40
1961.9.16

Blindman's Buff
c. 1775/1780

oil on canvas, 216.2 × 197.8 (85⅛ × 77⅞)
Samuel H. Kress Collection

Distinguishing Marks and Labels
On stretcher: three NGA labels

Technical Notes: These two paintings were executed on plain-weave, medium-weight fabric. The support for *The Swing* consists of two pieces of fabric seamed vertically approximately one-third from the right edge, while that of *Blindman's Buff* is fabricated with a horizontal seam that divides the painting in half. The tacking margins have been removed from both paintings. *Blindman's Buff* shows fabric cusping along all four edges. Although *The Swing* has cusping on the top, right, and bottom edges, the cusping on the left side is much less pronounced, indicating that *The Swing* may have been been cut down on the left side, which would explain the discrepancy in size between the two paintings. Each painting has been lined at least twice and attached to a stretcher whose design differs from the original stretcher. Stretcher bar cracks on both paintings indicate that the original stretchers may have had six members each, including one horizontal and one vertical crossbar. The edges of the original fabric on *The Swing* are ragged and uneven, so they do not reach the edge of the stretcher. Both paintings were prepared with a double ground of a gray layer on top of a red one. The paint was applied thinly, modulated with glazes and scumbles.

Both paintings are in fair condition. *The Swing* has three tears in the fabric; the longest tear runs through the lion fountain in the lower left corner. The other two tears are located in the sky in the upper left quadrant of the painting. *Blindman's Buff* has a tear through the right arm of the blindfolded woman. The areas of abraded paint in the clouds and trees of *Blindman's Buff* have been inpainted, as have the edges and the area along the seam. On *The Swing,* the seam has been inpainted, and the area between the ragged edges of the original fabric and the edges of the current stretcher have been filled and inpainted. According to Colin Eisler, the paintings were "last relined in Europe" and had "minor restorations by Mario Modestini in 1959."[2] The inpainting on both paintings has discolored, though the worst of the discolored inpainting along the seam in *The Swing* was inpainted again in 2002.

Provenance: Casimir Perrin, marquis de Cypierre [1783–1844], Paris; (his estate sale, at his residence by Thoré, Paris, March 10, 1845 and days following, nos. 52, 53). possibly marquise de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Paris; Camille Groult [1837–1908], Paris, until at least 1889.[1] (Wildenstein & Co., New York); sold 1954 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York.

Exhibited: Fragonard, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1987–1988, no. 163. *The Pastoral Landscape: The Legacy of Venice,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1988–1989, not in cat. *The Age of Watteau, Chardin, and Fragonard: Masterpieces of French Genre Painting,* National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Altes Museum, Berlin, 2003–2004, not in cat. (shown only in Washington).

Cat. 40. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *Blindman's Buff*

Cat. 41. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*

41
1961.9.17

The Swing
c. 1775/1780

oil on canvas, 215.9 × 185.5 (85 × 73 1/16)
Samuel H. Kress Collection

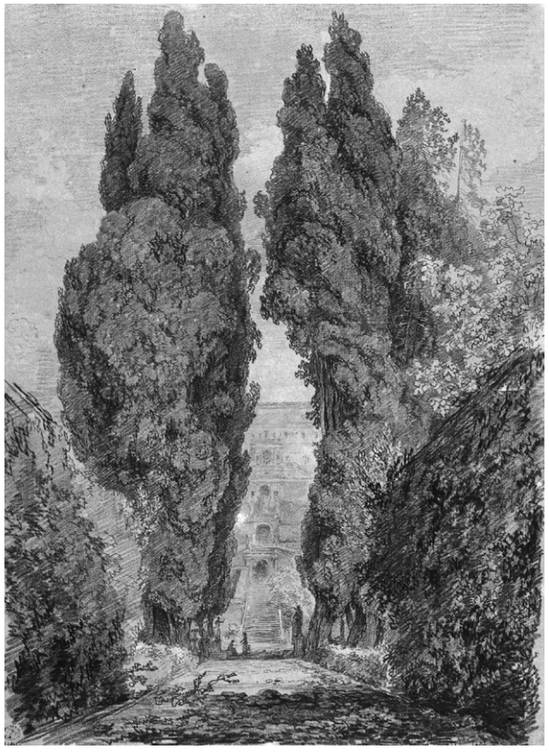
Distinguishing Marks and Labels
On stretcher: three NGA labels

Technical Notes: Same as cat. 40.

