

Nineteenth-century French Drawings Fondation Custodia



Lionel Le Couteux (1847–1909)

Rocky Coast by the Sea [detail]

Black chalk heightened with white chalk
on grey-green paper. – 393 x 524 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris

8.10.22–8.1.23

EXHIBITION AT THE FONDATION CUSTODIA

from 8 October 2022 to 8 January 2023

Nineteenth-century French Drawings. Fondation Custodia



OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, the Fondation Custodia has contributed to the re-discovery of another, different nineteenth century, a long distance from the famous names and the usual well-trodden paths: Georges Michel (*The Sublime Landscape*, 2017-2018); or open-air painting (*True to Nature*, 2021-2022). Both exhibitions enjoyed a resounding success with the public. In Autumn 2022, this exploration will be continued with a retrospective revealing the poetic work of Léon Bonvin (1834 – 1866) accompanied by the publication of a catalogue raisonné. At the same time, the Fondation shines a light on its own holdings in an exhibition of a choice collection of nineteenth-century French drawings; these are also available to all in our database *Collection Online*.

The exhibition *Nineteenth-century French Drawings. Fondation Custodia* presents works by major French artists (Ingres, Delacroix, Corot, Rosa Bonheur), and restores the reputation of artists who were famous in their day but have now been unfairly forgotten (Achille Benouville, Eugène Buttura, Lionel Le Couteux) or completely disregarded (Caroline de Fontenay, Charles Eustache).

The majority of the drawings are being shown to the public for the first time, as only a few of them were included in the exhibition of our French drawings, *Watteau to Degas*, in 2010.

The drawings are presented here in a largely chronological order, highlighting various themes. In this overview of the century, we have several focuses on artists whose work is well represented in the collections of the Fondation.

The exhibition is testimony to the collection's vitality. Begun by the collector Frits Lugt (1884 – 1970), founder of the Fondation Custodia, at the outset the nineteenth-century holdings comprised significant single sheets (Millet's *Young Gleaner*, Ribot's *Portrait of Victor Hugo on his Death Bed*). Frits Lugt's successors as director of the Fondation used their discernment to enrich the collection year by year. Following Lugt's personal taste, they mainly favoured landscape, often without any human presence, and in particular landscape drawn directly from nature. They also succeeded in acquiring some impressive portraits, as well as studies for well-known paintings.

The exhibition opens with artists whose careers spanned two centuries. The impressively skilful draperies, drawn on blue paper by Pierre Paul Prud'hon and Pauline Auzou, one of the few female history painters, draw a veil over the eighteenth century while the striking portrait of Antoine Berjon directs our gaze towards a new era [fig. 1].

In the early days of the nineteenth century, artists gave importance to the observation of nature, guided by Constantin d'Aix, Michel Mandevare and Georges Michel, and sought for new subjects – as evidenced by the surprising watercolours of Pierre Luc Charles Ciceri and his friend Fortuné Delarue [fig. 2].



1. **Antoine Berjon** (1754 – 1843)
Portrait of a Man in Profile
Black chalk and white chalk on blue-grey paper.
– 354 x 285 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 2013-T.2



2. **Fortuné Delarue** (active circa 1794)
Ciceri Family, 1829
Pen and black ink, watercolour and gouache over graphite. – 185 x 238 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 2021-T.6

At the beginning of the century, the visit to Italy was often the key event of an artist's career. In Italy, Joseph Bidault and Antoine Félix Boisselier discovered the incomparable beauty of the light in Rome, celebrated by Chateaubriand, and translated it in their harmonious landscapes.

The Italian sojourns of Achille Etna Michallon, winner of the Grand Prix de Rome for historical landscape painting, Camille Corot and Théodore Caruelle d'Aligny are illustrated by a variety of drawings that reflect their constant efforts to represent the emotions evoked by nature. Corot and his friend Caruelle d'Aligny, who frequently met to draw and paint before the motif together, managed to imbue their studies of the Roman Campagna with a timeless character.



3. Attributed to François Marius Granet (1775 – 1849)
Terrace in Castellar, 1846
Watercolour over a sketch in graphite. – 165 x 241 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2022-T.71

The work of the painter François Marius Granet is highlighted in five remarkable drawings from the ten or so owned by the Fondation Custodia. Sensitive to the beauty and poetry of nature, Granet produced luminous wash drawings and fluid watercolours in Italy and France. The most recent of these to enter our collections, *Terrace in Castellar*, with its fresh, acid colours, fits perfectly into the spontaneous style of his drawn oeuvre [fig. 3].

For some artists, the immensity of the nature they encountered during these journeys across the Alps provided a real catalyst to their art. They responded to their discoveries by exploring new techniques or even adopting a radically different style.

