

Jean-Jacques Lequeu  
*Visionary Architect.*  
*Drawings from the*  
*Bibliothèque nationale*  
*de France*

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***Self-Portrait (Jean-Jacques Lequeu Reflecting), 1792***  
**Pen and black and brown ink, brown and gray wash**  
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**Estampes et de la photographie**

In the 1822 catalogue he prepared for the sale of his drawings, Lequeu described himself as “reflecting” in this self-portrait. Seated in a niche, he pauses in his studies. He is surrounded by his accomplishments, including the new map of Paris upon which he rests his arm. The inscription identifies him as an architect of the Rouen Academy, but the elements surrounding him deviate significantly from academic tradition and indicate his personal style as a designer. The pilasters contain fluted diamond-shaped panels that match his signet ring, while the keystone above him is adorned with a beaver, a natural builder.

## ***The Great Yawner***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, red chalk**

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Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu inserted an additional *a* into the French word *bailleur* (yawner) identifying this man with his mouth agape, perhaps to echo the sound of a prolonged yawn. The artist was likely familiar with contemporary depictions of the subject, such as a 1783 self-portrait by Joseph Ducreux (1735–1802) in which he is shown midyawn and Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's 1781–83 bronze head of a yawning man.



Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736–1783), *The Yawner*, 1781–83. Bronze. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. © Szépművészeti Múzeum - Museum of Fine Arts Budapest 2020.

*Squinting Man*

Red chalk and wash, brown ink

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***Pouting Man***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

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Estampes et de la photographie**

*He Sticks Out His Tongue*

Pen and black ink, brown wash

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## ***Preening Man***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

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Lequeu's careful studies of facial expressions also function as self-portraits, revealing the artist at different stages of life and in a range of moods. As with the character heads sculpted by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736–1783) first exhibited in Vienna in 1793, Lequeu's portraits examine how facial expressions convey not only fleeting emotions but also ingrained elements of a subject's personality. Here, the bare-chested artist, his head wrapped in a flannel, puckers his lips and raises his brows in a parody of vanity.

***Proposal for the Dome of Sainte-Madeleine, Rouen, 1775***

**Pen and black ink, gray and brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

In 1773, the Rouen architect Jean Baptiste Le Brument was entrusted with building a chapel for the city's hospital and proposed capping the building with a stone dome. Lequeu, who worked for Le Brument, drew a design for the stone dome from five different angles on this sheet. At lower left, it is outlined horizontally in a rectangular diagram, half viewed from underneath and half from above. This is elaborated in the upper registers, showing an exterior elevation and two cross-sections, with and without coffering. The designs are connected by dotted lines and corresponding letters, inviting viewers to rotate the imaginary structure in their mind's eye. (Ultimately, a lighter and less costly wooden-framed structure was adopted.)

***Perpendicular Section of the Verdiers Mill, 1778***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

The date of this design's creation and the location of the mill it depicts—the town of Guiseniers, between Rouen and Paris—suggest that Lequeu executed it during one of his frequent stays at his granduncle's residence there. The detailed rendering and precisely numbered list of components elaborate on an illustration of rustic agriculture in Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1751–66), which Lequeu studied closely.

***A Stove for the Ceremonial Staircase at the Hôtel  
de Montholon, 1785***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Stoves, often used in place of fireplaces to heat structures, were frequently placed in thoroughfares where residents would not linger. Lequeu took this necessary but smoky feature as the basis for a meditation on architectural and bodily heat. A snaked column alludes to the famous serpentine tripod at Delphi, playfully comparing the hot air produced by the stove with oracular smoke. Above the firebox, the chaste goddess Diana holds an oil lamp suggestively, emphasizing the tension between the heat of desire and the virginity required to tend the temple fire.

***An Andiron for the Hôtel de Montholon, 1785***

**Pen and black ink, gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

While overseeing the construction of the Hôtel de Montholon, Lequeu contributed designs for candelabras, vases, lamps, and moldings as well as functional objects like heating stoves, beds, and door locks. He transformed this utilitarian object into a luxurious decorative element adorned with gilt bronze and ornamented with a classical urn.

***Design for a Living Room at the Hôtel de Montholon, 1785***

**Pen and black ink, gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

The Hôtel de Montholon, built in 1785 by François Soufflot and still standing on one of the Grands Boulevards in northern Paris, is a rare example of a sumptuous neoclassical mansion of the eighteenth century. Lequeu was appointed site foreman, in charge of its construction and interior design. This unrealized design for a living room is dominated by a pair of caryatids, sculptural columns in the form of young women thought to have been enslaved symbolically as architectural supports.

***Facade of a Pleasure Palace, Called the Temple of Silence,*  
1788**

**Pen and black ink, brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

In an effort to establish his architectural career, Lequeu courted aristocratic clients with designs for country residences in the waning moments of the ancien régime. Construction began on a villa in Rouen for one patron, Louis-Jacques Grossin, comte de Bouville, but the project was halted by the revolution and the count's flight from France. That this intimate villa was conceived as a Temple of Silence is indicated by the figure of Harpocrates, the Hellenistic god of secrets, in the tympanum. The design was included in an 1813 publication on civil architecture by Lequeu's friend Jean-Charles Krafft, suggesting contemporary awareness of the artist's work.

***Funerary Monument, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Through an agglomeration of architectural decoration, Lequeu transformed a Corinthian column into a funerary monument. Reminders of death and ancient sepulchral rituals abound: a ceremonial urn atop the column; an ancient tear vessel, or lachrymatory, below; and a skull in the pediment above a ceremonial torch. He even incorporated pairs of crossed tibias in the coffered decoration of the cornice seen in the plan at lower left. Most striking, however, is that a large part of the page is dominated not by the monument but by its shadow, which forms a shape that is both strange and ominous.



