before a most cheerful landscape; she is accompanied by two cupids, and holds her son in her arms, who seems afraid of the water in which she appears to want to bathe him). Purchased by the art dealer Le Brun for 605 livres; *The Toilette of Venus* (lot 19) was bought by Chereau for 587 livres.

References

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4
1946.7.1

Allegory of Painting
1765

oil on canvas, 101.5 × 130 (39 15/16 × 51 3/16)
Samuel H. Kress Collection

Inscription

At lower right in black paint: FBoucher / 1765

Distinguishing Marks and Labels

On stretcher: two NGA labels; small torn blue-bordered label, "1417d"; written in blue crayon, "11554F"

Provenance: Possibly Maximilian III Joseph, Elector of Bavaria [1745–1777]. Traditionally said to have been brought into France by the early nineteenth century by Général de Saint-Maurice. M. Maillet du Boullay, Paris; (his sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, January 22, 1870, nos. 1 [*Music*] and 2 [*Painting*]); M. Féral. Gustave Rothan, Paris, by 1874; (his sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, May 29–31, 1890, nos. 122 [*Music*] and 123 [*Painting*]); Fréret. Adèle, 4th duchesse de Dino [née Adèle Livingston Sampson, 1842–1912; married first to Frederick W. Stevens], Paris, by 1907; probably by inheritance to her daughter, Countess Mabel Stevens Orlowski [married 1891 to Count Mieczyslaw Orlowski];[1] (Wildenstein & Co., Inc., Paris, New York, and London); sold 1942 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York.

Exhibited: Ouvrages de peintures exposés au profit de la colonisation de l'Algérie par les Alsaciens-Lorrains, Palais de la Présidence du Corps legislatif, Paris, 1874, no. 30. *Tableaux anciens et modernes exposés au profit du Musée des Arts décoratifs,* Pavillon de Flore, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1878, no. 14. *The Great Tradition of French Painting,* Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, 1940, no. 7. *Recent Additions to the Kress Collection,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1946, no. 766. *François Boucher in North American Collections: One Hundred Drawings,* National Gallery of Art, Washington; Art Institute of Chicago, 1973–1974, unnumbered brochure (shown only in Washington). *Wettstreit der Künste — Malerei und Skulptur von Dürer bis Daumier,* Haus der Kunst, Munich; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, 2002, no. 81 (shown only in Cologne).



Cat. 4. François Boucher, *Allegory of Painting*



Cat. 5. François Boucher, *Allegory of Music*

5
1946.7.2

Allegory of Music
1764

oil on canvas, 103.5 × 130 (40¾ × 51³⁄₁₆)
Samuel H. Kress Collection

Inscription
At lower right in black paint: FBoucher 1764

Distinguishing Marks and Labels
On stretcher: two NGA labels; small encapsulated label, "1418d"; small encapsulated label, "MADE IN FRANCE"; written in blue crayon, "11553F"

Provenance: Same as 1946.7.1

Exhibited: Ouvrages de peintures exposés au profit de la colonisation de l'Algérie par les Alsaciens-Lorrains, Palais de la Présidence du Corps legislatif, Paris, 1874, no. 31. *Tableaux anciens et modernes exposés au profit du Musée des Arts décoratifs,* Pavillon de Flore, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1878, no. 15. *The Great Tradition of French Painting,* Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, 1940, no. 8. *Recent Additions to the Kress Collection,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1946, no. 767. *François Boucher in North American Collections: One Hundred Drawings,* National Gallery of Art, Washington; Art Institute of Chicago, 1973–1974, unnumbered brochure (shown only in Washington).

Technical Notes: The two paintings were executed on medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. Both have been lined and secured onto modern stretchers, but creases in the paint indicate earlier stretchers made from 6-cm-wide wood stock with a single vertical cross-member. A 2.5-cm-wide horizontal strip of fabric has been added along the bottom edge of *Music.* Remnants of sewing threads and an older fabric strip indicate that the current addition replaces another one. Similar sewing threads on *Painting* indicate that both paintings were once enlarged at the bottom edge. Judging from the compositions and the position of the signatures, neither painting appears to have been cut down along this edge. It is possible that these older additions were sewn-on tacking margins. However, cusping is only visible along the top and right edges of *Music* and the top and left edges of *Painting.* The upper right corner of *Painting* and the upper left corner of *Music* are intact, but the other corners were cropped at some point and later replaced during lining with triangular fabric inserts. The X-radiographs reveal nail holes around the perimeters of both paintings, indicating that the paintings may have been set in place and wooden molding nailed over them. The holes in the corners are oriented diagonally to each corner, suggesting that the molding may have framed the paintings in an octagonal shape. When removed later from the decorative scheme, the paintings may have been cut out along the inside perimeter of the molding, which would explain the loss of the corners, but this scenario does not fully explain the one intact corner on each painting.

