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Ambroise Duchemin
Salon du Dessin 2026

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Cover:
Antoine Vollon (1833–1900)
Portrait of a Woman
Charcoal and white chalk highlights on paper
456 × 304 mm (18 × 12 in)
Signed (lower right): "A. Vollon"
Inscribed by a framer (lower right): "3011 Bristol bleu foncé / style / s. v. 59 ½ 44 p. c."

Previous page:
Antonio de La Gándara (1861–1917)
The Kiosk
1890–1893
Pastel on toned paper
245 × 160 mm (9 5/8 × 6 ¼ in)

Direction: Carola Scisci

Paul Gavarni

Paris 1804 – 1866 Paris

Studies for Top Hats

Pencil on paper

211 × 158 mm (8 ¼ × 6 ¼ in)

Annotated (along the right edge of the sheet): "feutre ras – noir // feutre ras – noir // feutre ras / gris // nœud derrière"

Stamped (lower right): "Pierre Gavarni Collection" (Lugt 1124c)

Provenance:

Pierre Gavarni (1846–1932) Collection, the artist's son

Private collection

Galerie Paul Prouté, Paris

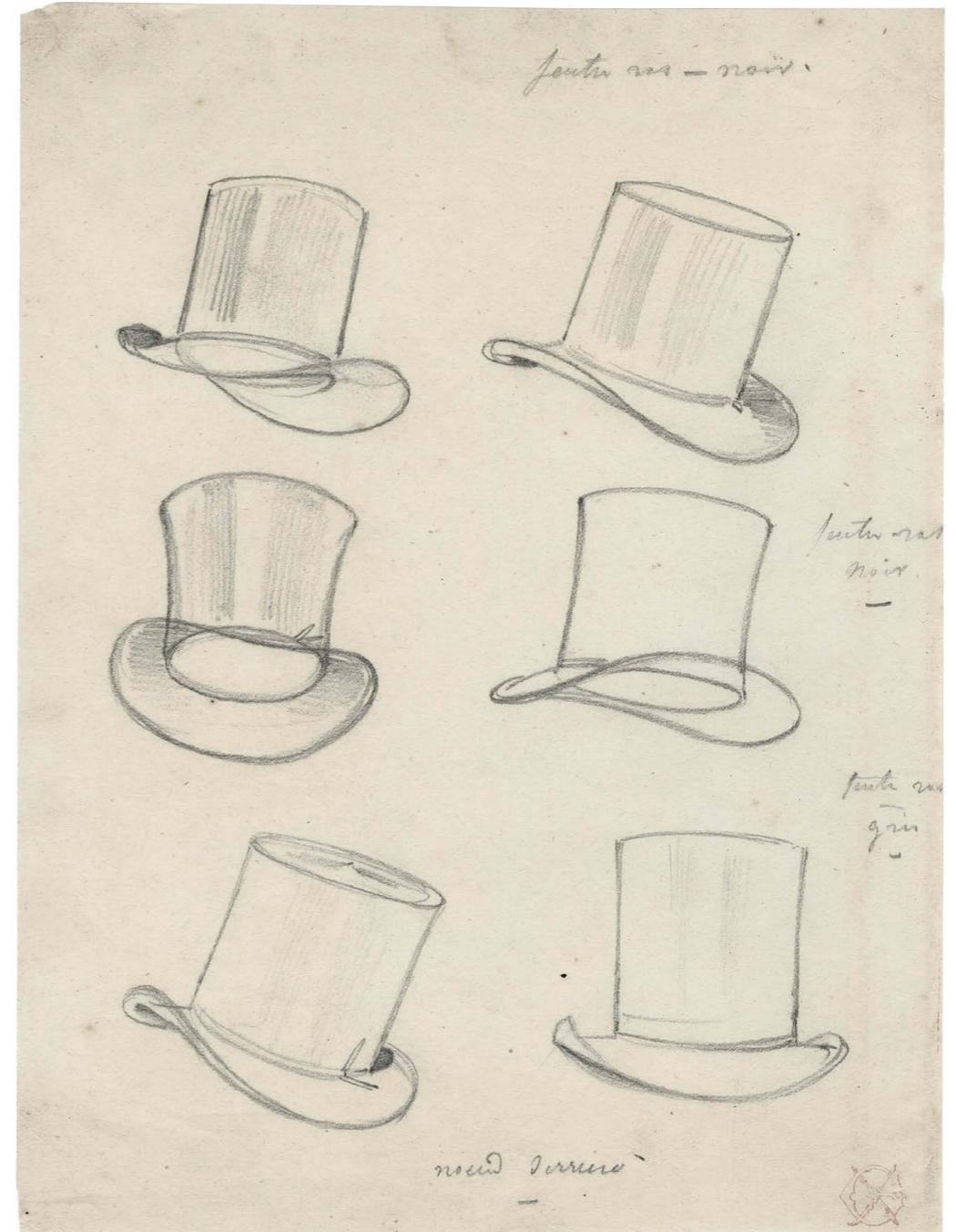
Literature:

Galerie Paul Prouté, *Catalogue n°171 - Décembre 2025*, 2025, p. 8, no. 12.

Paul Gavarni was one of the most perceptive observers of Parisian society in the first half of the 19th century. Best known as a caricaturist and illustrator, he contributed extensively to journals such as *Le Charivari* and *La Mode*, in which his depictions of fashionable life, social types, and urban manners brought him widespread recognition. Closely associated with writers of the caliber of Honoré de Balzac and Charles Baude-laire, Gavarni combined sharp social insight with a refined sense of form and gesture.

In 1829 the artist settled in Montmartre, where he lived until 1835. During those years, Gavarni devoted himself intensively to developing his draughtsmanship: he produced a large number of sketches and studies, exploring costume, accessories, posture, and movement with precision and economy of means. Several drawings from this period bear the inscription 'MM', an acronym devised by Gavarni to indicate Montmartre, and which ultimately attests to the importance of that phase for the development of his graphic language.

Our sheet offering *Studies for Top Hats* shown from multiple angles, reflects this sustained period of technical investigation. Executed in pencil, the drawing presents a series of variations in form and perspective that focus on the relationship between the *haut-de-forme's* crown and brim. Light shading and economical contour lines convey volume and structure, while marginal annotations referring to material and colour underline the functional nature of the study. Both analytical and lively, the sheet exemplifies Gavarni's practice of refining observation through repeated motifs while also anticipating the clarity and immediacy of his later published work.



Antoine-Louis Barye

Paris 1796 – 1875 Paris

Jaguar and Snake

Watercolour on paper
160 × 250 mm (6 ¼ × 9 7/8 in)

Provenance:
André Pacitti (1913 – 2007), Paris, since 1981
Sale at Tajan, Paris, *Succession Jean Bouin-Luce*, 16 December 1999, lot 6
Joseph Reinis, New York, acquired at the above sale
Thence by descent

Exhibited:
Loan, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, 2012.

Throughout his career, Antoine-Louis Barye was principally known as a sculptor and always considered himself as such. Yet, as a formally trained painter, he also produced a substantial corpus of acclaimed paintings and prints, including more than 200 watercolours, all of which contributed significantly to his reputation and earnings, often selling for considerably more than his bronzes.

Like many French romantic artists, one of Barye's favourite subjects was the animal kingdom, especially large cats such as lions, jaguars, and tigers, whose omnipresent threat of brutal violence served as an allegory for the unpredictable and unfettered qualities of nature itself. Eugène Delacroix shared this fascination in early representations of exotic animals, but by the mid 19th century, Barye had become the supreme agent in popularising this theme, owing to his ability to capture a wider range of animals on a wider array of media, such as in our watercolour.

Jaguar and Snake was inspired by animals Barye observed almost daily at the zoo in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, where he sketched from the 1820s onward, sometimes in the company of Delacroix. This particular work of a seated jaguar with his head turned to his left to watch a threatening snake, reveals Barye's dexterity and detailed study of anatomical forms from life. Rather than alluding to the ferociousness of the cat like in Delacroix's work, Barye focuses on the tactility of the jaguar's fur and his nonchalance and charisma in the face of danger. This work, which is another version of the *Jaguar et serpent* included in Charles Otto Zieseniss's catalogue raisonné of watercolours by Barye, published in 1954 (no. C17) and formerly in the collection of Mr and Mrs Alexander Lewyt, was authenticated by Zieseniss himself in a letter dated 12 December 1981 to André Pacitti. Our *Jaguar and Snake* was also owned by Joseph Reinis, author of *The Founders and Editors of the Barye Bronzes* (2007).



James Abbott McNeill Whistler

Lowell 1834 – 1903 London

Head of a Man in a Turban

c. 1851–1852

Pen and black ink on cream paper
47 × 42 mm (1 7/8 × 1 5/8 in)

Provenance:

Maria Whitman Bailey (1836–1852) Collection, West Point, New York, gifted by the artist in 1851–1852
Thence by descent
William Maxwell Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook (1879–1964) Collection, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1958
Marcia Anastasia Aitken, Lady Beaverbrook (1909–1994) Collection, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1964
Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation, Fredericton, New Brunswick, acquired from the above, 1970
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick
Sale at Waddington's, Toronto, *Old Masters & 19th Century Art*, 11 December 2025, lot 7

Literature:

Margaret F. MacDonald, *James McNeill Whistler: Drawings, Pastels and Watercolours. A Catalogue Raisonné*, New Haven, London, 1995, p. 26, no. 87, as *Head of a Man in a Turban*.
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, *Exhibition of Drawings by James McNeill Whistler*, Fredericton, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 1959, p. 69.
David Clayton, *James McNeill Whistler: Drawings and Watercolours*, London, 1959, p. 45.
Nancy L. Pressly, *Whistler in America: an Album of Early Drawings*, New York, 1972, p. 153, no. 67, as *Head of a Man*.

From the outset, Whistler's career was shaped by displacement and cultural hybridity. Born in the United States, he spent his formative years in Saint Petersburg, where he received his earliest artistic training, before returning to America in his late teens. In 1851 he enrolled at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Although his time there was brief, these years proved artistically productive.

Even before receiving formal training in Europe, he used pen and ink as a direct, exploratory medium to study form, light, and expression. Our sheet, executed during his time at West Point, exemplifies this early concern with psychological presence and tonal structure. The head emerges from dense cross-hatching, its features built through closely layered strokes. Partly concealed beneath the folds of the turban, the sitter's shadowed gaze and indistinct features lend the figure an exotic, orientalisising character that heightens its mystery. Delicate pen work creates an almost lantern-like illumination around the head, while the paper's slight grain enhances its atmospheric depth. Through its small scale, the drawing achieves a striking dramatic presence.

Like many drawings produced at West Point, the sheet may have served as an illustration or character study. It may relate to a group of larger compositions from the same period depicting men with shoulder-length hair, moustaches, and beards, often wearing caps or hoods and sometimes shown in interiors suggestive of historical or literary subjects. Although the precise context remains uncertain, the drawing belongs to this early narrative phase of Whistler's activity. At this time, the artist also seems to have isolated figures from larger compositions by cutting the paper around them, effectively framing the character within the sheet itself. The format of our drawing reflects this practice, transforming what was once part of a broader composition into a self-contained and compelling study.

Whistler gifted our *Head of a Man in a Turban* to Maria Whitman Bailey, the daughter of Professor Jacob Whitman Bailey, a scientist and professor at the Military Academy with whom the artist was closely acquainted.



Jean-François Millet

Gruchy 1814 – 1875 Barbizon

The Diggers

c. 1855

Pencil on paper
58 × 76 mm (2 ¼ × 3 in)
Stamped (lower right): "J.F.M." (L. 1460)

Provenance:
Estate of the artist
Sale at Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Vente par suite du décès de Jean-François Millet*, 10–11 May 1875, lot 182

Jean-François Millet devoted his career to the Realist representation of rural labour, treating the daily work of peasants as a subject of enduring seriousness. Having trained in Cherbourg and Paris before settling in Barbizon in the late 1840s, he repeatedly returned to scenes of sowing, digging, and harvesting, as he regularly drew on his intimate knowledge of agricultural life to construct images grounded in physical effort and collective gesture.

