The Oyster Lunch

Jean-François de Troy

1735 · Oil on canvas · 180 × 126 cm · Musée Condé, Chantilly

Louis XV commissioned this painting for a dining room in his private apartments at Versailles. The richly dressed diners, oysters, champagne and tableware make the meal a display of courtly pleasure.



01 Follow the glances

VIDEO 0:30–1:05 / 1:40–2:05

Several figures look toward a flying champagne cork. Their glances connect the crowded table to the open space above it.

02 Notice work and leisure

VIDEO 0:40–1:05

At lower left, a servant kneels beside a seated diner. The video reads this as attention to his shoes. Set this downward action beside the upward glances.

03 Read the whole space

VIDEO 1:05–1:40

The figures cluster around the table. Tall architecture above and scattered shells below extend the scene. The video traces a diagonal through the gathering.

04 Track light and color

VIDEO 2:20–2:55

Light appears to enter from the left and brighten the white cloth. Warm orange and gold sit beside cool blue and gray, separating clothing and surfaces.

THREE ENLARGED DETAILS



Cork in flight

Several upward glances lead to this small detail against the column.



Service below the table

The kneeling servant brings another kind of attention into the scene.



Objects of luxury

Silver dishes, porcelain coolers and champagne connect pleasure with display.

Based on Bernard Martin, The Oyster Lunch (YouTube, 2018). Historical details checked against Musée Condé, PE 366.

Date note: the video says 1734; the museum dates the painting to 1735. Images: supplied course reproduction, Musée Condé collection.