

21 December 2017

## Three exhibitions at the Fondation Custodia from 27 January to 29 April 2018

## Georges Michel. The Sublime Landscape Portrait Miniatures in the Fondation Custodia Art on Paper. Recent Acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia

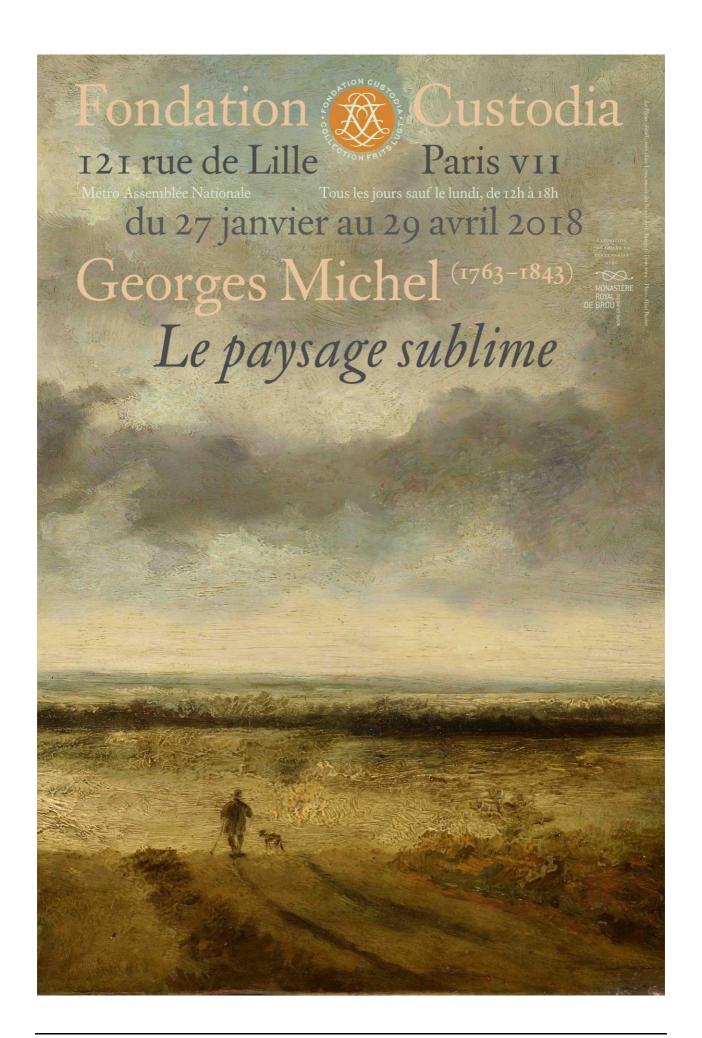
From 27 January to 29 April 2018 the Fondation Custodia is holding three exhibitions in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix, 121 rue de Lille, Paris.

The public is offered a chance to discover Georges Michel (1763-1843) in the first exhibition to be devoted exclusively to the work of this French artist for fifty years. Nicknamed 'the Ruisdael of Montmartre', Georges Michel was strongly influenced by Dutch painting of the Golden Age, and is considered a forerunner of the Barbizon School. With exceptional dramatic power, this visionary artist managed to render the landscape of the Ile-de-France sublime. His work is characterised by its strong light effects and turbulent skies.

A chance also to be charmed by the Fondation Custodia's collection of portraits in miniature, displayed as a group for the first time.

The collection was built up by Frits Lugt (1884-1970), founder of the institution, and has been augmented by acquisitions made by the successive directors of the Fondation Custodia. Today it comprises more than one hundred portraits. Although English and French examples, dating from the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth, predominate, all the schools – and in particular the Dutch, German and Italian Schools – are represented, from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, before the painted portrait was superseded by photography. These small portraits were painted on vellum, ivory or were enamelled.