***Draftsman's Tools, from Civil Architecture, 1782***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This sheet presents the draftsman's arsenal: brushes, penholders, graphite, rulers, ruling pens, and erasers. In the accompanying text, Lequeu described his drawing process as a series of stages, beginning with contour lines and following with the addition of light and shadow. He was deeply conscious of the diverse sources of his materials, which, as his annotations indicate, came from as far as China, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and Siam (now Thailand).

***Study of Spheres, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and black ink, gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
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*Civil Architecture* includes a number of didactic sheets outlining visual models for technical draftsmanship. This page offers instructions for creating volume and using light and shadow to define complex three-dimensional objects, like armillary spheres and terrestrial globes. The caption at bottom, “Globe of the Earth, or a framework of a dome,” reflects the wide range of subjects encompassed by Lequeu’s guidelines.

***Study of a Head, from New Method, 1792***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

To understand the structure that underlies facial beauty and expressions, Lequeu studied the musculature of the face and its geometric components. His notes on proportions indicate his familiarity with published anatomical texts. Lequeu's commentary, however, ironically acknowledges the limitations of his method, noting that "it would be impossible to determine the true combination of passions on our face."

***Study of a Head, Seen from Behind, from New Method, 1792***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des**

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**Frontispiece to *New Method*, 1792**

**Pen and black ink, gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu used drawing to interrogate the ancient canon of beauty, epitomized in this sheet by a venerated Roman marble bust thought to represent ideal human proportions. He divided the head into its component parts as if it comprised masonry blocks; beneath, he placed an array of the draftsman's tools.

***Study of Mouths, from New Method, 1792***

**Pen and black ink, gray-brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Applying his methodical approach to proportions, Lequeu used a protractor to draw a mouth frontally and in profile. As diagrammed, the contour of lips drawn according to this method would be derived from a series of curved arches extrapolated from a sequence of fixed points. The commentary compares the sinuous line of a closed mouth to a cupid's bow, evoking the "sweet melancholy smile" of Venus's "perfect mouth."

***The Principle of Shadows*, frontispiece to *Civil Architecture*,  
1782**

**Pen and black ink, gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
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In the 107 drawings that comprise his *Civil Architecture*, Lequeu offered methods for depicting three-dimensional forms, the architectures “of various peoples scattered on the Earth,” and his own inventions. He paid special attention to “shadows and their different effects projected on plans, elevations and profiles by the sunlight or burning bodies,” which was the subject of a larger debate among contemporary architects.

***Symbolic Order for the State Room of a National Palace,***  
**1789**

**Pen and black ink, gray-brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Emblematic of the ancien régime, the aristocrat was a subject of scorn during the revolution, when many nobles fled France under the threat of the guillotine. Lequeu's design for a column comprising an aristocrat with shackled wrists punishes the former ruling class in effigy: the noble, denied liberty, is forced to support the weight of the building. This overtly political design testifies to Lequeu's active production of revolutionary iconography.



***Monument to the Glory of Illustrious Men, for the Place de la Victoire, from Civil Architecture, 1794***

**Pen and black ink, gray-blue wash, pen and red ink, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

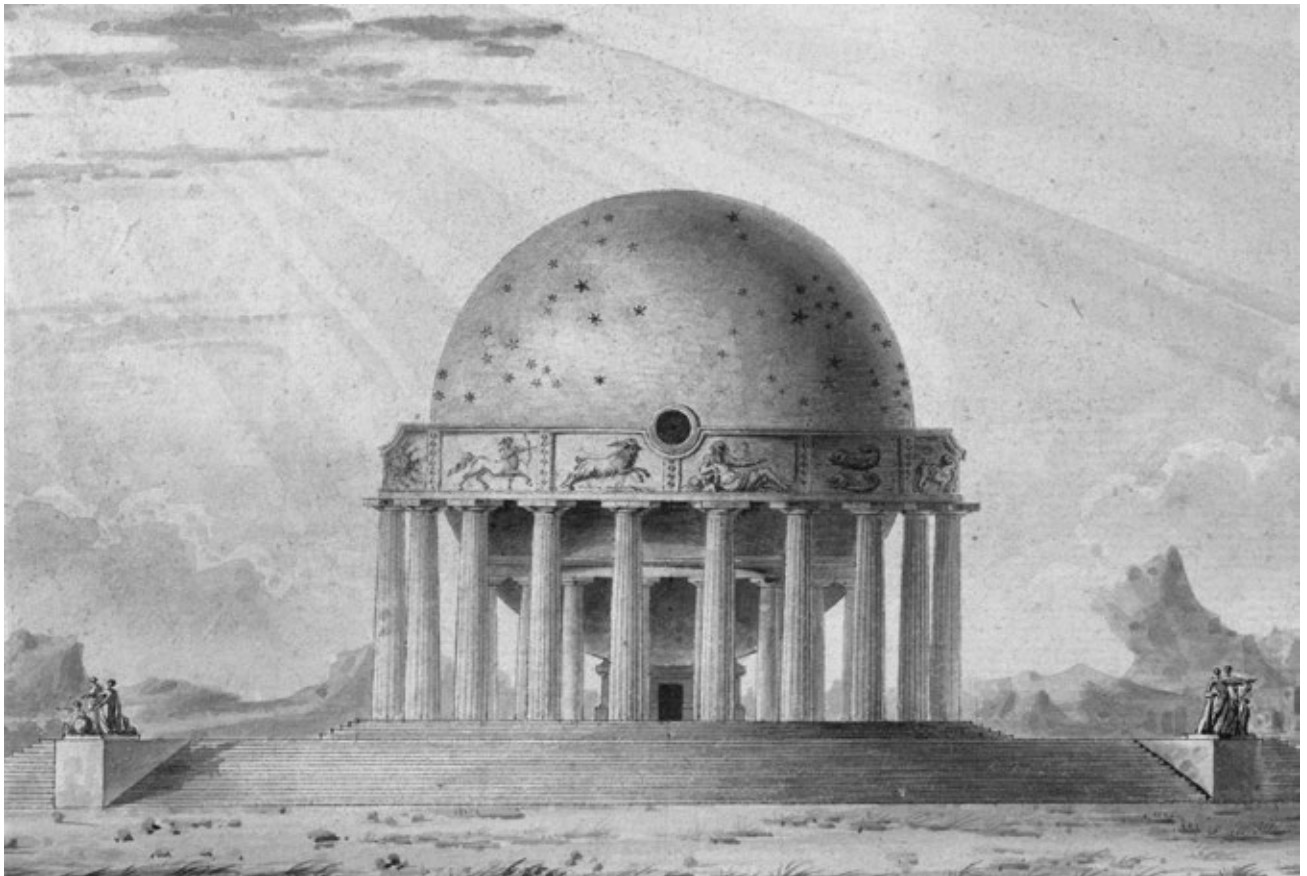
In year II of the republican calendar (1793–94), a competition was held to design a monument commemorating those who had died on 10 August 1792 while storming the Tuileries Palace to depose the king. Lequeu witnessed the celebrations organized in their honor, and some of his marginal inscriptions on this entry are copied from the ephemeral monument erected outside the ruined palace at that time. Even though Lequeu's design was exhibited in the Hall of Liberty—the assembly room of the Revolutionary Tribunal at the Conciergerie prison—the project was abandoned after Maximilien Robespierre's dramatic fall from power in July 1794.