Provenance: Same as cat. 40.

Exhibited: Fragonard, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1987–1988, no. 162. *The Pastoral Landscape: The Legacy of Venice,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1988–1989, no. 80. *The Age of Watteau, Chardin, and Fragonard: Masterpieces of French Genre Painting,* National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Altes Museum, Berlin, 2003–2004, not in cat. (shown only in Washington).

Fig. 1. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *Cypresses at the Villa d'Este, Tivoli,* 1760, red chalk, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie



These monumental canvases, which must be counted among the greatest achievements in eighteenth-century French landscape painting, have been associated since their rediscovery in the early nineteenth century. Nearly identical in height, they present similar views of vast and fecund picturesque gardens, peopled with elegantly dressed men, women, and children playing games, conversing, promenading, and dining in an exuberant natural environment. The myriad details in each — bubbling fountains, shadowy sculptures, overgrown flower beds, rushing cascades, soaring trees, and towering cloud-filled skies — put the viewer's eye in constant motion in, around, and between the two compositions. *Blindman's Buff* was intended to hang to the left of *The Swing,* as indicated by the trellises covered with red and pink flowers that appear in the lower right and lower left corners of each composition. When seen side by side the paintings can be appreciated as one panoramic composition, centered on a great mound surmounted by a geyser and flanked by dramatic vistas to either side. Laboratory analysis has dispelled the notion, first advanced by Pierre de Nolhac, that the pictures were originally a single canvas that has been cut in two.[3] *The Swing,* which is slightly narrower than *Blindman's Buff,* shows indications of having been cropped along its left edge, so that originally the two canvases must have been precisely the same size.[4]

Landscape — particularly gardens — formed a significant aspect of Fragonard's oeuvre. While little documentation or contemporaneous commentary have survived, such works were admired and appreciated during his lifetime and shortly thereafter, as his early biographer, Charles Le Carpentier, indicated:

> When this artist wished to be true to himself, he created delicious landscapes where one always finds the memory and the image of nature. They are remarkable above all by their astonishing effect of light and the beautiful forms of their terracing. His trees are treated with taste. . . . Could anyone better understand the magic of the skies he paints so exquisitely, and seize the beautiful effects that nature reveals only after a storm, or when a cloudy and nebulous sky lets a few sunrays dart to the ground.[5]

Le Carpentier's comment that such paintings evoked a "memory" of nature was astute, for *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing* are replete with reminders of the fabulous gardens that Fragonard first depicted when he was a student at the Académie de France in Rome from 1756 to 1761. Fragonard's experience of Italy had sparked his interest in landscape drawing and painting, an inclination he developed on numerous drawing excursions throughout Rome and the Italian countryside. The most remarkable results of these efforts are the extraordinary red chalk drawings of the gardens of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, where the artist stayed for several weeks in the summer of 1760 as the guest of the Abbé de Saint-Non (fig. 1). The towering cypresses and overgrown bowers, lively fountains, and stunning vistas that characterized the d'Este gardens reappear in *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing,* even if the works are in no way topographical. While it has proved impossible to find specific garden sources for the paintings, certain motifs — such as the sculpture — can be linked with known prototypes.[6] Fragonard's method in his garden paintings was not to record a site precisely but to re-create imaginatively a sense of the character of a place he and his patrons may have visited. Attempting

to identify the garden scenes in these two paintings would be fruitless and alien to the artist's method and purpose.[7]

Blindman's Buff and *The Swing* were produced long after Fragonard's initial trip to Italy. The artist's technique in these works is free and expansive, with little of the precise brushwork and devotion to detail that characterize the smaller landscapes he produced in Italy and shortly after his return to Paris in 1761.[8] The paint was applied thinly — some passages are nearly transparent washes of color — with only discrete areas of impasto in some of the brushwork defining clothing and foliage. This fluid technique recalls the fresh and confident ink wash drawings that Fragonard made for his patron, Pierre Jacques Onésyme Bergeret de Grancourt (1715–1785), on a second trip to Italy in 1773–1774.[9] The example illustrated here (fig. 2), representing an unidentified park probably in the vicinity of Rome, demonstrates the artist's brilliance at capturing a sense of light and atmosphere and conveys the spontaneity and transience of nature more convincingly than the red chalk drawings made at Tivoli in the previous decade.[10] The drawing's complex composition, with its artful massing of trees and combination of views peopled with a variety of figures, anticipates the style and imagery of *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing,* which the artist executed in Paris shortly after the second trip to Italy. It is probable that they date from the last years of the 1770s.[11]

