

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Basin

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, est. 1756)

Date 1776

Medium Soft-paste porcelain

Dimensions 2 7/8 × 10 3/4 × 8 3/8 in. (7.3 × 27.3 × 21.3 cm)

Credit Line Gift of Miss Helen Clay Frick, 1934

Accession Number 1934.9.43

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 28, Boucher Room

Commentary Dressing and grooming (often done in the presence of friends and visitors) were important in the life of an eighteenth-century aristocrat, and the manufactory at Sèvres produced many accessories, often in sets, for these activities, including small boxes, jars, and brushes in different shapes and sizes. Large jugs and basins used to wash one's hands with scent infused water were usually displayed on the dressing table during the morning ritual or in the garde-robe as precursors of the plumbed-in hand basin. At the time, clean water was a rare commodity, even for the wealthiest, and many doctors advised against bathing or even washing one's face, fearing dangerous illness. However, the water jugs and basins made at Sèvres were always beautifully decorated, these with fruits and flowers in white reserves against a turquoise blue ground. The flowers and fruits—pink roses, mauve convolvuli, blue ranunculi, yellow anemones, pink peach, and purple plums, among others—were painted by Cyprien-Julien Hirel de Choisy (active 1770–1800) in the style of a Flemish still-life painting.

Collection History Baron Foley, Ruxley Lodge, Claygate, Surrey. Gift of Miss Helen C. Frick, 1934. Source: *Porcelains in The Frick Collection: Oriental and French*. Volume VII. New York: The Frick Collection, 1974.