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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**FRICK ACQUIRES A WATERCOLOR BY
ANTOINE VOLLON:
VIEW OF *DIEPPE HARBOR***

**TO BE FEATURED NEXT SUMMER IN A PRESENTATION OF
RARELY SHOWN LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS FROM THE
PERMANENT COLLECTION**



Antoine Vollon (1833–1900), *View of Dieppe Harbor*, 1873, watercolor and graphite on laid paper, The Frick Collection, gift of Carol Forman Tabler in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander A. Forman III

Throughout the nineteenth century, the city of Dieppe attracted artists intent on depicting its pebbled beaches, vibrant harbor, and Renaissance château. Turner, Delacroix, Daubigny, Pissarro, and Whistler all spent time in the northern French city, a hub of transportation between Paris and London situated on the English Channel in Normandy. Henry Clay Frick acquired paintings of Dieppe by Daubigny and Turner in 1904 and 1914,

respectively. The Frick is pleased to announce the acquisition of a third view of the city: a splendid watercolor and graphite drawing by the French artist Antoine Vollon (1833–1900), *View of Dieppe Harbor*, 1873, the generous gift of the preeminent Vollon scholar, Dr. Carol Forman Tabler, in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander A. Forman III. Next summer, this work will be featured in a presentation of rarely seen drawings from the museum's permanent collection. *Landscape Drawings in The Frick*

Collection, organized by the Frick's Research Assistant Joanna Sheers Seidenstein, will be on view in the Cabinet Gallery from June 9 to September 13, 2015. Comments Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator Xavier F. Salomon, "Vollon was an immensely well-connected artist, celebrated in his lifetime. This superb drawing is a welcome addition to the Frick's stellar collection of works on paper, and we are thrilled to have an example of the artist's work in the collection."

THE ALLURE OF DIEPPE

Having trained primarily as a printmaker in his native Lyon, Vollon launched a successful career as a painter and draftsman in Paris about 1859. Although known as a painter of still lifes, he dedicated himself as well, if more privately, to landscape. Like the Barbizon School painters who preceded him and the Impressionists who were his contemporaries, Vollon's interest lay with unpretentious subjects and the ephemeral qualities of nature. Signed and dated 1873, *View of Dieppe Harbor* is among Vollon's earliest representations of the port city, which he visited intermittently between 1873 and 1876. During this period, he produced several works—sketches, finished drawings, and large-scale oil paintings—depicting Dieppe's landscape, architecture, and inhabitants. A longstanding center of the fishing industry and international trade and, beginning in the 1820s, a seaside resort known for its baths, casino, and theater, Dieppe was a cosmopolitan city that yet offered Vollon an abundance of rustic subjects.

This watercolor presents a panoramic vista of the city from the southern side of the port's inner harbor, looking north. At the center of a dense swath of land that spans the width of the sheet, beneath a large expanse of sky, lies the Gothic church of St. Jacques. Dieppe's white cliffs and château rise in the distance at left, obscuring the channel on the other side. This vantage point thus affords a view not of scenic beaches and grand ships, but of rough-hewn buildings and small fishing boats. Masts rise throughout the composition and tiny figures—probably fishermen—appear on the shore. The two women in the foreground wear the headdresses, billowing skirts, and clogs typical of the residents of Le Pollet, a fishing community on the harbor's eastern shore that was characterized in literature of the period as a simple, pre-industrialized society, timeless in its dress and customs. The women's presence in this calm scene is akin to that of the villagers and farmers in many landscapes of the Barbizon School and particularly to the laundresses in the rural views of Charles-François Daubigny, Vollon's close friend and mentor. They represent the quotidian life of the harbor and play an important, if subtle, role in the artist's overall evocation of the atmosphere of the place.

