

STORIED ROTHSCHILD FAMILY TROVE TO REST, AT LAST, AT MFA BOSTON



*Snuff box with
image of Madame
de Pompadour,
Late Eighteenth
century*

*Bonbonniere
mounted with a
timepiece, John
and George
Hannett, about
1765*



BOSTON, MASS. — This story of a trove of beautiful objects begins in gilded Vienna society, where it falls prey to the ugliness of war and Nazi seizure, traces its way to Austrian salt mines until the Monuments Men liberate the artworks. Years later, many of the objects — hundreds more perhaps are untraceable, their whereabouts unknown — came back to the Rothschild family. Nearly 200 are joining the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), where visitors may appreciate the works on their own aesthetic merits as well as learn the story of how a family legacy was lost and restored.

The museum is acquiring a collection of 186 objects originally owned by Baron and Baroness Alphonse and Clarice de Rothschild of Vienna — members of the celebrated Rothschild banking family. Many of these works were seized in 1938 following the Anschluss, or annexation of Austria to Nazi Germany. A selection from the gift is on view in the exhibition “Restoring a Legacy: Rothschild Family Treasures,” on view through June 21.

The gift includes European decorative arts, furniture, prints, drawings, paintings, and personal objects including jewelry and jeweled objects, miniatures and rare books. Telling the story of how the objects were collected, looted and then recovered by the family and its heirs,

*Art Deco platinum,
carved emerald
and diamond
brooch,
about
1937*



the exhibition — on view in the MFA’s Lee Gallery — samples the luxurious objects that earned the admiration of collectors around Europe, embodying what was once known as *le goût Rothschild*, or “the Rothschild taste.” By tracing the provenance, or ownership history, of the works from the historic Rothschild palaces in Vienna, through World War II and finally back to the Baroness and her daughter, exhibition curators illustrate how generations of Rothschild women worked diligently to secure the return of their family’s

treasures. The collection is a gift of the heirs of Bettina Looram de Rothschild, who was a daughter of the Baron and Baroness. Her daughter, MFA Trustee Bettina Burr, is among the donors who have made this gift to the MFA.



Pearl, and diamond necklace circa 1880 Silver, gold, pearls and diamonds

** Gift of the heirs of Bettina Looram de Rothschild * Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

*Platinum and diamond necklace/tiara
circa 1920, platinum and diamonds.
* Gift of the heirs of Bettina Looram de
Rothschild * Photograph © Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston*



“It is the museum’s mission to bring art and people together, and we believe that art tells powerful stories,” said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director at the MFA. “This collection — with its rare and beautiful objects treasured by the Rothschild family, lost and then recovered — tells a story like no other.”



*Carnet de bal,
about 1765*

Commode with corner cupboards (commode a encoignures), attributed to: Claude-Charles Saunier (French, 1735–1807). French (Paris), about 1770-80, wood, black Japanese lacquer, gilt-bronze, white marble. Promised gift of the heirs of Bettina Looram de Rothschild. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.





Bettina Burr, January 26, 2015

From L-R: Albert de Rothschild (16), Baroness Clarice de Rothschild (43), Bettina de Rothschild (13), Baron Alphonse de Rothschild (60), Gwendoline de Rothschild (11), November 20, 1937.



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