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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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***THE IMPRESSIONIST LINE FROM DEGAS TO
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC:
DRAWINGS AND PRINTS FROM THE CLARK***

March 12 through June 16, 2013



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901), *The Seated Clowness (Miss Cha-U-Kao)*, from *Elles*, 1896, color lithograph on paper, © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Photo credit: Michael Agee

This spring the Frick will present a selection of nineteenth-century French drawings and prints from the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Remarkable sheets by Jean-François Millet, Gustave Courbet, Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, Camille Pissarro, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and other masters will be on view in the lower-level galleries and Cabinet. Ranging widely in subject matter and technique and spanning the entire second half of the nineteenth century, the fifty-eight works represent the diverse interests of Realist, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist artists in a rapidly changing world. The exhibition is organized by Colin B. Bailey and Susan Grace Galassi of The Frick Collection and by Jay A. Clarke of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute,

Williamstown, Massachusetts, and is made possible by The Florence Gould Foundation. Comments Colin Bailey, “the Clark is an internationally renowned

and respected institution with significant and enviable holdings in many areas, above all in nineteenth-century French art. We are very pleased to share with New York audiences such a large and comprehensive selection of their Impressionist and Post-Impressionist drawings and prints—many of which are travelling to New York for the first time.” The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication on the Clark’s holdings in nineteenth-century French drawings and prints. Related education programs hosted by the Frick during this presentation include lectures, seminars, gallery conversations, and special events.

A PERIOD OF CHANGE IN THE ARTS REFLECTED IN WORKS ON PAPER

The profound changes revolutionizing the arts during the second half of the nineteenth century were no less significant for works on paper than for painting. This period witnessed an enormous expansion of the art market with affordable prices and a burgeoning middle-class eager to buy into the unfolding modern movement; the revival of old and the emergence of new techniques and media; and a productive tension between high and low art. With challenges to the academic tradition and to long-accepted hierarchies of genre and subject matter, scenes of gritty reality replaced morally uplifting themes, and mythological goddesses were pushed aside by frankly sexual nudes. Landscape, now ascendant as a genre, flourished in scenes of labor and leisure in the remote countryside, urban parks, or idylls on far-flung islands. At the same time, traditional standards of finish and correctness of form gave way to an emphasis on expression and the mark of the artist's hand. As Jay A. Clarke, Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Clark, discusses in her introductory essay to the exhibition's catalogue, nineteenth-century literature on drawings and prints emphasized qualities of spontaneity, creative freedom, and expressiveness over polished form. This stress on the originality of the hand-drawn arts served to differentiate these forms from photography and photomechanical reproductive processes, and fine art publications and exhibitions dedicated to promoting drawings and prints proliferated. Nevertheless, artists borrowed freely from commercial and popular forms, quickly absorbing new procedures and techniques in the flexible media of drawing and printmaking.

DEGAS, FROM VIRTUOSO EXERCISE TO AUDACIOUS EXPERIMENTS

One of the earliest works in the exhibition is a sheet made by Edgar Degas while still a student of the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Since the founding of the Academy in the seventeenth century, generations of students followed a prescribed curriculum in order to acquire the shared language and subjects of classical representation. While the Academy's prestige waned in the later nineteenth century, its methods still formed the educational foundation of many of the most progressive artists. Here, Degas depicts the half-length figure of a model in profile and full face, each exhibiting a different expression. The clenched hand emerging from the sleeve of the figure in profile positioned in the center of the sheet ingeniously serves both views of the man. This beautiful study sheet attests to Degas's early mastery of composition and the methods of classical draftsmanship, as seen in the subtle range of light and dark and polished finish that rivals Ingres. From such virtuoso exercises sprang Degas's later audacious experiments with the human figure in motion, as demonstrated in the many examples in this exhibition.



