

Press Release

French Sculpture Census, World's First Comprehensive Digital Archive of French Sculpture in America, Launches in Cooperation with Six American and French Institutions at <http://frenchsculpture.org/>

DALLAS, Texas- (December 15, 2014) The Nasher Sculpture Center, in partnership with The University of Texas at Dallas, the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, the Musée d'Orsay, the Musée Rodin, and the Ecole du Louvre in Paris, announced today the launch of the French Sculpture Census at <http://frenchsculpture.org/>.

The first of its kind anywhere in the world, the Census is directed by Laure de Margerie, former Senior Archivist of Sculpture at the Musée d'Orsay and current research fellow at UTD under the auspices of the newly created Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History. For it, de Margerie has produced a digital archive of 7,000 French sculptures dating between 1500 and 1960 that are found in American museums, public buildings, historic homes and estates, or displayed in public space. Offered in both English and French, the Census presents in rich detail the breadth, quality and diversity of nearly 500 years of French sculpture collected in the United States.

The Census is shaped by the US partnership between University of Texas at Dallas, which funds and contributes resources to Director de Margerie's research and retribution, and the Nasher Sculpture Center, which has built the website, hosts and digitally maintains it. It is coproduced with the French institutions, INHA, Musée d'Orsay, Musée Rodin and Ecole du Louvre, which provide financial, academic and technical support.

"The French Sculpture Census marks an important contribution to the study of the history of taste, the building of American museum collections, the development of the art market, and the transatlantic art trade," notes de Margerie. "It is our goal to make the website an invaluable resource for a varied audience: museum professionals, curators, conservators, scholars, historians, professors, students, collectors, dealers, auctioneers, and all those interested in French sculpture or wishing to discover, learn, and appreciate the field."

"Steered by the focused vision and energy of Laure de Margerie, the Census is a tremendous scholarly undertaking," said UTD's Dr. Richard Brettell, the Margaret McDermott Distinguished Chair, "but one which will prove a true asset to people in all walks of life, from the art historian to those simply curious about French sculpture. It is a privilege for UTD to work alongside Ms. de Margerie and to bring, with our friends at the Nasher Sculpture Center, this archive to the public."

"The Nasher is proud to work in cooperation with this group of excellent institutions on the French Sculpture Census, a groundbreaking digital archive. As an institution dedicated to sculpture and with a wide array of French works in our collection, the Nasher's development of the digital platform and hosting of the French Sculpture Census is a truly sympathetic partnership," says Nasher Director Jeremy Strick.

With this launch, comprehensive information for 7,000 works by 690 artists in 305 locations is immediately available. Over time, additional objects will be added with the goal of expanding the Census's online content by over 50% to include 15,000-20,000 sculptures nationwide.

French Sculpture Census Website Features and Tools

FrenchSculpture.org has been developed to share a detailed amount of information on each of the objects included in the census and broader information on sculpture as a field. It includes:

- Search screens with access by artist, place of birth and death, gender, type of sculpture, medium, period, location, and a full text search,
- Educational tools such as a specialized bibliography, a list of exhibitions, a glossary of sculpture terms, descriptions of sculpture techniques (modeling, carving, casting), references to legal texts defining original works and reproductions in the case of editions, links to other specialized websites,
- « Spotlights on... » works with odd destinies, rediscoveries, « coups de cœur » (favorite pieces), unexpected ensembles.
- Each object record will be illustrated with one photograph and will include a direct link to the owning institution website.
- The web version will also interact with viewers by inviting them to report new sculptures or bring additional information to existing ones, with Laure de Margerie vetting all data.

About the Six French Sculpture Census Partners

- The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), School of Arts and Humanities, Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Museums, co-directed by Dr. Richard R. Brettell
www.utdallas.edu/
Provides retribution, travel fees, research resources and technical equipment to Laure de Margerie
- The Nasher Sculpture Center, in Dallas, Director: Jeremy Strick
www.nashersculpturecenter.org/
Funds the development of the interface between the database and the Internet, built the website, hosts and digitally maintains it.
- The National Institute for Art History (Institut national d'histoire de l'art, INHA), in Paris; Director: Antoinette Le Normand-Romain
www.inha.fr/
Funds the rights for the images of the artists not yet in the public domain.
- The Musée d'Orsay, in Paris; Director: Guy Cogeval
www.musee-orsay.fr/
Provides assistance in the development and adaptive maintenance of the database.
- The Musée Rodin, in Paris; Director: Catherine Chevillot
www.musee-rodin.fr/
Will fund a part time student three months/year to complete the Rodin records in the Census.
- The Ecole du Louvre, in Paris; Director: Philippe Durey
www.ecoledulouvre.fr/
Makes interns available to the Census; provides travel grants through French Heritage Society, the Conseil régional d'Ile de France, or from its own funds; if needed, lends laptops.

About Laure de Margerie, Director of the French Sculpture Census

From 1978 through 2009, Laure de Margerie was Senior Archivist, Head of the Sculpture Archives at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. When the former Gare d'Orsay railway station was converted into the museum in 1986, de Margerie was part of the team who installed the sculpture collection and co-authored the collection catalogue. During her 31-year tenure at the museum, and with the Musée d'Orsay sculpture curators, Laure de Margerie built a globally acclaimed resource part of a research center that welcomes 2400 international visitors each year. The Sculpture Archives at the Musée d'Orsay include comprehensive documentation on 10,000 sculptors (French and foreign) and 4,000 objects (sculptures and medals belonging to the Musée d'Orsay).

Laure de Margerie also took part in major exhibitions such as *La sculpture française au XIX^{ème} siècle* (Paris, Grand Palais, 1986), *Le corps en morceaux* (Paris and Frankfurt, 1990), *Auguste Préault (1809-1879)* (Paris, Blois and Amsterdam, 1997-98). She curated several exhibitions: *La Danse de Carpeaux* (Paris and Valenciennes, 1989), *Drawings by Carpeaux* (Paris, 1991-92), *Carpeaux peintre* (Paris, Valenciennes and Amsterdam, 1999-2000) and *Charles Cordier (1827-1905), Ethnographic Sculptor* (Paris, Quebec City, and New York, Dahesh Museum, 2004-05). She wrote several essays, catalogues and books on 19th c. sculpture.

She was awarded a fellowship at the Clark Art Institute, in Williamstown, MA (2000-01), and was the Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department guest scholar at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA (Fall 2011). Laure de Margerie started the French Sculpture Census in September 2009 when she moved to Dallas. She joined the University of Texas at Dallas where Prof. Richard R. Brettell, Founding Director, The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History, Margaret McDermott Distinguished Chair, Co-Director of CISM, offered to co-fund the French Sculpture Census in the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Museums.

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