

ANTIQUES

And The Arts Weekly

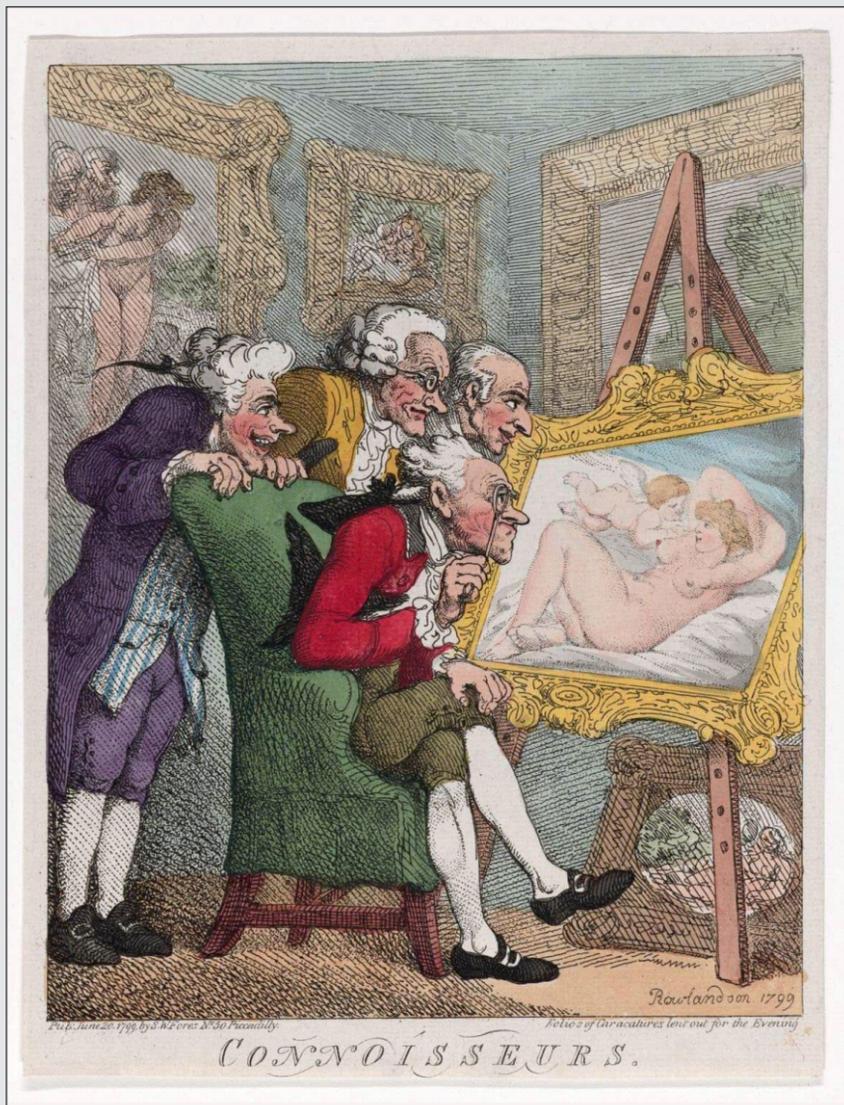
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“Connoisseurs” by Thomas Rowlandson, 1799, hand-colored etching, published by S.W. Fores, No. 50 Piccadilly, Corner of Sackville Street, London. Gift of Carl Zigrosser, 1974.

“Italian Picture Dealers Humbugging My Lord Anglaise” by Thomas Rowlandson, 1812, hand-colored etching, published in London. Gift of Carl Zigrosser, 1974.

Biting Wit And Brazen Folly

British Satirical Prints, 1780s-1830s

BY JAMES D. BALESTRIERI
PHILADELPHIA — Foible is a great word. So is folly. Though they are somewhat out of fashion, even dated, the concepts they describe have, perhaps, never been more relevant. And together, foible and folly are the stuff of satire. Satire has been around as long as language and images have been etched in stone and set down on papyrus, foolscap and newsprint. We find satire in literature, in poetry and prose. We find it in painting and sculpture, in song and film, and on the stage. We find satire wherever human frailty inflates and becomes ego, vanity and hubris. The satirist is the court jester of the arts, the one who tells the naked emperor that he has been cheated by his tailors. The caricature is the natural vehicle for the satirical artist.

At the end of the Eighteenth Century, two events rocked the British Empire. First, the infallible core of that empire was shaken by two revolutions, one leading to the loss of Britain’s American



“Dandy Pickpockets, Diving” by Isaac Robert Cruikshank, 1818, hand-colored etching, published in London. Gift of Carl Zigrosser, 1974.

colonies; the other, in France, threatening the very centrality of monarchy as the indispensable political system. Second, the new middle class exploded in Great Britain. Rural agrarian society rapidly gave way to urban, industrial dominance. There were new kinds of jobs and people who were identified with those jobs. Alongside this, new money chased the aristocracy in matters of taste, including art and fashion.

