

**Ambitious series of engravings by groundbreaking
17th-century French artist on view at the
National Museum of Women in the Arts**

**Impressive: Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella *installation presented
for first time in 15 years***



Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella, Plate 25 from *The Entrance of the Emperor Sigismund into Mantua*, 1675; Engraving on paper, 9 x 19 1/2 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Chris Petteys; Photo by Lee Stalworth

WASHINGTON—This fall the National Museum of Women in Arts ([NMWA](#)) presents in its entirety an acclaimed series of 25 prints by the 17th-century artist Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella. Installed as a wrap-around narrative frieze, the series demonstrates how the power of classical art was borrowed from antiquity, employed in 16th-century Italy and sought by the 17th-century French court—and how, given opportunity and training, women artists could excel. *Impressive: Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella* is on view through October 20, 2024.

Bouzonnet-Stella (1641–1676) is best remembered for her masterfully executed aquatints and relief-style engravings on paper. *The Entrance of the Emperor Sigismund into Mantua* (engraved 1675; published around 1787), her most notable series, dramatically depicts crowds of men, women, children and horses traveling alongside the emperor. The work reproduces an Italian

Renaissance stucco frieze designed by Giulio Romano (1499–1546) and Francesco Primaticcio (1504–1570) for the Palazzo Te in Mantua, Italy.

Born in Lyons, France, Bouzonnet-Stella moved to Paris in 1654 with her siblings—her sisters, Claudine and Françoise, and brother, Antoine. There, they lived with their uncle, artist Jacques Stella (1596–1657), and worked in his workshop and studio in the Louvre. It was here that Bouzonnet-Stella received much of her training and made print reproductions of her uncle's work. She also received her own independent commissions.

The museum's exhibition presents in its entirety Bouzonnet-Stella's epic suite of prints, which she produced on commission for Jean-Baptiste Colbert, advisor to King Louis XIV. Her work at the French court was part of Colbert's plan as *vice-protecteur* of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture to promote a "French style" based in classical art. Through prints like these, which could be reproduced and widely disseminated, Paris became the epicenter of printmaking in Europe, a legacy that Bouzonnet-Stella and her family helped to shape.

High-resolution images available upon request.

Impressive: Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella is organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The exhibition is generously supported by Stephanie Sale and the members of NMWA.

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