

THE  
POWER  
INSIDE  
THE  
PENCIL

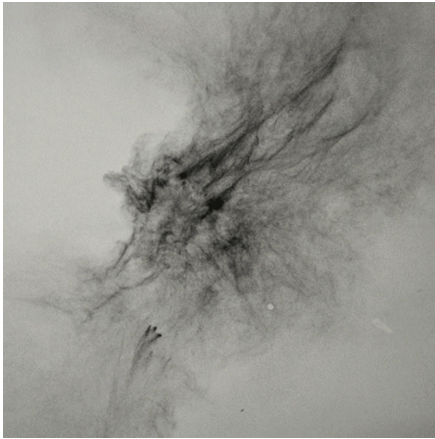
# GRAPHITE

*Grey matters*  
*By Jane Munro*

The  
Fitzwilliam  
Museum  
CAMBRIDGE



# GRAPHITE



James Eden and Olly Rooks,  
photographic still from Burst video

THE humble pencil is one of the most common implements used for drawing, and also one of the most versatile, allowing the artist to explore a vast range of effects, from a needle-sharp contour line to the velvety depths of soft pencil shading, at times worked to a dense, metallic sheen. One of its most eloquent champions, the artist and author Mervyn Peake, considered it to be the draughtsman's most elemental form of expression, what vocabulary was to the writer, or the keyboard to a pianist. A soft pencil was a 'rich, exhaustive, medium', he wrote, capable of creating 'a thousand moods that lie between delicacy and violence': its ability to create tones ranging from 'the frailest of greys to the black of the tomb' made it 'Hell and heaven in a cedar tunnel.'

This exhibition celebrates the extraordinary expressive potential of the medium, through four centuries of drawings from the Museum's collections. While almost all were made using graphite, not all were made with a pencil, at least in the form we know it today. Seventeenth-century 'plumbago' miniaturists, for example, would have used graphite in its purest mineral state, in 'plummets' (a term adapted from metal alloy styluses), or sticks that were also ground and manipulated with a stump to model flesh tones, light and shade. Innovations in pencil-making from the end of the eighteenth century made it possible to introduce different degrees of darkness in the mark left by the pencil on its support: the harder





the substance the lighter the line. The drawings displayed here show something of the range of effects that could be achieved by artists who were masters of their medium: from the vigorous compositional sketches that speak of the ‘wild fancy’ of George Romney, to crisp contours and fine webs of pencil hatching in works by Degas, Legros, Burne-Jones and Augustus John to the raw strength of smudged outline drawings by L.S. Lowry, a true devotee of the pencil.

Contemporary artists Christopher Le Brun and Christopher Cook confront and confound preconceptions of graphite as an essentially linear medium, by employing modern forms of graphite in highly innovative ways. Smooth-flowing batons of extremely soft graphite gave Christopher Le Brun the freedom to work uninhibited, ‘burying’ successive strata of ideas, and allowing form to emerge uncertainly, suggestively. Christopher Cook, on the other hand, uses a highly personal medium of graphite powder mixed with oil, resin and solvents to create enigmatic imagery that blurs the boundaries between drawing, painting, and photography.





James Eden and Olly Rooks, photographic still from *Burst* video.

A new generation of artists has used graphite as a way of exploring the act of drawing itself. In their performance video, James Eden and Olly Rooks limit the artist's intervention to a hand that punctures a graphite-filled balloon, unleashing the potential of the medium to create its own, mysterious, marks.

**<http://vimeo.com/11821911>**

© James Eden and Olly Rooks





# GREY MATTER

**G**RAPHITE is an allotrope of carbon, chemically related to diamonds. Originally referred to as ‘black-lead’, it has been known severally as wad(d), kellow, black-calke/cowke, and plumbago; even today, it is not uncommon to refer to ‘lead’ pencils. Its existence as a mineral was established in 1779 by a Swedish chemist, Carl W. Scheele; a decade later it was given the name ‘graphite’ by the German chemist and mineralogist, Abraham Gottlob Werner, a term derived from the Greek word ‘graphein’, meaning to draw/write.

Historically, it has had a number of uses, notably as a lubricant, but has also been used in anything from lining the inside of casting moulds of cannon and musket balls, to the manufacture of baseball bats and golfballs, as well as in the nuclear and aerospace industries. Until well into the nineteenth century, it was also recommended for minor medical conditions, such as colic or dyspepsia, sometimes taken with nuxvomica.

As a material for artists, it appears to have been in use by the mid-sixteenth century. Initially, it would have been applied in its pure mineral state, either as a baton wrapped in sheepskin or string, or using a wooden or metal holder, known as a *porte-crayon*. Wood-cased pencils, in a primitive form of those we know today, seem to have been available from the end of the seventeenth century; soft woods such as deal,





pine and, especially cedar were preferred for ease of cutting and sharpening.

Finest English graphite, from Borrowdale in Cumbria, soon became a highly prized commodity, encouraging pencil makers to experiment with ways of finding a cheaper alternative by using lower grade graphite, mixed with binders and other substances. In 1662 the *Bleistiftmacher* (lead pencil maker) Friedrich Staedler of Nuremberg, devised one of the most successful of these early composite pencils by mixing ground graphite with sulphur and antimony, and inserting into wooden shafts; however, while they were an improvement on earlier admixtures, they were still liable to break more easily than pure graphite, and left a less clear mark.

A truly viable substitute for pure graphite emerged only at the end of the eighteenth century, as an economic imperative brought on by wartime embargos. Dwindling supplies from mines in Cumberland, exacerbated by a trade blockade during the war between France and England from 1793, deprived Continental pencil manufacturers of imported Borrowdale graphite, and prompted a national effort to invent an equally performing alternative. In 1794 the painter, chemist, physicist and engineer, Nicolas-Jacques Conté responded to the challenge set by the French Minister of War, Lazare Carnot, in just eight days. The following year, he was





granted a patent for his new process, which involved mixing low-grade, finely-ground graphite powder, readily available in France, with clay and water, and placing the pastes into narrow moulds that were then fired at high temperatures, and then inserted into grooved wooden batons.