## ***Design for a Temple of Equality, 1794***

**Pen and black ink, gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu prepared this design for a temple in the former aristocratic garden adjacent to the Paris mansion of banker Nicolas Beaujon (now the Élysée Palace) in 1794. He had joined the Popular and Republican Society of the Arts that year, and members were required to demonstrate a refined form of patriotism—likely the reason Lequeu dedicated the temple to Equality. Lequeu adapted the spherical structure from a model popularized by Antoine Laurent Thomas Vaudoyer's 1782 design for a globular house.



Antoine Laurent Thomas Vaudoyer (1756–1846), *Design for the House of a Cosmopolitan*, 1782/83. Watercolor. Private collection. Archives Charmet/Bridgeman Images.

## ***Design for an Assembly Hall, 1794***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

The revolutionary constitution ratified 24 June 1793 (year I) established Primary Assemblies, each comprising between two hundred and six hundred citizens who would gather to vote, although this process was never implemented.

Among the welter of architectural competitions in 1794 was one to commemorate the constitution with a space for these assemblies. In his proposal for an assembly hall, Lequeu transformed Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières's Paris Corn Exchange (1763–69) into a grand arena, circular in plan, capped with a soaring dome, and illuminated by an oculus.



François Louis Couché (1782–1849) after Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721–1793), *Corn Exchange, Paris*, engraving, in *Soixante vues des plus beaux palais, monuments et églises de Paris . . .* (Paris: Vilquin, 1818–22). Bibliothèque nationale de France.

***Design for a Temple of the Earth, from Civil Architecture,***  
**1794**

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**  
**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des**  
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Intrigued by celestial and terrestrial globes, Lequeu frequently employed spheres in his designs. This example reinvents the artist's Temple of Equality (displayed nearby) but takes the earth as its subject. At center would be a "magnificent spectacle of a planetary model . . . surrounded by the dome's representation of the celestial firmament." Lequeu initially submitted the design to the revolutionary authorities in 1794, but his proposal was unsuccessful. In 1819–20, under the Restoration, he recycled the plan for a competition to design a chapel dedicated to St. Louis in Père-Lachaise Cemetery. After it was rejected again, Lequeu included the drawing in his *Civil Architecture* as a Temple of the Earth.

***The Gate of Parisis, from Civil Architecture, 1794***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This proposal for a monumental entrance gate honoring the Celtic tribe that gave Paris its name was exhibited in the Hall of Liberty shortly before the Reign of Terror ended in 1794. It is dense with republican imagery. Atop an arch, a colossal figure of the Gallic Hercules wears a Phrygian cap, surmounted by a Gallic rooster, as he holds a statue of Liberty standing on a globe. Yet Lequeu's apparent support for the revolution cannot be taken at face value. On the back of the drawing, he wrote, "A drawing to save me from the guillotine. Everything for the fatherland."

***Tomb of Isocrates, Athenian Orator, 1789***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Turning to another ancient source—Plutarch’s *Lives of the Ten Orators*—Lequeu transcribed a description of the rhetorician Isocrates’s tomb and rendered a fantastic vision of its appearance. While the original tomb was surmounted by a column bearing a mermaid, symbolizing Isocrates’s eloquence, a mistranslation of the original Greek led Lequeu to include a sheep as the base.



***Aqueduct Transporting Water to the Holy City, from Civil Architecture, ca. 1800–1804***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This imaginary aqueduct was meant to provide the “most limpid virgin pure water to the Sacred City.” At left is a Tower of Liberty and at right a “republican road,” and beneath the arcade are paths for pedestrians and carriages. The tower is embellished with symbols of independence and liberation. At left, in a diagram of the cornice, the artist calls for decorating the frieze with cat’s heads; the feline was Lequeu’s favorite avatar of freedom.

