

Basic Detail Report

**Title**

Blind-Man's Buff

Artist

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

Date

about 1750-1752

Dimensions

Painting: 46 × 36 in. (116.8 × 91.4 cm) Frame: 57 1/2 × 47 1/4 × 4 in. (146.1 × 120 × 10.2 cm)

Medium

oil on canvas

Classifications

Paintings

Credit Line

Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

Object number

1954.43

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Collections

Paintings

Label Text

In the 18th century the game of blind man's buff (or bluff) became the symbolic arena for courtship, chance, and the amorous amusements of lovers (directly relating to the concept "love is blind"). Playfully erotic and sensuously painted, Jean-Honoré Fragonard's scene appropriately takes place within a garden; he develops the theme of the fleeting nature of youthful love by decorating his composition with spring flowers. In a nod to 18th-century French aristocratic taste for romantic pastoral themes, the figures are beautifully dressed in rustic but improbably clean and fashionable clothes; the woman's shoes even have elegant bows on them. As the lover tickles his beloved on the cheek with a piece of straw, a Cupid-like infant brushes her hand with the end of a stick. These teasing gestures are meant to lead or distract the woman to or from the object of her desire. Reaching out to locate her lover, the woman steals a glance from underneath her blindfold and catches our gaze, letting us in on the joke: that she is not as blind or as helpless in this game as her lover suspects.

On View

Toledo Museum of Art (2445 Monroe Street), Gallery, 26, Rotunda