The paintings have an off-white ground layer; striations visible in the X-radiographs suggest that it was applied with a stiff-bristle brush. The paint was applied freely wet into wet in successive, overlying opaque layers. A fluid consistency allowed for brushmarks that follow the outlines and contours of the figures. Highlights in the draperies were executed in a low impasto. Compositional changes are evident in the X-radiographs, pentimenti, and texture from underlying paint layers. Minor compositional changes in the music book and the personification of Music are visible. Music's right thigh was narrowed, her neck was broadened, and the blue drapery around her back was initially red. The musical notations were added after the book was enlarged and the clouds in the lower right corner were added on top of the red drapery. In *Painting,* the X-radiographs show that the arms and left foot of the rightmost putto were shifted, and the drapery of Painting fell straight down her back, hiding more of her oval canvas.

Both paintings are in fair condition. They were relined, discolored varnish was removed, and they were restored during the most recent conservation treatment, performed by Stephen Pichetto in 1943. There is some abrasion in the clouds and sky in the upper left quadrant of *Painting.* This painting also bears some slight inpainting, which can be found along the edges, over the corner inserts, in Painting's wrist, and in the clouds in the upper right corner. *Music* is in slightly worse condition and, as a result, exhibits more inpainting. Minor areas of inpainting are found along the stretcher bar creases, in Music's right leg and red drapery, in the leg of the putto holding the harp, and to the left of Music's face. The small cloud at the left edge is abraded and inpainted, and the bottom strip has been heavily inpainted. The signature of *Music,* unlike that of *Painting,* has been reinforced by a later hand. On both paintings, the inpainting and varnish applied during the 1943 treatment have discolored somewhat.

Although they bear different dates, François Boucher's two allegories have been associated with each other since they came to light in the late nineteenth century.[2] Virtually identical in size, their compositions are well balanced and their subjects complementary. In each picture the arts of Painting and Music are personified as beautiful if rather undifferentiated young women,[3] seated against the sky on what appear to be billowing cloud formations. One turns her back to the viewer, while her companion reclines with her figure facing the picture plane. Their hair is pinned up to reveal the contours of their necks, and their bodies are wrapped in flowing drapes—one could hardly call it clothing—that fall away to reveal a bare shoulder, a leg, or a breast. The women are surrounded by attributes appropriate to their arts and are doted on by winged putti, who engage in playful activities. In *Painting,* one putto, reclining while holding a blazing torch, serves as a model for the maiden, who sketches his form on an oval canvas. A companion next to him looks on, while a third supports the canvas and holds aloft a laurel wreath. Their counterparts in *Music* serve similar functions, one holding a wreath and offering the woman a *flute à bec,* the other pulling at the strings of a lyre.

The paintings exhibit the free and open brushwork that Boucher favored in his later years. In both works the artist apparently applied the paint relatively quickly, using a wet-into-wet technique. The numerous pentimenti, described in the Technical Notes, indicate the freedom with which the artist painted the compositions directly on the canvas, probably with only minimal underdrawing. Indeed, the artist in *Allegory of Painting,* who quickly sketches her subject on the canvas with chalk, suggests the method employed by Boucher himself.[4] In the case of *Music,* at least, Boucher was adapting a composition he had invented as many as ten years before in an even more freely painted canvas (fig. 1).[5] In this simpler conception, a single putto gazes rapturously at the woman, who delicately pulls the lyre from his fingers. When he painted the National Gallery of Art's picture ten years later, Boucher added the second putto with the wreath, adjusted the position of the lyre and the figures' poses and gestures, and shifted the placement of the music book and doves. A small pen and ink drawing, long associated with the National Gallery's *Music,* must have been made as part of that process (fig. 2).[6] Certain elements of the 1754 painting remain—the poses of the central figures, the music book and recorder—but Boucher added two more putti (mirroring the three in the *Allegory of Painting*), including one holding aloft a laurel wreath; and he adjusted the legs of the woman, anticipating how they would appear in the later painting. When he translated the design to his new canvas, however, he replaced the putto at lower right with a pair of doves and depicted the woman in a more reclining position, so that her posture mirrors that of her counterpart in *Painting.*