## ***Scene from the Tragedy of Virginia, 1794–95***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This design for a theater set was inspired by a 1793 edition of the play *Virginie* by Jean-François de La Harpe (1739–1803), a passage from which Lequeu copied on the verso of the sheet. As recounted by the ancient writer Livy in his history of Rome, Virginia's father stabbed her to death to prevent her capture by the lustful Appius Claudius, who claimed she was a fugitive slave from his own estate. Her murder inspired Roman plebeians to revolt against a patrician tribunal. The revolutionary overtones of the subject undoubtedly appealed to Lequeu, who set the tragic action at left in front of a grand vaulted space reminiscent of the cloaca maxima—the Roman sewer—which underscores the theme of the decay of justice.

***Design for a Theater Interior, from Civil Architecture***  
**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**  
**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des**  
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Lequeu had an enduring enthusiasm for theater. He wrote at least nine plays (now lost) with such satirical titles as *The Man with Two Wives*, *Nadir the Great*, and *The False Dmitry, Tsar of Russia*. He also produced a number of designs for theaters and stage sets. This design for an auditorium shows five tiers of loges, box seats, and galleries. The restricted depth of the galleries to only three rows of seats, as indicated by the plan at bottom, produces a contrast with the soaring verticality of the entire structure.

***Proposal for an Arch Celebrating the Treaty of Amiens,***  
**from *Civil Architecture*, 1802–3**

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
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The Treaty of Amiens, signed by England and France in 1802, created a peaceful interlude during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. A subsequent decree called for proposals for public art to commemorate the truce; the submitted designs would be exhibited for a month in the Gallery of Apollo at the Louvre. In Lequeu's response, the Ionic capitals in the tower at left are embedded with hearts and rooster heads evoking the fighting cock of Rhodes, an animal celebrated by the ancients for its spirit and a symbol of courage and valor for the victorious French.

***Proposal for the Completion of the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, from Civil Architecture, 1815–23***

**Pen and black ink, brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Following his victory at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805, Napoleon decided to build a monument to the glory of his Grande Armée. The Arc de Triomphe was erected up to the level of the vaults by Jean-François-Thérèse Chalgrin, but construction slowed when he died in 1811. Lequeu's subsequent proposal sought a solution for the design during the intermediary period before the project resumed in 1823. He transformed the two piers into separate military towers, one on the left for soldiers of the newly restored Louis XVIII's army and the other for the commanding generals and officers, with a monumental statue of the king situated in between.

***Designs for an Altar and Baptismal Font, from Civil Architecture, ca. 1821***

**Pen and brown and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Even toward the end of his life, Lequeu continued to pursue opportunities to show his drawings. In 1821, he submitted these two designs to a competition preceding the baptism of the duc de Bordeaux, grandson of the future King Charles x, planned for May at Notre-Dame de Paris. In the freestanding altar at left, the lamb is a symbol of life, while in the font the same animal symbolizes death through sacrifice. Lequeu's design also connects the water of eternal life and the bloodshed of the "artisan from Nazareth." The altar's tympanum is ornamented discreetly with the instruments of the Passion, while the apse above the font is crowned with stags' heads, evoking Psalm 42: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God."

***Cow Barn and Gate to the Hunting Grounds, from Civil Architecture, ca. 1815***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
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Lequeu tested the limits of architectural symbolism in these two designs where form follows function. The barn below is in the shape of a cow draped in a gold- and silver-studded Indian blanket. Its monumentalism and exotic connotations evoke the colossal plaster-and-wood elephant erected in the Place de la Bastille in Paris in 1813. The upper design depicts an entrance to a princely hunting reserve decorated with the heads of wild boar, deer, and hounds. It was intended to be sculpted in “pork stone,” a mix of limestone and sulfur that, according to the artist, diffused “an odor of cat urine . . . [or] rotten egg.”



Jean-Antoine Alavoine (1776–1834), *Final Design for the Elephant Fountain in the Place de la Bastille*, 1809–10.  
Watercolor, with pen and brown ink. Musée du Louvre, Paris.  
RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.



***Dairy and Chicken Coop, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu's design for a dairy barn is filled with bovine references: the columns sprout udders and are topped with cow's heads, and a butter churn sits atop the spire. The exterior announces the building's purpose in a direct and amusing way. More understated in comparison, the chicken coop is surmounted by a metal dome, meant to reflect sunlight, whose rounded curve resembles an egg—with the figure of a chicken at its summit.

***Hermitage Gate, a Desert Drinking Pavilion, and a Hunting Retreat, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and black ink, gray and brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

These three studies explore the architecture of isolation. At upper left, a gate to an anchorite hermitage is composed of a tangle of dead branches, forming an effective barrier to the outside world; at upper right, a *vide-bouteille*—a pavilion for drinking and outdoor gatherings—is set in a remote location at high altitude. At bottom, a belvedere, or building designed for gazing at a beautiful view, sits at the edge of a cliff.

Asymmetrical yet perfectly balanced, the belvedere combines elements of a classical temple, a medieval fortress, and a Renaissance villa. Once inside, a visitor could admire the view through a telescope or one of the curiously shaped windows.

***Temple of Ceres, from Civil Architecture, 1793–1805***  
**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor**  
**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des**  
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This design for a pastoral temple devoted to Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture and the harvest, idealizes rural life. The structure, a curious combination of stone and foliage, is approached through fields of wheat, emphasizing the carved motto “True happiness is found in the countryside.” Inscriptions on the plaques in the canopy of the temple follow the republican calendar. Below, Lequeu transcribed several quotations, including “Work is often the father of pleasure,” from Voltaire’s *Upon Moderation in All Things, Study, Ambition, and Pleasure* (1738).