Drawing allowed Millet to develop his compositions in successive stages, often beginning with rapid, searching sketches before moving toward more resolved drawings or paintings. Our sheet offers the representation of two figures bent forward as they work the ground, their bodies aligned in a shared, rhythmic motion. It constitutes an initial conception for a more finished drawing of diggers executed around 1855 and now held in the collection of the Clark Art Institute (fig. 1), in which the figures are more fully modelled and securely anchored within space. Drawn with quick, forceful strokes, our early study focuses on gesture and physical effort and transforms a humble agricultural task into a concentrated image of labour and persistence. On the verso, a small charcoal study isolates the bent elbow of the figure on the left while also anticipating the more resolved treatment of the same arm in the Clark drawing, where it is fully integrated into the final composition.

Millet revisited this scene in numerous distinct versions, which were later disseminated more widely through engravings. Our composition was ultimately copied by Vincent van Gogh, who reinterpreted it in his own distinctive style (fig. 2).



Fig. 1
Jean-François Millet
The Diggers after Millet
c. 1855
Black Conté crayon and white chalk on wove paper
229 × 335 mm (9 × 13 ¼ in)
Williamstown, Clark Art Institute



Fig. 2
Vincent Van Gogh
The Diggers, after Jean-François Millet
1889
Oil on canvas
72 × 92 cm (28 ¾ × 36 ¼ in)
Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum



Victor Hugo

Besançon 1802 – 1885 Paris

Cathedral under a Storm

c. 1866

Pen, brown ink, wash and white gouache on paper
62 x 57 mm (2 ½ x 2 ¼ in)

Provenance:
Paul Meurice (1818–1905) Collection, Paris
Thence by descent

Literature:
Jean Massin & Bernadette Grynberg, *Victor Hugo. Œuvre graphique, 1967–1969*, vol. II, no. 907.
Jean-Jacques Lebel & Marie-Laure Prévost, *Victor Hugo: du chaos dans le pinceau*, exh. cat., Madrid, Paris, 2000, p. 232, no. 181.

Exhibited:
Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, *Victor Hugo: du chaos dans le pinceau*, 2 June–10 September 2000.
Paris, Maison de Victor Hugo, *Victor Hugo: du chaos dans le pinceau*, 12 October 2000–7 January 2001.

A tireless draughtsman, Victor Hugo worked predominantly in pen – the natural extension of the writer's hand. For him, drawing was not a matter of colour but of ink, the means via which light could be wrested from darkness.

In our representation of a *Cathedral under a Storm*, the silhouette of a cathedral in ruins emerges from a tumultuous setting; one can discern the outline of a Gothic cathedral, a quintessentially Romantic motif that became deeply resonant within Hugo's own literary universe. Light and shadow structure the entire composition, imbuing it with a dreamlike quality poised between vision and recollection. The stark contrast animates the imagined burghs and castles with a striking visual force that echoes the impressions gathered during Hugo's travels.

The monument depicted on our sheet remains impossible to identify – transfigured into a spectral tower barely discernible against the night. Nature, rendered as a storm descending upon an unnamed village, becomes the true protagonist. In our nocturnal scene, Hugo explores the full register of brown ink within a single composition with stains, dilutions, and saturations.



Antoine Vollon

Lyon 1833 – 1900 Paris

Portrait of a Woman

Charcoal and white chalk highlights on paper
456 × 304 mm (18 × 12 in)
Signed (lower right): "A. Vollon"
Inscribed by a framer (lower right): "3011 Bristol bleu foncé / style / s. v. 59 ½ 44 p. c."

Provenance:
Michel Descours, Paris
Private collection

Born in Lyon, Antoine Vollon trained initially as an engraver before entering, in 1851, the École des Beaux-Arts in his hometown. He settled in Paris in 1859 and soon became a regular visitor to the Louvre, where he deepened his engagement with Old Master painting. From the 1860s onward his work gained recognition within Realist circles, and he was closely connected to figures such as Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Théodule Ribot, and Henri Fantin-Latour, who included him in the now-destroyed group portrait *Le Toast* (1865). Vollon exhibited regularly at the Salon, and his works were collected by leading contemporaries, including Alexandre Dumas.

While best known for his still lifes, Vollon's practice also extended to landscapes and figure studies, which were underpinned by draughtsmanship of remarkable strength and assurance. Across media, his practice reveals a dual affinity: the weighty modelling and modern Realist sensibility of his oil paintings recall Édouard Manet, while the tactile richness of his charcoal work and his commitment to direct, unidealised observation align him more closely with Gustave Courbet.

On our sheet, the sitter's face is rendered with striking sobriety and intensity: strong chiaroscuro contrasts achieved through a masterful use of charcoal model the features without embellishment, emphasising the sitter's individuality and psychological presence. Our *Portrait of a Woman* stands as one of Vollon's most accomplished graphic works and can be considered comparable in ambition and visual impact to the finest Realist drawings by Courbet.



François Bonvin

Paris 1817 – 1887 Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Candle and Chamberstick

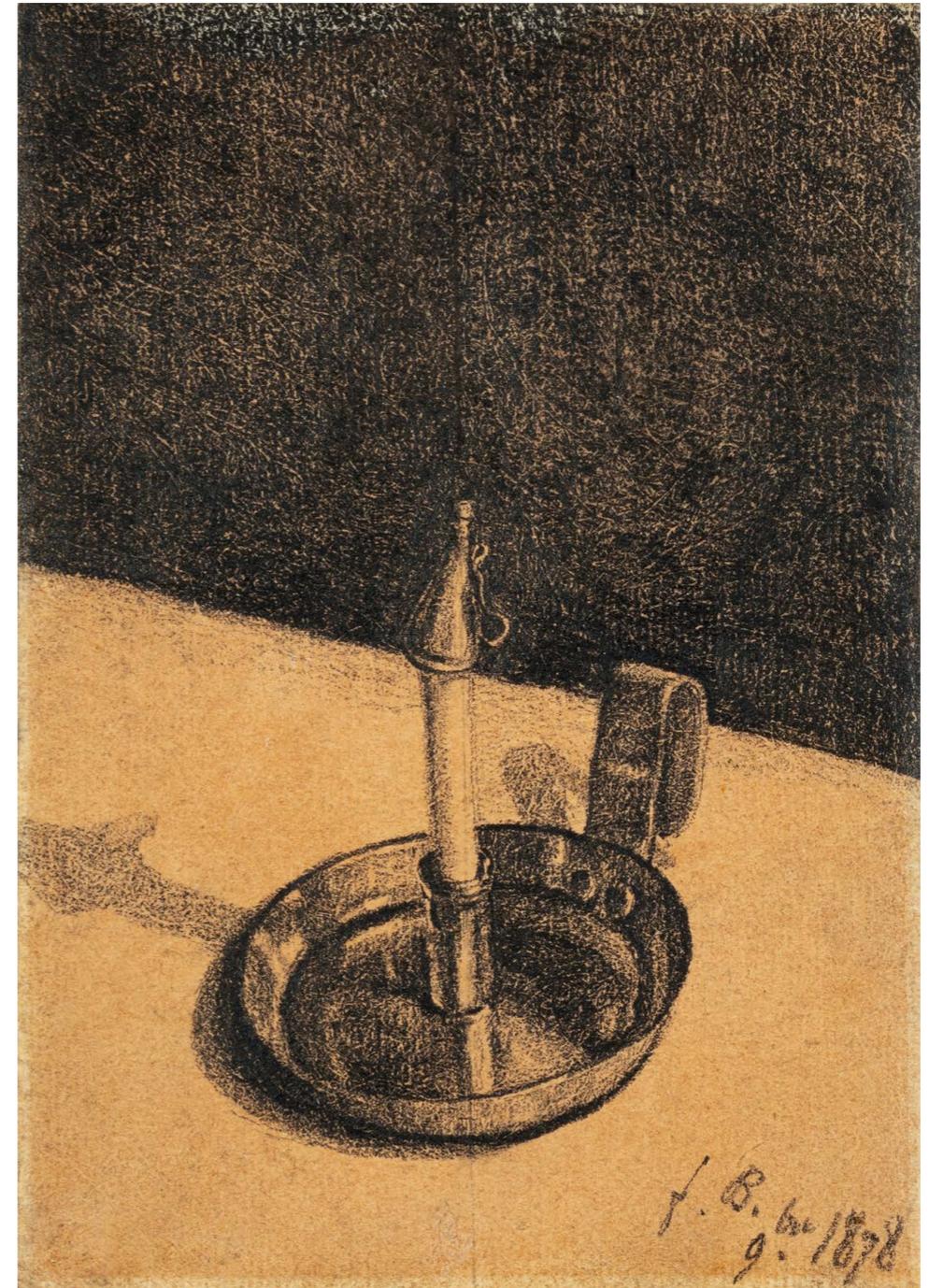
1878

Black chalk on paper
145 × 100 mm (5 ¾ × 4 in)
Monogrammed and dated (lower right): "f. B. / 9bre 78"

François Bonvin, a devoted admirer of 17th-century Flemish painting and of Jean Siméon Chardin's œuvre, devoted much of his career to the depiction of the contemporary world through genre scenes and still lifes. After making his début at the Salon in 1847, he emerged as a significant figure within the Realist movement, notably with *L'École des Orphelines* (1850), one of his most celebrated paintings. Despite this success, Bonvin remained largely independent of official artistic institutions: he aligned himself with progressive tendencies and participated in the Salon des Refusés in 1863.

Bonvin's works on paper are distinguished by precise draughtsmanship and a refined sensitivity to texture, surface, and light. Working in black chalk, he often allowed forms to emerge gradually from shadow, with the warm tone of the paper playing an active role in the construction of volume.

On our sheet, he depicts a candle in a chamberstick placed on a bare surface and isolated against a dark background. The composition is markedly stripped down, relying on compact passages of black chalk set against the lighter paper to articulate reflection, and shadow. This economy of means, together with the calmness of the motif and the careful modulation of light and dark, reflects Bonvin's sustained engagement with modest subjects and his ability to invest them with gravity and a restrained sense of poetry – qualities that underpinned the still lifes that secured his lasting recognition and commercial success.



Théodule Ribot

Saint-Nicolas-d'Attez 1823 – 1891 Paris

Two Cooks

Pencil, pen, black ink and wash on paper
310 × 230 mm (12 ¼ × 9 in)
Signed (lower right): "t. Ribot"

Born in 1823, Théodule Ribot experienced a difficult early life in Normandy before settling in Paris in 1845. After years of modest employment, he trained in the studio of Auguste Glaize and became a leading figure of the Realist movement in the late 1850s, engaging deeply with the legacy of the Spanish masters of the Golden Age and the example of Gustave Courbet. He took part in the 1859 exhibition of artists refused by the Salon alongside Alphonse Legros, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Henri Fantin-Latour, and Antoine Vollon, and from 1861 onward exhibited regularly at the Salon, gaining recognition for his kitchen scenes. A gifted and prolific draughtsman, Ribot's graphic practice was deeply informed by Rembrandt.

One of the most important strands of Théodule Ribot's oeuvre is his genre scenes, which celebrate everyday life and the honour of humble professions. From the 1860s onwards, genre painting gained a central place at the Salon, and Ribot actively contributed to this development. His depictions of cooks, seamstresses, and craftsmen convey a profound respect for manual labour, presented without embellishment or idealisation.

Our drawing portrays two cooks wholly absorbed in their task of cutting a large piece of meat. Their concentrated gestures and almost solemn expressions underline the seriousness of their work. Executed in ink and wash, the composition is monochromatic, its restrained means reinforcing the intensity of the moment. Far from being a casual sketch, this drawing exemplifies Ribot's ability to merge the immediacy of genre scenes with the dignity of portraiture, transforming a simple kitchen task into a meditation on labour.

The austerity of the medium and the expressive force of the figures also recall Ribot's admiration for the graphic work of Rembrandt and Goya, whose chiaroscuro, grey wash, and psychological intensity find an echo here.