The grand scale and broad, freely handled technique suggest that the paintings were conceived as decorations to be installed into the paneling on the wall of a salon.[12] As with so much of Fragonard's oeuvre, the early history of these resplendent landscapes is unknown, and no contemporaneous comments about them have been discovered, yet they surely must have been one of the artist's most important commissions, on a par with — in terms of ambition of design and execution, if not of patron — *The Progress of Love* series (New York, Frick Collection) executed in the early 1770s for Madame du Barry. Georges Wildenstein identified the paintings with two works listed in the estate inventory of the Abbé de Saint-Non, drawn up in 1792, which described two landscapes "made in Italy" with figures enjoying the game of *La Main chaude* (hot cockles) and playing on a *Balançoire* (either a swing or a seesaw).[13] Later scholars have rejected this association, however; the National Gallery's paintings were not "done in Italy," and it is highly unlikely that the game of blindman's buff (in French, *Colin-maillard*) would have been confused with the very different "*la main chaude*" described in the inventory. Moreover, the two landscapes belonging to Saint-Non can be identified with other works by Fragonard.[14] The first confirmed record of the Washington paintings was made in 1845, when they were described in the collection of the marquis de Cypierre.

A clue to the paintings' original purpose may be found in their relationship to another of Fragonard's masterpieces of garden painting, the so-called *Fête at Saint-Cloud,* also datable to the late 1770s (fig. 3). This large canvas, which is precisely the same height as *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing,* also depicts a panoramic view of a garden or parkland populated by numerous figures engaged in varied activities amid fountains, sculptures, and lush foliage. The traditional provenance of *Fête at Saint-Cloud* — that it was commissioned by the duc de Penthièvre for the Hôtel de Toulouse in Paris (now the Banque de France, where the painting still hangs) — is uncertain, and the possibility exists, as Pierre Rosenberg first observed, that it was part of a larger decorative scheme that included *Blindman's Buff, The Swing,* and perhaps two other garden scenes in the National Gallery of Art, *A Game of Horse and Rider* and *A Game of Hot Cockles* (see cats. 38, 39).[15] Although their later provenances are different, the similarities in scale, style, and subject matter suggest that these five pictures were conceived as a series and, like the Frick *Progress of Love,* cannot be understood fully unless treated together as a decorative program.[16]

Fig. 2. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *A Garden Near Rome,* c. 1773–1774, ink wash over black chalk, Paris, Musée du Petit Palais

Fig. 3. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *Fête at Saint-Cloud,* c. 1775–1780, oil on canvas, Paris, Banque de France

Sets of landscapes often served for interior decoration in the eighteenth century. In the 1770s and 1780s Hubert Robert (1733–1808, cat. 86) was among the most prolific such decorators, creating suites of landscapes and ruin paintings for the interiors of his patrons' *hôtels particuliers* and *maisons de plaisance.*[17] Fragonard is known to have painted many decorative pictures, often in pairs or series, but no ensemble survives intact in its original location.[18] Regarding the five garden paintings now divided between the National Gallery and the Banque de France, Paris, Rosenberg has proposed that they may originate from the collection of Marchal de Sainscy, whose 1789 sale catalogue describes a group of landscapes as follows:

Fig. 4. Nicolas Lancret, *Blindman's Buff,* before 1738, oil on canvas, Berlin, Château de Sans-Souci

Fig. 5. Nicolas Lancret, *The Italian Meal,* before 1738, oil on canvas, Berlin, Château de Sans-Souci

> H. Fragonnard [*sic*]. Five large pictures by this artist, designed and executed to decorate the walls of a salon; they represent diverse landscape subjects with varied and graceful sites, and are embellished with interesting figures.[19]

