin, the Forgotten Académicienne*.

The Tessin Lecture

Once a year the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm invites a prominent international scholar to give a lecture in art history. The lecture, which is public, is a way to pay tribute to an exceptional scholar in art history and emphasize the museum's commitment to research.