No corresponding compositional sketch for *Painting* has come to light, although a spirited black chalk drawing of a young boy's head is evidently a study for the child-model at the right of the picture.[7] Yet, as is often the case with such finished drawings by Boucher, it is likely that this drawing was made after the painting as a work of art in its own right, rather than as a preliminary sketch.[8] There are numerous such drawings of putti in Boucher's oeuvre, many related in type, if not in specific pose or gesture,



Fig. 1. François Boucher, *Clio,* 1758, oil on canvas, private collection. From *Master Paintings, 1350–1800* (London, 1989)

Fig. 2. François Boucher, *Music,* c. 1764, pen and ink wash, private collection. From Regina Shoolman Slatkin, *François Boucher in North American Collections: 100 Drawings* (Washington, 1973), 107





Fig. 3. François Boucher, *Les Génies des arts,* 1761, oil on canvas, Musée d'Angers

to those in *Painting* and *Music.*[9] These drawings often served as models for prints, which were produced in large quantities by such engravers as Gilles Demarteau (1722–1776).[10]

The low viewpoints of the two paintings and the broad handling of the brushwork suggest that they were intended as overdoors, to be placed high in a decorative scheme where close examination would not have been possible. Both compositions are structured around a series of curvilinear forms, creating dynamic, oval compositions that must have been echoed in their original framing. Pairs of holes, now filled, in the corners of both paintings were probably produced when elaborate paneled surrounds were nailed over the canvases once they were in place.[11] In the pen and ink study (fig. 2) for *Music,* Boucher employed an oval format, although it is unlikely that the painting itself was oval. Technical evidence suggests that the canvases have not been trimmed appreciably,[12] and key elements in the lower corners of the compositions — a palette with brushes in *Painting,* a plumed helmet and sword in *Music,* not to mention the artist's prominent signature at the lower right of each work — are evidence that the framing did not cover much of the canvas surface. The upper corners may have been rounded, so that the expanses of unresolved sky would have seemed less empty than they do now. Noting the passages of pale rose and red tones, Paul Mantz, who first published *Painting* and *Music* in 1873, believed that the pictures may have hung in a salon decorated in white and gold, although this hypothesis is conjectural.[13]

The provenance of the Washington pendants, based on tradition rather than documentary evidence, derives from Mantz and is equally suspect: he believed they had been painted for the elector of Bavaria, Maximilian III Joseph (1745–1777).[14] They were supposedly returned to France in the early nineteenth century by General de Saint-Maurice, who, according to André Michel, kept them for some sixty years before selling them to Charles Maillet du Boullay.[15] As Alastair Laing has pointed out, however, Saint-Maurice never served in Bavaria and died in 1796.[16] Nor do any references to the paintings appear in the state archives of Bavaria; thus the early provenance of the paintings must be called into question.[17]

Allegories of the arts feature prominently in the oeuvre of Boucher and his circle. In conceiving the two paintings, he followed a standard formulation that he had employed on several occasions. Boucher leaves open the question of who *Music* represents: Is she a general personification of "music," or someone more specific, such as one of the nine muses, the mythological attendants of Apollo? If so, she is likely Euterpe, the muse of music, or perhaps Clio, the muse of history, a figure Boucher represented before in similar fashion.[18] Identifying the figures precisely is difficult, however, given Boucher's carefree use of attributes.[19] Noting the doves and the roses in *Music,* Albert Pomme de Mirimonde felt that Boucher had intended to represent Venus, thus explaining the presence of the helmet and sword at the left, the attributes of her lover, Mars.[20] Mirimonde further suggested a neo-Platonic reading of the subject: Boucher shows us a celestial Venus who reaches for the lyre with its seven strings (symbolic of the seven celestial bodies) while rejecting the *flûte à bec* ("emblème érotique"), which represents her carnal nature.[21]