***Indian Pagoda of Intelligence, from Civil Architecture,***  
**ca. 1815–20**

**Pen and black ink, brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu combined disparate traditions in this design of a pagoda crowned with a minaret. The exterior was to be coated in a mixture of lime, sugar, and milk and then polished to create a glittering effect. While the design reflects Lequeu's idea of Indian Mughal architecture and reveals his curiosity about other cultures, the language used to describe the building is indebted to classical theory.

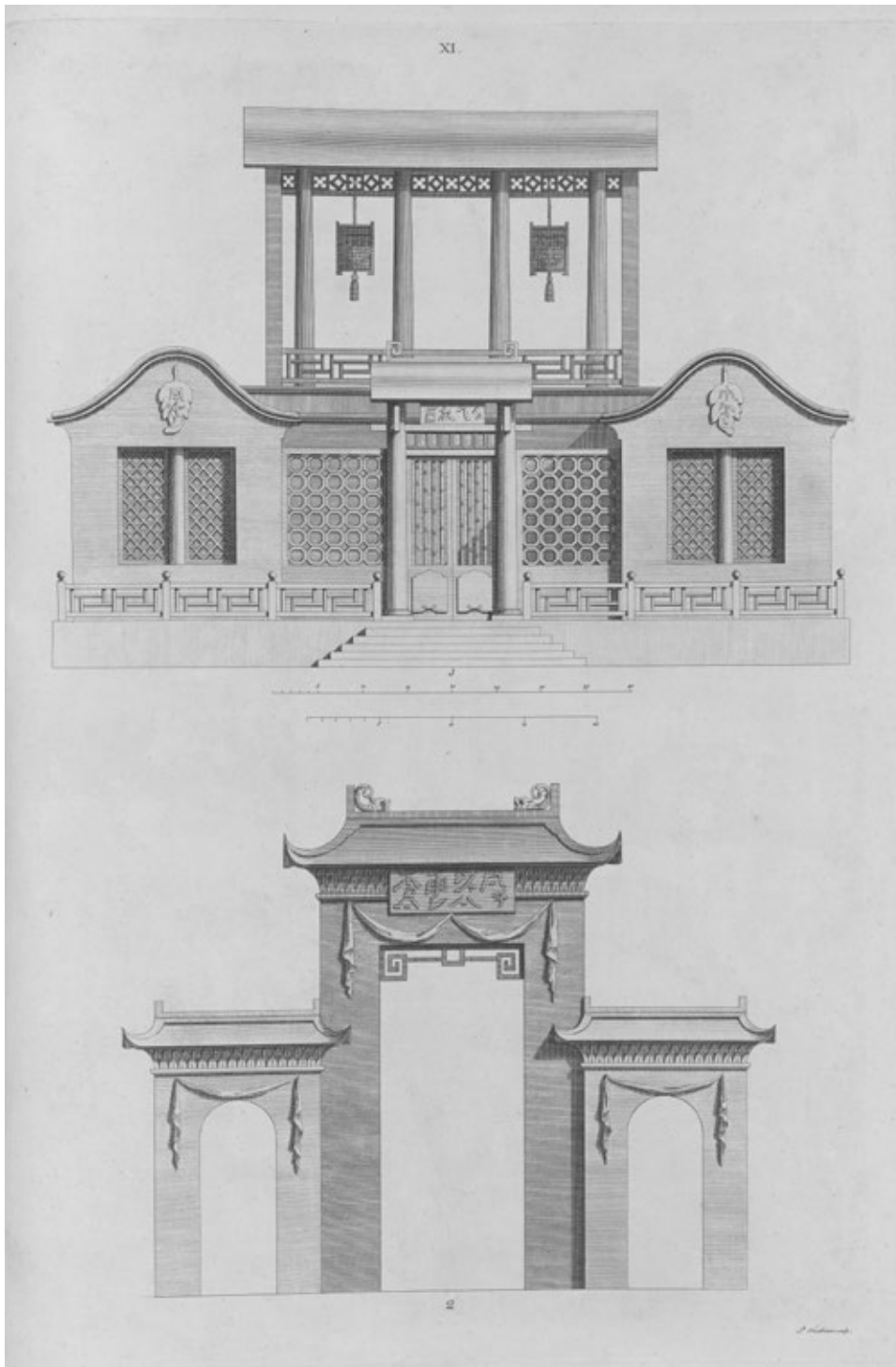
At the top of the sheet, the artist included three tomb designs. The tomb at right bears a mysterious epitaph: "There she rests among two rival lovers, separated."

***Chinese-Style Gardener's House and a Terrace on the Banks  
of a River, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and brown and black ink, brown and gray wash,  
watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

In the upper design, Lequeu began with the outline of a Cantonese house that he derived from the Scotsman Sir William Chambers's 1757 treatise on Chinese architecture. He then enriched the facade with ornament of his own invention, including pseudo-Chinese inscriptions, bells, and animal-headed scrolls atop the cornices. The open-air pavilion on the second story is devoted to the rising sun and features a gabled roof decorated—somewhat unexpectedly—with turbaned heads. The lower design on the sheet features a two-story terrace along a riverbank that forms a spectacular gallery of waterspouts, which is flanked by two donjons crowned with tents.