While the identification must remain speculative, the circumstantial evidence assembled by Rosenberg is provocative.[20] The consignor of the 1789 sale, Louis René Marchal de Sainscy, had acquired much of his collection in 1782 from his father, Louis Pierre Sébastien Marchal de Sainscy, along with the family's primary residence in the rue des Fossés-Montmartre in Paris. Louis Pierre fits the profile of the sort of connoisseur who was purchasing works by Fragonard in the 1760s and 1770s. A noted collector, he was governor of Abbeville, *maître d'hôtel du roi,* and *econome general du clergé,* a title inherited by his only son Louis René. The son's own immense wealth was increased when he married into a family of *fermiers généraux* in 1779.[21] Yet both Louis Pierre's and Louis René's fortunes reversed precipitously in the wake of financial reforms initiated by Charles Alexandre Calonne, the king's controller-general of finance, forcing father and son to sell their property and leave Paris in 1788. The subsequent sale of the collection in 1789 revealed their particular interest in large-scale paintings by contemporary French artists (along with smaller easel pictures by French, Italian, and Dutch masters), including numerous works that were clearly meant to be integrated into the architectural framework of the house. Among these are four overdoors by François Boucher (1730–1770, cats. 2–6), two more of ruins by Robert, and three large scenes from the hunt, "made for the decoration of a salon," by Francesco Casanova (1727–1803).[22] The five Fragonard landscapes were also described as having this purpose, although it is unclear whether they were designed specifically for the Sainscy residence or whether they had been purchased from another collection. The varying shapes and sizes of the Washington and Paris paintings (beyond the current reduced dimensions of *The Swing, Hot Cockles,* and *Horse and Rider*) make better sense if imagined surrounded by boiseries, windows, and doorways. Given that the Fragonard paintings can be dated on stylistic grounds to the late 1770s, the father, Louis Pierre, most likely acquired them from the artist. Rosenberg has suggested that the paintings do not appear in an inventory drawn up in 1782 on the sale of the house and collection from Louis Pierre to his son Louis René simply because, being mural decorations, they would have not have been noted as separate property by the auditors.[23] The three Casanova scenes from the hunt, which are similar in scale and shape to the Fragonards and therefore may have been part of a complementary decoration scheme, went similarly uninventoried.[24] In the end, neither the large Casanovas nor the five Fragonards found buyers in the 1789 sale, possibly because of their scale (they were likely unframed) and the necessity of hanging them as a pair. The fate of the Washington canvases is unknown until they appeared at auction in Paris in 1845. *Fête at Saint-Cloud* may have remained at rue des Fossés-Montmartre (the site of the 1789 sale) and transferred to the Hôtel de Toulouse when the Banque de France acquired the Sainscy house in 1806.

When seen together, Fragonard's five paintings share a vision of the garden and park as a commodious setting for all sorts of festivities and

amusements as well as amorous dalliance. The various games and entertainments incorporated into Fragonard's garden paintings were relatively common features of landscape painting in the middle and late eighteenth century.[25] They are part of a tradition made popular by Jean Antoine Watteau (1684–1721, cats. 98, 99) and Nicolas Lancret (1609–1743, cats. 64, 65), who frequently included figures playing games and socializing in gardens or parklands. Lancret's pendants at the Château de Sans-Souci, Berlin (figs. 4, 5), although much smaller than Fragonard's grand landscapes, combine similar amusements — blindman's buff, dining in the outdoors, and swinging — in a fecund garden decorated with terraces, sculptures, and fountains.[26] Fragonard himself treated the games depicted in *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing* numerous times, especially in small cabinet pictures like the famous *Swing* in the Wallace Collection, London.[27]

While such amusements undoubtedly were enjoyed in eighteenth-century France, modern scholarship has focused on the symbolic meanings that they must have conveyed to viewers of paintings. Fragonard's juxtaposition of the games of blindman's buff and swinging was pointed, for both activities have been interpreted as alluding to the progress of love. Blindman's buff — with its blind protagonist awkwardly seeking a mate — corresponded to the difficulties of courtship, while the rhythmic motion of the swing — propelled by a companion who pulls on ropes — suggests the culminating act of love.[28] The lush, picturesque gardens, with their overripe blossoms, spurting fountains, and provocative sculptures, underscore the amorous associations of the games. The sculptures that Watteau frequently incorporated into his *fêtes galante* have been interpreted as commenting on the scenes of flirtation and love.[29] Fragonard may have intended much the same meaning: the fountain to the left in *Blindman's Buff* has been described as representing Vestal Virgins, calculated to contrast with the folly of love, embodied in the blindfolded player who spins aimlessly.[30] The enchanting detail of the woman looking through a telescope in *The Swing* suggested to Eisler a contrast between "idle curiosity for what is beyond her with her oblivion to what surrounds her."[31]