Jules Bastien-Lepage

Damvillers 1848 – 1884 Paris

A Silhouette Walking in the Streets of Damvillers

1884

Charcoal and stumping on paper

223 × 287 mm (8 ¾ × 11 ¼ in)

Signed, located and dated (lower left): "J. BASTIEN LEPAGE Damvillers 1884"

Provenance:

Sale at Drouot Estimations, Paris, *Bijoux & Orfèvrerie & Tableaux & Arts Nouveau et Déco & Objets d'art & Mobilier*, 28 June 2013, lot 142

Private collection

One of the leading figures of Naturalism in late 19th-century French art, Jules Bastien-Lepage was born in Lorraine but soon moved to Paris to train at the École des Beaux-Arts under Alexandre Cabanel. From the early 1870s onward, he developed a distinctive approach that combined his attachment to the rural world of his native region with a sober, modern realism. His major paintings, including *Les Foins* (1877) and *Jeanne d'Arc* (1879), brought him international recognition. In the final years of his life, shortly before his premature death in 1884, Bastien-Lepage increasingly turned to the representation of landscape scenes, at times setting his compositions in and around his native village of Damvillers, as in *Octobre* (also known as *La Récolte des pommes de terre*), painted there in 1878.

Drawing occupied a central place in the artist's practice, and experimentation. In his final years, he produced a number of landscape drawings that, by favouring broad tonal construction over descriptive detail, reflect his sustained interest in the rendering of atmosphere in his representations of figures within rural settings.

Our poetic and mysterious drawing, dated 1884 and set in Damvillers, depicts a low horizon dominated by a barn beneath a heavy, overcast sky. A solitary figure stands in the foreground, reduced to a dark silhouette that anchors the composition and reinforces its sense of isolation. The scene is constructed with softly modulated greys worked by stumping to create atmosphere and depth.

Executed in 1884, hence in the year of Jules Bastien-Lepage's death, *Silhouette Walking in the Streets of Damvillers* belongs among the artist's final works on paper and aligns with his late landscape imagery. Rare for both its mood and its pronounced darkness, the drawing reflects the Realist traditions associated with Léon and François Bonvin, while anticipating the Neo-Impressionist approach later developed by Georges Seurat and his contemporaries.



Édouard Manet

Paris 1832 – 1883 Paris

Portrait of Marie Colombier

1880

Ink and pencil on paper
163 × 114 mm (6 3/8 × 4 1/2 in)

Provenance:

Edgar Degas (1834–1917) Collection, Paris
Sale at Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, *Collection Edgar Degas*, 26–27 March 1918, lot 225
Georges Durand-Ruel (1866–1931) Collection, Paris
Paul Durand-Ruel, Paris
Private collection, Paris
Sale at Artcurial, Paris, *Impressionniste & Moderne - Vente du jour*, 7 December 2022, lot 204
Private collection

Literature:

Paul Jamot & Georges Wildenstein, *Manet: Catalogue critique*, Paris, 1932, no. 419.
Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1947, p. 260.
Alain de Leiris, *The Drawings of Édouard Manet*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1969, mentioned p. 36, no. 510, fig. 383.
Denis Rouart & Daniel Wildenstein, *Édouard Manet: Catalogue raisonné*, Lausanne, Paris, 1975, vol. II, pp. 154–155, no. 421.

Around 1880, drawing and pastel occupied a central place in Édouard Manet's artistic practice. In the final years of his life, increasingly limited by illness, he produced a substantial group of works on paper, which featured numerous portraits of women. Of the approximately sixty pastels of female sitters attributed to Manet, the vast majority date from this late period.

Our drawing, executed around 1880, belongs to this intense moment of graphic experimentation. Many of the women he portrayed moved within the Parisian social circles he frequented, notably Marie Colombier, a well-known figure in the Parisian demi-monde. Colombier, who pursued a career as an actress before becoming a novelist, enjoyed notoriety from the 1860s and moved within prestigious literary circles. She was later involved in a public scandal when she was famously horsewhipped by the actress Sarah Bernhardt following the publication of a malicious libel.



Fig. 1
Édouard Manet
Portrait of Marie Colombier
c. 1880
Pastel on primed linen canvas
559 × 356 mm (22 × 14 in)
Glasgow, Glasgow Museums

Our portrait is preparatory for Manet's pastel *Portrait of Marie Colombier* (fig. 1), also executed in 1880. In the pastel drawing the interplay between finish and suggestion echoes the economy and immediacy present in our drawing. On our sheet, Manet concentrates on the sitter's head, capturing her features and expression with swift, searching lines. The lightly sketched neck and the loosely spiralling strokes framing it underscore the provisional nature of the sketch, which is concerned less with finish than with the immediate recording of pose and character. Such drawings functioned as a crucial preparatory stage in Manet's working process, which allowed him to refine likeness and expression before moving to pastel.

Our *Portrait of Marie Colombier* was formerly in the collection of Edgar Degas, and it was sold during the posthumous sale of his collection on 27 March 1918 at the Galerie Georges Petit. Manet and Degas were closely associated from the early 1860s and moved within the same artistic circle frequented by Henri Fantin-Latour, Berthe Morisot, and Stéphane Mallarmé. Degas owned several paintings and works on paper by Manet, which he retained throughout his life.



Albert Lebourg

Montfort-sur-Risle 1849 – 1928 Rouen

Sleeping Cat

Charcoal and stumping on paper
235 × 305 mm (9 ¼ × 12 in)
Dedicated (lower right): "à M. Bonhomme / 1918"
Signed and located (lower right): "A. Lebourg / Dieppe"

Provenance:
Mr. L. Bonhomme Collection, Dieppe, gifted by the artist in 1918
Mr. F. Poty, Pont-du-Château
Sale at Arthenchères, Lyon, *Passion Peinture XIV*, 20 May 2025, lot 20

A native of Normandy, Albert Lebourg began studying architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Rouen at the age of seventeen. In 1872 he left France to teach drawing in Algiers; after several years there, however, he chose to settle in Paris. Upon his return, he joined the studio of Jean-Paul Laurens at the École des Beaux-Arts. Inspired by the northern light and the landscapes of the Norman coast, Lebourg developed a keen sensitivity to atmospheric effects and gradually devoted himself to landscape painting. He soon came into contact with the Impressionists and participated in their exhibitions of 1878 and 1880. The Seine and the Marne became among his favoured motifs, and he divided his time between Rouen, Paris, and the countryside of his native Normandy.

On our sheet, Lebourg renders the head of a sleeping cat in charcoal with the warm tone of the paper deliberately left active to articulate the texture of the fur and the subtle transitions of light across the form. Dense, compact passages contrast with lighter reserves to define the eyes, muzzle, and coat, while darker zones, worked with quick and decisive strokes, establish depth around the head. Lebourg reinforced these effects by rubbing the medium into the grain of the paper, producing carefully modulated chiaroscuro.



Fig. 1
Albert Lebourg
Studies of a cat
Charcoal on paper
305 × 230 mm (12 × 9 in)
Dedicated (lower centre): "A Lebourg à son ami
Bonhomme 1918"
Private collection

In contrast to his Impressionist painting, Lebourg's draughtsmanship in charcoal, black chalk aligns more closely with the Realist tradition of Gustave Courbet. As indicated by the dedication it bears, our *Sleeping Cat* was drawn in Dieppe, in Normandy, and was presented to Mr. Bonhomme in 1918. That same year, Lebourg also presented him with another drawing showing several studies of what may be the same cat, identifiable by the dark patch over its left eye (fig. 1). The handling and tonal density of our drawing, however, suggest an earlier moment in the artist's graphic production, probably dating to the final years of the preceding century, when physical presence and sculptural modelling took precedence over the more atmospheric effects that would come to dominate his later work.



Adolph von Menzel

Breslau 1815 – 1905 Berlin

Study of Hands

1890

Charcoal and stumping on paper

127 × 206 mm (5 × 8 1/8 in)

Monogrammed and dated (lower left): "AM. / 90"

Provenance:

Friedrich "Fritz" Gurlitt, Berlin, 1895

Siegfried Billesberger, Moosinning, in 1990

Private collection

Hans Pels-Leusden, Zurich, 2002

Sale at Grisebach, Berlin, *Kunst des 19. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 31 May 2008, lot 109

Martin Moeller, Hamburg, 2013

Stephen Ongpin, London

Private collection

Literature:

Hermann Knackfuß, *Menzel*, Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1895, p. 125, fig. 133.

Hermann Knackfuß, A. v. *Menzel*, Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1922, p. 137, fig. 155.

Moosinning/Munich, Galerie Siegfried Billesberger, *Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und Graphik 1500–1900*, 1990, pp. 134–135, no. 73.

Zurich, Galerie Pels-Leusden, *Adolph von Menzel: Spätes Debut*, 2002, pp. 62–63, no. 34.

Hamburg, Dr. Moeller & Cie., *Adolph Menzel 1815–1905: Meister der Zeichnung*, 2013, no. 12.

Drawings by Adolph Menzel: A World Caught with the Eye and Held by the Pencil, exh. cat., London, Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, 2019, no. 36.

Exhibited:

Moosinning/Munich, Galerie Siegfried Billesberger, *Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und Graphik 1500–1900*, 1990.

Zurich, Galerie Pels-Leusden, *Adolph von Menzel: Spätes Debut*, 2002.

London, Riverwide House, *Drawings by Adolph Menzel: A World Caught with the Eye and Held by the Pencil*, Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, 28 June–5 July 2019.

Largely self-taught, Adolph von Menzel came to prominence through his illustrations for Franz Kugler's *History of Frederick the Great*, a project that established his reputation for precision and historical acuity. Over the course of a long career based primarily in Berlin, Menzel developed a highly individual form of Realism grounded in sustained study and technical control. His achievements were widely recognised during his lifetime and, in 1898, culminated in his ennoblement. Drawing lay at the core of Menzel's artistic practice, and throughout his career, and from his earliest years he produced numerous studies in pencil, chalk, pastel, and gouache, treating hands both as autonomous motifs and as essential elements of larger compositions. The opening page of one of his earliest sketchbooks (*Kupferstichkabinett*, Berlin), dated 1835,

already includes several pencil studies of hands holding a book or clasped together. By around 1890 Menzel worked with increasing independence, largely freed from academic constraints and public commissions. Works from this period reveal a growing focus on fragmentary subjects and isolated motifs, particularly in his works on paper where studies of hands recur frequently. His attention to partial views of the body finds a compelling parallel in his well-known study of his own foot (fig. 1), which encapsulates Menzel's focus on the unidealised and the overlooked, as well as his sensitivity to the expressive potential of the fragment. Executed in charcoal in 1890, our *Study of Hands* combines lightly articulated structural lines with more concentrated passages of shading to define joints, musculature, and the distribution of pressure within the hands. The absence of contextual detail directs attention to the functional and formal aspects of the motif. Both in subject and in handling, our drawing fits squarely within Menzel's late graphic work and exemplifies his sustained engagement with the study of hands across more than half a century.



Fig. 1
Adolph von Menzel
The Artist's Foot
1876
Oil on canvas
38.5 × 33.5 cm (15 1/8 × 13 1/4 in)
Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie



Georges Rasetti

Paris 1851 – 1938 Paris

Wooded Landscape

c. 1891

Ink on paper
275 × 445 mm (10 7/8 × 17 1/2 in)
Signed (lower right): "G. Rasetti"

Born in Paris into a family of artists, Georges Rasetti trained at the École des Beaux-Arts and studied under Léon Bonnat and Florent Willems. In 1891, he travelled to Pont-Aven, where he encountered Paul Gauguin and became closely associated with Paul Sérusier, as well as with Aristide Maillol, Charles Filiger, Jan Verkade, and Mogens Ballin. This period placed him at the heart of the Nabi circle, at a moment when the group was formulating a new pictorial language based on synthesis, structure, and on the expressive autonomy of line and surface. Rasetti's work from the 1890s reflects the Nabis' rejection of naturalistic description in favour of compositional rhythm and symbolic resonance.

