



Dearest Friends
Drawings in the Collections
of 19th-Century French Artists

Exhibition from 17 October 2026 to 17 January 2027
Frits Lugt Collection, Fondation Custodia, Paris



Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), *Two Connoisseurs and a Painter in a Studio*

Pen and brown ink, charcoal, grey wash, 31.2 x 45.6 cm

Frits Lugt Collection, Fondation Custodia, Paris, inv. 2024-T.53

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NINETEENTH-century artists did not merely create, they were also collectors. Out of friendship, admiration or loyalty, they surrounded themselves with the works of their peers, amongst which drawings – intimate and personal objects – held a special place. This exhibition delves into the heart of these artists' collections and sheds light on nineteenth-century drawing in France. It offers an opportunity to explore the various social circles and the personalities of the artist-collectors on display, all of whom were born between the last third of the eighteenth century and the first half of the following century.

Also including paintings and documents, the exhibition features a selection of remarkable sheets, often gifted or exchanged, bearing witness to the artists' sense of kinship. Illustrious names, such as Théodore Géricault, Honoré Daumier, and James Whistler, stand next to lesser-known ones. The collections met with various fates after the deaths of their owners: some were preserved and bequeathed to museums, for instance that of Pierre-Jean David d'Angers, now in Angers; others were dispersed at public auction, the most admired of which remains the collection of Edgar Degas.

From the French Academy in Rome at the Villa Medici, where the first friendships between winners of the Prix de Rome were forged, to Paris studios, the exhibition explores these networks of artists. Some collected the works of their masters, others those of their friends, giving rise to collections marked by loyalty and admiration. Two key figures form the core of the show: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres and Eugène Delacroix. Their works, carefully kept by peers, are testament to their enduring influence and the fascination they held for their contemporaries.

The exhibition brings together nearly 120 works thanks to several public and private collections, notably the Musée du Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, as well as from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and numerous French institutions, such as the museums in Angers, Besançon and Rouen. Their generosity allows these works, rarely seen and some even unpublished, to be revealed to a larger public, and enables the reconstruction of ensembles that have never been displayed since their dispersion more than a century ago.

True to its interest in the history of collections, the Fondation Custodia is carrying on the legacy of its founder, the collector and connoisseur Frits Lugt (1884-1970). Based in Paris since its creation in 1947, the Frits Lugt Collection now holds over 100,000 works of art, including drawings, prints, artists' letters, rare books and paintings, which can be consulted on appointment by art historians and art lovers. The institution organises temporary exhibitions, publishes catalogues and conducts research, and enriches its holdings through an active acquisition policy. Its research library is open to the public, while Lugt's study on the collectors' marks on prints and drawings, continued by the Fondation Custodia in a freely available online version, remains a standard reference.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Frits Lugt Collection, Fondation Custodia
121, rue de Lille - 75007 Paris
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Dates

from 17 October 2026 to 17 January 2027

Opening

press: Thursday 15 October 2026 from 10 to 11.30 am
public: Thursday 15 October 2026 from 6 to 8.30 pm

Opening hours

every day except Monday, from 12 to 6 pm

Admission charges

full price: € 15
reduced price: € 10

Access by public transports

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

Communications director

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The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue published by Paul Holberton Publishing, London.

With the exceptional participation of the Musée du Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay.



IMAGES AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS



1. Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)
Ruins of the Gate of the Heilig Kreuz Convent in Meissen, circa 1824
Graphite and watercolour, 21 x 14.9 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Angers, inv. MBA 364.40.42
Formerly owned by Pierre-Jean David d'Angers (1788-1856)



2. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867)
A Communion in Rome, 1806
Graphite and brown wash, 22.2 x 15.6 cm
Prat Collection, Paris
Formerly owned by Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (1767-1824)



3. Lancelot Théodore Turpin de Crissé (1782-1859)
View of Capri, 1854
Pen and brown ink, brown wash, over traces of graphite, 32.8 x 47 cm
Frits Lugt Collection, Fondation Custodia, Paris, inv. 2008-T.12
Formerly owned by Count Alfred Emilien O'Hara de Nieuwerkerke (1811-1892)



4. Théodore Géricault (1791-1824)
The Artist's Left Hand, circa 1823-1824
Black crayon, red chalk, watercolour, 22.5 x 29.5 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. RF 1397
Formerly owned by Pierre-François Lehoux (1803-1889)



5. Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)
Portrait of Frédéric Chopin, circa 1838
 Graphite and white chalk, 29.2 x 22.1 cm
 Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. RF 31280
 Formerly owned by Léon Riesener (1808-1878)



6. Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)
A Hunter Stalking a Lion in the Mountains of North Africa, 1849
 Pastel and charcoal, 24 x 31.1 cm
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 2023.476
 Formerly owned by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)



7. Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)
A Bouquet of Flowers, circa 1849-1850
 Black crayon, watercolour, gouache, pastel, on two joint sheets of grey-blue paper, 65 x 65.4 cm
 Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. RF 31 719
 Formerly owned by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906)



8. Honoré Daumier (1808-1879)
The Connoisseur, circa 1860-1865
 Pen and ink, wash, watercolour, lithographic crayon, gouache over black chalk, 43.8 x 35.5 cm
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 29.100.200
 Formerly owned by Jules Dupré (1811-1889)



9. Hippolyte Flandrin (1809-1864) and Paul Flandrin (1811-1902)
Double Self-Portrait, 1835
 Graphite crayon, 25.4 x 19.8 cm
 Musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques,
 Paris, inv. RF 4021
 Formerly owned by Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896)



10. Édouard Manet (1832-1883)
Portrait of Mrs. Édouard Manet on a Blue Sofa, 1874
 Pastel on brown paper, laid down on canvas, 49 x 60 cm
 Musée d'Orsay, Paris, inv. RF 4507
 Formerly owned by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)



11. Gustave Doré (1832-1883)
Portrait of the Daughter of the Engraver Pierre Edmond Hédouin, circa 1877
 Graphite and watercolour on cardboard, 35.8 x 27.3 cm
 Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Pissarro – Pontoise, Pontoise, inv. D.899.10.1
 Formerly owned by Pierre Edmond Hédouin (1820-1889)