William Chambers, *Cantonese House*, engraving, in *Designs of Chinese Buildings and Furniture* (London: 1757). The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

## ***Etruscan Labyrinth, 1792***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, patch with revision at base of monument**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Intrigued by subterranean labyrinths, Lequeu here envisaged the legendary tomb of the Etruscan king Lars Porsena said to have been built around 500 BCE in Chiusi, Italy. Erected above an inescapable labyrinth, the massive structure boasted tiers of pyramids surmounted by a globe and adorned with bells that sounded in the wind. The scale of the monument is evident from the miniscule figures beneath the trees. At upper left is a rendering of a Roman coin struck in Spain; Lequeu interpreted its design as the mythical labyrinth of the Cretan king Minos. At right, Lequeu provided a compendium of ancient labyrinths based on descriptions from Herodotus and Pliny as well as contemporary travel literature.

***Temple of Divination, from Civil Architecture,***  
**ca. 1798–1802**

**Pen and black ink, gray wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

An example of Lequeu's fascination with ritual spaces, this sheet depicts a temple that would have served as the locus for the initiation of ancient Greek priests. A flaming river feeds into the temple, producing the billowing smoke at center, while Y-shaped divining rods, alluding to the mysteries known only to adepts, adorn the pillars flanking the entrance. To counter the sulfurous odor of the river, the sanctuary would emit an aromatic perfume—the recipe for which Lequeu includes—whose sweet vapor evoked dreams.



***Underground of a Gothic House, from Civil Architecture,*  
1804–11**

**Pen and brown and black ink, brown and gray wash,  
watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Freemasonry was a prominent cultural movement in the France of Lequeu's day. He was surely aware of secretive Masonic initiation rites, though he does not seem to have been a member of any lodge.

This structure, located behind a temple devoted to Minerva (seated at right), is designed for initiations into the "Society of Sages and Most Courageous Men." According to Lequeu's annotations, the ritual to join the brotherhood required initiates to overcome their fear of death through trials by fire, water, and air in subterranean chambers before emerging into the light. Each chamber would be equipped with complex mechanisms meant to produce claps of thunder.

## ***Geometric Map, 1801***

**Pen and black ink, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

In 1802, Lequeu was reassigned to an office responsible for cartography in the department of the interior, where he would spend years shifting between positions as a geographical draftsman. Among his responsibilities were new maps of Paris, which were necessitated by Napoleon's reorganization of the city. In this drawing, produced around the same time, Lequeu indulged in the opposite of documenting the urban fabric: he created a bird's-eye view of an imaginary landscape with a sinuous river and undulating topography. The artist curiously "signed" the drawing with the playing card at lower left, which contains a pun on the sound of his name: The Heart, or Le Cœur.

***Grotto of the Oceanids, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and black ink, gray and brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

The present sheet invites the viewer into the “marvelous” dwelling of a group of mythological water nymphs. This three-story cavern, illuminated by an oculus, forms a microenvironment replete with water jets, singing birds, and plants growing on compost. A surrounding aqueduct supplies the water for the monumental cascade. Lequeu’s annotations note that the grotto, half-disguised as an artificial mound above ground, was to be situated at the end of a cloister and in front of a labyrinth, an elaborate and entirely imaginary setting.

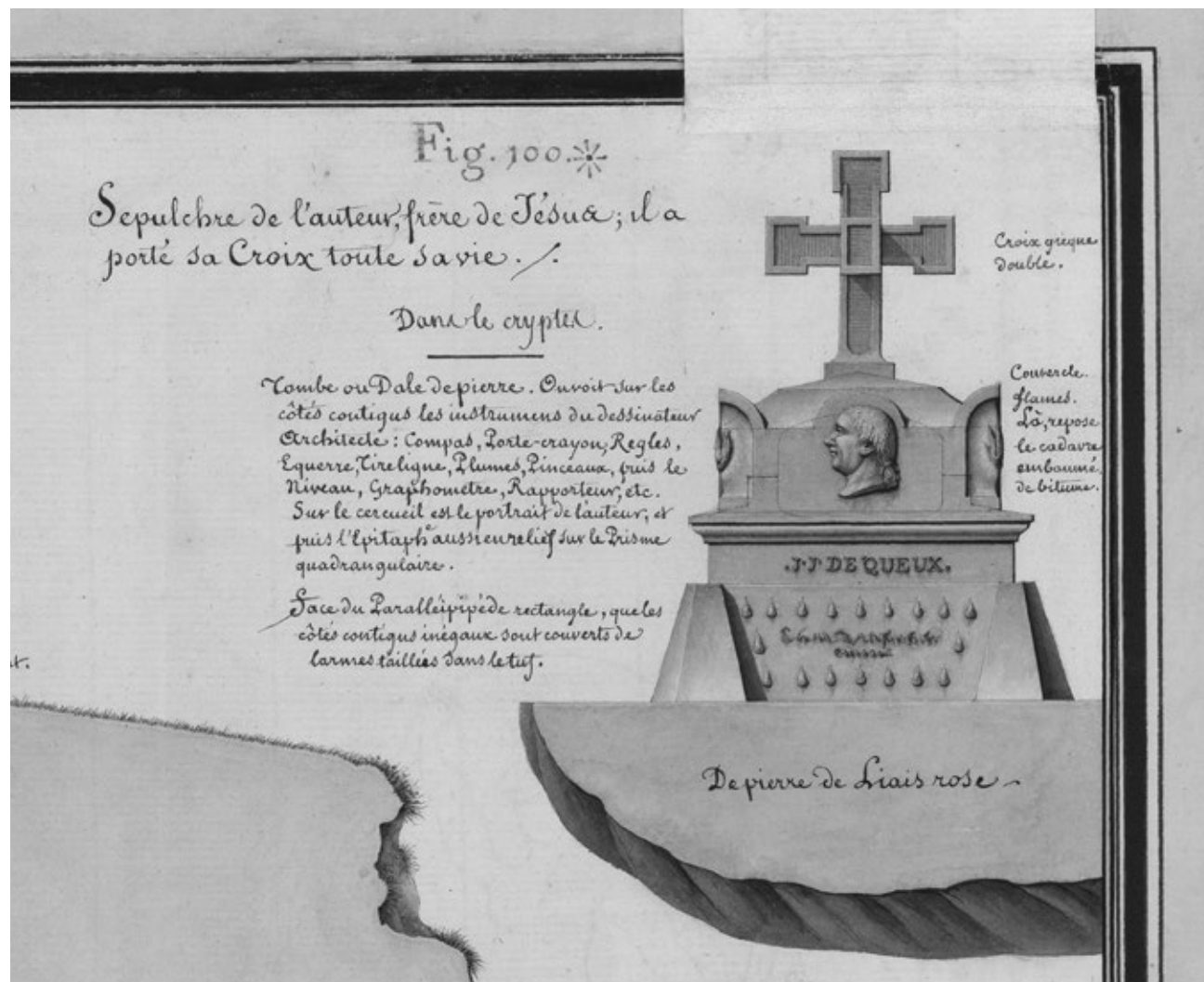
***Cavern in the Gardens of Isis, from Civil Architecture,*  
ca. 1810–25**

