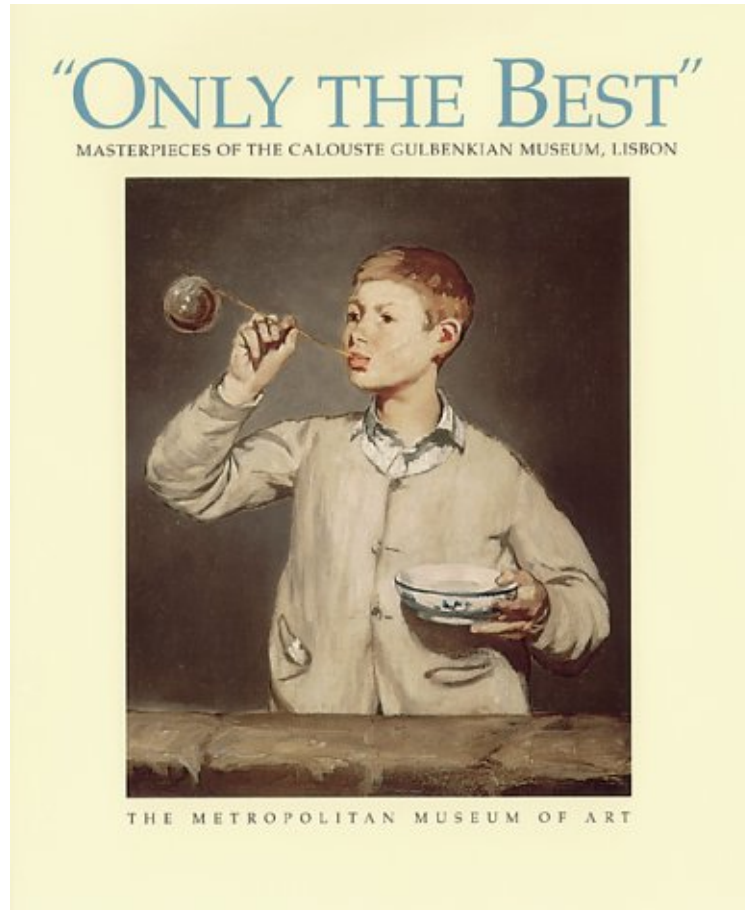


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## Only the Best (Metropolitan Museum of Art Publications)

*Katharine Baetjer*

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**Katharine Baetjer : Only the Best (Metropolitan Museum of Art Publications)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Only the Best (Metropolitan Museum of Art Publications):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Hayden18Enjoyed the museum while visiting Lisbon and wanted. The collection is breathtaking.5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Oil and ArtBy Vahe KandaharianThe first two decades of the 20th century were marked by military conflicts, civil wars, genocide and famine. During these hard times a dozen of individuals from both sides of the Atlantic became extremely wealthy by founding oil companies. Among them was Calouste Gulbekian who had generated tremendous wealth from his oil dealings in the Middle East and Russia. Along with his knowledge of the petroleum industry Gulbenkian's passion for art led to a collection of masterpieces that is only rivalled by major museums. Islamic Art, Armenian manuscripts, French Sculpture, jewelry by Lalique, paintings by Rubens, Manet, Gainsborough and others - all reflect Calouste Gulbenkian's different facets of life. Gulbenkian was born in Constantinople to an Armenian family. He studied and

lived in London, Paris and Lisbon. Along with his oil dealings in Russia in the 1920s he had also acquired art from Hermitage. In his letter to John Walker, curator of the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C., in February 1953, Gulbenkian wrote: I fully realize that it is high time that I should come to a decision with regard to the future of my collections. You know also how deeply attached I am to them all, in fact, it is without slightest exaggeration that I consider them as "my children" and their future welfare is one of my dominant anxieties. They represent fifty or sixty years of my life and I have collected them, at times with immense difficulties, and always and exclusively guided by my own taste and judgement! Of course, as all collectors do, I have sought advice, but I do feel they are mine, after my own heart and soul!! On October 3, 1965 the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum and the headquarters of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation opened in Santa Gertrudes Park in Lisbon, Portugal.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good buy By Pedro Fernandes This book presents a survey of masterpieces in the Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa, Portugal. The reproductions are very good (but not great) and the commentary is better than average. My major complaint is that the book is a bit thin or small. The Gulbenkian collection is excellent in scope and quality and this selection doesn't make justice to the collector.

A Metropolitan Museum of Art Publication This volume brings together 80 of the finest masterpieces in the collection of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, all richly illustrated in color. These magnificent works, which reflect the eclectic taste of renowned art collector Calouste Gulbenkian (1896-1955), include paintings by Rubens, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Turner, and Manet; jewelry by Lalique and silver from services produced for the nobility of Russia and Western Europe; Roman medallions; Ottoman ceramics; Japanese lacquerware; and books and textiles from both the Eastern and Western worlds. Published to accompany an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, this stunning book offers dazzling testimony to Gulbenkian's devotion to quality. As a collector-whether of ancient Egyptian pieces, Islamic works, or European painting and decorative arts-Gulbenkian acquired "only the best." 120 illustrations, 112 in full color, 8 1/2 x 10" KATHARINE BAETJER is curator, Department of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. JAMES DAVID DRAPER is Henry R. Kravis Curator, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art EXHIBITION SCHEDULE The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Nov. 16, 1999-Feb. 27, 2000. End