



Nicolas Lancret: Dance before a Fountain (Getty Museum Studies on Art)

Mary Holmes, Mark Leonard

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In a garden glade before a grand fountain, surrounded by a musical party, an elegant woman in a lustrous white gown dances as part of a foursome, raising her eyes to the viewer as if extending an invitation to the dance. This is the enticing scene in the J. Paul Getty Museum's painting *Dance before a Fountain* by Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743), an excellent example of the *fete galante*, a genre that was created and reached the peak of its popularity in France during the first half of the eighteenth century. This monograph seeks to familiarize American audiences with Lancret, a master of this genre, who was a revered painter in his own time, rivalling his contemporaries Antoine Watteau and Francois Boucher, and a favourite of crowned heads across Europe. Mary Tavenor Holmes's engrossing text uses this painting as a springboard to reveal a remarkable amount about the painter, his mode of painting, Paris at the time this work was made, eighteenth-century dance, and the world of art patronage and collecting in France and elsewhere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lavishly illustrated with comparative paintings by artists such as Watteau, Boucher, Peter Paul Rubens, Jean-Francois

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