Alongside painting, Rasetti was deeply engaged with printmaking and ceramics, practices that reinforced his interest in line and graphic clarity. His drawing technique, which was strongly influenced by *Japonisme* and by the aesthetics of woodcuts, favours contour, repetition, and areas of dense hatching evoking the visual logic of engraving.

The motif of the wood or forest holds particular significance within Nabi imagery, where it is associated with introspection and spiritual retreat. Its dense, enclosed structure allowed Nabi artists to suppress perspectival depth and descriptive detail, favouring instead a synthetic organisation of vertical forms and flat colour planes through which paintings and drawings could convey inner experience. Our *Wooded Landscape*, executed in black ink on paper and dating from this formative Nabi period, exemplifies these concerns. The composition is organised through a succession of vertical tree trunks set against simplified ground forms and articulated by dense, directional hatching.

Rasetti's oeuvre is today exceptionally rare, owing in part to his premature death in 1938 following a fire in his studio, which is reported to have destroyed a substantial portion of his work. Nevertheless, despite the limited dissemination of his production during his lifetime and its subsequent scarcity, Rasetti occupies a significant position within the history of the School of Pont-Aven, as he participated in the movement's emergence and contributed actively to the experimental climate from which Nabi aesthetics first took shape.



Auguste Rodin

Paris 1840 – 1917 Meudon

Two Studies of a Nude Figure Combing her Long Blond Hair

c. 1890–1895

Pencil and watercolour on grid paper

292 × 161 mm (11 ½ × 6 ⅜ in)

Inscription (on the verso): "Dessins donnés par / A. Rodin à M. Fenaille / 1907"

Provenance:

Maurice Fenaille (1855–1937) Collection, Paris, gifted from the artist in 1907

Lilian Rössel-Kåge (1896–1967) Collection, Stockholm

Sale at Bukowskis, Stockholm, *Important Spring Sale*, 7 June 2017, lot 404

Nicolas Schwed, Paris

Private collection

Literature:

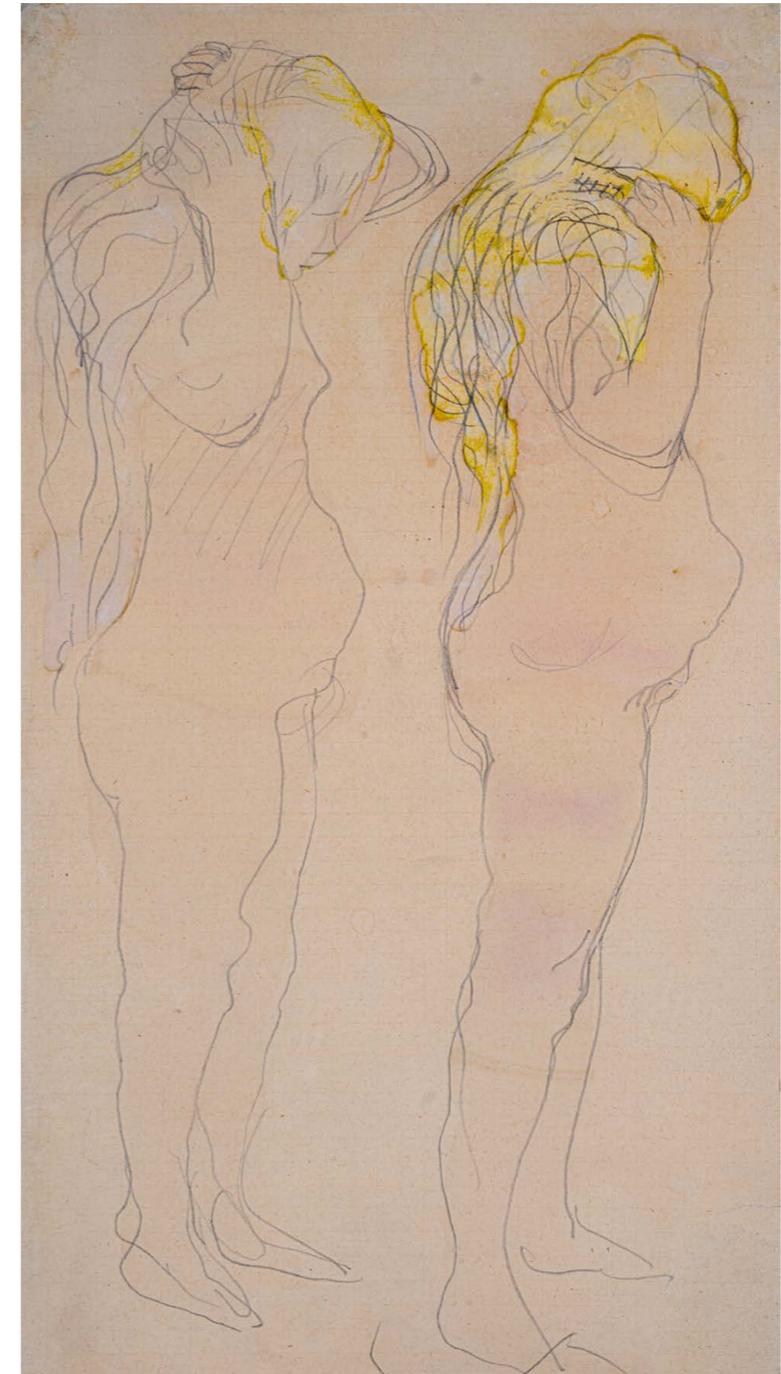
This drawing will be included in Christina Buley-Urbe, *Catalogue raisonné des dessins et peintures d'Auguste Rodin*, under no. 161203.

This sheet belongs to Rodin's so-called transitional period, dating to the early 1890s. During these years in which the artist worked at 182 rue de l'Université in Paris, Rodin received a steady stream of models whose features he noted on index cards. The artist progressively moved away from the densely worked "black drawings" associated with the *Porte de l'Enfer* toward a lighter, more fluid graphic idiom that would come to define his mature style. While his earlier drawings often evoke mythological or literary sources, his transitional works are grounded in direct observation, capturing models in unposed, spontaneous attitudes.

As Christina Buley-Urbe has observed, many drawings from this phase depict women with a "medieval Eve-like beauty": slender bodies with small breasts, a softly rounded abdomen, a warm roseate complexion, and long fair hair. Rodin encouraged his models to perform ordinary gestures, hoping to seize a movement unmediated by theatrical posing. As he explained in an 1898 interview with Maurice Guillemot for *Gil Blas*: "They always want to pose; I tell them: make the gesture of combing your hair... but no, really comb your hair, as you normally would, and only then I will seize the truth".¹

On our sheet, the same figure is drawn twice as she tends her long blond hair, each study adjusted through subtle variations in position and degree of finish. The brighter yellows and soft pinks animating the more developed figure on the right are characteristic of the artist's transitional palette. The use of squared paper, frequently employed in his earlier "Inferno" drawings of the 1880s, further supports an early date within this phase.

In 1907, Rodin gifted our drawing to Maurice Fenaille, one of his most important patrons. An industrialist and noted art historian, Fenaille began collecting Rodin's work in the mid-1880s and went on to acquire a distinguished group of marbles, terracottas, and a portrait of his wife. He played a central role in championing Rodin's draftsmanship, notably by editing the influential *Album Goupil* (1897), the first publication to reproduce a substantial body of the artist's drawings. Fenaille assembled an important collection of Rodin's works on paper, many of which were later donated to the Musée Rodin and other French institutions. The inscription on the verso indicates that this sheet formed part of a larger group the artist presented to him in 1907, the same year the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune mounted the first exhibition devoted exclusively to Rodin's drawings.



¹ From a letter by Rodin dated 20 February 1898: "[elles] veulent toujours poser; je leur dit: Faites le geste de vous coiffer... mais non, coiffez vous réellement, pour de vrai, et je saisis alors la vérité".

Antonio de La Gándara

Paris 1861–1917 Paris

The Kiosk

1890–1893

Pastel on toned paper
245 × 160 mm (9 5/8 × 6 1/4 in)

Provenance:
Estate of the artist
Antonia de la Gándara & Thadée Kopezinsky Collection, Paris, by descent
Ms Maurice Collection
Mr Martin Collection, in 1979 by exchange
Sale at Collin du Bocage, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Dessins anciens et modernes, tableaux*, 1 April 2011, lot 117
Private collection

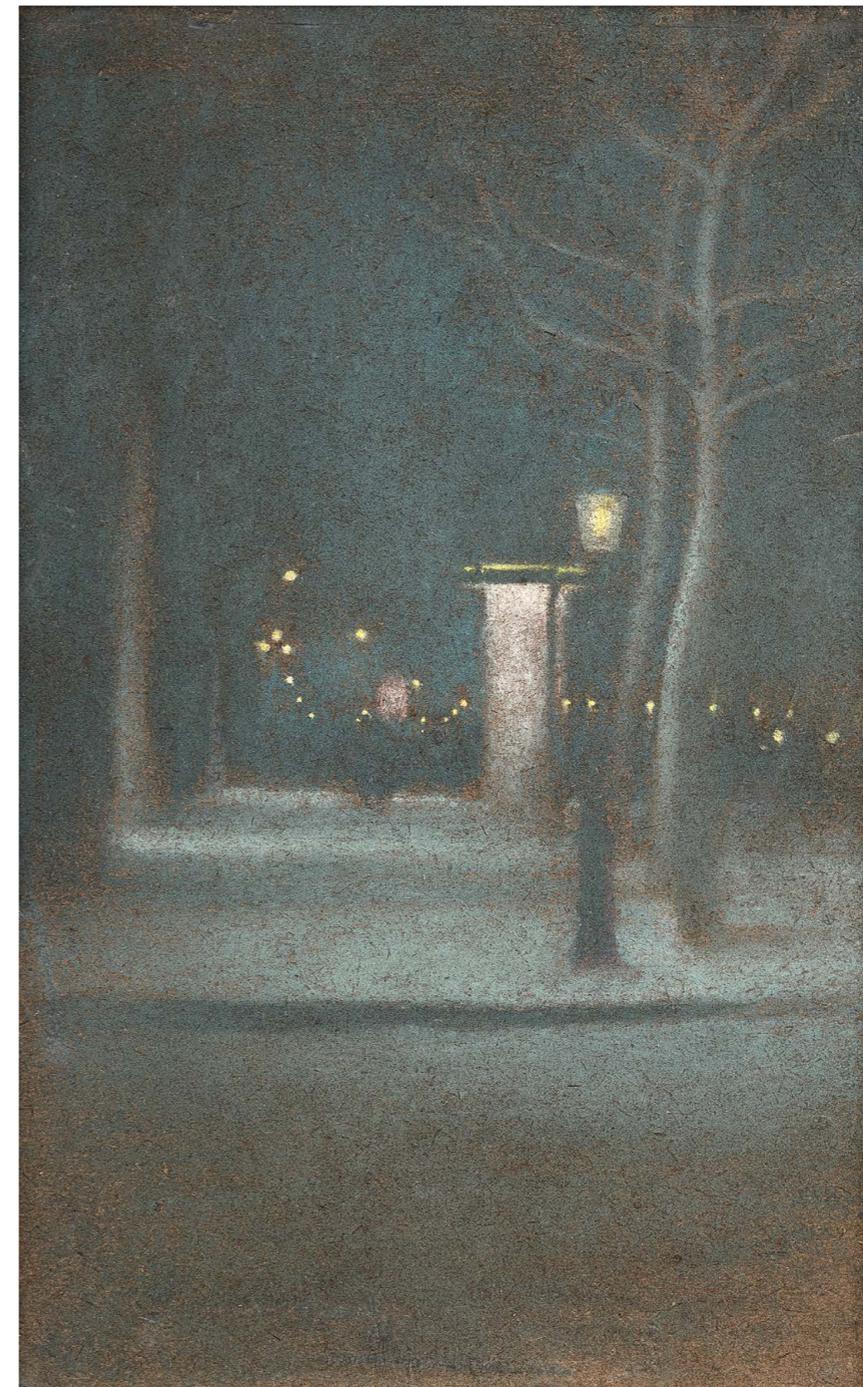
Literature:
Exposition Antonio de La Gandara, exh. cat., Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel, 1893, no. 50.
Catalogue Illustré des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Dessins, Gravure, Objets d'art et Architecture Exposés au Champ-de-Mars le 10 Mai 1893, 1893, p. 32, no. 1218, as "Vue de Paris le soir".
Gabriel Badea-Paun, *Antonio de La Gandara: sa vie, son œuvre (1861–1917). Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint, dessiné et lithographié*, PhD Thesis, 2005, vol. II, p. 535, no. 283, as *Kiosque*.
Xavier Mathieu, *Antonio de La Gandara: un témoin de la Belle Époque*, 2011, pp. 194–195.