The watercolour views by the three brothers Auguste, Hippolyte and Paul Flandrin are evidence of the experimental techniques they developed in Italy. Small in size, these pared-down landscapes form an enchanting and colourful group.

The new career seemingly embarked upon by Louis Cabat when he arrived in Italy was greeted with admiration by the reviewers of the Salon of 1838. His style, as well as that of Victor Biennourry or the painter from Lyon, Antoine Ponthus-Cinier, gained in scope and confidence when faced with the sublime, broad horizons of the Roman Campagna. These styles are perfectly represented by the large-scale studies shown here. Achille Benouville, who won the Grand Prix for landscape in 1845, spent a large part of his life in Italy. He offers us a vibrant and refined vision of the Lago di Nemi, close in its characteristics and use of colour to the work of Louis François [fig. 4].

Pride of place is given to portraits owned by the Fondation Custodia, grouped around two works by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: the magnificent medallion of Julie Forestier, his fiancée [fig. 5] and the effigy of the painter François-Édouard Picot. The portraits by Amaury-Duval and Delaroche present a psychologically detailed depiction of their colleagues Dauzats and Granet and bear witness to the friendship and mutual esteem that existed between artists. Louis Lamothe gives us an authoritative view of his own position as an artist in his self-portrait.



5. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780 – 1867)
Portrait of Julie Forestier, 1806
Graphite, heightened with watercolour and white gouache on wove paper. – 90 x 72 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2004-T.32

The third room of the exhibition begins with the work of two great figures of the Romantic period: Antoine Louis Barye is represented by a watercolour and Eugène Delacroix by a pastel executed in 1832 during his trip to the Orient.

Next, naturalist experiments by the Barbizon School are illustrated by great names associated with the movement: Théodore Rousseau, Charles Jacque and Jean-François Millet. Rousseau, the devoted portraitist of the Forêt de Fontainebleau, is represented by four works, including the spectacular *The Oak of the Reine Blanche*, unquestionably one of his greatest compositions [fig. 6]. Two sparkling black chalk studies stand out among this *plein air* group, by Jean-Baptiste Clésinger and Célestin Nanteuil.

The Parisian realism of Auguste Péquégnot and Gabriel Prieur is closely followed by the inspired naturalism of Charles Eustache and Lionel Le Couteux. Their total mastery of their drawing tools and their sense of composition lend exceptional monumentality to their subjects. The remarkable *Rocky Coast by the Sea* by the multi-talented artist Le Couteux is one of the very few drawings of the artist to have come down to us [fig. 7].

A large number of watercolour landscapes have landed over the years in the portfolios of the Fondation Custodia. This exhibition gives us the opportunity to unveil a remarkable selection of works from this rich collection. Since the 1820s and the discovery of the work of the English masters, watercolour painting acquired increasing importance, gaining ever-growing autonomy and recognition as a separate technique.

A special section is devoted to Isabey and Jongkind; the Fondation is proud to have acquired many exceptional works by them, in particular some coastal views [fig. 8].

Paul Huet, who was close to Bonington, is represented by a group of four impressions of nature, very immediate in character. The exhibition also allows us to discover Caroline de Fontenay. Few of her works are known to us today but they include the rare and original *The Touques River near Trouville*, painted from a window [fig. 9]. Rosa Bonheur, whose name is more familiar, is present with an infinitely poetic landscape. A number of light, luminous watercolours by Henri Joseph Harpignies and Gustave Doré attest that they were both indisputable masters of the technique [fig. 10].



8. **Eugène Isabey** (1803 – 1886)
View of a Village on the Normandy Coast
Watercolour, gouache, point of the brush and black ink over black chalk.
– 257 x 350 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 1993-T.7

The exhibition ends with a diversity of styles experimented with by artists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Landscape draughtsmen endeavoured to render the different effects of nature according to their own sensibilities, often offering a vision that was more aesthetic than topographic. Testimony to this are Léon Cogniet's *Moonlight Reflections on the Sea*, and the chilly luminosity of *Undergrowth with Bare Trees* by Jean-Pierre Monseret. Charcoal and graphite lend themselves to the expressive power of observers of everyday life (Antoine Vollon, Maxime Lalanne) and their *plein air* impressions (Auguste Cabuzel) [fig. 11].

Similar intensity can be found in the portraits by Ker Xavier Roussel, Ernest Zacharie, or those of Eugène Carrière, which are unusual because they were directly executed in oil paint on the covers of books; these come from the extensive Goncourt holdings in the Fondation Custodia.

Farther on, the expressive quality of Jean-Léon Gérôme strikes the visitor via two preparatory studies for history paintings destined for the Salon. Equally evocative, the works of James Tissot and Albert Besnard allow us to appreciate the intimacy of a cloakroom or an ordinary pair of slippers; the human figure is visually absent from these – but how present in spirit through the hats and coats and abandoned shoes [fig. 12].