Nevertheless, the small size of the figures and their lack of detail might make them ill-suited as bearers of complex meaning, and it is possible that they were included to add visual interest to the landscapes themselves. These works occasionally have been described as characteristic of the sublime in nature, as almost protoromantic in sensibility: "What set out to be a topical scene [*Fête at Saint-Cloud*] . . . has become a wild poem about the strength of natural forces and puny man."[32] Fragonard's figures do indeed appear small, but they are fully integrated into their hospitable surroundings, and one could claim just as persuasively that his garden settings, far from posing a threat, encourage the pursuit of a host of idle pleasures, both public and private: carnival sideshows, swinging, aristocratic parlor games (hot cockles and blindman's buff), rough children's play (horse and rider), puppet shows, and picnicking. These paintings are foremost images of people enjoying the outdoors; that, after all, was the purpose of gardens and parks that, unlike wild nature, were to be accommodating to the promenader. Louis Carogis de Carmontelle, in his explication of the Parc Monceau, designed in the late 1770s for the duc de Chartres, insisted that "despite the charms offered by the countryside, it is only in the garden where one finds good living — the hunt, games, concerts, entertainments; that is what we desire and that is what we praise."[33] Jennifer Milam has argued that the National Gallery versions of blindman's buff and swinging, in which the landscapes dominate, should be understood less in conventional overt erotic terms and more as playful re-creations of the exhilarating amusements they represent. "The swing becomes a vehicle of physical and mental transport, serving to move the figure and the viewer into the alternative playlands of leisure and art."[34] Leisure activities, whether playing games, promenading through a picturesque garden, or a combination of both, had come to define aristocratic culture in the late eighteenth century.

The five paintings are a summation of Fragonard's lifelong exploration of the theme of the garden. Grand in scale, they are complex and elaborate visualizations of "unadorned" nature in which the compositions, chiaroscuro, brushwork, and activities of the figures re-create the infinite variety of motifs and range of effects that characterized the picturesque garden in eighteenth-century France. In these works Fragonard brought together a diversity of garden types, including a French public park in *Fête at Saint-Cloud,* a vast estate inspired by the gardens of Italy in *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing,* and two intimate corners of private gardens, one picturesque, one formal, in *A Game of Horse and Rider* and *A Game of Hot Cockles.*

Fragonard's innovative compositions reflect a remarkable sensitivity toward the character of the picturesque, or "English," garden that was gaining popularity in France during these years.[35] The panoramic breadth of *Blindman's Buff* and *The Swing* allows for the inclusion of a variety of distinct areas of visual interest, from the exhilarating vista, to a distant peak at the right, to the equally long view into the further reaches of the garden at the left, where a tiny group of strollers — captured in a beam of sunlight — parades among the trees (recalling the background boaters in *Horse and Rider*). In between, Fragonard has arranged a series of disparate focal points that the viewer is encouraged to examine as the canvases are surveyed: a game of blindman's buff, lovers reclining in bushes, a group finishing a meal, a man and woman washing a dog in a fountain, a woman on a swing observed by companions, one with a telescope. Such visually arresting details are not centered on the figures alone. As in the other works in the series, Fragonard employed the vocabulary of the garden designer — trees, bushes, lawns, flowers, pathways, fountains, and sculptures — to draw the spectator's attention, frame views, and lead the eye around the composition. With their multiple views, lack of visual unity, and range of brushwork, Fragonard's gardenscapes present an image of the park that embodies the ever-shifting experience of the promenader in nature. Like his or her counterpart in actual gardens, the viewer of these paintings must "explore" the composition, forever changing direction, making visual connections, and taking delight at a series of seemingly unrelated details. As in the picturesque garden itself, unity and resolution is not imposed upon the scenes by the artist, but is left to the imagination and vicarious eye of the spectator.