Finally, the chance to peruse a selection of nearly one hundred works on paper, recently acquired by the Fondation Custodia and in some cases on public display for the first time. Amongst these are the large, strange etchings hand-coloured by the architect Louis Jean Desprez (1743-1804). Alongside the drawings and prints by members of the French, Spanish and English Schools, the exhibition also presents exceptional sheets by Dutch masters of the Golden Age. Notable is the intimate self-portrait by the young Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1687), with corrections by the great master Rembrandt himself.





## Georges Michel. The Sublime Landscape

from 27 January to 29 April 2018

Admired by Vincent van Gogh, Georges Michel is held to be the precursor of *plein air* painting. He was influenced by the painters of the Dutch Golden Age, earning the nickname of 'the Ruisdael of Montmartre'. Yet today he is not widely known. The Fondation Custodia, in collaboration with the Monastère royal de Brou, is proposing to unveil the artist whose merits were first remarked by the dealer Paul Durand-Rueil in the nineteenth century. The first one-man exhibition for fifty years of the work of Georges Michel will be held from 27 January to 29 April 2018 at 121 rue de Lille, Paris. About fifty paintings and forty drawings – on loan mainly from French private and public collections – will be on show, and the exhibition will include some recent acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia.

Georges Michel was born in Paris in 1763 and died there in 1843 after a remarkable career, whether in real terms or in a mythical post-mortem reconstruction of the life of this allegedly misunderstood artist. The main body of what we know about him comes from the biography written by Alfred Sensier in 1873, compiled from information recounted to him by the artist's widow. Michel kept his distance from official art circles and only took part in the Salon between 1791 – the date when the exhibition first opened its doors to artists who were not members of the former Académie royale – and 1814. His name was not mentioned thereafter until the sale of his work and the contents of his studio a year before his death.

The exhibition at the Fondation Custodia opens with youthful work by the artist, still betraying the influence of the eighteenth-century French landscape tradition as embodied in the art of Lazare Bruandet (1755-1804) or Jean-Louis Demaine (1752-1829), with whom Michel explored the Ile-de-France in search of subjects for sketching. He remained loyal to

Paris and the surrounding countryside, claiming that 'anyone unable to spend a lifetime painting within a range of four leagues is just a blundering fool searching for a mandrake – he will find only a void'. Saint-Denis, Montmartre or La Chapelle, the Buttes-Chaumont and the banks of the Seine, the countryside to the north of Paris offered a variety of hills and plains, dotted with quarries, mills and scattered dwellings (fig. 3).







Georges Michel's style developed gradually away from the picturesque, anecdotic landscape that was in vogue between 1770 and 1830, achieving a notable originality. His paintings capture, with sincerity and a hint of the romanticism to come, the rural spots threatened with extinction as the villages around Paris began to be subsumed into the capital during the 1860s.

At a period when the painting of the Northern schools was enjoying a revival in France, Georges Michel, according to his widow, carried out some restoration work on Dutch paintings for the influential Paris dealer Jean-Baptiste Pierre Le Brun (1748-1813) and for the Muséum central des Arts (now the Musée du Louvre), at the behest of its director, Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825). Even though no trace of this activity can be found in the archives, Michel's work is incontrovertibly influenced by the masters of the Dutch

Golden Age. The exhibition at the Fondation Custodia – one of whose aims is to study the reception of Dutch art in France – takes this opportunity to compare Michel with the predecessors he so admired – and whose work he sometimes copied (fig. 8). From Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/1629/1682) he borrows



compositions enlivened by vast, windswept skies, with sometimes a shaft of brilliant sunlight breaking through the clouds. The masterly chiaroscuro in his paintings, however, has its source in the work of Rembrandt (1606-1669). Philips Koninck (1619-1688), whose work in the eighteenth century was sometimes confused with that of Rembrandt, also evidently inspired Michel with his vast landscapes and limitless skies.