Exhibited:
Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, *Exposition Antonio de La Gandara*, March–April 1893.
Champs-de-Mars, Paris, *Exposition nationale des beaux-arts*, 10 May 1893.

Born in Paris to a Spanish father of Mexican origin and a French mother educated in England, Antonio de La Gándara entered the École des Beaux-Arts in 1868, where he studied under Alexandre Cabanel and Jean-Léon Gérôme, both of whom quickly recognised his precocious talent. He formed close friendships within Montmartre's artistic milieu, notably with Rodolphe Salis, founder of *Le Chat Noir*, Théophile Steinlen, Caran d'Ache, and Adolphe Willette. After marrying Anne-Catherine Wilms in 1885, he painted the celebrated portrait of Robert de Montesquiou, whose patronage introduced him to influential social circles and led to prestigious commissions portraying the Comtesse de Montebello, the Baronne Adolphe de Rothschild, Anna de Noailles, and Madame Gautreau, the celebrated sitter of John Singer Sargent's iconic painting *Madame X*. From 1892 onward he exhibited regularly at the Galerie Durand-Ruel, and by the early 1900s he enjoyed considerable success both in Europe and the United States. Closely associated with writers and musicians of his generation, La Gándara also developed a marked interest in fashion, notably through his collaboration with *La Gazette du Bon Ton*.

Pastel played a central role in La Gándara's graphic work. Working on toned papers, he built up delicate layers of colour to create soft transitions, luminous veils, and gently blurred contours. He excelled in capturing the atmospheric effects of twilight and evening, when silhouettes and shadows dissolve beneath the glow of streetlamps. His landscapes – often set in parks, along riverbanks, or on lamplit avenues – carry a distinctly Symbolist inflection, merging recognisable sites with mist, silence, and poetic ambiguity. Views of the Place de la Concorde and the Madeleine, prospects along the Seine, and especially his oils painted in the Jardin du Luxembourg – admired by the poet Albert Samain – all attest to this lyrical sensibility.

In preparation for his 1893 solo exhibition at the Galerie Durand-Ruel, La Gándara surrounded his grand society portraits with a group of small-format pastels depicting Parisian scenes, underscoring the importance of this medium within his œuvre. Our pastel belongs to this group: in *The Kiosk* La Gándara approaches the nocturnal lyricism cultivated by Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Degouve de Nuncques, and József Rippl-Rónai, evoking the hushed visions of the urban night that came to be closely associated with Symbolism. Cool tonalities punctuated by warmer halos around the lights dominate the scene, while the visible grain of the paper enhances the impression of damp air and suspended time.



Charles Lacoste

Floirac 1870 – 1959 Paris

Street in Orthez

1895

Oil on paper
400 × 160 mm (15 ¾ × 6 ¼ in)
Located and dated (on the verso): "Orthez, Mai 1895"

Provenance:
André Barbier (1883–1970) Collection, Paris
Thence by descent
Sale at Ader, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Tableaux Modernes*, 18 May 2016, lot 29
Private collection

Born in Floirac, in the Gironde, and long based in Bordeaux, Charles Lacoste remained profoundly attached to his native region throughout his career. Largely self-taught, he developed his artistic language working primarily en plein air before reworking his compositions in the studio. In the 1890s, he moved within Parisian and provincial intellectual circles and formed lasting friendships with figures such as Arthur Fontaine and the Rouart brothers. A monographic exhibition at the Salon des Cent in 1898 marked a decisive moment in his career, followed by regular participation in the Salon des Indépendants and, starting in 1903, in the Salon d'Automne, which he co-founded. He later exhibited at the Salon de la Libre Esthétique in Brussels (1907) and at the Salon de la Toison d'Or in Moscow (1908).

The 1890s represent the most accomplished and innovative phase of Lacoste's career. During this decade, his work shows clear affinities with the aesthetic principles of the Nabis, particularly in its synthetic approach to composition, its emphasis on flat areas of colour, and its reduction of forms to their essential structures. Like Félix Vallotton, Lacoste privileged a geometric organisation of space and a restrained, deliberate handling of pictorial means that emphasise order, balance, and clarity. His paintings seem to seek simplicity and purity to convey a vision governed by measure and restraint. After 1898, his style gradually evolved toward a more descriptive and atmospheric mode of expression.

Executed around 1895, our oil on paper dates from Lacoste's most accomplished artistic period. It depicts a *Street in Orthez*, where he stayed while visiting his close friend, the poet Francis Jammes, who had settled there with his family in 1888. Executed during the artist's most successful years, the work exemplifies his synthetic approach to landscape and urban views. Lacoste constructs the composition through simplified geometric forms and flat planes of colour, using a restricted palette of blue, brown, and slate-grey tones. These warm, opaque nuances, combined with the absence of anecdotal detail, bestow upon our work the calm, contemplative stillness that characterises his finest works.

Our *Street in Orthez* belonged to André Barbier, a painter and longtime associate of Lacoste. Barbier was part of the same artistic milieu and shared his interest in synthesis and structural clarity. Their friendship formed within a circle of artists and writers that engaged in redefining pictorial language at the turn of the century.



Jean-Jacques Henner

Bernwiller 1829 – 1905 Paris

The Dead Christ Lying on His Shroud

1896

Pencil and white chalk on tracing paper fixed on a photograph
165 × 290 mm (6 ½ × 11 ¾ in)
Studio stamp: "J. J. Henner" (L. 3652)
Inscribed (lower right): "Salon 1896"
Inscribed (lower left): "Braun phot."

Provenance:
Estate of the artist
Thence by descent
Sale at Ferri & Associés, Paris, *Vente cataloguée classique*, 12 December 2025, lot 70

Born in 1829 in Bernwiller, Alsace, Jean-Jacques Henner trained in Strasbourg before entering the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he absorbed a rigorous academic education shaped by close study of Renaissance masters and 19th-century French painting. Awarded the Prix de Rome in 1858, he spent the next five formative years at the Villa Medici, gradually turning from history painting to genre scenes and landscapes distinguished by a subtle sensitivity to light and atmosphere. Upon his return to France, Henner enjoyed a successful official career while pursuing a highly personal approach that favoured idealised figures and timeless subjects. A prolific and sought-after portraitist from the 1870s onward, he was elected member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1889 and named Grand Officier de la Légion d'honneur in 1903.

At the 1896 edition of the Salon, Henner exhibited a painting of the dead Christ laid out at the foot of the Cross. Henner painted the body resting on a white shroud set against a dark, crepuscular sky. Contemporary critics praised the work for the purity of its conception and the restraint of its expression, noting the pallor of Christ's body isolated against a tragic backdrop of clouds, as well as the balance Henner achieved between ideal beauty and anatomical accuracy without recourse to overt religious sentimentality.¹ François Thiébauld-Sisson praised the painting's sober gravity, as well as the refinement of its colour and modelling, qualities that placed it among Henner's most accomplished religious works of the period.²

Our sheet presents a drawing fixed on a photograph of the painting as exhibited at the Salon (fig. 1). This photograph is significant as part of the earliest generation of art reproductions by the Braun studio, founded by Adolphe Braun, whose refined carbon prints played a pioneering role in disseminating artworks in the late 19th century. By tracing directly over the photographic image, Henner brings together drawing,

painting, and photography at a moment when their interaction remained experimental. This rare conjunction offers insight into his working process, showing how photography could support graphic refinement while preserving the intensity of the original composition. Such dialogue reflects broader contemporary concerns with image-making, as seen in works like Bagnan-Bouveret's *The Wedding at the Photographer's Studio*, and illustrates how photography became an active force in reshaping artistic practice and perception.



Fig. 1
Jean-Jacques Henner
The Dead Christ Lying on his Shroud
(*Le Christ au linceul*)
c. 1896
Oil on canvas
175 × 44.5 cm (6 7/8 × 17 1/2 in)
Musée Jean-Jacques Henner



¹ François Thiébauld-Sisson, *Le Salon de 1896: Cent planches en photogravures et à l'eau-forte par Goupil & C^o*, p. 24.
² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Odilon Redon

Bordeaux 1840 – 1916 Paris

Small Tricolor Bouquet

1905

Pastel on paper
439 × 362 mm (17 ¼ × 14 ¼ in)
Signed (lower right): "ODILON REDON"

Provenance:
Sale at Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 12 May 1939, lot 35
Mr. Prouvost Collection, acquired from the above
Thence by descent
Sale at Sotheby's, London, *Impressionist & Modern Art - Day Sale*, 23 June 2010, lot 116
Private collection

Literature:
Odilon Redon, exh. cat., Paris, 1963, no. 27, as *Vase de fleurs*.
Alec Wildenstein, *Catalogue raisonné de l'Œuvre peint et dessiné*, 1996, vol. III, no. 1426.

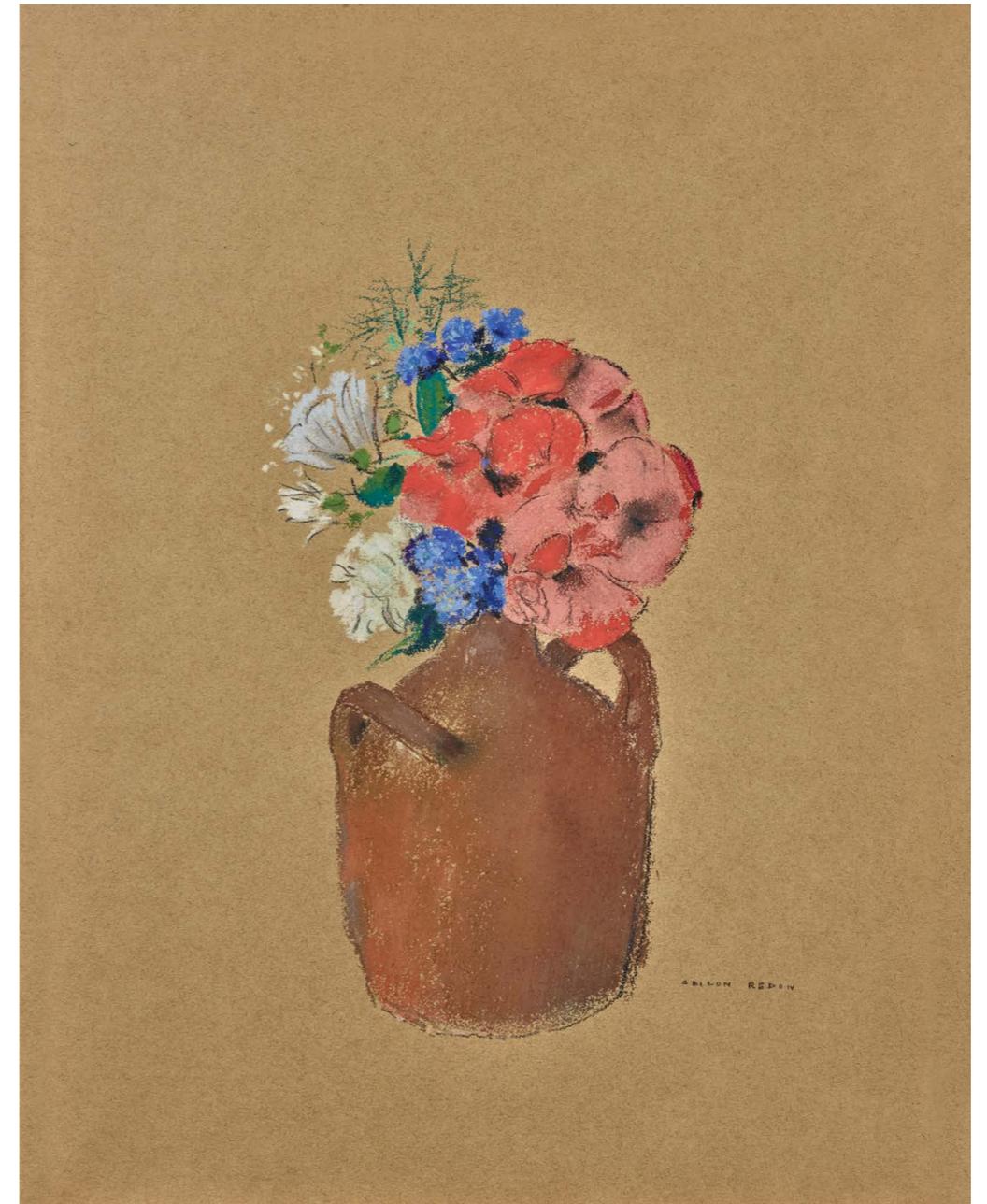
Exhibited:
Paris, Galerie Bernheim Jeune, *Odilon Redon*, 1963.

