

RESTITUTION

The Restitution of *The Penitent
Magdalene*: a Work of Justice

Press Release

Concert and conference on
the restitution of *The Penitent
Magdalene*

Thursday, February 1st
7:30pm
Fondation des États-Unis



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La Fondation des États-Unis —

Founded in 1930 by the American visionaries Homer and Mabel Gage, the United States Foundation (Fondation des États-Unis or FEU) is an American multicultural center in Paris offering students and researchers from around the world an inspiring place to study and a communal living environment. It is also a pillar of peace: its cultural and artistic program celebrates friendship between cultures while showcasing the talents of American youth to Paris. Located across from Parc Montsouris, on the 36-hectare eco-campus of the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris (CiuP), the Foundation is housed in an eight-thousand-square-meter art deco building designed by architect Pierre Leprince-Ringuet as a tribute to Franco-American friendship. It features a library, several meeting rooms, an art gallery, a magnificent and large concert/conference hall overlooking a rose garden, and a 5th floor of artists' and musicians' studios.

The frescoes on the walls, by Franco-American painter Robert La Montagne Saint-Hubert, are listed as a historic monument and can be visited by the public during European Heritage Days. To fulfill its public-interest mission, the FEU presents projects throughout the year that are led by its residents, alumni, its own Harriet Hale Wolley Fellowship artists, and other companies in artistic residence. The FEU's mission is to strengthen the friendship and cooperation between France and the United States through education and culture. It provides an intercultural environment, ideal for shaping global citizens with the humanist values needed to build a better world. Because the FEU is a non-profit organization, its concerts, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, performances, and scientific activities are open to the general public free of charge. Each year, thanks to the center's grants and its partnership with the Fulbright Program, a new generation of talent can live together, exchange ideas, exhibit, perform, and freely express their creativity with each other and, in the Grand Salon of the FEU, with the wider community of France.

About

The Fondation des États-Unis (FEU) is pleased to organize an evening around the work of Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722) *Madeleine Pénitente*. This unique and historic event will take place on February 1, 2024, starting at 6 pm.

Surrounding and celebrating the restitution of the work *Madeleine Pénitente*, the evening offers the general public the chance to discover the incredible story of this work, which was looted during the Second World War and returned to the Hauser family in 2023. The evening will begin with a talk on the restitution of this work in the presence of the artist's family, lawyer Charlotte Caron, who worked for the restitution under French law, and American specialist Raymon Dowd, a New York attorney and Associate Professor at Fordham Law School. The evening will continue with a concert, orchestrated and directed by Diana Ligeti, director of the Fontainebleau Schools of Music and Fine Arts, recounting the eventful history of the painting. Musicians in residence at the FEU, alumni and students of the Fontainebleau Schools of Music and Fine Arts will lead this moment of sharing. Together, they will immerse the general public in the emotion of classical music from the 18th century to the Second World War. The program includes other surprises based on the despoiled works.

Friends and patrons of the FEU, as well as members of the press, will be invited to a private reception in the exhibition gallery.