The Fondation Custodia, a home for art on paper in Paris, has recently acquired a large number of sheets by Georges Michel. The last section of the exhibition is devoted to these drawings. Michel's prolific graphic work is characterised by its wide variety of techniques



and subjects. The artist excelled in capturing vibrant views of Paris – in black chalk or, less frequently, pen and ink. The topographical nature of these drawings makes identification of the chosen locations simple: the Louvre (fig. 9), the Tuileries, the Jardin des Plantes, the Barrières de Ledoux.





The lack of confidence to be glimpsed at times in these urban scenes is amply compensated by Michel's skill at recreating the atmosphere of rural landscapes. As he tramped the still-fallow plains of the Ile-de-France, Georges Michel produced a considerable number of open-air studies in black chalk alone, often on blue paper of a standard size. As in the paintings, the wide plains dotted with fleeting points of interest are reproduced on small pages, sometimes collected into albums, four of which are still to be found in the Louvre, the Musée Carnavalet and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Taken from a fifth album acquired by the Fondation Custodia in 2016, a selection of fifteen studies in this exhibition illustrates the artist's habit of compulsive, almost obsessional, sketching



(fig. 10). They bear witness also to Michel's need to endlessly rework his chosen subjects, simply in order to explore their possibilities. His drawings of isolated objects are less common; probably the most striking of these are his studies of trees. Heightened with water colour and sometimes annotated, these drawings are the fruit of very exact observation – indeed, they have something in common with genuine botanical studies. Georges Michel's interest is primarily in the majesty of a particular specimen or the extraordinary forms taken by another; they pay homage to nature's picturesque qualities and the variety of her creations (fig. 11).



Although influenced by French predecessors and by the art of seventeenth-century Dutch artists, Georges Michel's work is possessed of a wholly individual vibrancy and turbulence. The freedom of the brushstrokes in his paintings – comparable to the dramatic use of black chalk or charcoal in some of his drawings – allows him to transcend the Ile-de-France (fig. 12). Michel's landscapes are based on observation but far outstrip it; the results are truly sublime.



The work of Georges Michel marks a turning point in landscape painting in France. He influenced the generation of painters led by Jules Dupré (1811/1889) and Charles Jacque (1813/1894), but he also made a deep impression on Vincent van Gogh (1853/1890). Van Gogh's letters reveal his familiarity with, and his admiration for, Michel's work and his personality – he calls him 'maître Michel' (master Michel). Within the collection of the Fondation Custodia, Georges Michel perfectly embodies the link between the landscapes of the Dutch Golden Age and the oil sketches, painted out of doors, of the artists of the nineteenth century.

This exhibition is organised by the Fondation Custodia in collaboration with the Monastère royal de Brou, Bourgen-Bresse.

### Curators

Ger Luijten, director of the Fondation Custodia and Magali Briat-Philippe, conservateur, responsable du service des patrimoines, Monastère royal de Brou.

### Catalogue



Edited by Magali Briat-Philippe and Ger Luijten *Georges Michel. Le paysage sublime*Fondation Custodia, Paris, 2017
208 pp, illustrations in colour, 25 x 28 cm, hard cover ISBN 978-90-78655-26-8

### **Practical Information**

Georges Michel. The Sublime Landscape From 27 January to 29 April 2018 121, rue de Lille 75007 Paris www.fondationcustodia.fr

Open every day except Monday, from 12 to 6 pm Admission charges 10 € (full) / 7 € (reduced) The ticket gives access to all three exhibitions

Communications Director:

Gaëlle de Bernède: gaelledebernede@gmail.com – Tel: 01 75 43 46 80

Price: 29.00 €

## Fondation 121 rue de Lille



## Custodia Paris VII

Métro Assemblée Nationale



# Les Portraits en miniature de la Fondation Custodia

du 27 janvier au 29 avril 2018 tous les jours sauf le lundi de 12h à 18h Antoine Berjon (1754–1843)

Antoine Berjon (1754–1843)

Portrait de femme

Aquarelle sur ivoire. – 80 mm (diam.)