In 1798, three years after Conté's invention, a counter-claim for the invention of this new form of 'composite' graphite pencil was made by the Austrian mechanic, Josef von Hardtmuth, who opened a pencil factory in Vienna in 1790. While precedence is impossible to establish, Hardtmuth's discovery only serves to highlight the drive to invent a modified form of graphite pencil, stimulated by economic necessity.





# SHADES OF GREY 'H' to 'B'

**T**ODAY, pencils are general graded according to the European system – possibly established by a British pencil maker, Brookman in the early 1900s (see nos. 9 and 31) - using a sequence ranging from 'H' (for hardness) to 'B' (blackness) and 'F' (fine point); depending on the manufacturer, as many as twenty grades can exist, from 9H (the hardest) for 9B (softest). Nineteenth-century artists' suppliers often advertised different grades of pencil as being suitable for specific types of work:

HH - very hard, for architects

H - hard, for lightly indicating contours

HB - for sketching

B - soft, for shading

BB - very soft, for deeper shading







## GREY AREAS

**F**OR over two centuries before the term ‘graphite’ was invented, Britain was the leading supplier of the mineral then known as ‘black lead’. Sometime before 1565, an enormous deposit of graphite was discovered in Borrowdale in Cumberland, and when it was found it would not burn, was initially used by the local population to mark sheep.

As the properties and uses of graphite – in particular for munitions – began to be better understood, precautions were taken to protect the valuable resource. Mines were taken over by the Crown and, once sufficient stocks of graphite had been extracted, were flooded to prevent theft. In the early part of the eighteenth century, best graphite or ‘wad’ could fetch £1300 per ton; understandably, it was transported to monthly markets in London under armed guard. Despite these measures, there appears to have been an active black market; eventually, in 1752, an Act was passed that made stealing or receiving black-lead a felony punishable by whipping and hard labour, or transportation. A century later, the situation seemed little improved. Commenting on the displays of mining and mineral products at the Great Exhibition in 1851, including those of British pencil makers, one visitor observed that, while graphite was less scarce than it had been at the beginning of the century, the demand for Borrowdale graphite was still high. Strict security measures had been implemented at the mine, he noted: guards were placed at the





entrance, workmen changed their clothes under the supervision of a steward, who, armed with two loaded blunderbusses, was also responsible for overseeing employees who sorted and cleaned the 'plumbago'.

With dwindling supplies of Borrowdale wad, would-be miners and exploiters looked further afield for new deposits of the mineral in the nineteenth century. One of the most remarkable of these was the French explorer, trader and businessman, Jean-Pierre Alibert (1820-1905), who in 1847 went prospecting for gold in Siberia and instead found a rich seam of graphite in a mountain range close to the Chinese border.



Jean-Pierre Alibert mine in Siberia from A.W.Faber, *The Pencil-Lead mines of Asiatic Siberia*, 1865

Exploiting a site over 2000 metres above sea level, in extreme climatic conditions, took considerable





resolve. Alibert set up an entire community on the mountain, complete with church, kitchen garden and hippodrome, and only after mining for seven years came across graphite of a quality high enough to rival the depleted English supplies. After several more years, these were finally shipped down the frozen Siberian rivers to the Pacific and Indian oceans, and on a two-year journey across land to the pencil manufacturer A.W. Faber in Nuremberg, to whom he sold exclusive European rights.

Alibert (or Ivan Petrovich as he called himself in Russia) was no mean self-publicist. One of his moments of glory came in 1862, when he was awarded two medals at the Great Exhibition in London for an outstanding display of graphite and other minerals that included entire busts (of Alexander II and the Russian folk hero Yermack Timofeyevich), carved out of solid blocks of graphite. Liberal in his success, Alibert offered samples of his famous graphite to public institutions in London and Paris, and to titled Heads of State throughout Europe.

Today, the main countries exporting graphite are China, India, Brazil, North Korea and Canada.





David LOGGAN  
1635-92

**A Judge, 1650-60**

Graphite on vellum laid down on card

Oval, 114 x 88 mm

Given by A.A. de Pass, in memory of his son, Crispin de Pass, 1933

No. 1655

David Loggan was born in Danzig of Scottish parents and worked in Amsterdam until he came to London around 1660. He is widely considered as one of the masters of 'plumbagos', a form of portrait miniature painting executed in graphite, and sometimes ink, on vellum (fine animal skin) that enjoyed great popularity in the second half of the seventeenth century. The word 'plumbago' was an alternative term for black lead, both of which were commonly used to describe the mineral before it acquired the name graphite in 1789.

Plumbagos were first made in the Netherlands, as a by-product of the flourishing print trade, and were introduced to England after the restoration of the monarchy



in 1660, when printmakers returned home from exile abroad. They developed from the original drawings used as the basis of their engravings to become small, independent, works in their own right, rivalling portrait miniatures. Loggan himself worked both as an engraver and a miniaturist; the Fitzwilliam owns a large collection of his portrait engravings, in many of which he depicts his sitters in 'medallion' frames similar to the oval frames he used in his 'plumbago' miniatures (see, for example fig. 1).

The identity of the sitter in this portrait is unknown. He wears the judicial dress of the period; a broad collar, probably of lawn, an ermine cape and the judicial cap, worn over the white sergeant's coif.



fig 1. David Loggan  
**Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll**  
Given by John Charrington, 1933 P.7948-R