Edgar Degas (1834–1917), *Two Portrait Studies of a Man*, c. 1856–57, graphite with stumping and white chalk on paper, © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Photo credit: Michael Agee

MILLET'S EXPRESSIVE EXECUTION OF HIS SUBJECT MATTER



Jean-François Millet (1814–1875), *The Sower*, c. 1865, pastel and Conté crayon on paper, © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Photo credit: Michael Agee

Virtuosity gives way to a more expressive, rough-hewn execution suitable to the subject matter of Jean-François Millet's *Sower*—a paean to the heroic laborer. This pastel reprises the subject of one of Millet's most famous paintings of fifteen years earlier (now at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and is one of several versions commissioned by clients trying to corner the market for his pastels. In the Clark sheet, the sower's powerful striding body is dramatically silhouetted against the vast expanse of dark furrowed earth, the brim of his hat intersecting with the high horizon line. Above, distinct curvilinear strokes of light-colored pastel suggest the last rays of the setting sun in a dramatic windswept sky, underlying the significance of the sower's activity. Tinges of blue and rose in the clouds echo the colors of the peasant's clothing and unite the celestial and terrestrial realms through the laborer. A small figure on the horizon with a team of horses and a harrow provides a sense of scale and the enormity of the sower's task. The timeless figure echoes earlier representations of rural laborers such as those found in the *Très Riches Heures of the Duc de Berry* and the bucolic landscapes of Poussin.

PISSARRO CHALLENGES NOTIONS OF FINISH

Like Millet, Camille Pissarro spent much of his career depicting peasants and unembellished scenes of rural life, although the urban cityscape seized his imagination as well. His large pastel *Boulevard de Rochechouart* depicts a slice of Paris in the years following Baron Haussman's renewal of the city. For the writers and artists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the pulse and rhythm of the *grands boulevards* symbolized modernity, as eloquently expressed in Baudelaire's famous essay of 1863 "Peintre de la Vie Moderne."



Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), *Boulevard de Rochechouart*, 1880, pastel on paper, © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Photo credit: Michael Agee

Through hatched, unblended strokes in a multitude of colors, Pissarro achieves a sense of transparency that captures the shifting sensations of a city in constant flux. His high viewpoint plunges the viewer into the melee of a tree-lined *place*, with carriages and omnibuses circulating and pedestrians dispersing into the streets. These anonymous urban dwellers dressed in dark clothing are mere blurs in the lively milieu, a world away from Millet's monumental figure who commands the space of his environment. Although the pastel appears closer to a sketch than a completed work, Pissarro deliberately challenged accepted notions of finish. He signed and dated the sheet and exhibited it as an independent work alongside his paintings and smaller drawings in the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition of 1881.

GAUGUIN EXPERIMENTS WITH PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES



Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), *Joys of Brittany*, from the *Volpini Suite*, 1889, zincograph on paper, © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Photo credit: Michael Agee

In Paul Gauguin's *Joys of Brittany*, the scene shifts from urban modernity to rural utopia. Here Gauguin extends his bold, simplified manner of drawing to the technique of zincography. Although a novice printmaker, Gauguin chose to work on a grained zinc plate in crayon and tusche wash applied with a brush, a challenging method that afforded him a subtle range of tonal and textural effects. In this sheet, one of eleven zincographs printed on striking canary yellow paper, Breton girls in clogs and traditional headdresses perform a country dance. The work forms part of the so-called *Volpini Suite*,

named for the proprietor of the Café des Arts, where Gauguin and his friends staged a show in direct opposition to the officially sanctioned exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts during the run of the 1889 Exposition Universelle. Based loosely on works in other media that Gauguin made in Martinique, Arles, and Brittany over the previous two years, the suite depicts figures engaged in simple pleasures in changing landscape settings, themes underscored in his deliberately crude, expressive manner. His choice of commercially produced yellow paper—very different from the pale tones of the more expensive, handmade papers typically used by artists—contributes to the liveliness of his images and a sense of displacement from the realm of traditional printmaking.

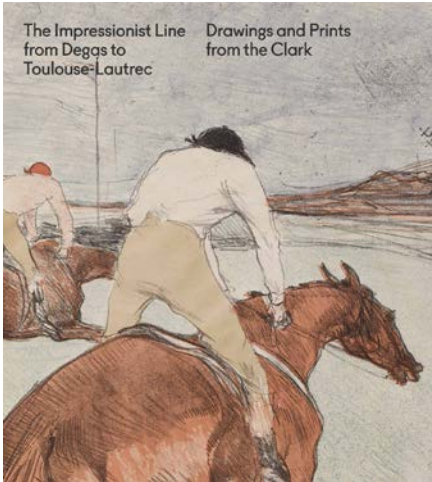
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC CREATED AN INDELIBLE IMAGE OF LIFE IN PARIS