The figure personifying *Painting* is even more generic. We cannot even be certain that Boucher intended to represent the art of painting rather than drawing, since the woman is shown sketching the model in white chalk.[22] Yet she sketches on canvas, and her palette and brushes are close at hand. Though Boucher was a fluent and facile painter, he was an even more brilliant and prolific draftsman. Better than any artist of his generation, he no doubt recognized the relationship between the two arts. Colin Eisler, suggesting that the figure represents Pictura, the personification of painting, proposed that Boucher was emphasizing the more general concept of Design, in which the artistic concept was more important than its actual execution.[23] Why he juxtaposed a personification of painting with one of music is less perplexing if we consider the possibility that the pair probably was part of a set of four or five pictures, the others most likely representing Sculpture, Architecture, and Poetry.[24] Eisler reasonably proposed that such a set may have been installed in a music room or library; no paintings by Boucher have surfaced, however, that might serve as viable candidates for the rest of the suite.[25]

The winged putti that gather around the female personifications are best described as "génies," or geniuses, which symbolize "the expanse of the spirit, the power of the imagination, and the activity of the soul."[26] These little geniuses, usually winged but sometimes not, flutter about throughout Boucher's oeuvre, in paintings and in numerous drawings and the prints made after them.[27] The Goncourt brothers noted their ubiquity:

"They appear everywhere in [Boucher's] work.... They amuse themselves at the feet of the Muses by playing with the attributes of the Arts and Sciences.... They are always a charming spectacle, with their little fat hands, their rotund stomachs and navels like dimples, their cupid's bottoms, their chubby calves.... And what games, the sport of elves and infant gods, they play amid the allegorical scenes."[28] Boucher's most ambitious and elaborate use of the type was in his large canvas, painted in 1761 as a cartoon for the Gobelins tapestry works, on the subject of *Les Génies des arts* (fig. 3).[29] Here all the arts, including music and painting as well as sculpture, architecture, and drawing, are gathered before a classical facade, the whole a hive of activity. As in the two National Gallery allegories, one genius at the top holds aloft laurel wreaths to honor the arts.

Painting and *Music* were created during a period late in Boucher's life when he was at the height of his influence, if not at the peak of his powers. In 1765 he was appointed First Painter to the King, and elected director of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. During this time his talents as a decorator were in great demand, and his prodigious output sometimes resulted in a facility of brushwork and repetition of motifs. In *Painting* and *Music,* the fluid and open technique eschews details and complex working of the surface for a more rapid *alla prima* effect. This result may be a function of the pictures' destination as overdoor panels or, perhaps, the artist's failing eyesight,[30] although Eisler suggested that in the case of *Painting* at least, the intervention of Boucher's studio may have been a factor.[31] It is worth remembering, however, that by the 1760s Boucher's technique in general had attained a bravura confidence that had become somewhat mannered.[32]