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor,  
patch with revision at upper right**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

For this depiction of a grotto in the gardens of Isis, the Egyptian goddess of fertility, Lequeu turned to Ovid's tale of the nymph Arethusa. She was transformed into a spring to elude being raped by the river god Alephus; the god, in turn, transformed himself into a river to follow her further. Here, Alephus is represented as the cascade at left, and the waters mingle in a cavern whose oculus Lequeu's inscription refers to as an orifice. The figure of the nymph recalls a description in the erotic Renaissance novel *The Dream of Poliphilo*. Lequeu owned the 1804 edition of the text.

At upper right, Lequeu envisioned his own tomb, containing his "cadaver embalmed in bitumen." The sepulchre is surmounted by the instruments of Lequeu's profession as an architectural draftsman, including a compass, rulers, and *porte-crayon*. Beneath the flap of paper on which the tomb is drawn, however, is an alternative design bearing a Greek cross—an echo of Lequeu's bitter remark that he carried the cross his entire life.



Detail of tomb design under flap at upper right.

***Machine for Circulating Water throughout the Castle,*  
from *Civil Architecture*, ca. 1800–1805**

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Ever pragmatic, Lequeu included designs for a comprehensive sewage system and a mechanism to distribute water in his depiction of a Moorish pleasure palace. Inside the tower, the wind would lash a stretched canvas, moving a vertical chain that carries a bucket of water from the moat to a channel, which would distribute the water through the structure. At right, Lequeu added a recently invented lightning rod to protect the building.

***Island of Love and Fisherman's Rest, from Civil Architecture,*  
1810–25**

**Pen and black ink, brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Situated between the military grounds of a royal city and a fortified encampment for elite troops, this island offers a quiet place for repose. Rising from the waters, a series of monumental terraces houses a menagerie of wild animals and birds in cages or in the surrounding woods. Lequeu painstakingly enumerated the many creatures in a series of lists. The island is surmounted by a temple of white stone paved in red jasper, which, as Lequeu notes, emits a rosy glow in daylight—an effect the artist had read about in an early eighteenth-century description of a castle in Ankara, Turkey.

***Apotheosis of Trajan*, after 1802 (inscribed 1794)**

**Pen and black ink, brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

This scene envisages a Roman ceremony marking the deification of the deceased Emperor Trajan in 117 CE. It shows a colossal burning pyre surmounted by a wax effigy of the emperor being kissed by his successor. Lequeu turned to contemporary sources for details as he envisioned the ancient ritual.



***He Is Free, 1798–99***

**Pen and black ink, brown and red wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This curious scene considers the association between liberation and libertine architecture. A nude woman, lying on her back in a gravity-defying pose, extends her upper body from a niche to free a male lyrebird; the first specimens of this bird, native to Australia, had just reached Europe. Below the niche, four melancholy masks frame the title. The contrast between the woman's soft, curved body and the sharp, rigid stone surround produces an erotic tension.

***The Bacchante*, ca. 1798**

**Pen and black ink, black and gray-brown wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu's explorations of amorous themes are often amusing. Seen from behind, a woman wearing an ivy wreath positions an aulos, a wind instrument used during feasts, suggestively near her backside. An inscription in Greek identifies her as one of the bacchantes, female companions of Bacchus, the god of wine, who indulged in frenzied trances while possessed by the wild power of nature. Her face, seen in profile, resembles a theatrical mask—a reminder that classical stage performances originated in bacchic rituals.

***What She Sees in a Dream, 1794–95***

**Pen and black ink, brown and black wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Here, Lequeu visualized a young woman experiencing an erotic dream. She lies asleep on a sofa above an elaborate alcove housing a peacock and baskets with fruits and flowers. Other imagery evoking male genitalia, including arrows, acanthus shoots, and a winged cupid riding a phallus, surrounds her.

***Agdistis, Son of Jupiter, ca. 1794–95***

**Pen and black ink, black and gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu was intrigued by the concept of gender fluidity. His interest led him to depict a rarely discussed figure from a 1727 mythological dictionary: Agdistis, born of the gods Jupiter and Cybele, who had both male and female physical attributes and was castrated by the gods. Lequeu showed the young deity frontally, with breasts and male genitalia. The figure holds a rose and an arrow-shaped lightning bolt, alluding to the female and male sexual organs.