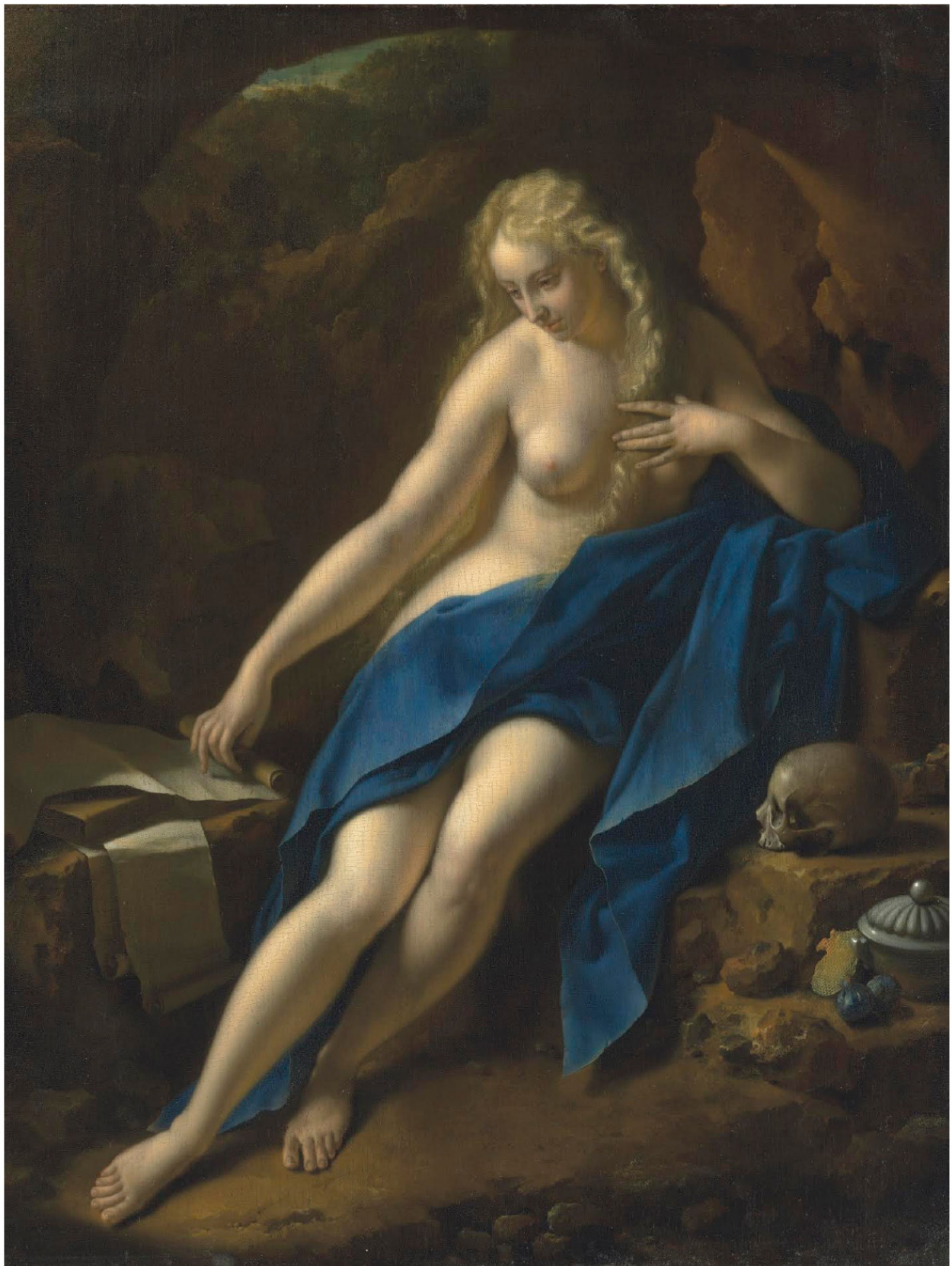
This event is supported by two law firms: the New York-based office of Dunnington Bartholow & Miller LLP, and the Paris-based office, Caron Avocats.

Artwork presentation

Mary Magdalene, popularly (though falsely epitomized as the «sinful woman»), emerges before the symbolic rock of Faith, draped in a majestic blue cloak revealing part of her body. The work's staging and Mary Magdalen's posture provoke deep reflection. Her left hand, touching her heart, expresses penitence, underlining her spiritual commitment. Beside her, a skull rests humbly on the ground, reminding us of the transience of life and the vanity of the earthly world. Nearby, a vase of ointment evokes the traditional iconography of Mary Magdalene, associated with the ancient symbolism of perfume as a means of transcending barriers towards heavenly bliss. Her right hand grazes a text which resembles the Bible. This gesture underlines her commitment to the study of sacred teachings. The scene suggests a profound spiritual quest and a desire to understand divine precepts. In the background, the sunrise creates an atmosphere of renewal, metaphorically symbolizing a new spiritual dawn and inner rebirth. This ephemeral moment, captured by van der Werff, evokes the transition of the repentant sinner to a new life, illuminated by Faith and the Resurrection of Christ. In this way, the work transcends mere artistic representation and embodies a profound spiritual message, which invites the viewer to reflect on redemption, faith and the possibility of inner transformation.

The work was removed from its temporary storage in a furniture repository by Nazi occupying forces. At the time of its spoliation, the piece's owner Lionel Hauser, banker and representative of Warburg & Co. bank in Paris, had taken refuge in the Free Zone in the South of France. A cousin by marriage as well as friend and financial advisor to Marcel Proust, Lionel Hauser was a renowned art lover and collector. Following a condemnation from the Paris Court of First Instance on January 27, 2023, defended in legal proceedings by Charlotte Caron, the auction house holding *Madeleine Pénitente* was obliged to return the work to Lionel Hauser's heirs.

