

# NEWS RELEASE

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ART  
INSTITUTE

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[Digital images available upon request]

## EXHIBITION CELEBRATES GIFTS TO THE CLARK ART INSTITUTE FROM HERBERT AND CAROL DIAMOND

*Lines from Life: French Drawings from the Diamond Collection* on View March 21–August 23

Williamstown, Massachusetts—The Clark Art Institute opens a new exhibition on March 21 that celebrates a series of recent and promised gifts made by local collectors Herbert and Carol Diamond. *Lines from Life: French Drawings from the Diamond Collection* traces transformations in nineteenth-century figure drawing when developing interests in Realism and contemporary life diverged from the idealism championed by public institutions such as the École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts) in Paris and the esteemed Académie de France (French Academy) in Rome. Featuring thirty-two works on paper from the Diamond collection, along with twelve additional works from the Clark's permanent collection, the exhibition includes drawings by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (French, 1780–1867), Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863), Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917), Jean-Léon Gérôme (French, 1824–1904), and Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916), among others. The exhibition is on view in the Eugene V. Thaw Gallery in the Clark's Manton Research Center through August 23, 2020.

“The Clark is happy to celebrate the generous gifts of Herb and Carol Diamond with this exhibition,” said Olivier Meslay, Hardymon Director of the Clark. “With their gift, the Clark collection will be different, adding strength in artists like Eugène Delacroix, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Ingres. The Diamonds' collection also opens new paths with artists like Henri-Pierre Danloux, Léon Bonnat, and Hippolyte Flandrin. Like Sterling and Francine Clark, the Diamonds have pursued collecting as a team, melding distinctive interests and shared sensibilities to build a remarkable collection that they now share with the world through their gifts to the Clark. We are deeply grateful to Herbert and Carol Diamond for their long friendship and support of the Clark.”

“Because of their intimacy and immediacy, drawings offer unique insight into the artistic process. Herb and Carol Diamond's collection helps us see how French artists changed their approaches to representing the human figure over the nineteenth century,” said Anne Leonard, the Clark's Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. “The Diamonds have lived with these drawings in their home for many years, and I know they are as thrilled as we are to share them with visitors, scholars, and students.”

The works on view in *Lines from Life* span the nineteenth century and reveal the varied uses of figure drawing. Detailed studies address a model's features and form, while swiftly drawn sketches explore gesture and movement. Sheets bearing grid lines and handwritten annotations demonstrate the relationships between drawing

and other media, including painting and printmaking. Many works illuminate the versatility of graphite, the primary instructional medium in use prior to the 1850s. Compositions by late nineteenth-century artists reveal how diverse media—chalk, charcoal, Conté crayon, and color pastel—often encouraged experimentation.

Kristie Couser, the Clark's Curatorial Assistant for Works on Paper, organized the exhibition and notes that the Diamonds' particular interest in the preparatory role of drawing "broadens the museum's presentation of nineteenth-century French art—the cornerstone of our permanent collection. This exhibition presents a unique opportunity to see the collectors' eye at work, while inviting a new look at select figure studies from the Clark's founding collection that resonate with the Diamonds' interests."

### ***Drawing Instructors and their Students***

The curriculum of public institutions in the nineteenth century considered drawings of the nude – meticulously studied and sketched live in the classroom – to be the ultimate measure of an artist's skill. Ingres represented this tradition in the early part of the century, teaching in Paris and directing the French Academy in Rome. Among his many students in France and Italy were Hippolyte and Paul Flandrin, Henri Lehmann, and Théodore Chassériau, whose preparatory drawings and portrait drawings are included in the exhibition.

Ingres was a leading practitioner of linear classicism—an approach to drawing that emphasizes the primacy of line. *A Couple Embracing* (c. 1813–14), a sensitive drawing calling to mind the trembling kiss shared by Paolo and Francesca, the illicit lovers condemned to hell in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* (1320), is a subject to which Ingres returned for at least seven paintings. The female nude, as represented in this exhibition by Ingres' *Bathing Woman* (1828–67), represents another theme the artist explored throughout his career.

In 1832 Hippolyte Flandrin became the first of Ingres's students to win the coveted Prix de Rome scholarship, a state-funded residency at the French Academy in Rome. Before Hippolyte and his brother Paul traveled together to Italy, they collaborated on *Self-Portrait of Hippolyte* (1833), which follows the well-established practice of their mentor, Ingres, who had made graphite portrait drawings for fellow artists, French officials, and tourists since his own student days in Rome.

Chassériau, a child prodigy, studied with Ingres at the tender age of eleven. Unlike the Flandrins, he broke away from the constraints of classicism expounded by Ingres, with more freely drawn romantic and emotionally expressive works such as *Study for the Figure of Saint John* (1841–42). With sparse contour lines and minimal areas of coarse hatching, Chassériau captures the pose of John, who lowers his head into his left hand in anguish.

### **Challenging Conventions**

Other mid-nineteenth-century artists were also challenging the conventions of the academic methods of drawing while focusing their practice on depicting workers and acquaintances. Throughout his career, Jean-François Millet (French, 1814–1875) recorded the rhythms of manual labor at a time when the customary agricultural practices of rural France began to give way to advancing industrialization. In the drawing *The Diggers* (c. 1855) and related etching (c. 1855–56), two men, surrounded by an untilled field, commence the arduous task of turning soil. Millet returned to the theme of tillage in numerous drawings, an unfinished painting, and a large pastel.