Thomas FORSTER  
c.1677- c.1710

### Unknown girl, 1708

Graphite on vellum

Oval, 108 x 79 mm

Signed in graphite: *T. Forster /*

*Delin / 1708*

Given by A.A. de Pass, in memory  
of his son, Crispin de Pass, 1933

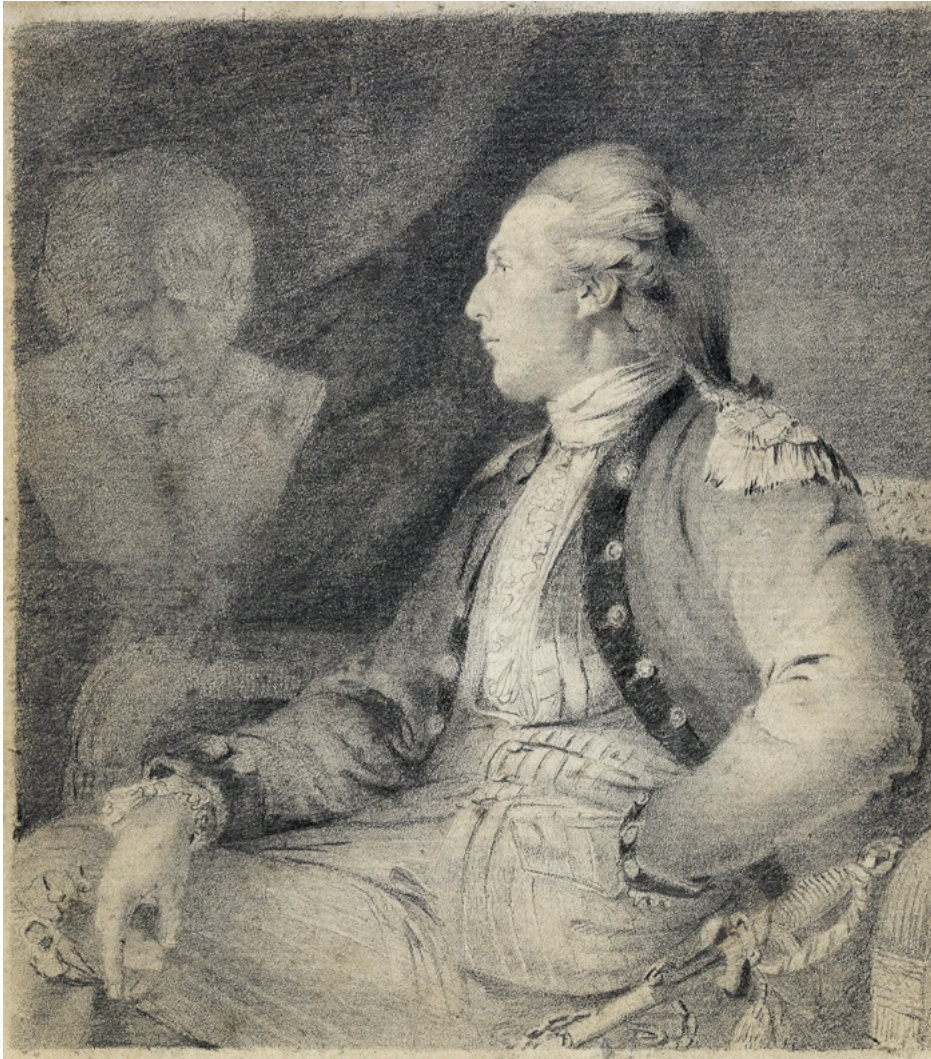
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Little is known about Forster. Clearly a talented artist, he appears to have worked in London, but may have been visiting from Ireland. All of his known miniatures, dating from between 1690 and 1713 are in 'plumbago', or graphite.

Forster models the sitter's features and dress with astonishing delicacy, using ground graphite powder, blended with a stump so that it takes on the appearance of a grey ink or watercolour wash.

Later sources recommended that, to obtain smooth, even, tones with graphite powder, the artist use cotton, or a device called an *estompe-ombreur* (lit. a 'stump-shadower'), a curved wooden handle with a flattened end, covered in suede.





John BROWN  
1752-1787

**Portrait of Captain  
John Wood(s), late  
1770s**

Graphite on paper  
Circular, 125 x 125 mm  
Bought from the Perceval Fund,  
2003  
PD. 20-2003

John Brown received his initial training in Edinburgh, but spent most of the 1770s in Italy, where he was part of a thriving international community of artists that included Henry Fuseli, Johann Tobias Sergel, George Romney (see nos. 5, 23 and 24) and John Flaxman (no. 29).

He worked primarily as a printmaker and draughtsman and went on to make his reputation as a portraitist in 'crayons'. The majority of his surviving portrait drawings are on a much larger scale than this example; several depict the first members of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, founded by the 11th Earl of Buchan in 1780. This is the only portrait in this smaller format that Brown is known to have made in Italy. It demonstrates the extraordinary refinement with





which he was able to recreate texture, volume, light and shade through subtle modulations of graphite in the sitter's features, costume and setting. The result is an image which, despite its small scale, rivals the colouristic richness of an oil painting.



DETAIL John Brown, *Portrait of Capt John Wood(s)* (no. 3)





Alessandro MAGANZA  
1556-1640

**Christ before Pilate**  
1580s ?

Graphite on paper  
217 x 185 mm, irregular  
Bought from the Perceval Fund,  
1964  
PD.39-1964

Maganza was born in Vicenza and worked there, in Venice, and elsewhere in the Veneto. This sketch was used by Maganza's son for a painting in the parish church of Fontaniva, east of Vicenza.

Graphite was probably first used for artistic purposes from the mid-sixteenth century. Originally thought to have been drawn in black chalk, closer analysis has shown that the medium used in this drawing is graphite, a rare example of Maganza working solely in what would then have been known as 'black lead'.

Early drawing manuals advised artists to work first 'rustically' in charcoal, sketching





in rough outlines that could be subsequently brushed off with a feather, before reinforcing, or modifying, them with black chalk or graphite (J.B. *The Mysteries of Nature and Art, Contained in foure several Tretises ... The Third Booke of Drawing, Painting, Limning, Graving*, London: Ralph Mab, 1634, p. 104). Long before the invention of the pencil, artists would have applied graphite in its pure mineral form, as ‘black leade plummets’, wrapped in sheepskin or bound in string to protect the hands.





George ROMNEY  
1734-1802

**Study for the head of  
Bolingbroke, 1788-90**

Graphite on paper  
287 x 262 mm  
Bought, 1874  
L.D. 80

Speed was essential to Romney's working methods. His son recalled that he constantly had a sketchbook to hand to record ideas or subjects of passing interest, and even executed compositional sketches in oils in less than an hour, 'as it were by magic, [in] the most bold and dashing manner' (*Memoirs*, 1830, p.129).

Subjects of spirits, ghosts and visionary beings particularly appealed to Romney's 'wild fancy'; a drawing representing the Lapland witches from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) is on the reverse of this sheet. While this created the problem of representing the invisible, it also allowed him to work directly from the imagination, uninhibited by the need to reproduce a close physical likeness.