Gossip flew, tastes enjoyed booms and busts, technologies sputtered into being and were ridiculed, classes mixed and wondered about one another. All was ripe for lampooning. Print technologies had made reproduction faster and cheaper, and, like today’s political cartoons and internet memes, satirical images were enjoyed publicly and socially and read like sociological tea leaves to gauge public opinion. As the text of “Biting Wit and Brazen Folly: British Satirical Prints,

(continued on page 30)



Needle's Eye Folly, Rob Cardillo Photography



Ottoman Tent Folly, Rob Cardillo Photography

Follies Run Amok In Winterthur's Garden

WINTERTHUR, DEL. — Thirteen fantastic structures — from a Gothic-inspired tower and an Ottoman tent to American summerhouses and a faerie cottage — await exploration in “Follies: Architectural Whimsy in the Garden,” Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library’s debut garden exhibition, on view through January 5. Some of the follies are newly-built structures based on classic and contemporary examples at estates elsewhere. Others are historic structures currently in the garden that visitors have enjoyed for years. Together, they form a delightful, entertaining and fresh way for visitors to discover and experience the Winterthur Garden.

A folly is a structure placed in a garden or landscape, built primarily for decoration but suggesting through its appearance some other purpose. Follies amuse the observer, frame a vista or pique the viewer’s curiosity. Follies are often placed to create a destination for visitors as they explore a garden or estate.

“I don’t know if Americans think of gazebos or summerhouses as follies,” said Chris Strand, Brown Harrington director of garden and estate. “To most



Chinese Pavilion Folly, Rob Cardillo Photography

of us, they are a convenient place to have a picnic or sit and relax. Our founder, Henry Francis du Pont, was well-traveled and university-educated in horticulture and knew about follies and their history. Working closely on the garden design with this childhood friend, noted architect Marian Coffin, he relocated a number of historic structures to Winterthur and placed them to draw attention to particular views and provide a sense of place. We hope our visitors will absorb that as they walk through the garden and are delighted by this imaginative architecture.”

The 60-acre Winterthur Garden is surrounded by nearly 1,000 acres of meadows, farmland and waterways. The views in every direction are important to the whole. The paths are an integral part to the overall design, curving rather than straight, following the contours of the land, passing around trees and drawing walkers into the garden. The garden itself is a perfect setting for follies.

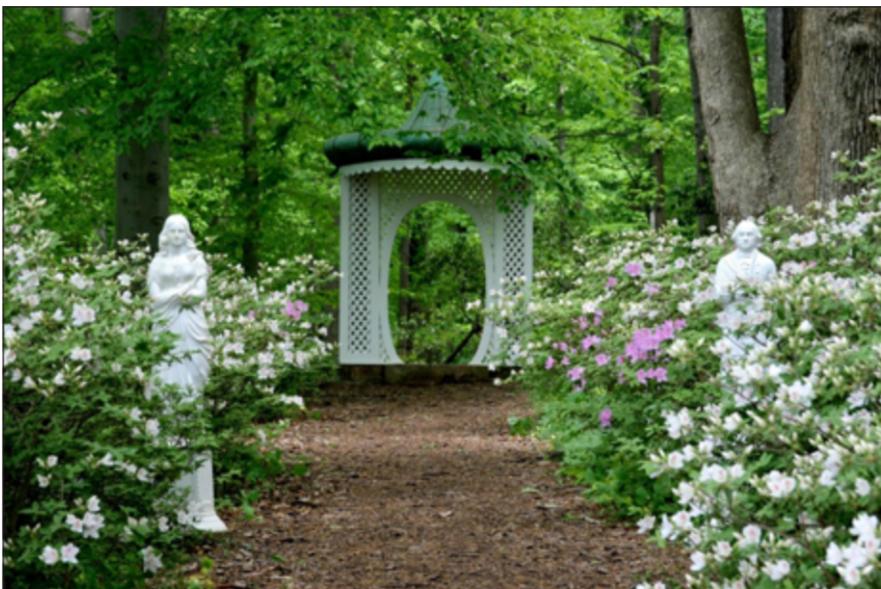
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library is at 5105 Kennett Pike. For additional information, 302-888-4780 or www.winterthur.org.



Neoclassical Folly, Rob Cardillo Photography



Gothic Tower Folly, Rob Cardillo Photography



Pagoda Gate Folly

—Jeannette Lindvig photo



Brick Lookout Folly

—Bob Leitch photo