The Artwork



Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722)
Madeleine Pénitente
1707, oil on wood panel, 44,8 x 34,9 cm

Musical Program

Divided into 3 distinct parts: the 18th century, the Second World War, and Spain, the musical program for this evening's restitution celebration will be performed by students from The Fontainebleau Schools of Music and Fine Arts (EAAF), as well as resident artists from the Fondation des États-Unis. Conducted by Diana Ligeti, professor at the CNSMD de Paris, CRR de Rueil -Malmaison and Artistic Director at the EAAF, the musicians will perform pieces by Barrier, Mozart, Klein, Shostakovich, Ravel, and Bach.

The Musicians

Isabelle Pazar, flute (FEU musician)

Ian Tomaz , piano (FEU musician)

Jonathan Mutel, violin (FEU musician)

Andrew Briggs, cello (FEU Alumnus and EAAF Alumnus)

Thomaz Tavares Paes, flute (FEU Alumnus and EAAF Alumnus)

Bartu Elci-Ozsoy, violin (EAAF)

Antonin Lefaure, viola (EAAF)

Diana Ligeti, cello (Artistic Director of the EAAF)

The Musical Program

18th century

J.B. Barriere (1707-1747)

Sonata for 2 cellos in G Major

Andrew Briggs, Diana Ligeti

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

1st movement from Flute Quartet in C Major

Jonathan Mutel, Antonin Lefaure, Andrew Briggs, Isabelle Pazar

Excerpts from the flute quartet in D Major

Bartu Elci-Ozsoy, Antonin Lefaure, Andrew Briggs, Thomaz Tavares

Musical program

World War II

D. Shostakovich (1906-1975)

1st and 2nd movements of the 8th string quartet

Jonathan Mutel, Bartu Elci-Ozsoy, Antonin Lefaire, Andrew Briggs

J. Williams (1932-)

Schindler's list

Jonathan Mutel, Isabelle Pazar, Diana Ligeti, Ian Tomaz

Spain

M. Ravel (1875-1937)

Alborada del gracioso

Ian Tomaz

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Nana

Thomaz Tavares, Ian Tomaz

F. Kreisler (1875-1962)

Variations on a theme by De Falla

Jonathan Mutel, Ian Tomaz

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

From the «Festo Visitationis» to the chorale «Joy of men's desiring»

Isabelle Pazar, Ian Tomaz, Jonathan Mutel, Andrew Briggs, Thomaz Tavares, Bartu Elci-Ozsoy, Antonin Lefaire, Diana Ligeti

Both institutions born of a shared desire to contribute to the development of Franco-American friendship, the Fontainebleau Schools of Music and Fine Arts (EAAF) and the Fondation des États-Unis (FEU) are strengthening their partnership with new enthusiasm in the wake of the pandemic. Whether through student exchanges or the realization of joint projects, our two institutions share the same objectives: cultural exchange, open-mindedness, and the dissemination of French culture in the United. Both institutions accomplish this goal by welcoming students from American universities and transmitting our shared mission to promote creation. Our collaboration is based on these axes. Within this partnership, FEU residents join the EAAF's summer sessions to collaborate with Fontainebleau students on their projects; EAAF students come to the FEU to showcase their talents in concert on the last Thursday in July.

The EAAF offers a unique summer program for musicians (string players, pianists and composers) and architects. Located in the magnificent château and town of Fontainebleau, some 60 kilometers southeast of Paris, the program has a rich tradition dating back to its creation in 1921. The music conservatory offers individual studies and chamber music. Pianists and composers study harmony, analysis, fugue and counterpoint. The school of architecture, or fine arts, brings together disparate artistic disciplines to explore new ways of seeing, thinking, and designing. At Fontainebleau, these disciplines often intersect in surprising and unusual ways. Music and architecture students live and eat together, attend lectures and concerts, and attend joint excursions. Students are encouraged to observe each other's work and collaborate on projects. The highly talented and diverse student body are instructed in English by a predominantly French faculty of renowned musicians, designers and artists. The five-week architecture program and four-week music conservatory offer opportunities for educational progression with in-depth exposure to French music, design, and history.

Practical Information

Fondation des États-Unis

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Find all the details of the cultural program online at fondationdesetatsunis.org

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & YouTube
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Pricing

Free entrance

Reservations recommended via our website



Opening hours

Monday to Friday

10:00-12:30 / 14:00-17:30

Access

By public transport :

RER B: Cité Universitaire

Streetcar T3a: Cité Universitaire

Bus 21 or 67: Stade Charléty - Porte de Gentilly

By car :

Parking available in the surrounding streets.

Underground parking lot Porte de Gentilly (approx. 500m from the Fondation): Parking Charléty-Coubertin.

By bike :

It's possible to get to the FEU by bike with Vélib, station at the bottom of the FEU.

Conference partners:



Concert partners:



Reception partners:

