**Re-Membering Marie Antoinette**

Focus on sequence of assignments for Unit 2 on Material Culture

Luxury objects in the age of Marie Antoinette: A Collaborative On-line Exhibit

The late eighteenth-century in France was a moment of perfection and refinement in luxury craftsmanship: exquisitely crafted furniture, carved and painted wall paneling, refined fabrics—lace, muslin, velvets and silks—with hand-painted or embroidered designs, useful and decorative porcelain in brilliant colors and delicate patterns, imaginative coiffures and hats, all abounded in the interior spaces and on the bodies of those from the wealthy ranks of society. Marie Antoinette, if not always the leader in setting a decorative trend, was highly conscious of fashion and showed refined taste in design and materials.

The items of the online exhibit have been selected to showcase the variety of objects that Marie Antoinette might have used and chosen for her interior spaces and to adorn her person. They all are examples of craftsmanship of the highest order, fashioned and maintained through the corporation system that governed such crafts and trade during the ancien régime, and as showcased in the plates and articles explaining their construction in the *Encyclopédie*. Each of these items can also be seen in the context of an interior space from the period as represented in one or more of the accompanying prints from the *Monument du Costume* by Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, assembled as a group of 24 prints in 1789. We can thus visualize how Marie Antoinette might have interacted with the spaces and objects that governed her daily life.

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<td>Monument du Costume, Moreau le Jeune, [1789].Cunningham Print Gallery, SCMA</td>
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**Goals and Parameters:**

- **Focus on intellectual query:** How can we imagine, reconstruct and understand an historical personage?
- **Interdisciplinary exploration**
- **Introduction to college resources**—collections in Smith College Museum, Rare Books Collection, Collection of Historic Costumes.
- **Writing intensive:** array of frequent writing assignments, from personal impressions to comparative essays and research inquiries.

**A Course in four units**

- **From Facts to History**—portraits biographies, correspondence, timeline
- **Material Culture: Things, Places, Spaces in the Private and Public Spheres**—Versailles and Trianon, fashioning the body, luxury objects, and *l’Encyclopédie*
- **Conflicting Images of a Myth**—portraits, caricatures, pamphlets, theatre, films
- **In Her Shoes**—Reenacting Marie Antoinette’s trial

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**A First-Year Seminar**

Janie Vanpée, Smith College