Although Vollon depicted the same view in a small oil painting (now lost), this large watercolor is an independent, finished sheet of the kind contemporary collectors eagerly sought. It contains a remarkable wealth of architectural and nautical details but remains, like many of the artist's canvases, deliberately sketchy in finish. The swift application of watercolor with a very wet brush across the laid paper leaves the depressions in the sheet clean. These and other untouched areas impart a subdued luminosity to the entire scene—as if bathed in the gray light of a sun filtered through thick cloud cover. The bold strokes of light blue in the sky suggest rapidly passing clouds and strong winds of salt air.

The sheet bears a dedication to Madame Dumas, née Nadezhda von Knorring, the wife of the celebrated French playwright and novelist Alexandre Dumas *filis*. At their home in Puy, near Dieppe, the couple hosted various artists and writers, including Vollon. They became admiring patrons, acquiring no fewer than eighteen works by the artist. Vollon most likely presented this watercolor to Madame Dumas as a gift of thanks for her hospitality during his first visit to the region.

A SHARED VIEW OF THE CITY

In the summer of 1876, Vollon and Daubigny made overlapping trips to Dieppe. The older artist's painting of the city's inner harbor (also in The Frick Collection) resulted from studies he made during this stay, and it shows the same view as Vollon's watercolor. These good friends, who held similar artistic interests and ambitions, may well have shared their various depictions of Dieppe with one another. Working in oil, Daubigny achieves a sense of immediacy and liveliness of execution similar to that of Vollon's watercolor, with loose,



Charles-François Daubigny (1817–1878), *Dieppe*, 1877, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection

largely unblended strokes of buttery paint, in some areas thinly applied, in others thick with impasto. Whereas Vollon opted for cool, silvery shades, Daubigny employed his preferred palette of warm tones of green and brown, with touches of yellow and red throughout. Here, the bright white reflections on the calm water, together with the haze over the horizon and the slight blur of the buildings in the background, suggest the heat of a blazing summer sun. Like Vollon, Daubigny presents a quiet moment, his scene animated only by the illusion of fleeting movements of light, water, and air, of rocking boats and swaying masts. Both artists aimed to capture the universal qualities of the natural world, as well as the distinctive atmosphere of the historic port city in which they, and many artists before and after them, found continual inspiration.

LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS IN THE FRICK COLLECTION

In the summer of 2015, the Frick will present a selection of landscape drawings from its small but superb collection of works on paper. These sheets—many of which have rarely been on view—range in date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century and include examples by Claude, Rembrandt, Corot, Rousseau, Whistler, and others. Depicting quotidian life in the country, urban scenes, and imagined views of timeless Arcadian realms, the works reveal thematic continuities across four centuries. The newly acquired *View of Dieppe Harbor* by Vollon finds an ideal context amid drawings by the artist's contemporaries and forebears, with whom he shared a drive to investigate the technical possibilities for representing the light and textures of the natural and built environment. The installation, which will be on view in the Frick's Cabinet Gallery, provides an opportunity to showcase the acquisition and this growing and vital part of the permanent collection, as well as to explore the approaches of artists over time to the representation of three-dimensional space and intangible atmospheric effects on paper. *Landscape Drawings in The Frick Collection* runs from June 9 through September 13, 2015.

FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY RECEIVES RELATED ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

In May 2014, The Frick Art Reference Library acquired correspondence and other documents (approximately 450 items) relating to Antoine Vollon, his son, Alexis Vollon, and their peers, as a gift from Dr. Carol Forman Tabler. The materials were assembled by Dr. Tabler through gifts and purchases made during the course of her research. This acquisition complements other archival collections held by the Library, such as the Pierre Miquel study notes on nineteenth-century French landscape painting and the Frank Stokes collection of photographs of artists in their Paris studios (ca. 1890).

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

Building project: www.frickfuture.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

App: frick.org/app

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue

Museum Hours: open six days a week: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day

Admission: \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; "pay what you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection

Subway: #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; Bus: M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Shop: the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Visits: Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

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For further press information, please contact Alexis Light, Senior Manager of Media Relations & Marketing
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