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from  
THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**First Public Viewing of French Drawings from a Celebrated  
Dutch Collector and Art Historian**

***WATTEAU TO DEGAS:  
FRENCH DRAWINGS FROM THE FRITS LUGT COLLECTION***

*October 6, 2009, through January 10, 2010*

As its major fall exhibition, the Frick is pleased to present *Watteau to Degas: French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection*, featuring more than sixty works on paper from the holdings of the Fondation Custodia, Paris. On view until January 10, 2010, it includes drawings and watercolors by well-known masters of the French School, including Antoine Watteau, François Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Jacques-Louis David, Eugène Delacroix, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and Edgar Degas, as well as by important figures who may be



Antoine Watteau, (1684–1721), *Woman Reclining on a Chaise Longue*, c. 1718, red and black chalk with stumping, 21.7 x 31.1 cm, Fondation Custodia, Paris

less familiar to the general public. This is the first public exhibition to focus on French eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works on paper from the holdings of **Johannes Frederik Lugt** (1884–1970), a remarkable self-taught art historian and noted collector. His name is well known to those in the field, and with his pioneering publications very much in use still, he continues to be cited today. Initially specializing in Dutch and Flemish drawings and prints from his native Netherlands, Lugt later began to acquire works from all over Western Europe, with a great

strength developed in the area represented in this exhibition. In 1947, Lugt established the Fondation Custodia, Paris, to care for and to add to his collections; it now holds more than 7,000 drawings and 30,000 prints; as well as paintings, books, and artists' letters. The exhibition was organized by the Frick's Associate Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator **Colin B. Bailey** and Senior Curator **Susan Grace Galassi** and is accompanied by a catalogue and selection of public programs. Principal funding for the *Watteau to Degas: French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection* is provided by Peter and Sofia Blanchard; Elizabeth and Jean-Marie Eveillard; and Melvin R. Seiden in honor of Jean Bonna and Eugene V. Thaw. After its debut at the Frick this fall, the exhibition will travel to the Institut Néerlandais, Paris, appearing from February 11 through April 11, 2010.

Comments Colin B. Bailey, "Among drawing enthusiasts and specialists, the stature of Frits Lugt—and his well-formed collection—is significant, and we were honored to be invited to organize an exhibition from these holdings. The show includes several beloved and well-known works by Watteau and also brings to light many heretofore unpublished sheets. In fact, as a group, the French drawings have not been the subject of an exhibition or a focused catalogue, so this endeavor has been most rewarding." Adds Mária van Berge-Gerbaud, Director of the Fondation Custodia, "Indeed, Lugt never wanted to write a catalogue of his own collection, let alone his French drawings, which have scarcely been exhibited or published. This, he believed, was a job for his successors. It is thanks to Colin B. Bailey and The Frick Collection that this much-needed publication occurs now, marking the first step toward a future catalogue raisonné of the French drawings in the Frits Lugt collection."

## **A BORN COLLECTOR, A SELF-TAUGHT ART HISTORIAN**

The only child of a civil engineer from Amsterdam, Lugt left school at sixteen to pursue a career at the auction house of Frederik Muller & Company. He was a born collector, who, by the age of eight, had sold a significant gathering of shells to the natural history department of Amsterdam's royal zoo. By twelve, he talked his way into the print room of the Rijksmuseum to study the Dutch Golden Age drawings. Three years later he began work on a catalogue of this collection, with some 955 entries to his credit. A defining viewing experience for the young man was the great exhibition devoted to Rembrandt organized in September 1898 to celebrate Queen Wilhelmina's coronation, where more than 120 paintings and 350 drawings were on display. Not only did the exhibition inspire the fourteen-year-old to write a biography of the artist, which he illustrated with his own drawings after Rembrandt's work, but it instilled in him a life-long admiration for Rembrandt, his favorite artist. (Lugt owned no fewer than thirty drawings attributed to Rembrandt, twenty of which are today considered as autograph, as well as a virtually complete set of his etchings.)

With the outbreak of the First World War and the collapse of the art market, Lugt left Muller's auction house to deal on his own and to pursue his scholarship on Dutch and Flemish drawings. He, his wife, and growing family—five children in all—lived in an eighteenth-century country house in the province of Utrecht. Lugt and his wife traveled frequently to Paris, where he would be engaged over the next three decades in cataloging and publishing

the Northern drawings in each of the city's principal public collections: the Petit Palais, the Musée du Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and the École des Beaux-Arts.