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Notes

1. The NGA paintings were possibly the two Fragonards sold from the Montesquiou-Fezensac collection prior to its 1897 sale (Hôtel Drouot, Paris, March 19, 1897); see Eisler 1977, 331 n. 17. Camille Groult was given as the owner of the paintings in publications of 1889 and 1927; however, the latter publication must have meant Groult was a former owner, as he died in 1908.
2. Eisler 1977, 329.
3. Nolhac 1906, 69. Nolhac's hypothesis was echoed more recently by Cuzin (1987–1988, 202–203), who later retracted the idea (Cuzin 1988, 83–87).
4. The X-radiographs show that, while *The Swing* may have been slightly cut at the left edge, *Blindman's Buff* probably retains its original proportions (there is cusping along all four edges). Similarly, the X-radiographs of *Hot Cockles* and *Horse and Rider* show no evidence of cusping at the top and left edges, indicating that these works may have been cut down at the tops, as Cuzin thought (Cuzin 1987–1988, 203), and possibly along the left sides as well. I am grateful to Elizabeth Walmsley, conservator of paintings at the National Gallery of Art, for her help in studying the X-radiographs.
5. "Mais quand cet artiste a voulu être lui-même, il a crée des paysages délicieux où l'on retrouve toujours le souvenir et l'image de la nature. Ils sont recommandables sur-tout par l'effet surprenant de la lumière, et la belle forme des terrasses. Ses arbres sont touchés avec goût. . . . Peut-on mieux entendre la magie des ciels qu'il peignait d'une manière exquise, et saisir les beaux effets que la nature ne présente qu'après les orages, ou quand le ciel couvert et nébuleux laisser darder quelques rayons de soleil sur la terre" (Le Carpentier 1821, 281).
6. For example, the imposing statue atop the cascade in *Blindman's Buff* is similar to the one on the *Fountain of Rome* at the Villa d'Este (see Coffin 1960, fig. 25).
7. One might also recall a nineteenth-century account by A. de Launay, *Salons de Paris,* April 10, 1859, that Fragonard "had himself decorated [his] studio in a theatrical manner; at the back hung a curtain on which his imagination had created vegetation of a richness unknown to our climate with, in the foreground, bushes, creepers, climbing plants, imitation rocks, and flowers, the whole arranged so as to produce the most surprising effects; in the corner stood a child's swing . . . on which he used to pose his models" (see Wildenstein 1960, 24 n. 3).
8. For example, Rosenberg 1989, nos. 80–84, 120.
9. Wildenstein 1961; Wilhelm 1948a.
10. Ananoff 1961–1970, 3: no. 2151, fig. 585; Paris 1992–1993, 84–85, no. 39.
11. Most scholars date the paintings to 1775–1780, although Rosenberg tentatively suggested a slightly earlier date, before the trip to Italy (Paris and New York 1987–1988, 342). He later changed his mind (Rosenberg 1987).
12. Eisler proposed that an architectural element such as a pilaster separated the two canvases and that the paintings may have been placed on curved walls, providing "an almost stereoscopic trompe l'oeil effect" (1977, 330).
13. "Premièrement, un tableau peint sur toile dans son cadre doré, representant une étude de paysage fait en Italie par Fragonard avec figures, sujet de la Main chaude; un autre tableau sur toile, par le même, representant aussi un paysage d'Italie avec figures, sujet d'une Balançoire, prises ensemble cent livres" (cited in Wildenstein 1959, 238–242).
14. Rand 1991, 246–248.
15. Paris and New York 1987–1988, 344–345, nos. 162–165; see also Rosenberg 2004. Although it is one of the artist's largest canvases, *Fête at Saint-Cloud* came to light only in 1862, when an inventory of the Banque de France was compiled. In his monograph, Portalis — the first to publish the painting — noted that the identity of the person who commissioned it was unknown (1889, 1:82–83). Nolhac (1906, 69) first suggested that it was "perhaps executed for the duc de Penthièvre" ("peut-être exécuté pour le duc de Penthièvre"). Because the bank had been the Hôtel de Toulouse, the Paris residence of Louis Bourbon, the duc de Penthièvre, it has generally been assumed that the duc — the last legitimate male descendant of Louis XIV — commissioned the work from Fragonard. (In 1769 Penthièvre's daughter had married the duc de Chartres, who owned the land that encompassed the Parc de Saint-Cloud; see Baillio 1988, whose interpretation of the painting is based on the patronage of the duc.) Despite the attraction of this idea, there is no supporting documentation to confirm it. None of the guidebooks from the period describes the painting, even when giving detailed accounts of the residence, and the two inventories of the Hôtel de Toulouse, compiled in 1794 and 1795 during the revolutionary seizures, fail to mention it (see, for example, Dézallier d'Argenville 1775, 170–177). Moreover, an unpublished study of the archives of the Banque de France in 1972 by Jean de Cayeux (in the archives of Galerie Cailleux, Paris) found no trace of the painting before the late nineteenth century. The painting is first recorded in an appraisal of 1862, when it is listed with several works — by Boucher and others — whose provenances are equally mysterious. The Hôtel de Toulouse apparently was pillaged during the revolution, and Cayeux suggests that the Fragonard and other eighteenth-century works might have been acquired by the bank in the early nineteenth century to decorate the rooms in an appropriate style. An earlier unpublished report, written when Cayeux appraised the *Fête at Saint-Cloud* for the bank in 1946, already had raised doubts about the duc de Penthièvre's commission of the painting. I wish to thank Marianne Roland Michel for allowing me to study these revealing documents. Nevertheless, until recently most scholars have repeatedly claimed that the duc de Penthièvre commissioned the work from Fragonard.
16. That the paintings were a series was particularly apparent at the Fragonard exhibition in 1987–1988, when they were displayed together in public for the first time (Paris and New York, 1987–1988). Apart from their differing states of preservation, it was clear that the pictures were closely related in style, color, subject, and proportions of the figures.
17. See Cayeux 1987; Bandiera 1989; Radisich 1995.
18. *The Progress of Love* is a rare instance in which the pictures and intended setting can be plausibly reconstructed. Part of Fragonard's decoration for the Hôtel Matignon in Paris, four overdoors of the seasons, remains in situ, although the salon apparently was redecorated in the nineteenth century. At that time, one of the panels, *Winter,* was sold and is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; see Cuzin 1987–1988, 269, nos. 50–53. First proposed in Rosenberg 1987, 62–67, and elaborated in Rosenberg 2004.
19. "Cinq grands Tableaux de cet Artiste, composés et executés pour former la tenture d'un Sallon; ils representent divers sujets de Paysages de sites variés et gracieux, et sont ornés de figures interresantes. T[oile]." *Catalogue d'une collection choisie de tableaux de differens maîtres . . . qui composoient le cabinet de M.[-],* Paris, April 29, 1789, no. 41. See Rosenberg 1987, 62–67.
20. Rosenberg 2004, 248–257.
21. Roland Michel 1986, 546–552, reproduces a drawing by Carmontelle portraying the Sainscy family, including Louis René and his tutor, the Abbé Fleury (fig. 122).
22. Among his French paintings were twelve Boucher, including the celebrated *Rising* and *Setting of the Sun,* painted as tapestry cartoons for the marquise de Pompadour, which Louis Pierre had purchased at the Pompadour sale in 1766 (see Ingamells 1985–1992, 3 (1989): nos. P485, P486, 77–78; Ananoff and Wildenstein 1976, 2:109–115, nos. 422 and 423); landscapes by Claude Joseph Vernet (1714–1789, cat. 92) and Hubert Robert; and fifteen paintings by Casanova. In addition, he possessed landscapes by Teniers, Cornelis van Poelenburg (1594/1595–1667), Breenberg, and Jacob van Ruisdael 1628/1629–1682) (see Rosenberg 2004, 250).
23. "Mais nous n'avons rien pu découvrir sur les circonstances exactes de la commande à Fragonard d'une série de paysages décoratifs pour son hotel de la rue des Fossés-Montmartre, sinon que celle-ci doit être antérieure à 1782 et postérieure au retour de l'artiste du second voyage d'Italie (1773–1774)" (But we have not been able to discover anything about the specific circumstances of the commission to Fragonard for a series of decorative landscapes for his townhouse in the rue des Fossés-Montmartre, other than it must have been before 1782 and after the return of the artist from his second voyage to Italy [1773–1774]). Rosenberg 2003, 256–257.
24. Unfortunately, the house at 3, rue des Fossés-Montmartre (now 6, rue d'Aboukir), no longer survives, leaving any reconstruction of the original arrangement of Fragonard's five garden paintings hypothetical.