Along with his paintings and drawings, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's posters and prints created an indelible image of the Parisian underclass that inhabited the world of brothels, cabarets, and dance halls. His dynamic compositions and brilliant color combinations raised the bar of artistic expression for color lithography, a technique championed as a fine art beginning only in the 1890s. One of Lautrec's most famous prints, *The Seated Clowness* (front), epitomizes these qualities, along with the artist's sardonic humor. Here, a performer at the Moulin Rouge known as Miss Cha-U-Kao (a name derived from "chaotic Can-can") sits alone in an outlandish yellow ruff and black tights, provocatively posing for both the artist and passers-by at what appears to be a masked ball. Lautrec's genius for composition can be appreciated in the relationship of the figure's bent and extended legs to her arms, which mirror her lower limbs in inverted form. The sheet is part of Lautrec's magnificent *Elles* Portfolio, an album of prints that has traditionally been thought to depict the stages of a prostitute's day—a common theme in Japanese prints, which also were a source of inspiration for the high-keyed color and simplified perspective often used in his prints. More recently, the suite has been interpreted as portraying the domestic life of lesbian entertainers and prostitutes. Several sheets feature Cha-U-Kao and her lover. While commissioned for a purveyor of erotic and pornographic prints, the album is surprisingly free of salacious content, showing instead Lautrec's affection for his beloved denizens of the demimonde, a world he himself inhabited. This work and several others by Toulouse-Lautrec, are shown together in the Cabinet, offering a striking conclusion to the exhibition.

ABOUT THE CLARK

Sterling and Francine Clark, American collectors a generation younger than Henry Clay Frick, founded the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, and it opened to the public in 1955. The Clark's collection—works dating from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century—is renowned especially for its nineteenth-century French art. In the summer of 2014 the Clark will complete its campus expansion program with the opening of a new visitor, exhibition, and conference center designed by Tadao Ando.

WELCOME PUBLICATION ON THIS BODY OF WORKS ON PAPER



The exhibition coincides with the publication of a new volume on the notable French artists represented in the collection of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. *The Impressionist Line from Degas to Toulouse-Lautrec: Drawings and Prints from the Clark* is edited by Jay A. Clarke; with essays by Mary Weaver Chapin, Jay A. Clarke, Anne Higonnet, Richard Kendall, and Alastair Wright. Color reproductions of 101 works—ranging from chalk drawings by Charles-François Daubigny and Edgar Degas to woodcuts by Paul Gauguin and lithographs by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec—accompany important reconsiderations of well-known works and print series. Essays by five prominent scholars consider the political, social, cultural, and market conditions that governed and motivated printmaking and drawing and examine how key artists contributed to the development of the graphic arts in nineteenth-century France. The book concludes with a complete checklist of works included in the accompanying exhibition.

Jay A. Clarke, co-organizer of the exhibition, is Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Mary Weaver Chapin is curator of graphic arts at the Portland Art Museum. Anne Higonnet is professor of art history at Barnard College. Richard Kendall is curator-at-large for the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Alastair Wright is university lecturer in history of art and tutorial fellow at St. John's College, University of Oxford. The book (ISBN: 978030191936) features 160 pages, 101 color illustrations, and is available in softcover (\$45.00; member price \$40.50) in the Museum Shop of The Frick Collection, on the Web site (www.frick.org), and by phone at 212.547.6848.

RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Lectures

Unless otherwise noted, lectures are free. No reservations are necessary, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Lectures will be webcast live and thereafter can be viewed on the Frick's Web site or the institution's channel on FORA.tv.

Date Wednesday, March 13, 6:00 p.m.
Speaker Jay A. Clarke, Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown
Title *The Impressionist Line*

In the late nineteenth century, artistic visionaries approached the drawn and printed line as signposts of modernity. Long overshadowed by oil paintings, prints and drawings created from the 1860s to the 1890s have a different story to tell, one of artistic spontaneity and experimentation. This talk will consider the hallmarks of the Impressionist line by looking at works from the special exhibition, including watercolors by Honoré Daumier and Berthe Morisot, drawings by Claude Monet, mysterious color woodcuts by Paul Gauguin, improvisatory etchings by Édouard Manet, pastels by Jean-François Millet and Camille Pissarro, and luminous color lithographs by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

