

# Bouguereau's 'Fancies':

## Allegorical And Mythological Works By The French Master

By Kate Eagen Johnson



**F**rench academic painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825–1905) is widely admired for his delicate figure studies that capture even the most subtle human emotions. Immensely popular in both Europe and America during his lifetime, Bouguereau became one of the most prolific and influential artists of the Nineteenth Century, and is today widely recognized as one of the art world's

great painters. “Bouguereau’s ‘Fancies’: Allegorical and Mythological Works by the French Master,” which is on view January 27–April 19 at the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Fla., features 19 mythological and allegorical paintings and drawings spanning the artist’s entire career, in addition to period reproductions of his works in print, porcelain, marble and bronze.





(Previous Page) Façade of Whitehall. The New York architectural firm of Carrère and Hastings designed Whitehall, now called the Flagler Museum, for Henry M. Flagler (1830–1913). When it was completed in 1902, the refined Beaux-Arts-style mansion stood in stark contrast to the wild Florida landscape surrounding it. ©Flagler Museum

“Jeune fille se défendant contre l’Amour (Young Girl Defending Herself Against Eros)” by Bouguereau 1880, oil on canvas. This painting showing a girl resisting “first love” belonged to Henry M. Flagler. During the millionaire’s lifetime, the salon painting hung at his Palm Beach home Whitehall, now the Flagler Museum. The University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

**A** highlight of the exhibition is the display together, for the first time ever, of three versions of the artist’s “Jeune fille se défendant contre l’Amour (Young Girl Defending Herself Against Eros).” Created in 1880 for the annual French Salon, the full-sized version of this subject — a girl chastely resisting first love — was once owned by Henry Flagler and hung at Whitehall (now the Flagler Museum), and is currently in the collection of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.



**T**he Salon version is united in the exhibition with the artist's reduction of the subject, once owned by Henry Flagler's friend Henry Walters of Baltimore and lent by the J. Paul Getty Museum, as well as a chalk and gouache drawing of the same subject from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

"Love's Resistance" (after "Young Girl Defending Herself Against Eros") by Bouguereau 1885, black chalk and opaque watercolor. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund, 1971.







Bouguereau's salon version of "Young Girl Defending Herself Against Cupid" once hung in the Music Room.  
©Flagler Museum

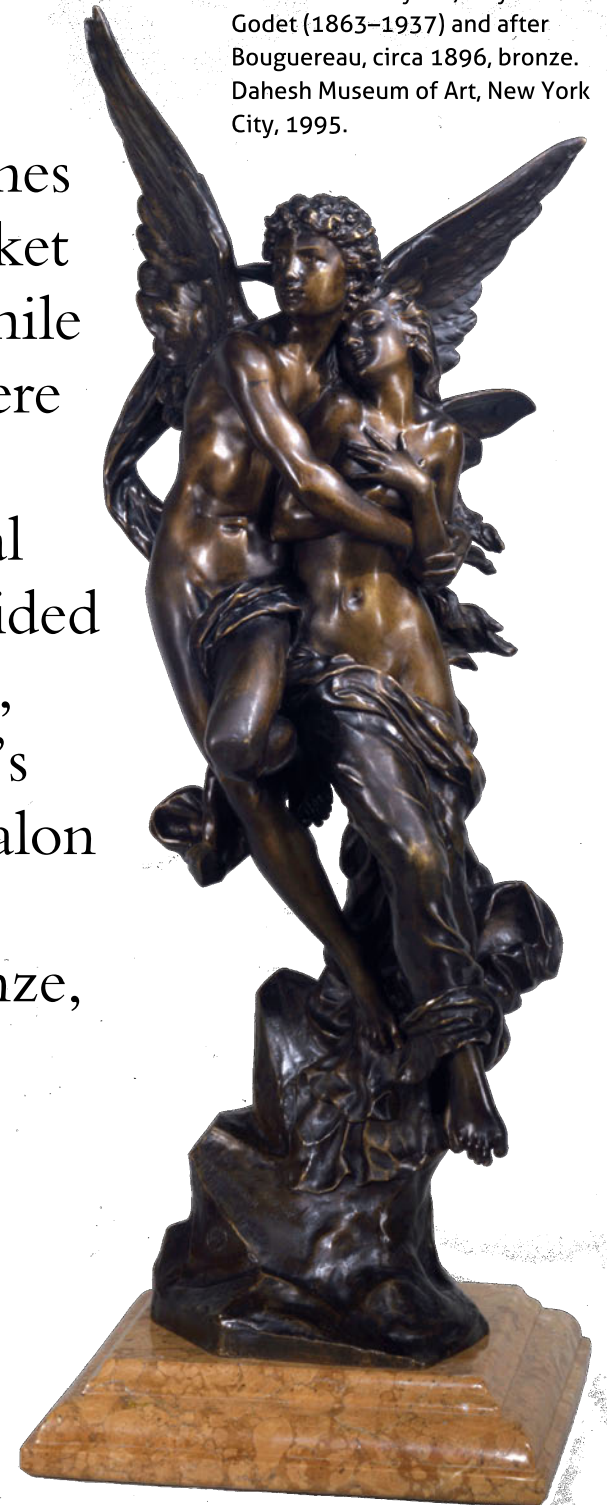




The exhibition also examines the rise and fall in the market for Bouguereau's work. While Bouguereau's paintings were eagerly collected by the wealthy, new commercial reproduction methods provided more affordable versions, contributing to the artist's popularity. Bouguereau's Salon paintings were quickly reproduced in marble, bronze, porcelain and as prints.

"L'Amour au Papillon (Love with a Butterfly)" by Clement-Leopold Steiner (1853–1899) and after Bouguereau (1825–1905), 1888 or after, marble. The Collection of Richard H. Driehaus, Chicago.

"Ravissement de Psyche (The Abduction of Psyche)" by Henri Godet (1863–1937) and after Bouguereau, circa 1896, bronze. Daresh Museum of Art, New York City, 1995.



His work was enthusiastically sought by Europeans, but many of Bouguereau's most dedicated collectors were in North America.

"La Madone aux roses (The Madonna of the Roses)" by Bouguereau, 1903, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Lyndhurst, A National Trust Historic Site.