## Portrait Miniatures in the Fondation Custodia

from 27 January to 29 April 2018

At the same time as the exhibition devoted to Georges Michel in the first-floor galleries of the Fondation Custodia, the ground-floor galleries are exhibiting the important collection of miniature portraits in the possession of the Fondation Custodia, to mark the publication of the catalogue raisonné edited by Karen Schaffers-Bodenhausen.

Taken from the medal cabinet of Hôtel Turgot where they are closely guarded, about 65 portraits provide a fascinating overview of the wealth and diversity of this group.

The collection was started by Frits Lugt (1884-1970), founder of the institution, and has been augmented by successive directors of the Fondation Custodia. Today it numbers more

nineteenth centuries, before the medium was gradually supplanted by the arrival of photography. Reflecting the history of its development, the English, French, Dutch and Flemish schools predominate in the collection and thus constitute the bulk of the selection. The exhibition is organised chronologically and is intended to reveal to the public the special qualities of these precious miniatures, painted in gouache or oils, on ivory, vellum or copper. Works in enamel also have their place in the collection and are

illustrated by the *Self-Portrait* by Jean Petitot (1607-1691, fig. 1)), who perfected the technique of enamelling, producing work of exceptional refinement.

Portraits in miniature are often presented in the form of jewellery, on boxes or are mounted on personal belongings, like the *Portrait of an Unknown Man* by Nicolas Jacques (1780-1844, fig. 3), which is displayed on a red morocco wallet designed to hold letters. This reveals the intensely intimate, even sentimental character of these representations of a loved-one, given to someone close to perpetuate their memory. The names of the models have often been lost to time, for example the name of the young man whose portrait is attributed to Gonzales Coques (1614-1684, fig. 2).



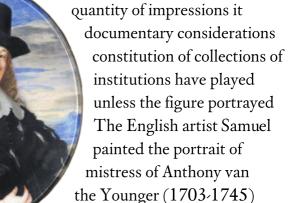
These small, fragile-looking works of art invite silent contemplation, in private. Frits Lugt and his successors were undoubtedly attracted by the artistic qualities of miniature painting

which 'bears witness to so much life

is in inverse proportion to the engenders'. The dynastic or usually affecting the miniature paintings in public virtually no role in this case, belongs to the world of art. Cooper (1607/8-1672)

Margaret Lemon (fig. 5), Dyck; Georg Andreas Wolfgang

portrayed the Italian collector and art



and art; the small size of the object

historian Francesco Maria Niccolò

Gabburri (fig. 6), who owned some of the drawings now in the Fondation Custodia.

## Catalogue raisonné



Portrait Miniatures in the Frits Lugt Collection
Karen Schaffers-Bodenhausen
Paris, Fondation Custodia, 2018
2 volumes (hardback) in a cassette; vol. I Text, 277 pp. / vol. II
Plates, 143 pp., 150 colour reproductions, 33 in black & white,
27 x 19,5 cm
ISBN 978 1 912168 10 1

Price: 75,00 €



## The Eye of Pascale-Sophie Kaparis

Ger Luijten, director of the Fondation Custodia, regularly invites contemporary artists to exhibit their work at 121 rue de Lille, Paris. Today he is offering exhibition space to Pascale-Sophie Kaparis (www.pascalesophiekaparis.com).

Pascale-Sophie Kaparis is a French artist born in Morocco. She has been given carte blanche to design work linked to the portrait miniatures in the collection of the Fondation Custodia.

The artist has been working for several years on the subject of 'the gaze'. Following the directions of Frits Lugt, she uses a magnifying glass to bring a fresh, creative eye to these small portraits. She was struck,

while examining the details, by the care and attention given by painters of the day to the appearance of their models. With her magnifying glass, she has transformed their faces, redefining their features and expressions. The images thus produced, using reflections and mirrors, allow the spectator to immerse him or herself in Pascale-Sophie's work.

Her installation creates a link with the exhibition *Art on Paper. Recent Acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia* which, a few rooms further on, includes other work by contemporary artists inspired by the collections in the Fondation Custodia.