Date Wednesday, May 29, 6:00 p.m.
Speaker June Hargrove, Professor, Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture, Department of Art History and Archaeology, University of Maryland
Title *"The Listening Eye": Paul Gauguin's Primitive Tales*

Gauguin's 1902 *Contes barbares (Primitive Tales)* aligns the fate of the dying Oceania with his own imminent death. This enigmatic masterpiece, seen in the context of Gauguin's art in the Marquesas during the last eighteen months of his life, marks the culmination of his artistic journey as a spiritual quest that took him from Brittany to the South Pacific. The painting transcends surface reality through an appeal to the senses that offers the viewer a glimpse of the truth behind appearances.

Date Wednesday, June 12, 6:00 p.m.
Speaker Richard Kendall, Curator at Large, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown
Title *Degas and the Crisis of Modern Draftsmanship*

Edgar Degas's approach to drawing changed profoundly—some would say disastrously—over his long career. Initially emulating Renaissance draftsmen, Degas rethought the techniques and purposes of drawing in a modern context. In old age his works on paper used gestural—even crude—marks that can still disconcert us today. This lecture will explore how the pioneering Impressionist defied tradition through his use of startling points of view, unconventional materials, and extreme breadth of handling.

Introductory Gallery Talks

Saturdays, April 27 and May 18, at 12:00 noon
Join the curator for an overview of the special exhibition. *Free with museum admission. Advance reservations are required; to register, please visit our Web site*

Gallery Conversations

Each hour-long session will invite comparisons between a painting from the permanent collection and one drawing or print from the special exhibition. *Advance reservations are required; to register, please visit our Web site. Unless otherwise noted, programs are free with museum admission.*

Saturday, February 9, 12:00 noon, *Identity Confronted*,
Saturday, March 9, 12:00 noon, *Luminous Effects*
Saturday, April 13, 12:00 noon, *Artists and Performers*
Saturday, May 11, 12:00 noon, *The Search for Inspiration*

Seminars

Seminars provide unparalleled access to works of art and encourage thought-provoking discussion with experts in their fields. Sessions, held when the galleries are closed to the public, are limited to twenty participants. Advance registration is required; register online or by calling 212.547.0704. \$100 (\$90 for Members).

Date Tuesday, April 9, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Speaker Colta Ives, Curator Emerita, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Title *Degas: A New Old Master for Modern Times*

Of all the avant-garde Impressionists, Degas was the most thoroughly and consistently committed to the practice of drawing, a traditional artistic exercise for which he showed extraordinary sympathy and aptitude. Focusing on works on paper from the current exhibition, this seminar will offer a close examination of some of the artist's superb figure studies drawn in graphite, chalk, and charcoal that laid the foundations for memorable paintings of contemporary French life.

Date Tuesday, April 23, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Speaker Carl Brandon Strehlke, Adjunct Curator of the John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Title *Modern Life on Paper: Prints and Drawings from the Clark*

Despite their commitment to an unmediated transcription of modern visual experience, Manet and the younger generation of French artists known as the Impressionists were all trained as draftsmen and experimented as well in etching, and lithography. This seminar will examine the range of possibilities that drawing and printmaking offered these avant-garde artists.

Special Evening Events

Performance and Discussion

Title *Degas Dances*
Dates Thursday, April 18; Friday, April 19; and Saturday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for a very special evening of dance and commentary inspired Edgar Degas's painting *The Rehearsal*. Featuring a dancer, a ballet master, a violinist, and a curator, the performances will evoke the classical ballet in France, magically transporting the audience backstage to the Paris Opera House of the late nineteenth century. *Performances are supported by Ayesha Bulchandani-Mathrani and Sandeep Mathrani. \$125 (\$105 Members). Tickets must be purchased in advance online; please visit our Web site.*

Free Public Evening: Spring Night

Date Friday, May 17, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Enjoy a night of free programs and activities at the Frick, as we open our doors to the public and celebrate our special exhibitions. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet curators, hear lectures and talks, sketch in the Garden Court, and enjoy live music. *No reservations are accepted; visitors will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis.*

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

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

Admission: \$18; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1 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.

Museum 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 Heidi Rosenau, Head of Media Relations & Marketing or Alexis Light, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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