## ***Self-Portrait in Profile, 1793***

**Pen and black ink and wash, over black chalk**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu indicated in his inscription—“This second profile much more closely resembles Jean Jacques Lequeu Junior, Architect”—that he was pleased with this attempt at capturing his likeness, produced when he was thirty-six years old. In an open-necked shirt, his hair tied back with a cord, the artist appears at ease. The profile portrait, a popular style during the revolutionary era, harks back to ancient Roman coins, and Lequeu himself was a collector of coins and medals. To outline himself in profile, Lequeu likely relied on a physionotrace, a recently invented device for drawing silhouettes.

A SURE AND CONVENIENT MACHINE FOR DRAWING SILHOUETTES.

*This is the Character I would assign to the silhouette of this Young person, I find in it Goodness without much Ingenuity; Clearness of Idea, & a ready Conception, a mind very industrious, but, little governed by a lively Imagination, & not attached to a rigid punctuality; We do not discern in the Copy, the Character of Gaiety which is conspicuous in the Original, but the Nose is improved in the silhouette, it expresses more Ingenuity.*



Thomas Holloway, *A sure and convenient Machine for drawing Silhouettes*, 1792. Engraving. National Portrait Gallery, London.

***Brutus, the Assassin and Son of Caesar, ca. 1792***

**Pen and black ink, black and gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

This sculptural profile drawing depicts Brutus, whom Lequeu's inscription describes in terms of his role in the assassination of his adopted father Julius Caesar. Identified by Lequeu as the "first emperor," Caesar was proclaimed dictator for life in February of 44 BCE but was murdered soon after by senators who felt such a move threatened the Roman republic. Revolutionaries in France celebrated Brutus as a virtuous republican who put his convictions in support of the state ahead of his love for his father.

***And We Shall be Mothers Because . . . !*, 1793–94**

**Pen and black ink, black and gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

The meaning of this transgressive image of a nun baring her breasts is ambiguous. Lequeu's cryptic caption may allude to the suppression of the religious orders in 1792, when such institutions were condemned as bastions of social oppression. Such anticlericalism contributed to dechristianizing practices under the Reign of Terror, including mass executions of clergy and coerced marriages. The gesture of stripping off age-old habits and devoting oneself to procreation corresponds with the revolutionary goal of reinventing society, a sentiment echoed in Denis Diderot's novel *Memoirs of a Nun* (published posthumously in 1796).



## ***Alcove Window, 1797–98***

**Pen and black ink, brown and gray wash**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Voyeurism, a motif throughout Lequeu's designs, is explored explicitly in this nude. Through the bull's-eye window of an alcove, the viewer gazes at a turbaned woman, eyes downcast and unaware of an observer's presence, as she holds a mirror. The pointed ornament surrounding the opening is echoed in the antique-like relief on the mirror, which depicts a cupid holding a mirror decorated with a standing figure. This infinitely recurring effect visualizes voyeurism as an insatiable quest that both tantalizes beholders and separates them from the objects of their desire.

***The White Savage, ca. 1795***

**Pen and black ink, gray and brown wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu's provocatively titled, objectifying study of female buttocks combines near-clinical accuracy with pornographic intent. He labeled parts of the body ("the anus," "the rump") while commenting on the physical attributes of his model ("well-formed buttocks," "firm thighs"). This type of sheet, drawn from life, might have been created in sessions like the one Lequeu described in a 1795 account of his whereabouts during a royalist uprising: "At nine o'clock the citizens Anne-Marie-Catherine Remy and Françoise Thouvenin . . . came to my place to model [and] I occupied myself by drawing several attitudes until three in the afternoon."

***Grove of Aurora, from Civil Architecture***

**Pen and gray-brown ink and wash, watercolor**

**Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu here envisaged a “satyr island” with a secluded fish pond surrounded by a topiary enclosure in a “moresque and arabesque” style. The statues at center depict the goddess Aurora restraining the young hunter Cephalus. While in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Cephalus resists the goddess’s embrace and remains faithful to his wife, Lequeu reinvented the tale, recounting that the “chaste Cephalus” was forced by his “corruptress” to “salute [Aurora] each day with harmonious sounds.”

***Tavern and Hammock of Love*, from *Civil Architecture*,  
ca. 1810**

**Pen and black ink, gray and brown wash, watercolor  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des  
Estampes et de la photographie**

Lequeu's design for a *guinguette*, a tavern devoted to eating, drinking, and cabaret performances, is ornamented with tableware, bottles, and wheels of cheese and has columns shaped like wine barrels. The theme of earthly delights is developed in the plan at right for a hammock inside a lush garden that contains flowers producing the "odor of paradise."

**Jean-Jacques Lequeu**

**French, 1757–1826**

***A Scene of Havoc in a Piazza*, ca. 1792–95**

**Pen and black ink, gray wash**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mrs. Donald M. Oenslager, 1982**

A rare set design by Lequeu, and one of the few drawings by the artist not held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, this sheet was acquired by the stage designer Donald Oenslager.

At center, an outraged woman surrounded by weeping putti tears a document in half as a man approaches her with more paperwork in hand. The characters wear a mix of contemporary and historical costume. This eclectic anachronism is echoed in the composite architecture of the set: a round structure resembling the ancient Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella sits alongside medieval-style townhouses, and the scene is dominated by a monumental Renaissance exedra rising above the entrance to an Egyptian crypt flanked by a pair of obelisks.