25. The activities depicted in *Fête at Saint-Cloud,* while more unusual, did appear in other works of art, including Boucher's tapestry, *The Charlatans and the Peep Show,* designed in 1736 as part of the series "Italian Village Scenes" and last woven at Beauvais in 1762. The design was engraved by Cochin in 1740 (see Paris and New York 1987–1988, 340, fig. 6; New York, Detroit, and Paris 1986–1987, 334–339, no. 86).
26. Wildenstein 1924, nos. 77, 226 (figs. 29, 52). In his tapestry designs for the series *Amusements champêtres,* made for Beauvais in the late 1720s (but in production as late as 1761), Jean Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755, cats. 76, 77) introduced many of these activities in garden settings that approached the scale and decorative breadth of Fragonard's paintings. Opperman 1977, 87–89, 396–397, nos. P95–P102.
27. Rosenberg 1989, no. 177; Ingamells 1985–1992, 3 (1989):161–165, P430. The small *Preparation for Blindman's Buff* in the Musée du Louvre (Rosenberg 1989, no. 180) also includes the motif of figures preparing a meal outdoors. The themes of blindman's buff and swinging in Fragonard's art have been explored by Réau 1927; Wentzel 1964; Posner 1982; Milam 1998; and Milam 2000.
28. In a similar juxtaposition produced earlier in his career, Fragonard painted a *Blindman's Buff* (Toledo, Ohio, Toledo Museum of Art; Rosenberg 1989, no. 41) with a *Seesaw* (Madrid, Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza; Rosenberg 1989, no. 42).
29. Mirimonde 1962.
30. Eisler 1977, 329–330. Sculptures play a similar role in many of Fragonard's other garden scenes. In both the Wallace Collection *Swing* and *A Game of Hot Cockles* (cat. 39), Fragonard included Falconet's *Menacing Cupid.* In the so-called *Little Swing* (private collection; Rosenberg 1989, no. 178), a sculptural group includes a Cupid shooting his arrow in the direction of the woman on the swing.
31. Eisler 1977, 330.
32. Levey 1966, 119. See also Gaehtgens 1983, 32–35, and the interesting discussion by Saisselin 1985, 291–294.
33. "Malgré les charmes que la nature peut y offrir, il faut que nous y [le jardin] trouvions la bonne chère, la chasse, le jeu, les concerts, les spectacles; voilà ce qu'on y désire et ce qu'on y vante" (Carmontelle 1779, 3–4).
34. Milam 2000, 554.
35. On the development of the picturesque garden in France, see Wiebenson 1978.