However Romney's visions of fantastical creatures also relied on his knowledge of other artists's works. In this drawing, he depicts not the magically-evoked spirit, but the reaction of Bolingbroke, the conjurer in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Part 2, who had summoned it to appear. The open-mouthed expression of terror is clearly inspired by the seventeenth-century French artist, Charles Le Brun's widely circulated posthumous publication, *Expressions of the Passions of the Soul*, in which he codified the physiognomic expressions of human emotions, in this case Fear (fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Charles Le Brun, 'L'Effroy' ('Fear'), from *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions* (1698)

A larger and more finished compositional drawing of the subject is also in the Fitzwilliam Museum (B.V.13).





William BLAKE  
1757-1827

**Macbeth and the ghost of Banquo c. 1780**

Graphite on paper  
378 x 522 mm  
Bequeathed by Sir Geoffrey  
Keynes, 1985  
PD.170-1985

Blake is best known for his richly coloured printed books, watercolours and tempera paintings, but drawings such as this show that he was also a vigorous draughtsman in pencil. In a few summary lines, he powerfully evokes Macbeth's horror at seeing the ghost of the murdered Banquo. Rigid with fear, his hands raised in alarm, Macbeth stares fixedly at the ghost, seated impassively at his own place at table (*Macbeth*, Act III, sc. 4). The features of the ghost have been said to resemble Blake's own (compare fig. 1).



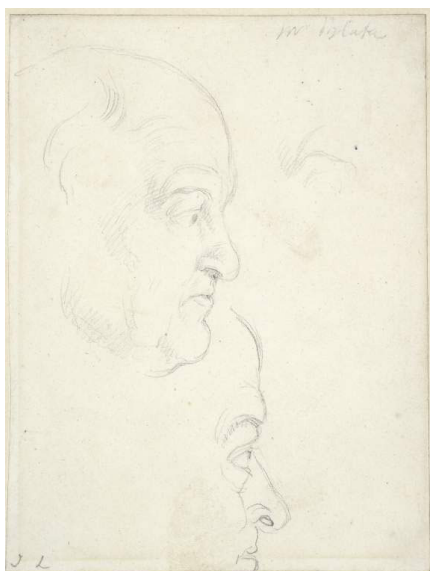
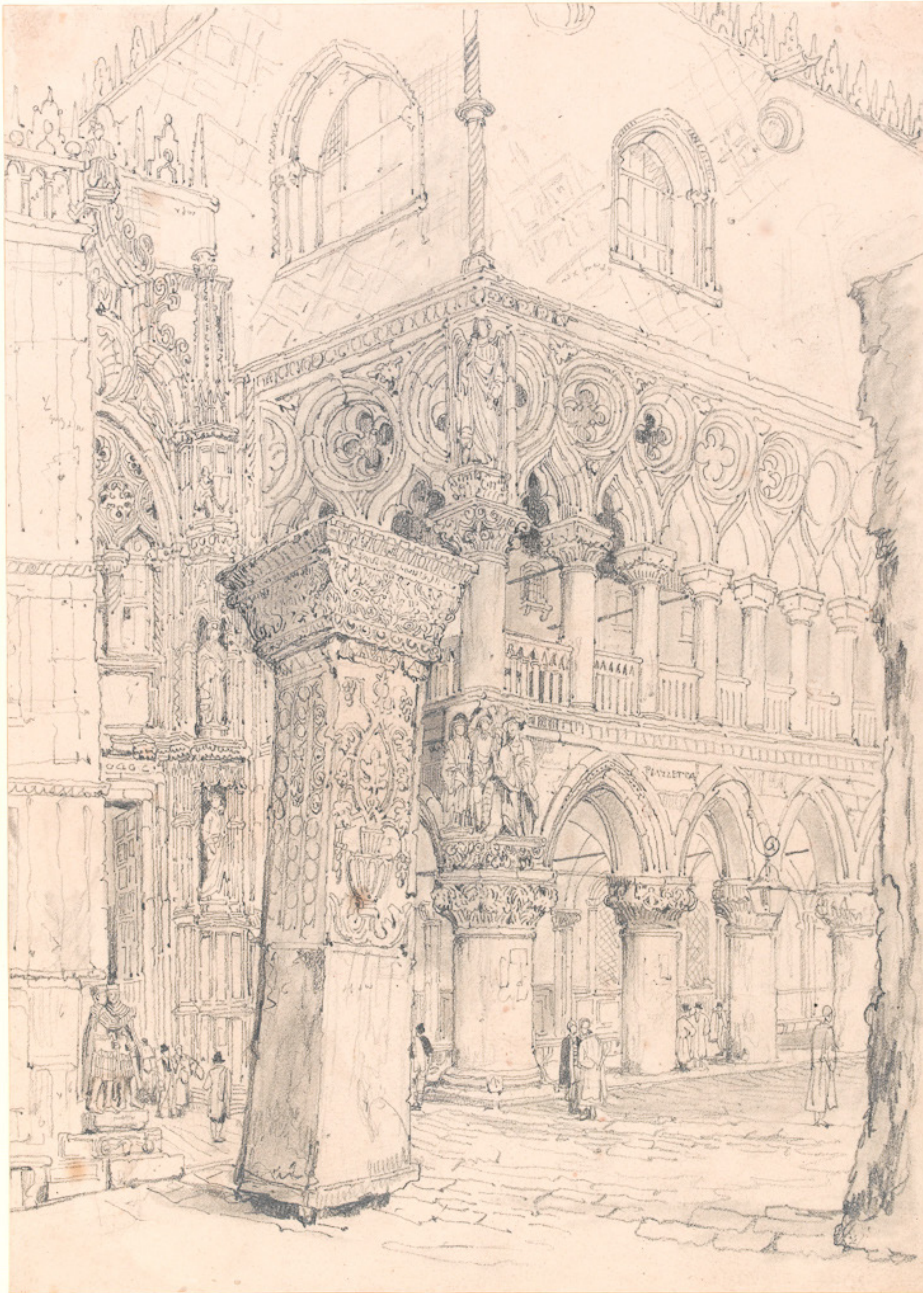


fig. 1 John Linnell, *Two portraits of William Blake in profile*, c. 1821  
PD.56-1950

For Blake, the 'first lines' applied to the paper preserved the vitality and originality of his vision, unmediated by the materiality of painting and printmaking.