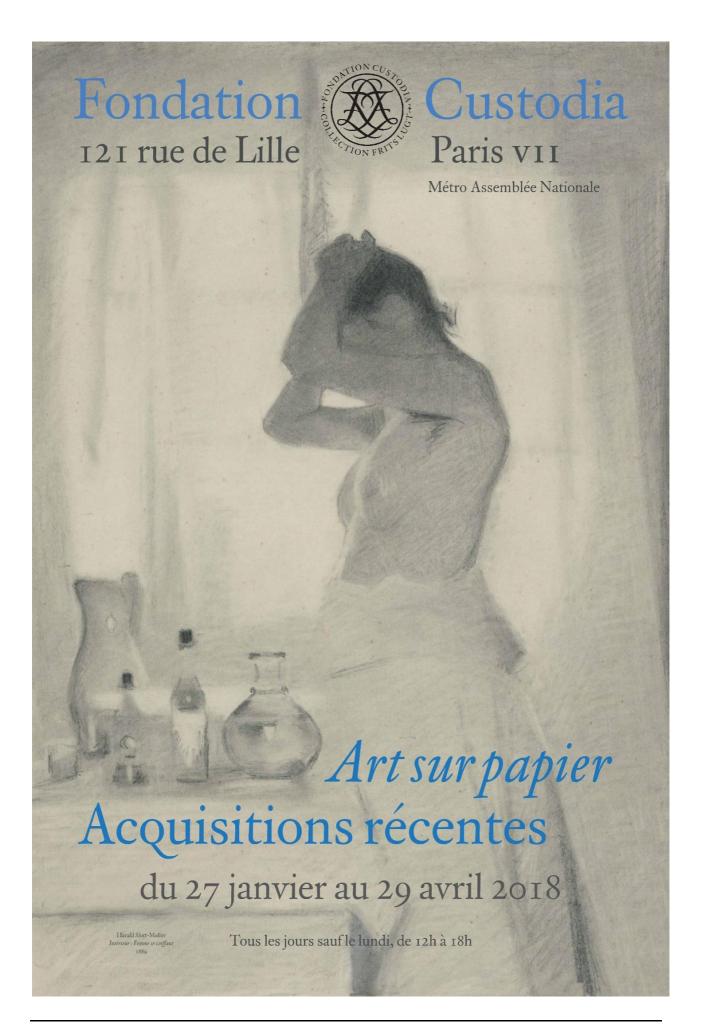
### **Practical Information**

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## Art on Paper. Recent Acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia

from 27 January to 29 April 2018

A collection is like a building, each of its elements contributes to the strength of the whole. This was the philosophy of Frits Lugt (1884-1970), art historian emeritus, dealer, collector and founder of the Fondation Custodia. Frits Lugt was particularly fond of work on paper – drawings, prints, artists' letters – which soon came to constitute the heart of his collection, as well as its focal point. The Fondation Custodia's attachment to graphic art is therefore part of its identity, as the scope and extent of its collection proves; the numerous exhibitions devoted to work on paper organised by the Fondation endorse this attachment.

After Watteau to Degas (2010) and Un cabinet particulier (2010), the Fondation Custodia is mounting a new exhibition devoted to its collection of graphic art, this time putting the emphasis on a selection of about one hundred recently-acquired works.

The intention here is to display a part of the collection of drawings, prints and letters belonging to the Fondation Custodia in Paris which normally can only be viewed by appointment. The works on paper are particularly fragile and are released from their storage boxes only very infrequently, during a consultation. This exhibition is therefore also a means of highlighting an acquisition policy, as demanding as it is sustained, which makes the Fondation Custodia one of the most dynamic privately-run museums in France.

In order to stimulate dialogue between techniques, genres, centuries and schools, the show is organised thematically. It also reflects the presence of the genres that were most dear to Frits Lugt: landscapes, artists' portraits, the human condition, cabinets of curiosities and contemporary re-interpretations.

