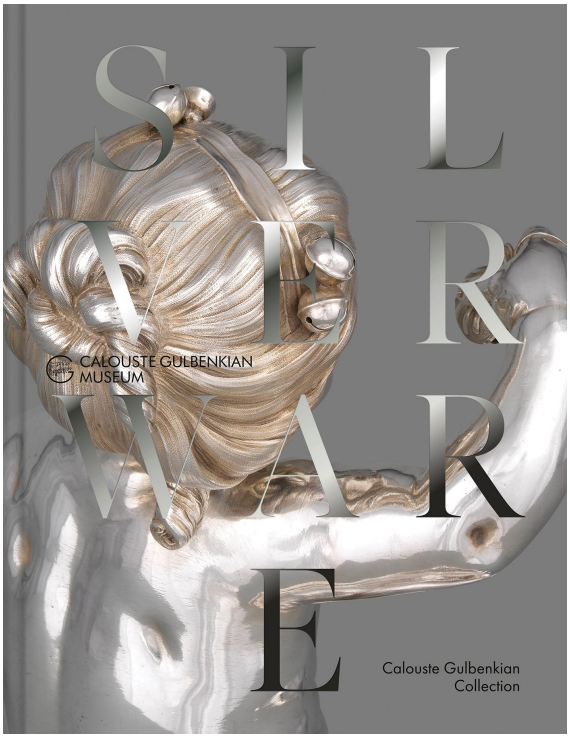
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The French Silverware in the Calouste Gulbenkian Collection

Peter Fuhring

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- The collection of 18th- and early-19th-century French silverware brought together by Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian is the most important of its time
- An excellent photographic survey, carried out specifically for the purpose, illustrates the 43 catalogue entries
- Awarded with the APOM award for the best Museum publication in 2023
- Awarded by the French Academy of Fine Arts with the Prize Bernier in 2023

The collection of 18th- and early-19th-century French silverware brought together by Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian is the most important of its time and one of the most significant sections of the Gulbenkian Museum's collection. Amassed between 1900 and 1950, these pieces constitute a unique group due to their diversity and quality. The collection comprises over 150 works, including several world-class masterpieces that represent the collector's taste.

The catalogue is dedicated to a selection of silver works of different typologies, such as centrepieces, tureens, salt cellars, candelabras and candlesticks, made by renowned silversmiths such as François-Thomas Germain, Antoine-Sébastien Durant, Robert-Joseph Auguste and Martin-Guillaume Biennais. Despite this diversity, these works all share the characteristics that make this collection unique: quality and authenticity combined with original designs, technical expertise and distinguished provenances, with former owners including members of European aristocracy and the Russian imperial family. These works were mostly purchased in Paris, but there is also an important group of works from the Hermitage collection, acquired through negotiations made between Calouste Gulbenkian and the Soviet government between 1928 and 1930.

After an initial text about Calouste Gulbenkian's passion for 18th-century French silverware, the most prominent pieces of the collection are presented in chronological order of acquisition and are accompanied by comprehensive descriptions and analyses, as well as detailed information on hallmarks, inscriptions, provenances and historical and bibliographical sources. An excellent photographic survey, carried out specifically for the purpose, illustrates the 43 catalogue entries.

At the end of the publication, the reader can find a list of secondary silverware, an index of names and the group of archive documents and bibliography consulted.

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Peter Fuhring studied biology and art history at Leiden University and obtained his doctorate in 1994 with a study of the life and works of Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (1695–1750), published in 1999. His thesis was awarded the Præmium Erasmianum and the J. W. Frederiks prize. A specialist in the history of ornament and design, he has published many articles and other works on drawings, ornament prints and the decorative arts and has organised several exhibitions on these subjects. He was the first to hold the Ottema Kingma chair in the History of Decorative Arts at Radboud
University in Nijmegen (2005–9). He was the lead author of the catalogue of the Jourdan Barry silver collection (2005) and also organised the exhibition *Designing the Décor: French Drawings of the Eighteenth Century* (2005–6) at the Gulbenkian Museum. From 2005 to 2022, Peter Fuhring has worked for the Fondation Custodia in Paris, on the Marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes by Frits Lugt, for which an online database was created in 2010.







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