In his thirties, Lugt also began to collect in a more serious and systematic way, initially specializing in Dutch and Flemish drawings and prints, always his chief interest. During the 1920s, the decade in which Lugt made his most important acquisitions, he also bought fifteenth-century Italian drawings and eighteenth-century French sheets: in 1925, he acquired three drawings by Watteau in one week. The death of Lugt's father-in-law, in 1935, ensured that his family's financial situation was secure and allowed him to continue his research and writing without the constraints of holding an official position. Lugt was among the founders and principal supporters of the Rijksbureau voor Kuntshistorische Documentatie (RKD), the institute devoted to the study of Netherlandish art and artists, established in The Hague in 1930. With the onslaught of World War II, Lugt sent his most important prints and drawings in sixty registered envelopes to Switzerland, where he and his family resided between September 1939 and May 1940. They spent the rest of the war years in Ohio at Oberlin College, and Lugt crisscrossed the country delivering lectures at many institutions, including the Frick Art Reference Library. Having returned to Europe in 1945, Lugt was eager to establish his collection in an active, urban center, and he chose Paris over The Hague and Haarlem when he created the Fondation Custodia in 1947. In 1953, Lugt acquired the Hôtel Turgot at 121, rue de Lille, as a home for his collection, and it was in this building that the Institut Néerlandais was inaugurated by René Coty, the President of the French Republic, and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in January 1957. The institute was created to serve as the cultural center of the Netherlands in the French capital, and for the next thirteen years, Lugt poured his considerable energy into organizing dozens of exhibitions, writing catalogues, and arranging hundreds of concerts and lectures. After his death, the activities of the Fondation continued unabated, and its collections were extended by his successors, Carlos van Hasselt (1929–2009), who served as director between 1970 and 1994, and Mária van Berge-Gerbaud, the current director.

## **DRAWN TO THE PANTHEON OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH ARTISTS**

The collection of French drawings at the Fondation Custodia numbers more than eight hundred sheets, and the Frick's selection of sixty-four eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works illuminates both Lugt's taste and that of his successors. As someone who had received neither an academic nor an institutional formation, and who approached works of art as a connoisseur—albeit a highly disciplined, scholarly connoisseur—Lugt was drawn to the pantheon of eighteenth-century French artists established by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt in the 1860s: Watteau, Boucher, Saint-Aubin, and Fragonard. Nineteenth-century art held little attraction for Lugt, and his acquisition of drawings by Delacroix, Degas, and Morisot was exceptional; most of the nineteenth-century drawings in the Frick's selection were purchased by the directors who succeeded him.



François Boucher, (1703–1770), *Standing Woman Seen from Behind*, c. 1742, black, red, and white chalk, with stumping, on gray-brown paper, 35.3 x 19.9 cm, Fondation Custodia, Paris

Watteau was Lugt’s favorite French artist, and six works by him form the largest group in the exhibition. The most intimate, *Woman Reclining on a Chaise Longue* (front page), is one of a series of studies made around 1718 from a model hired to pose in rented rooms for the artist and a select number of his art-loving friends. Only after we realize that this day-dreaming young woman is shown with her nipples exposed are we aware of the eroticism of this sheet. Although he pursued a successful career as a history painter in the Royal Academy, François Boucher was, in many ways, Watteau’s most gifted successor. In his twenties Boucher copied many of Watteau’s drawings for an engraved compendium, and the motif of an elegant woman, seen from behind, is a figural type that originated in Watteau’s mature oeuvre. *Standing Woman Seen from Behind* is one of Boucher’s most vigorous and accomplished studies and relates to the figure who attends her seated mistress in the genre painting *Lady Fastening Her Garter* (“*La Toilette*”), signed and dated 1742, and today in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

Strictly speaking, the Lugt drawing is not a preparatory study for the figure in the painting—there are too many variants between them—and may have served as an autonomous sheet intended to be matted, framed, and displayed in a collector’s picture cabinet. The young woman is wearing a sackback jacket, the latest fashion in the early 1740s. Her backless, heeled slippers confirm that her costume would have been appropriate only for private, indoor wear. We glimpse her, unawares, from behind: a potent privilege of spectatorship that was Watteau’s gift to artists of the following generation.