RR

Notes

1. The Wildenstein prospectus for the pair of paintings listed the last three owners as Mme Livingston-Sampson, duchesse de Dino, and comte Orllowski [*sic*]. Research for this catalogue determined that the first two names were the same person, and that the count (1865–1929) was her son-in-law. See NGA curatorial files for the prospectus and documentation of the family history; see also discussion in the text and associated notes.
2. Their traditional provenance — that they were painted for the elector of Bavaria — is open to question (see discussion below).
3. Both women bear close resemblance to Boucher's preferred type, which by this date had become an idealized representation of youthful femininity rather than an actual model; a drawing, dated 1768, shows a very similar head to that in *Music* (Ananoff 1966, no. 377, fig. 78).
4. Given the off-white ground color used in both paintings, Boucher may have sketched in the preliminary design in a darker color, perhaps black or red chalk.
5. Certain passages, such as the feet of the woman and the still life at lower right, appear unfinished, although the picture bears a signature and date, *F. Boucher 1754.* The painting is unrecorded by Ananoff and was first published in New York 1989–1990, 99–103, repro., entry by Wintermute. The provenance of this earlier version is traceable only to 1880.
6. For the drawing, see Ananoff 1966, 244, no. 940; Regina Shoolman Slatkin first associated the drawing with the Washington painting in Washington and Chicago 1973–1974, 107–108, no. 83, repro.
7. Black chalk with white heightening, 26.5 × 21.0 cm, private collection (see Ananoff 1966, no. 306, fig. 58).
8. See the discussion by Laing in New York, Detroit, and Paris 1986–1987, 284–285.
9. For example, Ananoff 1966, nos. 813, 815, 818, 829, 835, 840; figs. 130–134.
10. See Jean-Richard 1978, nos. 667, 670–674, 857.
11. See technical reports in the NGA curatorial files.
12. An analysis of the cusping of the canvas weave in *Painting* indicates that the canvas may have been cut down very slightly at the bottom edge; see Technical Notes.
13. Mantz 1873, 442.
14. Mantz 1873, 442.
15. Michel 1906, 51.
16. Letter to the author, April 20, 1997.
17. Eisler 1977, 318, offers the possibility that they were commissioned by Joseph von Dufresne, a courtier of the duke who had a large collection of French pictures (see also correspondence in NGA curatorial files).
18. Private collection, 81.2 × 128 cm; see Ananoff 1976a, 2: no. 489, and Tokyo and Kumamoto 1982, no. 53 (where it is misidentified as Polymnia, muse of heroic hymns; the correct identification comes from Jean Daullé's [1703–1763] engraving

of 1756, which reproduces an earlier version, painted along with its pendant *Erato,* for Madame de Pompadour; see Jean-Richard 1978, no. 558).

19. With her long flute and lyre, the figure of Polymnia (fig. 2) more likely personifies Euterpe, muse of music and lyric poetry.
20. In this regard, Slatkin understood the armor to "undoubtedly symbolize the triumph of music over the violence of men" (Washington and Chicago 1973–1974, 107).
21. Mirimonde 1969, 357.
22. This possibility was kindly pointed out to me by Alastair Laing (letter to the author, April 20, 1997).
23. He calls Pictura the "muse of painting," although no such muse exists; Eisler 1977, 317.
24. See, for example, the set of five overdoors commissioned in 1756 by Count Adam Gottlieb Moltke (1710–1792) for the Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen (see Ananoff 1976a, 2: nos. 467–471), and the four oval allegories painted in 1758, also representing putti engaged in the arts (Ananoff 1976a, 2: nos. 492–495). In both suites *Painting* is represented by two geniuses drawing on a sketch-pad. Around 1753 Boucher's student Jean Honoré Fragonard painted a suite of overdoors, representing the four arts as idealized women attended by putti, for Bergeret de Grancourt, one of Boucher's most important patrons (see Cuzin 1987–1988, nos. 3–6).
25. Eisler 1977, 317, wondered whether one of two overdoor paintings in the Wallace Collection, London, depicting a *Seated Nymph with Flutes* and the muse *Clio* may be associated with the Washington pair. However, the sizes and proportions do not match, and the pictures may be old copies after Boucher rather than originals. See the discussion by Ingamells 1985–1992, 3:85–88, nos. P481, P490.
26. "L'étendu de l'esprit, la force de l'imagination, l'activité de l'âme, voilà le genie," in "Génie [Philosophie & Littér.]." Diderot and d'Alembert [1751–1765] 1969, 7 (1762):582.
27. For example, in the suite of panels allegorizing the various mechanical and applied arts painted around 1750–1753 for Madame de Pompadour (New York, Frick Collection; Ananoff 1976a, 2: nos. 454–457). Similar figures appear in an overdoor from 1768, *Three Cupids Making Music* (private collection; Ananoff 1976a, 2: no. 659, fig. 1716). Naked little boys without wings personify the arts of painting, sculpture, and drawing in a chalk drawing published by Ananoff 1966, no. 33, fig. 8.
28. Goncourt 1880–1884, 1:146; translation by R. Ironside in Goncourt 1948, 66.
29. Ananoff 1976a, 2: no. 545.
30. See Laing, in New York, Detroit, and Paris 1986–1987, 306.
31. Eisler 1977, 317. Laing, letter to the author, April 20, 1997, expressed the opinion that *Painting,* rather than *Music,* is the more accomplished picture.
32. This point had already been already made in regard to the Washington paintings by Mantz 1880, 153.

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