

WINTERTHUR



Winterthur Press Release

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Winterthur Acquires Two Exceptional Historic Paintings

Intimate family scenes by John Lewis Krimmel and François-Jules Bourgoïn depict early American life in Philadelphia and New York.

Winterthur, DE, July 22, 2019—Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library is pleased to announce its acquisition of two important paintings with significant stories to tell: *Self-Portrait of John Lewis Krimmel with Susannah Krimmel and her Children* (1810–1811) by John Lewis Krimmel (1786–1821) and *Family Group in a New York Interior* by François-Jules Bourgoïn (1786–1821). Together the paintings shed light on the impact of the revolution era in the Atlantic World on American art and material culture.

German-American John Lewis Krimmel is often referred to as the first genre painter in America. Born Johann Ludwig Krimmel in 1786, in the family of an established baker of fine pastries of Ebingen in Württemberg, Germany, Krimmel immigrated to Philadelphia in the aftermath of Napoleon's invasion of German territories. Following his older brother George to Philadelphia in 1809, Krimmel was to become George's assistant in business. About a year after his arrival, however, Krimmel decided to pursue a career as an artist. Self-trained, he died 11 years later at the age of 30 in a drowning accident, soon after being elected president of the Association for American Artists and while preparing his most prestigious commission, *The Landing of William Penn at Newcastle in October 1682*.

Self-Portrait of John Lewis Krimmel with Susannah Krimmel and her Children was likely painted early in the artist's career in Philadelphia. Later described by Abraham Ritter Jr., a friend of the family, as a representation of Krimmel's reunion with George's family at their home on Eleventh and Market streets in Philadelphia, the oil-on-canvas painting, at 14 x 12 inches, is full of interesting objects of the kind found in the Winterthur collection. The eldest son sits on a fancy Windsor chair, painting with watercolors. His younger sister below looks toward the

viewer, showing a watercolor in her hand, possibly a metamorphosis booklet used by German Americans for instructing children in religious and moral values. Susannah sits on a low chair with rockers, probably a nursing chair. Behind her, a fly cloth is draped over the clock on the chest of drawers. Above the clock hangs George's portrait and two drawings. This painting of Krimmel's family reinforces Winterthur's strong collection of Krimmel materials, which includes two genre scenes and a series of extraordinary sketchbooks.

"It is an intimate scene," said Stephanie Delamaire, Ph.D., Associate Curator of Fine Art at Winterthur. "And it shows with such delightful details how everyday objects were being used."

The painting is the former property of the Westervelt Warner Collection of American Art. It was previously in the Schwarz Gallery, Philadelphia, and at the Duke Kahanamoku Estate, in Hawaii.

The exquisite 30- by 42-inch *Family Group in a New York Interior*, signed and dated J. Bourgoin pt / New-York-1807, is a conversation piece, or family picture, painted in oil on canvas by the elusive François-Jules Bourgoin. Bourgoin was a painter, miniaturist, and engraver known to have exhibited portraits, landscapes, seascapes, history paintings, and mythological scenes. He is often confused with François-Joseph Bourgoin, a rococo painter of French royal entertainments who was active in Paris during the second half of the 18th century. A student of German painter Anton Raphael Mengs and Italian painter Francesco Guiseppe Casanova, François-Jules Bourgoin is listed in several Paris Salons (1796, 1808, 1810, 1812).

"In some ways, Bourgoin is a big question mark," said Delamaire. "Very few pieces by him are known," and little is known about his life, other than he spent a significant part of it in the Americas. Beside this New York family interior, Bourgoin also painted several scenes in Jamaica and Saint-Domingue (*French Soldiers Fighting the Black Population in Santo Domingo; View of a field on a Caribbean Island; The Kingston Racetrack, overlooking Port-Royal, Jamaica*), suggesting that he might have been among those who moved to the United States as a result of the Haitian Revolution. *Family Group in a New York Interior* is the first of Bourgoin's oeuvre associated with New York. It is especially interesting for the way it contextualizes many pieces of furniture as well as utilitarian and decorative objects, such as the Argand sconces above a marble mantel piece adorned with neoclassical motifs; the dressing glass on a Pembroke table for the young girl at the left of the composition; the portable writing desk on top of a drop-leaf table with an open drawer showing a wax stick, ink stand and quill ready for use; and the marble-topped server (or chest of drawers), where a Sheffield-plated tea urn and teapots have been placed. This painting's detailed representation of material culture not only makes it an ideal object of study for Winterthur's visitors, researchers, and students, the picture also present

opportunities for further research into the life of this under-studied artist and its connection to the history of American art and the Revolutions in the Atlantic world. As for the family represented, Delamaire said, “There are lots of possibilities to explore.”



Self-Portrait of John Lewis Krimmel with Susannah Krimmel and her Children by John Lewis Krimmel (1786–1821), Oil on canvas, 14 x 12 inches, 1810–11.



Family Group in a New York Interior by François-Jules Bourgoïn (1786–1821), Oil on canvas, 30 x 42 inches, c. 1805.

[Please click link for high-resolution photos with accompanying credit.](#)

ABOUT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN & LIBRARY

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in Henry Francis du Pont’s former home as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden.

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Museum hours are 10:00 am–5:00 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. \$20 for adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$6 for ages 2–11. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.

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