Boucher’s greatest student was Jean-Honoré Fragonard, who is represented by four works in the exhibition, all acquired by Lugt himself. Ironically, the greatest drawing in this group, *View of the Serapeum at Hadrian’s Villa*, entered the collection in 1922 as a work by Hubert Robert. This magisterial, red-chalk landscape is one of a group that Fragonard made in Tivoli and its environs during the summer of 1760. As a protégé of the abbé de Saint-Non, who had rented the Villa d’Este for three months, Fragonard was invited to spend six weeks sketching in the Roman campagna. Although most of his drawings were made on the Este property, a small number—this sheet included—took as their subject views of the grounds of Hadrian’s Villa, four miles to the southwest of Tivoli. In the Lugt drawing, Fragonard shows the ruins of a complex of buildings, which, during the eighteenth century, were thought to be Hadrian’s re-creation of the Egyptian town and canal dedicated to the god Serapis. Modern scholarship has identified the site as the villa’s dining area, or *serapeum*. It has been well said that, for all his remarkable fidelity, Fragonard



Jean-Honoré Fragonard, (1732–1806), *View of the Serapeum at Hadrian’s Villa*, c. 1760, red chalk, over black chalk underdrawing, 35.1 x 48.3 cm, Fondation Custodia, Paris

approached his Roman views more as a poet than as a surveyor: for all the accuracy of his depiction, he communicates his pleasure in the luxuriance of the foliage, the burning heat of the noon day sun, and, above all, the immensity of the ruins that dwarf the three boys shown seated in the foreground.



Esprit-Antoine Gibelin, (1739–1813), *Interior of a Sculptor's Atelier with the Borghese Gladiator*, c. 1770, pen and brown ink, brown wash over black chalk, on two pieces of paper, joined horizontally, 23.7 x 18.3 cm, Fondation Custodia, Paris

One of the most intriguing drawings in our selection was done around 1770 by the little-known history painter, antiquarian, and museum administrator Esprit-Antoine Gibelin. The wash study, acquired by the Fondation in 1978, shows the interior of a sculptor's studio wherein the young master is carving a life-size copy of the *Borghese Gladiator* from a block of marble. Gibelin leads us through the process of sculptural replication: standing on the floor in the center of the composition, an assistant measures the dimensions of a full-scale plaster model of the *Borghese Gladiator*, which he will communicate to the sculptor, who stands on a platform to the left with his back to us, holding a mallet in his hand. The wooden frame suspended above the sculptor, with markings at regular intervals and plumb-lines hanging down, would have been used at an earlier stage in the carving, in tandem with a similar frame over the plaster model.

*View of Mont Sainte-Victoire from the Terrace of Malvalat* is one of the most accomplished watercolors of François-Marius Granet. The artist spent more than twenty years in Rome and established a thriving practice as a painter of cloisters and monasteries, which were exhibited to acclaim in Paris in the Salons of the Restoration and July Monarchy. His fluent and luminous watercolors, for which he is much admired today, were done as a form of relaxation and were never shown in public during his lifetime. The sun-filled sheet in the Lugt collection, acquired in 1995, was probably made around 1844 and depicts the view from Granet's country house outside Aix-en-Provence. In this carefully structured composition, the terracotta pot with its cascading orange and yellow flowers serves as the focal point, anchoring the diagonal stone ledge that overlooks the grounds below. The bands of strong sunlight and deep shadow add to the rigor and sense of construction that are everywhere apparent in this seemingly informal view.



François Marius Granet, (1775–1849), *View of Mont Sainte-Victoire from the Terrace of Malvalat*, 1844?, watercolor partially heightened with gum arabic, graphite underdrawing 10.5 x 16.9 cm, Fondation Custodia, Paris



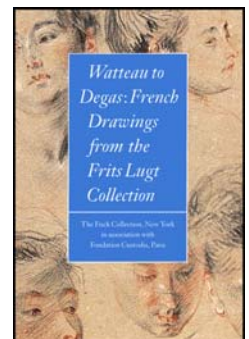
Edgar Degas, (1834–1917), *Head of a Soldier*, c. 1859, watercolor, gouache, and red chalk wash over graphite, 25.6 x 21.0 cm. Fondation Custodia, Paris

Degas's *Head of a Soldier*, acquired by Lugt in 1938, appears as something of an anomaly among the works of the nineteenth-century French school. As a student, Degas—like Manet and many of the Impressionists—copied works from the Renaissance and Baroque in the collections of the Louvre and the Bibliothèque nationale. During the three years that he spent in Italy, between 1855 and 1859, he filled his sketchbooks with hundreds of copies, in addition to making original drawings and oil sketches. His *Head of a Soldier* is a hybrid work, part direct copy, part “creative copy,” and was probably executed during his eight-month sojourn in Florence, between August 1858 and March 1859.