The great majority of the selected works are on display here for the first time. For example, the drawing by Jan Frans van Bloemen (1662-1749), of exceptional size, the preparatory drawing for a prestigious commission for a painting by Prince Ruspoli for his Roman palazzo (fig. 1). Or the huge, strange etchings, hand-colored by the artist and architect Louis Jean Desprez (1743-1804) himself (fig. 2)





The Four Elements series by Gerrit van Honthorst (1592-1656) belongs to another very important period and reveals a relatively unknown aspect of the career of the Dutch Caravaggesque painter, his work as a decorator (fig. 3a-d).









The English school of engraving is represented by a hypnotic self-portrait by Augustus John (1879-1961), as intense as it is bold in its execution (fig. 4).

The exhibition is also the opportunity to present contemporary work, recently acquired for the collections of Fondation Custodia, for example a masterly print by the Viennese artist Jakob Demus (born 1959), a diamond point engraving on copper, a rare technique of which he is today the sole exponent.

The complete catalogue of the exhibition, in French and English, will be available online from 27 January 2018, on the new version of the Fondation Custodia website.



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## **Practical Information:**

**EXHIBITIONS** 

Georges Michel. The Sublime Landscape

From 27 January to 29 April 2018

Portrait Miniatures in the Fondation Custodia

From 27 January to 29 April 2018

Art on Paper. Recent Acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia

From 27 January to 29 April 2018

**PRESS OPENING** 

VERNISSAGE

Friday 26 January 2018 from 10 to 11.30 am

Friday 26 January 2018 from 6 to 8.30 pm

**OPENING HOURS** 

Every day except Monday from 12 to 6 pm

ADMISSION CHARGES

Full 10 € / Reduced 7 €

LOCATION

Fondation Custodia

121, rue de Lille - 75007 Paris

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

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## Images Available to the Press

## Georges Michel. The Sublime Landscape



1. Georges Michel, *Stormy Landscape*Oil on paper, laid down on canvas. – 51.8 x 67 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, inv. 1939.6
Photograph by Alain Basset



2. Georges Michel, *Landscape near Chartres*Oil on panel. – 38 x 50 cm
Musée Baron Gérard, Bayeux, inv. POO27
Photo: Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Thierry Ollivier



3. Georges Michel, *The Storm*Oil on canvas. – 48 x 63 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg, inv. 937
Photograph by M. Bertola



4. Georges Michel, *The Storm*Oil on panel. – 98 x 126 cm
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2240
Photograph by Studio Tromp



5. Georges Michel, View of the Seine with a stage-coach Oil on paper, laid down on panel.  $-60 \times 79.5 \text{ cm}$  Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris, inv. RF 2008-48

Photo: Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Jean-Gilles Berizzi







7. Georges Michel, *The Mill of Argenteuil*, c. 1830 Oil on canvas. – 100 x 86 cm Pau, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. 78.4.1 Photo: Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Benoît Touchard



8. Georges Michel after Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29/1682) View of Naarden
Oil on paper, laid down on canvas. – 37 x 68 cm
Private collection



9. Georges Michel, *View of the Lowre with the Seine*Black chalk and watercolour. – 145 x 300 mm
Sceaux, Domaine départemental de Sceaux, dépôt du musée
Carnavalet, Histoire de Paris, inv. 37.2.74 (verso)



10. Georges Michel, *Groups of figures*Black chalk. – 90 x 160 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2016-T.66



11. Georges Michel, *Study of an Oak Tree*Black chalk, brown wash and watercolour.
– 412 x 282 mm
Besançon, musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, inv. D.2199
Photograph by Pierre Guenat



12. Georges Michel, *Landscape* Charcoal. – 412 x 516 mm New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, inv. 1977.128.2



## Images Available to the Press

## Portrait Miniatures in the Fondation Custodia



1. Jean Petitot the Elder (Geneva 1607-1691 Vevey) Self-portrait, 1674
Enamel on gold. – 29 x 23 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 1971-PM.3



2. Attributed to Gonzales Coques (Antwerp 1614-1684 Antwerp) Portrait of an unknown boy, c. 1650 Oil on copper.  $-94 \times 72 \text{ mm}$  Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 7094



3. Nicolas Jacques (Jarville 1780 1844 Paris)

Portrait of an unknown man, 1805

Watercolour on ivory. – 60 mm (diam.)