Later artists, including Camille Pissarro (French, 1831–1903), admired and emulated Millet's sympathetic images of agricultural workers. *Women in the Garden*, an undated drawing of two women, demonstrates Pissarro's commitment to quickly recording his sensations of nature. Pissarro produced many landscapes while living and working in rural communities northwest of Paris, often populating such scenes with field workers, market vendors, and women doing domestic chores, like tending kitchen gardens.

### **A Focus on Preparatory Drawings**

*Lines from Life* highlights the Diamonds' remarkable collection of preparatory drawings while also featuring examples of highly worked and independent drawings. The highly worked charcoal *Interior of a Tavern* (1866) by François Bonvin (French, 1817–1887), combines portraiture and still life—the table is set with a pitcher and dinnerware, playing cards lie on the floor, and the two figures are fully realized. The quality and composition of this drawing, which relates to a painting of the same name completed by Bonvin in 1867, blurs the line between a preparatory and finished work.

Jean-François Raffaëlli's (French, 1850–1924) chalk and pastel portrait *Man in the City's Outskirts* (*Bonhomme de Banlieue*) (c. 1885) epitomizes the artist's interest in realistic representations of industrial workers, rag pickers, and street vendors. The drawing, which depicts a solitary man standing on a desolate embankment outside of Paris, demonstrates the artist's increasing experimentation with pastel. Admired by Edgar Degas, Raffaëlli was invited to exhibit with the Impressionists in 1880 and 1881. This large-scale work is among the Diamonds' personal favorites and has hung in a prominent place in their home for more than two decades. "The Clark is particularly honored to be presenting this promised gift in this celebratory exhibition," Meslay said.

### **ABOUT HERBERT AND CAROL DIAMOND**

Herbert and Carol Diamond began buying art in 1964, initially collecting primarily early twentieth-century American art. In the 1980s, after a friend suggested that they look at nineteenth-century French drawings, they changed their focus and, to date, have amassed a collection of 160 pieces of French art, including 160 drawings and sculptures by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Paul Cézanne, Camille Pissarro, and Auguste Rodin, among others.

The Diamonds began visiting the Clark in the 1970s when they would summer in the Berkshires with their growing family. Eventually, they relocated from Pittsburgh to the Berkshires and their relationships with the Clark intensified. Recognizing the Clark's unique role as both a museum and a center for research in the visual arts, the Diamonds realized a desire to have their art collection permanently available to and appreciated by the public and determined that the Clark would make an ideal home for their collection.

### **ABOUT THE CLARK**

The Clark Art Institute, located in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, is one of a small number of institutions globally that is both an art museum and a center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts. Opened in 1955, the Clark houses exceptional European and American paintings and sculpture, extensive collections of master prints and drawings, English silver, and early photography. Acting as convener through its Research and Academic Program, the Clark gathers an international community of scholars to participate in a lively program of conferences, colloquia, and workshops on topics of vital importance to the visual arts. The Clark library, consisting of more than 275,000 volumes, is one of the nation's premier art history libraries. The Clark also houses and co-sponsors the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

The Clark, which has a three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide, is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Its 140-acre campus includes miles of hiking and walking trails through woodlands and meadows, providing an exceptional experience of art in nature. Galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; open daily in July and August. Admission is \$20; free year-round for Clark members, children 18 and younger, and students with valid ID. Free admission is available through several programs, including First Sundays Free; a local library pass program; EBT Card to Culture; and Blue Star Museums. For more information on these programs and more, visit [clarkart.edu](http://clarkart.edu) or call 413 458 2303.

**Press Contact:**  
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**Exhibition related events**

**Opening Lecture: *Lines from Life: French Drawings from the Diamond Collection***

Saturday, April 4, 11 am–12 pm

Auditorium

Join Kristie Couser, curatorial assistant for works on paper, as she presents an overview of *Lines from Life: French Drawings from the Diamond Collection*.

***Lines from Life* Drawing Day**

Wednesday, April 22, 1–4 pm

Eugene V. Thaw Gallery for Works on Paper, Manton Research Center

Enjoying school vacation week as a family? Save the date for a full day out at the Clark! Visit our galleries in the morning, stop by Café 7 for something tasty, and finish your artful adventures by drawing the afternoon away. Get inspired by the exhibition *Lines from Life: French Drawings from the Diamond Collection* in this drop-in drawing program for all ages. No experience or preparation required. Materials will be provided. **Free with admission.**

**Figure Drawing**

Wednesdays, May 27, June 3, June 10, June 17, 4–6 pm

Manton Study Center for Works on Paper, Manton Research Center

Try your hand at life drawing—no experience required! Practice sketching the human form during this series of guided drawing sessions with nude models. Sessions are open to all skill levels, and basic materials are provided. Artists bringing their own supplies should note that only graphite pencils are allowed in the Study Center and museum galleries.

**\$5 per session. Space is limited to 15 participants per session. Visit [clarkart.edu](http://clarkart.edu) or call 413 458 0524 to register.**