Samuel PROUT  
1783-1852

**The Piazzetta, Venice**  
1824-32

Graphite on paper  
362 x 259 mm  
Bequeathed by J. R. Holliday, 1927  
No. 1573

Prout was one of the leading landscape painters of his day, working extensively in watercolour as well as in oils. In addition, he was a highly sought-after teacher, who, between 1812 and 1820, published a number of popular drawing manuals for amateur artists that contributed significantly to the dissemination of his work, and the popularity of his style.

This drawing was probably made between Prout's first visit to Venice in 1824 and 1832, when it formed the basis of an engraving by Edward Finden in *Finden's Illustrations of the life and work of Lord Byron* (London, 1833-4).





For the artist and critic John Ruskin, Prout was a master of the pencil. Prout was not a colourist, he wrote, 'nor in any extended or complete sense of the word a painter. He is essentially a draughtsman with the lead pencil ... the chief art-virtue of [his work] is the intellectual abstraction which represents many features of things with a few lines' (*Works*, XIV, p. 392). Nor did Prout's imperfect mastery of perspective detract from the brilliance of his drawings, Ruskin believed: like Turner (Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy), Prout drew architectural subjects 'only with as much perspective as suited him' and 'twisted his buildings ... into whatever shapes he liked' (*Elements*, 1857, pp. xix, 19).

In common with many artists of his day, including John Linnell, who used them for more than half a century (see no. 31), Prout favoured pencils manufactured by the firm Brookman & Langdon, widely considered one of the best pencil makers of the day. One of the later partners in the firm, is thought to have been responsible for introducing letters to signify the varying darkness of their mark, from 'B' (black) to H (hard) at the beginning of the twentieth century, a system still used by manufacturers today.

**SEE: <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-suppliers/b/british-artists-suppliers-1650-1950-br.php>**





Frederick Landseer  
GRIGGS  
1876-1938

**The rood tower  
and south transept,  
Lincoln Cathedral,  
1912**

Graphite on paper  
317 x 227 mm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *F.L.  
GRIGGS / 1912*  
Given by Benjamin Chandler,  
1946  
No. 2765

Hard graphite pencil produces a sharpness of line that is ideal for rendering architectural detail, and is also readily translatable into print. Born in Hitchin, Griggs worked extensively as a draughtsman and etcher of landscapes and architectural subjects, and also worked as an architect at Chipping Campden. Many of his drawings formed the basis of illustrations for topographical books of his travels in England and France, notably the series *Highways and Byways*, launched in 1902, which recorded the architectural heritage of the southern and eastern counties of England. This drawing was used as the basis of an illustration in W. F. Rawnsley, *Highways and Byways in Lincolnshire* (London, 1914).





Architectural subjects were sometimes criticised as being the most lowly form of drawing, as they were, by their very nature, concerned purely with accurate recording of form, and discouraged imaginative input or creative flights of fancy. As Griggs's skilful drawing shows, however, technical virtuosity has an allure of its own.





Alphonse LEGROS  
1837 – 1911

**Portrait of a young girl, 1903**

Goldpoint on pink prepared paper  
283 x 225 mm  
Signed and dated upper right:  
*A. Legros // 1903*  
Given by Sir Ivor and Lady Batchelor, 1997  
PD.4-1997

Legros was trained in France, but settled in England in 1863, and became an influential teacher in his own right, first at the South Kensington Art School, and later at the Slade School of Art. His pure line drawing in the French academic tradition owed much to Ingres, (nos. 11, 12, 13) and his prominence as a teacher in the later part of the nineteenth century ensured that his linear style was transmitted to a younger generation of artists, such as Augustus John (no. 26).

A gifted etcher, Legros also enjoyed working with an extremely fine line in his drawings, using an accumulation of delicately hatched line to create shadow and modelling. Although this portrait appears at first sight to be drawn in pencil, closer





inspection shows that Legros has used metal – in this case gold – point, a medium used extensively since the Middle Ages, and which preceded the use of pencil. For a fuller description of the technique, see no. 27.

By the nineteenth century, most artists preferred drawing instruments and processes which demanded less painstaking preparation and implementation, but Legros remained a fervent adherent of metalpoint, and became one of the leading artists to revive the use of the medium. His sensitive metalpoint drawings were much admired by his fellow artists, including Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, who bequeathed a number to the Fitzwilliam in 1937 [<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/opacdirect/6512.html>], and Edgar Degas, who acquired two and hung them in his bedroom.



DETAIL: Alphonse Legros, **Portrait of a young girl** (no.9)





Hilaire-Germain-Edgar  
DEGAS  
1834-1917

**Study of the head  
of Thérèse Degas,  
the artist's sister, in  
profile to left, c. 1855-  
56**

Graphite on faded pink paper  
285 x 236 mm  
Bequeathed by A.S. F. Gow,  
through the National Art  
Collections Fund, 1978  
PD. 24-1978

In the early years of his career, Degas made a number of drawings using a hard graphite pencil, sometimes, as here, on coloured paper grounds, to create an extremely crisp linear contour that recalls the soft grey line of metalpoint drawings by Italian Renaissance artists whom he admired, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Lorenzo di Credi, and other draughtsmen of the Florentine school (see no. 27). In the middle of the nineteenth century, the technique of metalpoint enjoyed a modest revival (see no. 9), especially after the publication in 1858 of a translation of Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro dell'Arte* by Ingres's pupil Victor Mottez, a treatise which Degas himself owned. Cennini's book gives a brief description of the technique, but also lengthy advice on the preparation of the lightly-coloured grounds. The



drawing on the reverse of this sheet (fig. 1), showing a bare-footed male figure in drapery, is made on a pink-prepared ground which perhaps records Degas experimenting with the technical processes which Cennini explained in his book.

Marie-Thérèse Flavie De Gas (1840-1897), shown here at the age of around sixteen, was eight years Degas's junior. In 1863, she married her cousin, Edmondo Morbilli, in Paris.