Born in Bordeaux in 1840, Odilon Redon forged a distinctive trajectory at the intersection of Symbolist thought and emerging forms of modern painting. For much of his early career, he worked primarily in lithography and charcoal, producing the haunting monochrome visions known as his *noirs*. From the 1890s onward, however, colour assumed an increasingly central role in his practice, and by the turn of the century he devoted himself with growing intensity to floral subjects and still lifes, which would become one of the defining components of his late œuvre.

Executed in pastel, our *Small Tricolor Bouquet* demonstrates Redon's mature command of colour and surface. The powdery medium allows for soft transitions and vibrating chromatic passages as the artist exploits the grain of the paper to heighten luminosity. Contrasts between velvety petals and the matte, opaque body of the vase articulate what the critic Bernard Berenson described as "tactile values". Subtle modulations of red tones within the bouquet create what Redon himself termed "the tremor of the coloured surface by tone on tone", an effect that animates our composition without dissolving its structure.

Around 1900, Redon painted a succession of bouquets, several of which were shown at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in 1903 and 1906 and received the praise of Maurice Denis for their author's decisive turn toward chromatic pleasure. Like many painters who embraced the motif of flowers in a vase, from Édouard Manet to David Hockney, Redon treated the subject as a laboratory for pictorial invention.

Our small, unconventional bouquet of cornflowers, carnations, and poppies arranged in a terracotta vase evokes the lyrical beauty of the everyday, making our vibrant pastel a testament to Odilon Redon's draughtsmanship and ability to exalt humble subjects.



Auguste Rodin

Paris 1840 – 1917 Meudon

Cambodian Dancer with Red Sampot

c. 1906–1907

Watercolour and gouache on vellum paper
320 × 245 mm (12 5/8 × 9 5/8 in)
Signed (lower right): "Rodin"

Literature:
This drawing will be included in Christina Buley-Urbe, *Catalogue raisonné des dessins d'Auguste Rodin*, under the no. 120602.

Auguste Rodin's fascination with the Cambodian dancers began in 1906, when the Royal Cambodian Ballet performed in Paris during an official visit of King Sisowath. The dancers, with their highly stylised, fluid movements, and distinctive, almost sacred forms, captivated Rodin, who was deeply moved by their gestures and the combination of grace and ritual in their performances. Far from seeing them through a lens of sensuality, Rodin admired their physicality as a profound expression of art and form.

While sculpture, which had brought him fame in France and internationally, remained his primary medium, it was in his drawings that Rodin explored his newfound obsession with the dancers, whom he followed to Marseille, where they pursued their French tour. The intimacy of the connection he formed with the Cambodian performers was deeply personal, and he sought to capture their essence in a way that went beyond mere representation. The encounter with the dancers marked a pivotal moment in Rodin's career, inspiring some of his most original final works.

Our sheet, the Cambodian dancer balances lightly on one foot, her elongated arms flowing gracefully through the air. The soft red tint of her sampot blends seamlessly with the delicate rose tones of her skin and the warm beige of the paper, creating a harmonious palette. Upon this serene surface, she seems to perform a movement that is at once fluid and almost sacred.



František Kupka

Opočno 1871 – 1957 Puteaux

Prometheus

Ink wash and pencil on paper
260 × 190 mm (10 ¼ × 7 ½ in)
Monogrammed (lower left): "K."

Provenance:
Claude Pompidou (1912–2007) Collection, Paris
Sale at Bonhams - Cornette de Saint Cyr maison de ventes, Paris, *Claude Pompidou: Souvenirs du quai de Bethune*, 2 November 2020, lot 4
Private collection

Around 1905, František Kupka deepened his engagement with ancient civilisations, an interest stimulated by his work as an illustrator for Élisée Reclus' *L'Homme et la Terre* (1905 to 1908). This immersion in the origins of humankind subsequently informed his major Greek projects, including *Les Erinnyes* after Leconte de Lisle (1907), *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes, and *Prometheus* after Aeschylus, a theme he explored repeatedly before 1910 (fig. 1). Our wash drawing belongs to Kupka's early figurative period, when mythological subjects provided a fertile ground for narrative invention, symbolism, and formal experimentation, several years before he emerged as one of the foremost pioneers of abstraction.

In our composition, the titan is chained to a rock, surrounded by hybrid beings and a bird of prey, within a vertical composition of striking dramatic intensity. Kupka adopts a deliberately archaising idiom, combining monumental bodies, mythological figures, and fantastic creatures to evoke the primordial atmosphere of the myth. Rather than illustrating Aeschylus directly, the image draws on the visual imagination of pre-classical art, where monsters and humans coexist in an undifferentiated mythic world. The abrupt morphology and tense anatomy reflect Kupka's search for primal forms and for a visual language liberated from academic convention.

Our *Prometheus* was in the collection of Claude Pompidou, wife of the French President Georges Pompidou and a noted art enthusiast, whose collection reflected a sustained interest in major currents of modern art.

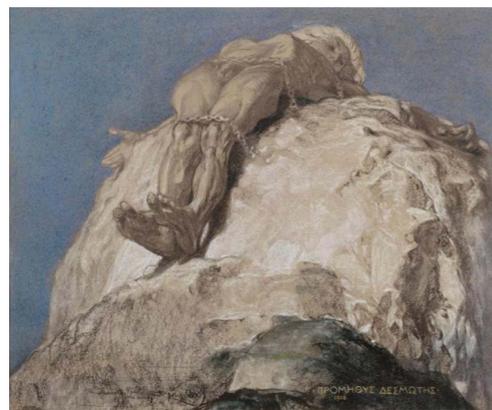


Fig. 1
František Kupka
Prométhée enchaîné
1908
Charcoal, chalk and pastel on grey paper
480 × 590 mm (18 7/8 × 23 1/4 in)
Paris, Centre Pompidou



Emile Claus

Vive-Saint-Eloi 1849 – 1924 Astene

London at Night

1915

Conté crayon on paper
123 × 183 mm (4 7/8 × 7 1/4 in)
Monogrammed, located, and dated (lower right): "E C / L 15"

Provenance :
Bonhams Cornette de Saint-Cyr Bruxelles, *Belgian Art*, 27 mai 2024, lot 6

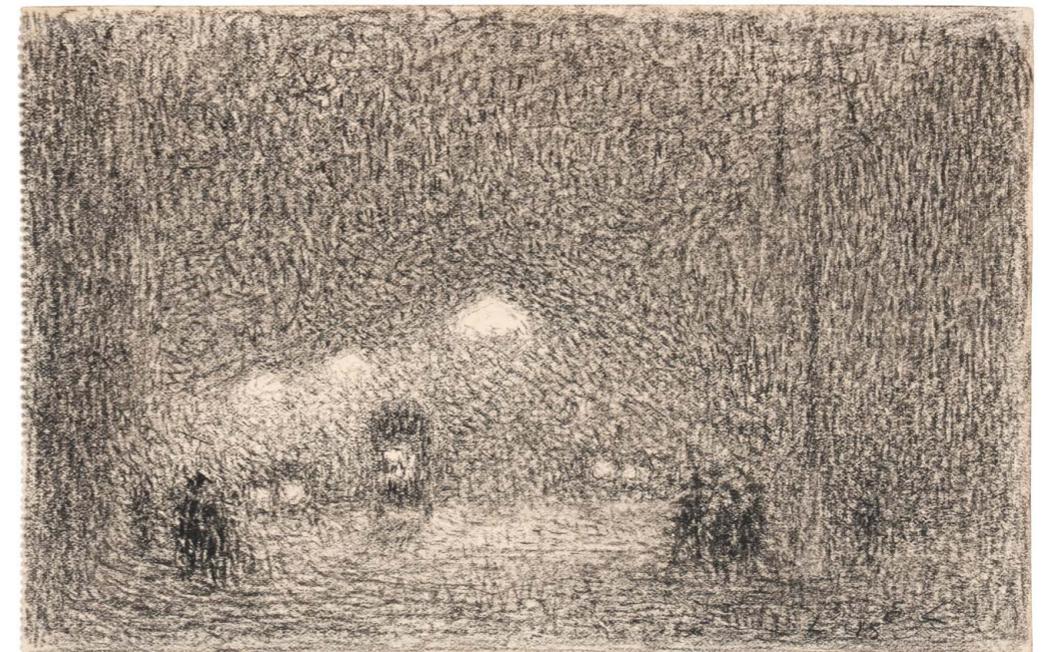
Literature:
Emile Claus retrospectief, exh. cat., Ostende, Provinciaal museum voor moderne kunst, 1997, p. 247, no. 235.

Exhibited:
Ostende, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, *Emile Claus retrospectief*, 14 June 1997–2 November 1997.

Influenced by the art of Jules Bastien-Lepage, Emile Claus painted his first works in a naturalistic style. A regular visitor of Paris, he was inspired by the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists, and gradually adopted a freer brushstroke which he combined with vivid colours. In the 1890s, Claus painted large, bright landscapes of the Belgian countryside. His official collaboration with the Parisian Gallery Georges Petit in 1900 increased his fame, making him the most famous Belgian painter of his time.

In 1915, as the war raged in Belgium, Claus went to London to create a series of views of the Thames. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of Claude Monet, who had painted the London river multiple times between 1899 and 1905. In a letter dated 20 April 1915, Claus expressed his desire to give a "unique theme to these canvases, unique yet different: the Thames". At that time, his studio was located on the 4th floor of Mowbray House, at the corner of Embankment and Norfolk Street, with windows overlooking the Waterloo and Westminster bridges. In 1917, Claus held his first exhibition on this subject, titled *Reverberations on the Thames*, at the Goupil Gallery in London. The show, which was accompanied by a catalogue, featured 91 works. The artist returned to Belgium in 1919, where he passed away in 1924 after a final retrospective exhibition at the Galerie Giroux.

On our sheet drawn in London in 1915, a swirling sequence of charcoal dashes define a mysterious environment. In his own reinterpretation of Seurat's graphic technique, Claus plays with positive and negative space to craftily render the smoothly suggested representation of figures, carriages, and light posts, ultimately recreating the foggy, mystical ambience of a London street at night.



Gaston Redon

Bordeaux 1853 – 1921 Paris

Fantastical Landscape

1915

Indian ink on paper
325 × 250 mm (12 ¾ × 9 7/8 in)
Signed and dated (lower left): "G. REDON / 1915"

Provenance:
Sale at Rossini, Paris, *Art moderne*, 29 mars 2024, lot 97

Brother of the famous painter Odilon Redon, Gaston Redon is primarily known as an architect. Admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts in 1883, he won the Prix de Rome that same year and entered the Villa Medici as a resident. In Rome, he formed friendships with composers Claude Debussy and Gustave Charpentier, who were also residents at the time.