References

1880–1884 Goncourt, 2:334.
1889 Portalis: 272.
1906 Nolhac: 69–71, 150, repro. betw. 70 and 71, 150 and 151, 152 and 153.
1927 Réau: 150–151, repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1956 NGA: 76–79, nos. 26, 27, repro.
1956 Réau: 158.
1956 Walker: 10, repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1957 Shapley: 47, pl. 120, 66, pl. 149.
1959 NGA: 366–367, repro.
1959 Wildenstein: 244.
1960 Wildenstein: 24, 297–298, nos. 447, 448, pls. 92–95.
1961 Seymour: 187, pls. 178–181.
1962 Cairns and Walker: 110, color repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1963 Walker: 318, repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1964 Wentzel: 214–216, figs. 162, 163.
1965b NGA: 52.
1968 NGA: 44, repro.
1972 Wildenstein and Mandel: nos. 471, 472, pls. 52–55.
1975 NGA: 132, 133, repro.
1977 Eisler: 328–331, figs. 295–298.
1979 Watson: 86, pl. 74, color repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1980 Fried: 139, fig. 60, 141.
1981 Conisbee: 178, pl. 15, 189.
1982 Posner: 80, figs. 8, 9.
1985 NGA: 159, repro.
1987 Lévêque: 42, repro. (*Blindman's Buff*).
1987 Rosenberg: 65–66, repro.
1987–1988 Cuzin: 202–203, 325, no. 339, pls. 250, 251.
1989 Rosenberg: 106, nos. 312, 313, repro.
1993 Massengale: 40, fig. 60 (*The Swing*).
1996 Timken: 154, 156, fig. 1 (*Blindman's Buff*).
1998 Milam: 9, 11, 13, pl. 5, 20 (*Blindman's Buff*).
2000 Milam: 548, 551, fig. 4, 553, fig. 6, 554 (*The Swing*).
2001 Rand: 495–497, fig. 1 (*Blindman's Buff*).
2004 NGA: 252–253, no. 203 (*Blindman's Buff*), no. 204 (*The Swing*), color repros.
2004 Rosenberg: 255–257, figs. 216, 217.
2006 Milam: 32–33, 39, 42, 131, 139 (*Blindman's Buff*); 61, 67, 131, 139, 141, 146, 159–160, 163, 165 n. 9 (*The Swing*).