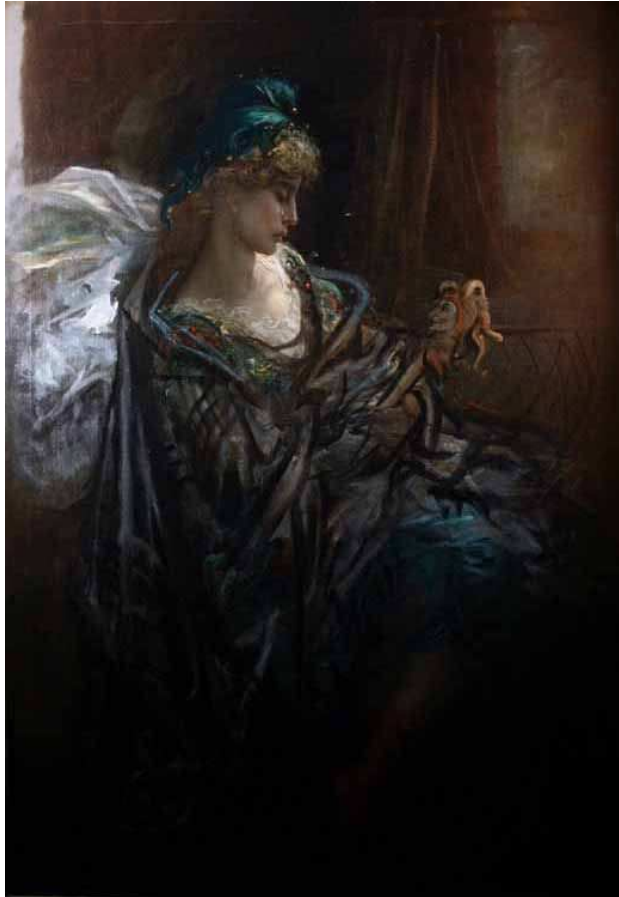


Collections 1800 – 1900

La Folie - Gustave Doré



A richly-dressed young woman sits, weeping.

She nurses a marotte or jester's bauble (the sceptre-like insignia of the medieval court jester), a symbolic inclusion perhaps, given an added dimension by the title which translates as 'the madness'.

X-rays of the painting show the artist originally painted the woman with a baby in her arms (notice the cradle in the top right-hand corner), was the child dead or dying? Rapid overpainting has turned a sentimental composition into a far more enigmatic work.

This painting by Gustave Doré (1832-1883) was bought by Richard Glynn Vivian at the second sale of works from the artist's studio (14th-15th April, 1885) at the Hotel Drouot, Paris. Glynn Vivian and Doré had been friends for a number of years prior to the premature death of the artist, at the age of 51. They would frequent fashionable soirées in the French capital, where Doré's artistic skills were much in demand.