Deeply uninterested in conventional architecture, Redon quickly turned away from academic practice to explore, through drawing, entirely imagined architectural visions. His graphic work, which included several studies of monumental and unreal architecture, enabled the artist to express his search for the infinite and the unattainable.

Our sheet, with its eerie and fantastical atmosphere, combines the artist's prowess as an architect and a draughtsman with his passion for music. Possibly a visual transcription of the macabre compositions of Franz Liszt (such as *Nuages gris* from 1881 or *Pensée des morts* from 1834–1852), or the *Erkönig* that Franz Schubert composed in 1815 based on the famous Romantic poem by Goethe titled *Der Erkönig* (The King of the Elves, 1782), our architectural scene illuminates Redon's ability to transcribe these musical pieces' sense of anguish into his technically advanced drawings.¹ *Our Fantastical Landscape*, recalling the phantasmagorical visions of his brother Odilon, is distinguished by its refined crosshatching, which lends depth and structure to the pyramidal – perhaps sacred – architecture boldly rendered on the sheet. At the same time, the composition conjures an atmosphere of the uncanny, a concept that preoccupied many scholars and psychiatrists at the turn of the century.



George Minne

Ghent 1866 – 1941 Sint-Martens-Latem

Embracing Couple

1920s

Black chalk and stumping on paper
190 × 305 mm (7 ½ × 12 in)
Signed (lower right): "George Minne"

Provenance:
Sale at Artcurial, Paris, *Old and 19th-Century Masters*, 11 February 2026, lot 417

After studying architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, George Minne soon turned away from academic training to pursue an independent artistic path. He exhibited at the Ghent Salon in 1889 and at the Salon des XX in Brussels the following year. During a stay in Paris in 1891, he received encouragement from Auguste Rodin, whose naturalism he deeply admired. Closely associated with Symbolist circles – notably the poets Maurice Maeterlinck and Émile Verhaeren – Minne exhibited at the first Salon de la Rose + Croix in 1892. Throughout the 1890s, he developed the motif of the nude, a theme he would repeatedly revisit in sculpture. Borrowing from Rodin the principle of variation and repetition, Minne refined an art marked by mystical primitivism, the primacy of line, and an increasingly radical simplification of form.

A prolific draughtsman, Minne conceived drawings not merely as preparatory studies but as autonomous works that reveal the same concerns that permeate his sculpture: inwardness, emotional concentration, and bodies held in states of tension or repose.

Our sheet, executed in the 1920s, revisits the motif of the *Embracing Couple*, which he explored in his drawings as well as in his sculpture since the early stages of his career. The intertwined figures continue to articulate themes central to his oeuvre: physical tension, inwardness, and compressed movement, with the forward-inclined male figure recalling the expressive idiom of Rodin, notably in *Ugolino* (1882).

Rendered in rich, velvety black chalk, our *Embracing Couple* reflects the softened graphic language characteristic of Minne's later career.



Pierre Bonnard

Fontenay-aux-Roses 1867 – 1947 Le Cannet

Femme à sa toilette

c. 1933

Gouache and pencil on paper
339 × 289 mm (13 3/8 × 11 3/8 in)
Signed (lower left): "Bonnard"

Provenance:
Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris
Jacques Dupont (1908–1988) Collection, Paris, acquired from the above on 21 June 1939
Thence by descent
Sale at Christie's, Paris, *Œuvres modernes sur papier / Art Impressionniste et Moderne*, 14 April 2021, lot 19
Private collection

Literature:
Madeleine Guynet-Pechadre, *Bonnard*, exh. cat., Nice, 1955, p. 34, no. 52.
Véronique Serrano, *Bonnard et Le Cannet, Dans la lumière de la Méditerranée*, 2011, p. 154, no. 20.
Pierre Bonnard, Centenaire de sa naissance, exh. cat., Munich, Paris, 1967, no. 174.

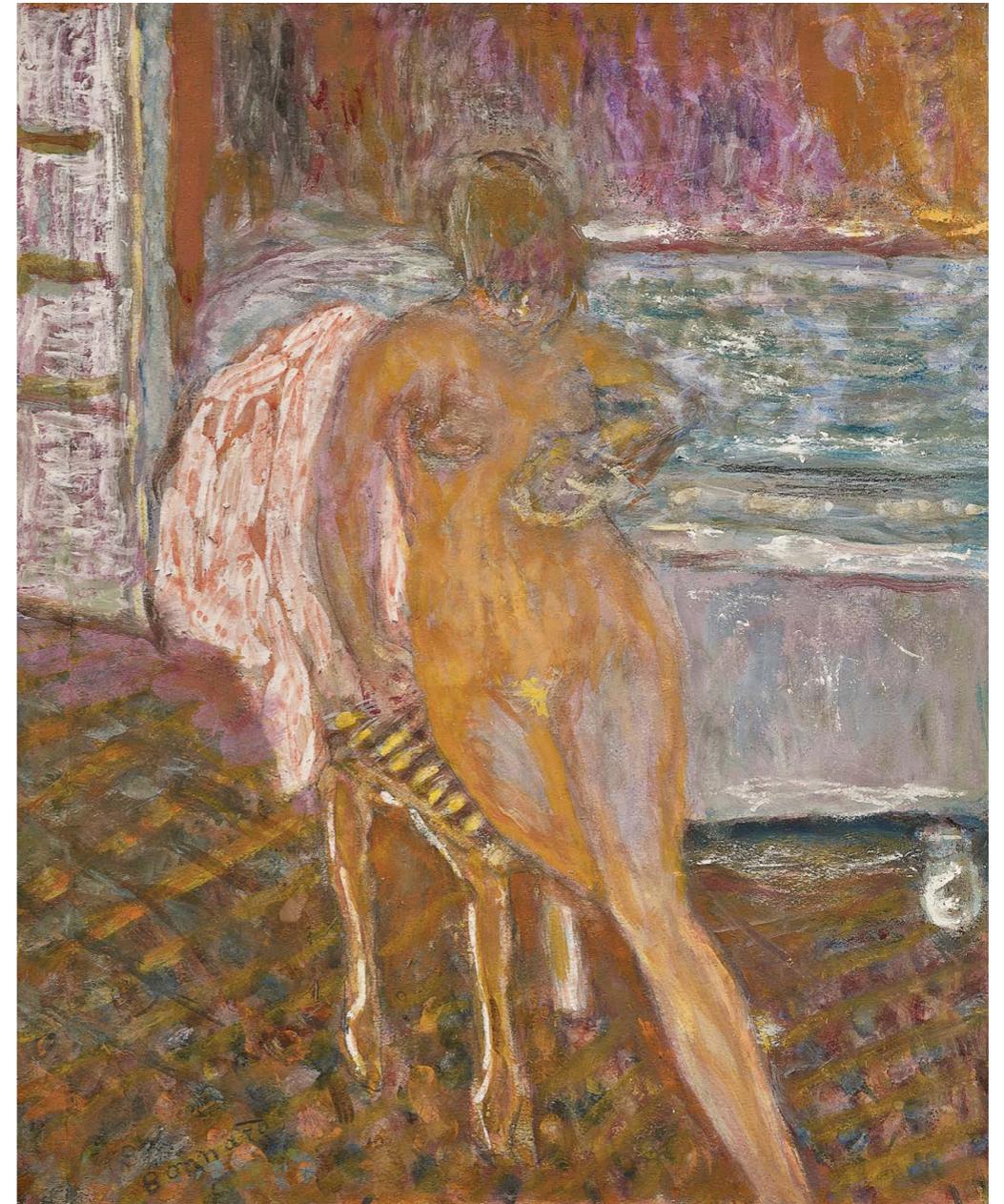
Exhibited:
Paris, Galerie Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, *Aquarelles, pastels et dessins de Bonnard*, 1–17 June 1939, no. 19.
Nice, Musée des Ponchettes, *Bonnard*, August–September 1955.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, *Pierre Bonnard, Centenaire de sa naissance*, 8 October 1966–1 January 1967.
Paris, Orangerie des Tuileries, *Pierre Bonnard, Centenaire de sa naissance*, 13 January–15 April 1967.
Le Cannet, Musée Bonnard, *Bonnard et Le Cannet, Dans la lumière de la Méditerranée*, June–September 2011.

Executed around 1933, *Femme à sa toilette* is a striking example of one of Pierre Bonnard's most recurrent and intimate themes: the rituals of bathing.

The appearance of the nude in the bath in Bonnard's work is inseparably tied to his encounter, in 1893, with Marthe de Méligny (born Boursin, 1869–1942), the young woman who became his model, muse, and companion. Secretive by nature, she concealed from the artist her age, her true surname, and her humble origins until their marriage in 1925. Of delicate health, Marthe frequently visited thermal resorts for treatment, often accompanied by the painter. At home, she delighted in the long rituals of her toilette, which provided Bonnard with endless opportunities to study the female nude and the play of reflections, light, and colour. These scenes enabled the artist to experiment with architectural elements – most notably shimmering mirrors and richly patterned tiled walls and floors – which frame and intensify his female figure in a multitude of compositions (fig. 1).

By the early 1930s Bonnard was exploring this theme with renewed subtlety, sometimes turning to gouache, a medium that allowed him to heighten the immediacy of his vision.

Our sheet is remarkable for its freshness and rarity: unlike some of his more fragmented compositions, the figure here is treated frontally, with colours whose intensity matches that of his oil paintings (fig. 1). Marthe's body emerges softly amidst iridescent reflections, the light gliding across her skin and echoing against the basin, while the surrounding interior – typically characterised by patterns of tiles – contributes to the sensory effect of the scene.



Soon after its execution in the early 1930s, the work entered the Galerie Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques, in Paris. Jacques Rodrigues-Henriques – son of Gustave Rodrigues-Henriques, a banker and stockbroker, and Gabrielle Bernheim, who later married Félix Vallotton – was himself an art dealer, a collector, and the founder-director of a gallery on Rue Bonaparte. In 1939, the work was acquired by Jacques Dupont (1908–1988), a passionate advocate for the arts. Appointed Inspector of Historic Monuments in 1938, Dupont worked during the Second World War with Jacques Jaujard to safeguard masterpieces from the Louvre and other French museums and, after the country's liberation, served in Germany as Fine Arts Officer alongside Rose Valland. Recognised for his wartime service, he rose to become Inspector General of Historic Monuments and, in 1957, professor at the École des Beaux-Arts. As president of the Société des Amis du Louvre, he enriched the Museum's collections – notably through the acquisition of Georges de La Tour's *Saint Sebastian Tended by Irene* – and organised major exhibitions in Paris. After remaining in the Dupont family for nearly a century, the work entered a private collection in Paris.

Bonnard's bathing scenes have often been compared to those of Edgar Degas and Auguste Renoir. Yet, as demonstrated by our sheet, they remain profoundly personal: rather than displaying staged poses of professional models, they encapsulate a lifelong meditation on Marthe's routine, transformed into a private mythology and a unique universe in Bonnard's œuvre.