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2016 PM.4



4. Pascale-Sophie Kaparis Face, 2017
Extract, optical image
© Pascale-Sophie Kaparis



5. Samuel Cooper (London 1607/08-1672 London)

Portrait of Margaret Lemon, c. 1635-1637

Watercolour on vellum. – 120 x 98 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 395



6. Georg Andreas Wolfgang the Younger (Augsburg 1703-1745 Gotha)

Portrait of Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri, 1727

Watercolour on ivory. – 128 x 98 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2008-PM.1



7. Pierre-Louis-Adolphe Labroue (Metz 1791-1863 Metz)

Portrait of Caspar David Friedrich, 1820

Watercolour on ivory. – 86 x 72 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2010 PM.1



8. Antoine Berjon (Saint-Pierre de Vaise 1754-1843 Lyon)

Portrait of an unknown woman

Watercolour on ivory. – 80 mm (diam.)

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2015-PM.1

## Images Available to the Press

## Art on Paper. Recent Acquisitions by the Fondation Custodia



1. Jan Frans van Bloemen, known as *Orizzonte* (Antwerp 1662-1749 Rome)

View of Vignanello in the Roman Countryside, c. 1740

Pen and brown ink, with grey and brown wash, over traces of black chalk. – 369 x 540 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2011/T.37



2. Louis Jean Desprez (Auxerre 1743-1804 Stockholm) Promotion Médicale, c. 1790 Etching, with watercolour. – 555 x 880 mm Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2016/P.2









 $3a \mathord{\cdot} d.\ Gerard\ van\ Honthorst\ (Utrecht\ 1592 \mathord{\cdot} 1656\ Utrecht)$ 

The Four Elements: Water, Air, Earth and Fire

Pen and brown ink, with grey wash and some red chalk, heightened with opaque white, over a sketch in black chalk, on greyish-brown cartridge paper. – 387 x 263 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2016/T.10 to 13



4. Augustus John (Tenby 1879-1961 Fordingbridge)

La tête farouche (Fierce Head), Self-Portrait, 1906

Etching. – 211 x 170 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2017-P.6



5. Jakob Demus (Vienna 1959)
Two Pieces of Lapis Lazuli, 2009
Watercolour, over a sketch in graphite. – 381 x 560 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2014/T.66



6. Samuel van Hoogstraten (Dordrecht 1627-1687 Dordrecht) Self-Portrait at a Window, c. 1642

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, over traces of black chalk; corrections in pen and brown ink probably by Rembrandt.

 $-170 \times 135 \ mm$ 

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2012/T.4



7. Jan van der Meer the Elder (Haarlem 1628-1691 Haarlem)

Landscape with an Inn, along a Wooded Road

Black chalk, with grey wash. – 176 x 265 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2011/T.38



8. François-Auguste Ravier (Lyon 1814-1895 Morestel)

Rocks, beginning of the 1870s

Watercolour, over a sketch in black chalk. – 264 x 354 mm

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2010-T.5



9. Jean-Achille Benouville (Paris 1815-1891 Paris)

View of Lake Nemi with the Town of Genzano in the Background, c. 1845

Pen and brown ink, watercolour and gouache. – 370 x 558 mm

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



10. Anonymous, *Young Girl at a Window*, c. 1580-1595 Engraving. – 409 x 270 mm Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2014-P.5



11. School of Tanjore, *Raja Tulsaji of Tanjore Seated under a Canopy*, 1770
Gouache, heightened with gold and beetles' wing-cases.
– 403 x 327 mm
Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 2013/T.35