Fig. 1 Edgar Degas, *Study of drapery of an unknown saint*, reverse of no. 10





Jean-Auguste-Dominique  
INGRES  
1780-1867

**Joseph Woodhead  
and his wife, née  
Harriet Comber, and  
her brother, Henry  
George Wandesford  
Comber, 1816**

Graphite on paper  
304 x 224 mm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*Ingres a / rome 1816*  
Given by the National Arts  
Collection Fund, 1947  
PD.52-1947

Ingres made his earliest graphite portraits in the 1790s as a student at the Académie Royale in Toulouse. These took the form of miniature profile medallions, a style of portraiture popular in the eighteenth century that was also practiced by his father. In scale these were broadly similar to the plumbago miniatures that had been fashionable a century earlier (nos. 1 and 2), and like them were often drawn in graphite on vellum, although the profiled features were also influenced by antique cameo gems.

After studying in Paris, Ingres won the highly competitive Prix de Rome awarded by the École des Beaux-Arts, which allowed him to travel to Rome as a pensioner



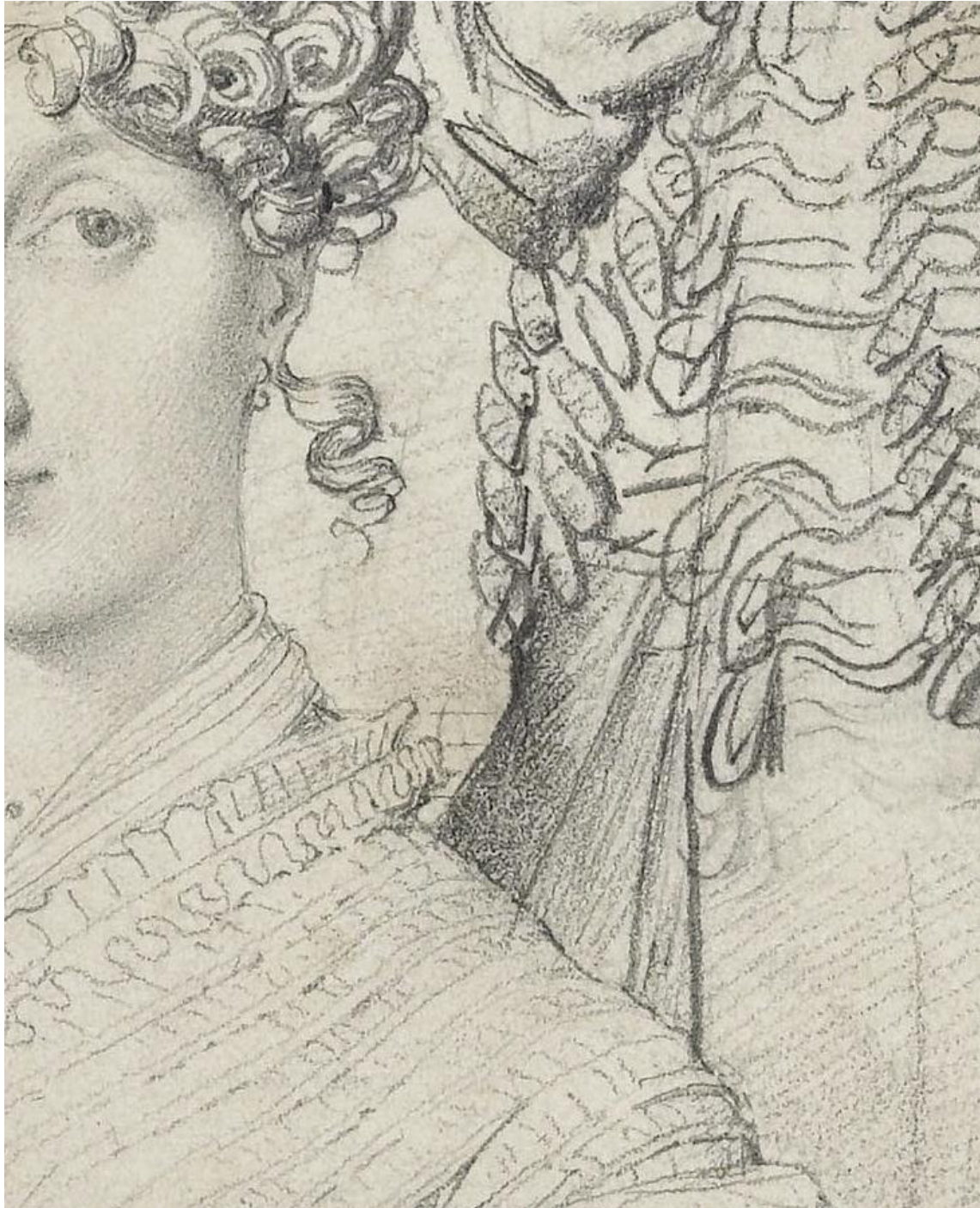


at the French Academy. He travelled there in 1806, and remained for over a decade, eventually becoming Director of the Academy. Pencil portraits provided him with a staple income during his stay, not least after 1815, when the fall of the Empire robbed him of his patrons in the French administration.

Between 1815 and 1817, Ingres made around thirty portraits of British sitters in Rome - most visitors, but some resident - of which this is among the finest. Comparatively large in scale, it is also a rare group portrait that celebrates the female sitter, Harriet Woodhead's, newly extended family. With her (oddly-proportioned) right arm she holds that of her new husband, Joseph, an agent in the Royal Navy. The younger man on the right is her brother, Henry, shown at the age of eighteen, who accompanied the newly-weds on at least part of their honeymoon. The following year, he began his studies in Cambridge, took his degree in 1812, and eventually (from 1835) took over his father's position as rector in the parish of Oswaldkirk in Yorkshire.

At a time when he was ambitious to establish a reputation as an artist in Paris, Ingres seems to have resented the drudgery of grand tourist portraiture. One unfortunate English visitor felt his frustration only too clearly when, arriving at the artist's house and asking if he was the author of the 'charming little portraits', Ingres slammed the door in his face, saying that the only person residing there was a 'history painter'! In fact, while he felt they distracted him from his higher aspirations, Ingres's astonishing facility as a draughtsman meant that he was able to execute the portraits very quickly, normally in two sessions in a single day. The rhythmic flurry of pencil work - not least in the costumes, drapery and poised wayward curl of Mrs Woodhead's hair - show the supreme confidence with which he mastered his medium.