The small figure of the knight on horseback, far left in the background of the Lugt watercolor, is taken from Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (c. 1456), of which Degas made a drawn copy in early 1859. The sheet's principal subject, however—the bust of the young man in armor—probably derives from Agnolo Bronzino's half-length portrait of *Cosimo I in Armour* (c. 1545), which had been on display in the Uffizi since the late eighteenth century, as had Bronzino's miniature replica on tin, which may have been the more immediate source for Degas's drawing. The disheveled, curly red hair of Degas's soldier and his ardent expression as he looks off into the distance are quite different from the marmoreal perfection and self-assurance of Bronzino's ducal sitter, whose features Degas has not attempted to replicate. Furthermore, Bronzino had used a neutral background to set off his warrior duke, whereas Degas, in his variation on this theme, may have looked to Northern Renaissance artists such as Hans Memling, whose bust-length portraits often portrayed their sitters in close up against a meticulously detailed landscape background. Attempting to reconcile such traditions, Degas is not immune to Daumier's dictum to be of one's time, and in the presentation of his youthful military hero, we sense an unexpected inner turmoil, more characteristic of late Romanticism than the high Renaissance.

## PUBLICATION

*Watteau to Degas: French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue written by the exhibition curators, Colin B. Bailey and Susan Grace Galassi, with an introductory essay by Mária van Berge-Gerbaud, Director of the Fondation Custodia. This is the first volume devoted to the French drawings in this celebrated collection and includes many unpublished works. The hardcover catalogue (336 pages, \$60; member price, \$54) will be available this fall in both English and French editions in the Museum Shop, on the Frick's Web site ([www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)), and by phone at (212) 547-6848.



## RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## LECTURES

Wednesday evening lectures are free and do not require reservations. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. (if those planning to attend arrive earlier, they are expected to pay the regular museum admission fee). Saturday afternoon lectures are free with museum admission.

**Date:** Wednesday, October 7, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Mária van Berge-Gerbaud, Director, Fondation Custodia  
**Title:** *The Frits Lugt Collection*

In 1947, renounced collector and art historian Frits Lugt established the Fondation Custodia in Paris to care for and to add to his 6,000 Old Master drawings and 30,000 prints. In conjunction with the Frick's special exhibition, Mária van Berge-Gerbaud will discuss Lugt's life and career. Presentation of this free lecture is made possible by the Netherland-America Foundation.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 18, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Stijn Alsteens, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints,  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
**Title:** *Frits Lugt: Connoisseur and Collector of Drawings*

The lecturer, a former curator of the Frits Lugt Collection, will discuss the collection, especially its impressive holdings of Dutch and Flemish drawings.

**Date:** Saturday, January 9, 2:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Colin B. Bailey, Associate Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator, The Frick Collection  
**Title:** *From Watteau to David: Eighteenth-Century French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection*

Bailey will present an overview of the eighteenth-century drawings selected for the special exhibition and discuss discoveries made while researching the catalogue. Highlights will include sheets by Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard, and Vincent.

## GALLERY TALKS

*Sundays, October 25 and December 6, 11:00 a.m.*

*Saturday, December 12, 11:00 a.m.*

Join curators of The Frick Collection for an introductory gallery talk in the special exhibition *Watteau to Degas: French Drawings from the Frits Lugt Collection*. Reservations are required and may be made by emailing [gallerytalks@frick.org](mailto:gallerytalks@frick.org).

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** (212) 288-0700

**Web site:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto: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 (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Admission:** \$18; senior citizens \$12; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm

**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

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

Madison Avenue to 70th Street; crosstown M72 stopping eastbound on Madison at 70<sup>th</sup> Street or westbound on Fifth Avenue at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street or 69<sup>th</sup> Street  
**Tour Information:** included in the price of admission is an audio tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Gallery Talks and Education Programs:** an array of docent-led discussions and other gallery talks are now offered, many included with admission. Please refer to our website for further information.

**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.

#148, August 27, 2009

For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing, or Alexis Light, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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