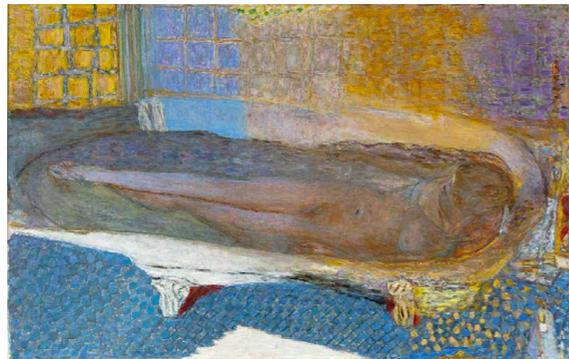
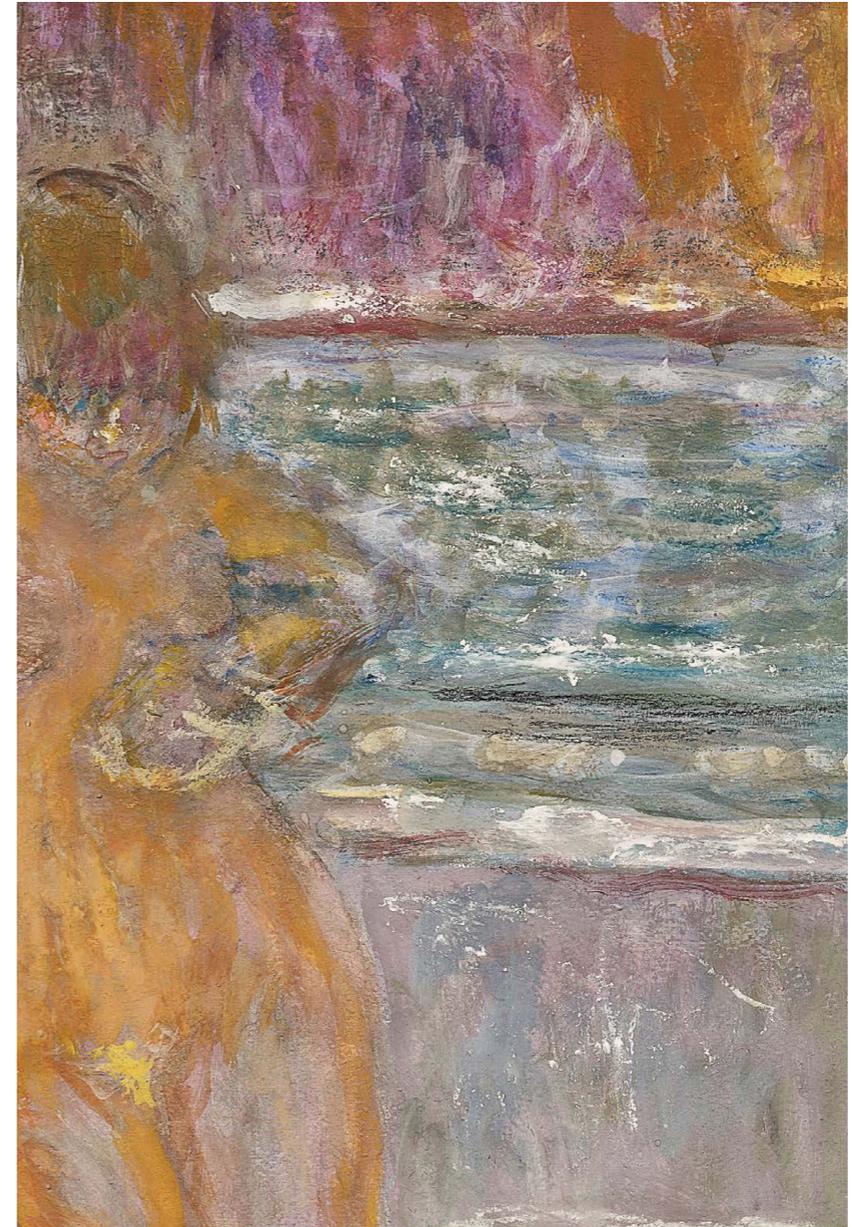


Fig. 1
Pierre Bonnard
Nu dans le bain
1939
Oil on canvas
93 × 147 cm (36 5/8 × 57 7/8 in)
Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris



Pablo Picasso

Málaga 1881 – 1973 Mougins

Study of the Legs of Dora Maar

1937

Pencil on paper
140 × 220 mm (5 ½ × 8 ⅝ in)

Provenance:
Dora Maar (1907–1997) Collection, Paris
Piasa, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Derniers souvenirs de Dora Maar*, Paris, 26-27 May 1999, lot 9
Richard Nagy Ltd., London
Private collection, Paris
Galerie Sophie Scheidecker, Paris
Private collection, acquired directly from the above in 2013

Pablo Picasso met the photographer Dora Maar, born Henriette Theodora Markovitch, during the International Surrealist Exhibition held in Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the spring of 1935. From this encounter developed a sustained personal and artistic relationship, in which Maar – soon to become one of Picasso's principal models – engaged with the artist in a fertile exchange between photography and painting. Picasso was drawn to Maar's intellectual independence and assured presence. Their relationship unfolded alongside his ongoing connection with Marie-Thérèse Walter, the mother of his daughter Maya.

Our drawing comes from a sketchbook belonging to Maar and dating from the 1930s. The carnet contains several drawings by Picasso, including studies and a written note referring to Ferdinand Cheval, the celebrated *Facteur Cheval*, whose visionary *Palais Idéal* – built single-handedly between 1879 and 1912 – became an emblematic example of imaginative, self-taught architecture admired by avant-garde artists and Surrealists. Executed in 1937, the same year as *Guernica*, the present sheet was conceived during a period of exceptional intensity in Picasso's work. In our *Study of the Legs of Dora Maar*, Picasso sketches the semi-open legs of his reclining companion. A lightly indicated drapery partially covers her body, while the composition remains suggestive through its economy of line and detail. Picasso's remark that "art is never chaste" finds a discreet echo in this sheet, conveyed with restraint and understatement.

The confident, uninterrupted pencil strokes reveal Picasso's close attention to form and posture, as well as his ability to translate a private moment of observation into a drawing of striking immediacy. The sheet stands as a compelling example of Picasso's draughtsmanship in the late 1930s, combining intimacy, clarity of vision, and formal control.



Sir Stanley Spencer

Cookham 1891–1959 Taplow

Study of a Female Nude

Pencil on paper
340 × 245 mm (13 3/8 × 9 5/8 in)

Provenance:
Bernard Jacobson, London
Sale at Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, *Modern British & 20th Century Art*, 11 December 2025, lot 516

Stanley Spencer was born in Cookham, Berkshire, a village that would remain a constant visual and spiritual reference throughout his career. Trained at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1908 under Henry Tonks, he received a rigorous academic formation based on drawing from the live model. This discipline fostered an intense, lifelong engagement with the human figure, which became one of the most radical and revealing aspects of his practice. His work gained early recognition and he emerged as one of the most distinctive and celebrated figurative painters in Britain: he was elected a Royal Academician, awarded a CBE, and knighted in 1959, the year of his death.

Far from academic idealisation, Spencer developed an uncompromisingly direct realism. His nudes, which feature among the most striking in 20th-century British art, are rendered with a frankness that foregrounds physical heft and vulnerability. Flesh, observed closely and unsparingly, is imbued with psychological presence. This approach reaches a culmination in works such as his *Nude Portrait of Hilda*, which is insistently and crudely real and intimate.

Our *Female Nude* exemplifies this sustained commitment to truthful observation from life and may plausibly be understood as a study related to this body of work, whether for the celebrated *Nude, Portrait of Patricia Preece* (1935) (fig. 1) held in the Ferens Art Gallery, or for a comparable painted nude. Cropped tightly on the torso and arms, the composition deliberately avoids narrative and individual likeness, concentrating instead on compression and curvature. The omission of the head further intensifies the focus on the body as a subject of analytical scrutiny, underscoring the intimate and probing nature of Spencer's art.

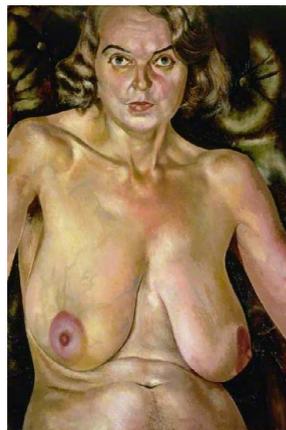
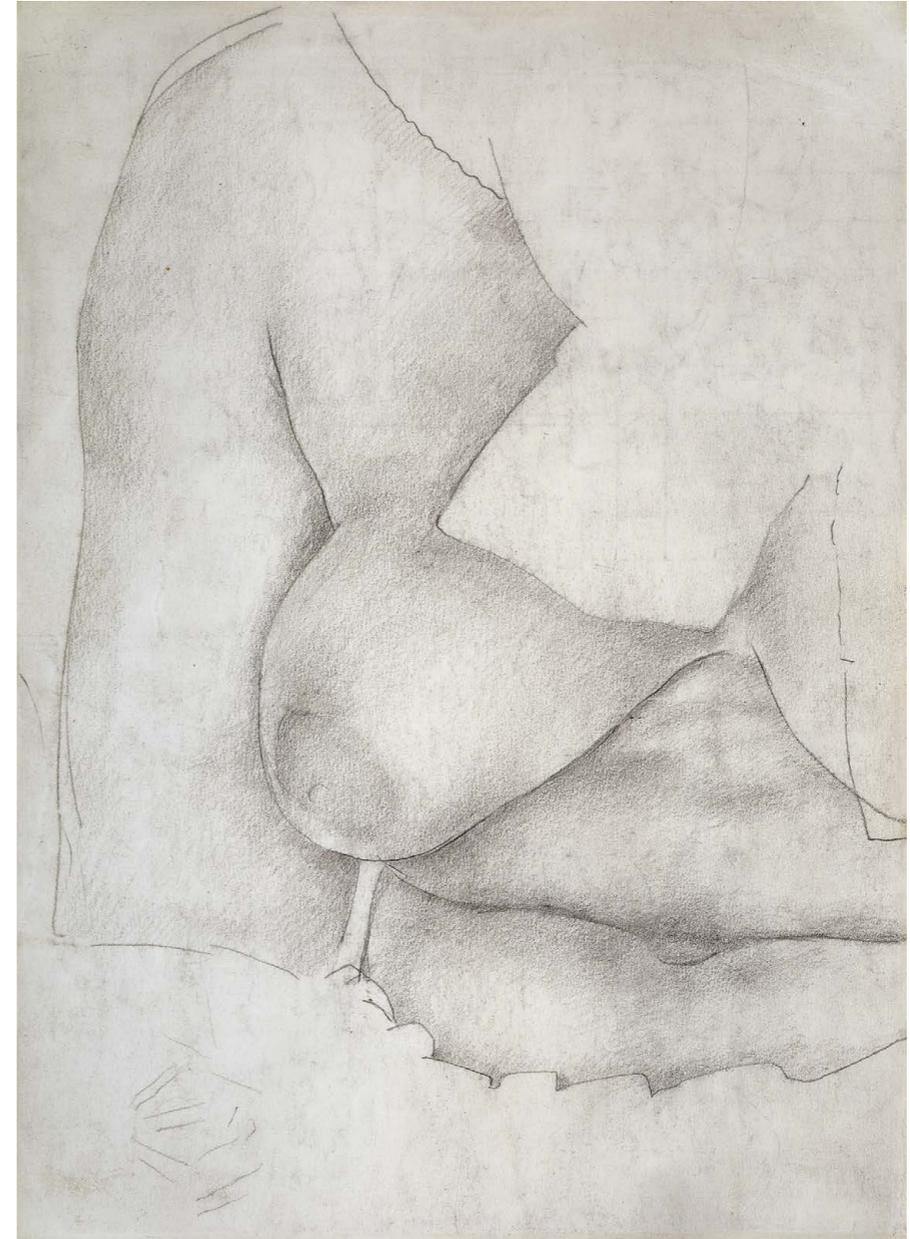


Fig. 1
Sir Stanley Spencer
Nude, Portrait of Patricia Preece
1935
Oil on canvas
76.2 × 50.8 cm (30 × 20 in)
Hull, Ferens Art Gallery



Fig. 2
Verso of our sheet
Assorted Squared Studies
Pencil on paper

On the verso (fig. 2), the sheet bears a series of squared studies that reveal Spencer's method of enlarging compositions for transfer to canvas. These relate to several paintings executed around 1940, notably *The Coming of the Wise Men* and *On the Tiger Rug*, and highlight the central role of drawing as both an investigative and preparatory tool in his work. Spencer's treatment of the body as dense, exposed, and unidealised, anticipates the realism of Lucian Freud, who acknowledged his role as a crucial precursor.



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Next page:

Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–1884)

A Silhouette Walking in the Streets of Damvillers

1884

Charcoal and stumping on paper

223 × 287 mm (8 ¾ × 11 ¼ in)

Signed, located and dated (lower left): "J. BASTIEN LEPAGE Damvillers 1884"



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