DETAIL, Jean-Dominique-Auguste Ingres, **Joseph Woodhead and his wife, née Harriet Comber, and her brother, Henry George Wandesford Comber** (no. 11)





Jean-Auguste-Dominique  
**INGRES**  
1780-1867

**A nymph, after Jean  
Goujon, c. 1802-06**

Graphite on paper  
460 x 117 mm  
Signed with initial, lower left: I  
Bequeathed by Guy John Fenton  
Knowles, 1959  
PD.42-1959

**A nymph, after Jean  
Goujon, c. 1802-06**

Graphite on paper  
454 x 116 mm  
Signed with initial, lower left: I  
Bequeathed by Guy John Fenton  
Knowles, 1959  
PD.43-1959

Ingres is as celebrated for what he said about drawing as for his drawings themselves.

He advised his many pupils and followers to draw ceaselessly in a notebook, and, if they had no materials at hand to do so 'with their eyes'. He invested accurate drawing with a quasi-moral or ethical purpose: it was, he famously claimed, 'the probity of art', 'three and a half quarters' of a painting, lacking only the colour. Mastery of contour was essential to creating beautifully-drawn form, he believed, although it should at the same time convey 'expression, the inner form, the plane, modelling' (Delaborde, *Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux ...*, 1870, p.123).



Ingres urged his pupils to draw assiduously after the great artists of the past, as he has done here, copying the bas-relief sculptures by the sixteenth-century sculptor Jean Goujon, which formed part of his Fountain of the Innocents, erected in 1549, and by 1824 in the Louvre.

Although some critics, like the poet Charles Baudelaire, thought that the 'laborious finesse' of Ingres's line destroyed the overall harmony of a composition, his drawing style had a huge influence on future generations of French artists, including Edgar Degas (no.10) and Alphonse Legros (no.9), and through the latter to his students at the Slade School of Art at the turn of the century. In fact, these two drawings provide physical evidence of the transmission of his ideas: both were given by Ingres to Legros, and by him to the father of the donor, Charles Julius Knowles,



Distinguishing graphite from other media, such as black chalk, can often be tricky, even to the highly-trained eye. In general, graphite leaves a tell-tale metallic sheen to the mark on the paper, though in some cases, as in this drawing, the situation is less clear-cut. The thicker, darker contour of the figures might have been achieved by using soft-grade pencils, but when viewed under the microscope seems to share many of the characteristics of black chalk.

fig. 1 Jean Goujon (c. 1510-after 1572),  
perhaps with Pierre Lescot, *The Fountain  
of the Innocents*, Louvre, Paris  
© Musée du Louvre, Paris





Sir Edward Coley  
BURNE-JONES  
1833 – 1898

**Study of drapery  
for Merlin in *The  
Beguiling of Merlin*,  
1872**

Graphite on white cartridge  
paper  
360 x 242 mm  
Bequeathed by Charles  
Haslewood Shannon, 1937  
No. 1997

Like other Pre Raphaelites painters, Burne-Jones favoured graphite as a drawing medium. From the early 1870s, in particular, he made numerous pencil studies for his finished paintings, generally of individual figures, or parts of the body – feet, arms, hands &c. This detailed study of drapery is one of the most beautiful of the numerous preparatory drawings for his painting *The Beguiling of Merlin* (1873-4, fig. 1).

Burne-Jones believed that drapery played a crucial part in conveying the mood and meaning of a painting. Here, for example, he indicates the featureless model in only a few perfunctory outlines; instead, his focus is on the weighty folds of the





fig. 1 Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, *The Beguiling of Merlin*, 1872-7, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight  
Courtesy National Museums Liverpool

draperies that lie heavily on the near-somnolent figure of Merlin, bewitched by the huntress, Nimue. However not all his contemporaries admired his painstaking attention to this sort of decorative detail. His erstwhile friend and mentor, John Ruskin, for one, found Burne-Jones's efforts misplaced: 'Nothing puzzles me more that the delight painters have in drawing mere folds of drapery and their carelessness about the folds of water and clouds, or hill and branches. Why should the tucking in and out of muslin be eternally interesting?' (Quoted in Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 1904, vol. 2, p. 18.)





DETAIL Sir Edward Burne-Jones, **Study of drapery for *The Beguiling of Merlin*** (no. 14)





Sir Edward Coley  
BURNÉ-JONES  
1833 – 1898

**Studies for *The Mirror of Venus*, c. 1873**

Graphite on cartridge paper  
218 x 179 mm  
Bequeathed by Charles  
Haslewood Shannon, 1937  
No. 2003.1

Burne-Jones drew obsessively throughout his career. His friend Graham Roberston considered him to be 'pre-eminently a draughtsman ... to draw was his natural mode of expression – line flowed from him almost without volition. If he were merely playing with a pencil, the result was never a scribble, but a thing of beauty however slight, a perfect design' (*Time Was*, 1931, p. 84).

He worked in a wide range of drawing media, and sometimes in phases. In the 1850s, for example, he produced a series of elaborately-worked pen and ink drawings, in part influenced by the engravings of the sixteenth-century German artist, Albrecht Dürer, but by the following decade seems to have preferred





using chalks and watercolour in a softer drawing style that corresponded to the 'Venetian' or 'Giorgionesque' style he adopted in his paintings in these years.

However, pencil remained a staple, and in the 1870s he began to use harder forms of graphite and occasionally metalpoint in his drawings, reflecting his growing passion for fifteenth-century Florentine art, Botticelli, in particular.

Burne-Jones painted two versions of the *Mirror of Venus*, a watercolour begun in 1868 and a larger oil (now in the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon), begun in 1873, and finished in 1877; this is one of several studies for the later composition in the Museum's collection. Most of these preparatory drawings were made as studies for paintings, but Burne-Jones also exhibited them as independent works of art, and gave many to his friends. For some later commentators, Burne-Jones's devotion to drawing, together with that of certain contemporaries, such as Frederick, Lord Leighton, had been instrumental in encouraging a renewed appreciation of graphite drawing in the twentieth century (Salwey, *The Art of Drawing in Lead Pencil*, 1921, p. 26).