The almost 150 works on display bear witness to the diversity and inventiveness of the nineteenth century and give a clear idea of the quality and originality of the exceptional collection of graphic art in the possession of the Fondation Custodia.



10. **Gustave Doré** (1832 – 1883)
View of the Forest at Westbridge, 1879
Watercolour and gouache over graphite.
– 744 x 625 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt,
Paris, inv. 1987-T.9

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue in French with contributions from the Fondation Custodia's curators. This presentation is also the opportunity to publish in our *Collection Online* database (<https://collectiononline.fondationcustodia.fr/>) our entire holdings of more than 1000 nineteenth-century French drawings.



Dessins français du XIX^e siècle
Fondation Custodia

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TWO EXHIBITIONS AT THE FONDATION CUSTODIA

from 8 October 2022
to 8 January 2023
Fondation Custodia,
Paris

Practical Information

EXHIBITIONS

Nineteenth-century French Drawings. Fondation Custodia
From 8 October 2022 to 8 January 2023

Léon Bonvin (1834–1866). Drawn to the Everyday
From 8 October 2022 to 8 January 2023

PRESS OPENING

Friday 7 October 2022 from 10 to 11.30 am

VERNISSAGE

Friday 7 October 2022 from 6 to 8.30 pm

OPENING HOURS

Every day except Monday, from 12 to 6 pm

ADMISSION CHARGES

Full price € 10 / Reduced € 7
The entrance ticket gives access to
both exhibitions

LOCATION

Fondation Custodia
121, rue de Lille – 75007 Paris – France
www.fondationcustodia.fr

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Metro: Assemblée Nationale (line 12) or Invalides (lines 8 and 13, RER C)
Bus 63, 73, 83, 84, 94: Assemblée Nationale

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Gaëlle de Bernède
gaelledebernede@gmail.com
Tel: +33 (0)1 75 43 46 80

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Roxane Latrèche
contact@gbcom.media
Tel: +49 176 8006 5583

PRESS CONTACTS NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM

Noepy Testa
noepy@entesta.nl
Tel: +31 (0)6 29 14 10 54

Heidi Vandamme
bureau@heidivandamme.nl
Tel: +31 (0)6 29 53 26 86

DIRECTOR FONDATION CUSTODIA

Ger Luijten
coll.lugt@fondationcustodia.fr
Tel: +33 (0)1 47 05 75 19



1

Images Available to the Press

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2

1. Antoine Berjon (1754 – 1843)

Portrait of a Man in Profile

Black chalk and white chalk on blue-grey paper. – 354 x 285 mm

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2. Fortuné Delarue (active circa 1794)

Ciceri Family, 1829

Pen and black ink, watercolour and gouache over graphite. – 185 x 238 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2021-T.68



3. Attributed to François Marius Granet (1775 – 1849)

Terrace in Castellar, 1846

Watercolour over a sketch in graphite. – 165 x 241 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2022-T.71



4. Achille Benouville (1815 – 1891)

View of Lake Nemi with the Town of Genzano in the Background

Watercolour, gouache, black chalk and pen and brown ink. – 375 x 567 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2010-T.6



5

5. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780 – 1867)
Portrait of Julie Forestier, 1806
Graphite, heightened with watercolour and white gouache
on wove paper. – 90 x 72 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 2004-T.32

6. Théodore Rousseau (1812 – 1867)
The Oak of the Reine Blanche, circa 1860
Charcoal, heightened with white chalk on prepared canvas.
– 1180 x 888 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 1995-T.5

7. Lionel Le Couteux (1847 – 1909)
Rocky Coast by the Sea
Black chalk heightened with white chalk on grey-green paper.
– 393 x 524 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 1992-T.24

8. Eugène Isabey (1803 – 1886)
View of a Village on the Normandy Coast
Watercolour, gouache, point of the brush and black ink over
black chalk. – 257 x 350 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
inv. 1993-T.7



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8



9. **Caroline de Fontenay** (1807 – 1853)
The Touques River near Trouville, 1842
 Pen and brown ink, watercolour and gouache.
 – 289 x 239 mm
 Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
 inv. 2006-T.23



10. **Gustave Doré** (1832 – 1883)
View of the Forest at Westbridge, 1879
 Watercolour and gouache over graphite. – 744 x 625 mm
 Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
 inv. 1987-T.9



11. **Auguste Cabuzel** (1836 – 1909)
Landscape with an Estuary
 Charcoal and stump on wove paper. – 214 x 274 mm
 Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
 inv. 2020-T.22



12. **James Tissot** (1836 – 1902)
The Cloakroom, circa 1885
 Graphite. – 339 x 426 mm
 Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris,
 inv. 2019-T.25