Sir Edward Coley  
BURNE-JONES  
1833 – 1898

**Studies of figures  
for *The Passing of  
Venus*, 1880**

Graphite with highlights in white  
bodycolour on green prepared  
paper

168 x 210 mm

Signed and dated in graphite,  
lower left *EBJ 1880*; inscribed,  
lower right: *PASSING OF VENUS*

Bequeathed by Charles  
Haslewood Shannon, 1937  
No. 2019b

Burne-Jones first conceived of the subject representing *The Passing of Venus* in 1861, as a tile design with the title *The Triumph of Love*. He took up the subject again in a number of compositions in oil and bodycolour made during the 1870s and early 1880s, and in 1898 turned into a tapestry.

The figure represented in this drawing, dated 1880, may be a study for the unfinished bodycolour version of the composition in Tate Britain which was begun in 1881, although it also appears in the bottom left hand corner of the tapestry, and in the preparatory watercolour sketch for it, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



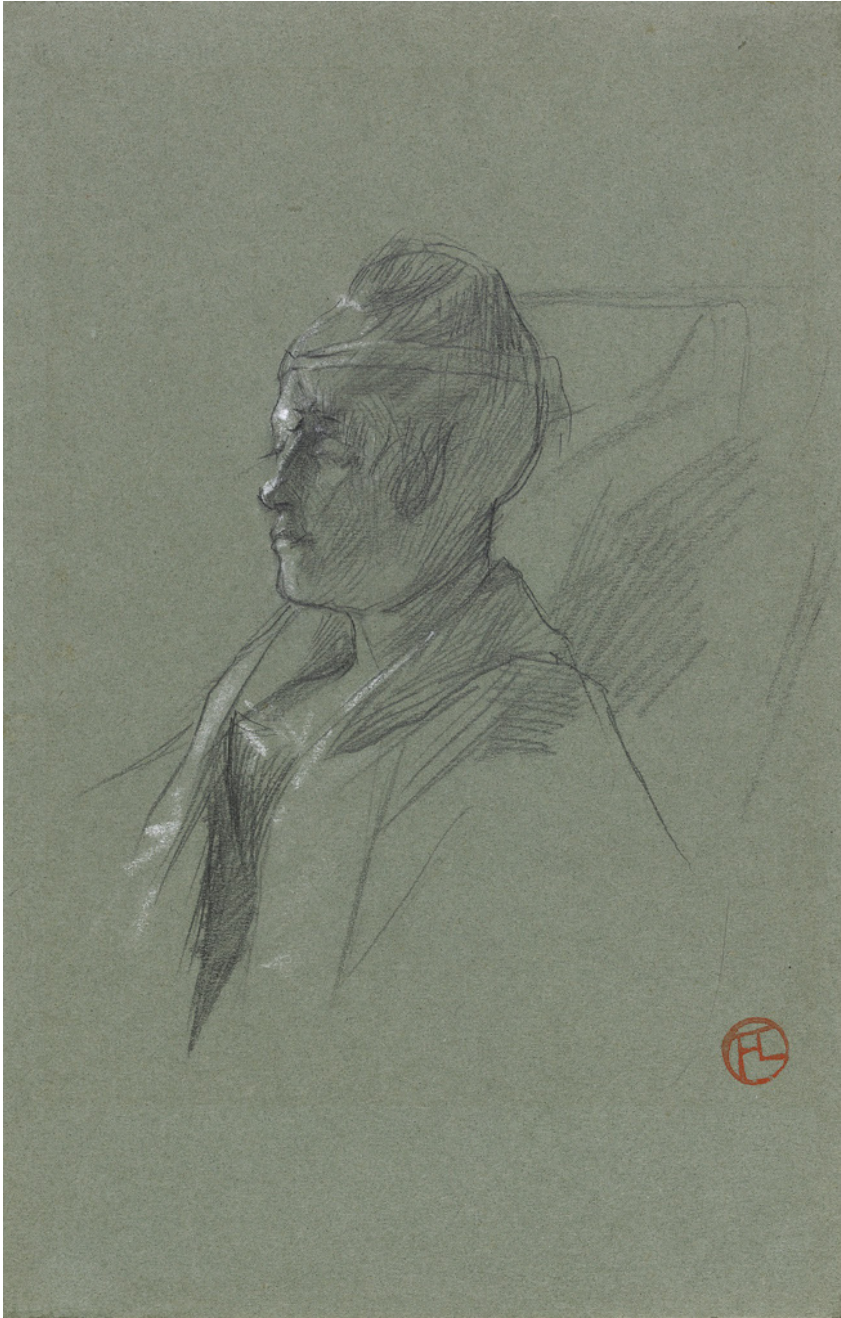


Unusually, Burne-Jones has used a prepared green paper for this study. To enhance the graphite line against the dark background, he has added selective touches of white bodycolour to highlight the folds of the draperies, and create a more pronounced sense of volume.



DETAIL Studies of figures for *The Passing of Venus* 1880 (no. 16)





Henri de TOULOUSE  
LAUTREC 1864-1901

**Portrait of Lili  
Grenier, 1894-97**

Graphite heightened with white  
on grey green paper

235 x 151 mm

Verso: rough sketch of a seated  
woman in blue crayon. Inscribed:  
*Mort (?)*

Bequeathed by A.S.F. Gow,  
through the National Art  
Collections Fund, 1978  
PD. 67-1978

Lautrec summed up his all-consuming passion for drawing in one simple statement: 'I am a pencil.'

The Symbolist poet, Arthur Symons, who knew him well (they met at the Moulin Rouge one night in June 1890), remembered that, 'Whenever he dined [for instance], in *Le Rat Mort*, he would call out to a woman he admired: 'Arrêtez-vous!' ['Stop!'], and ... would take out his notebook and draw some passionate design of her; then he would get up and wander around the tables, drinking in women's beauty as if he literally drank – as vampires do – their flesh and blood' (*From Toulouse Lautrec to Rodin*, 1929, p. 2). He tended to draw his models - 'especially

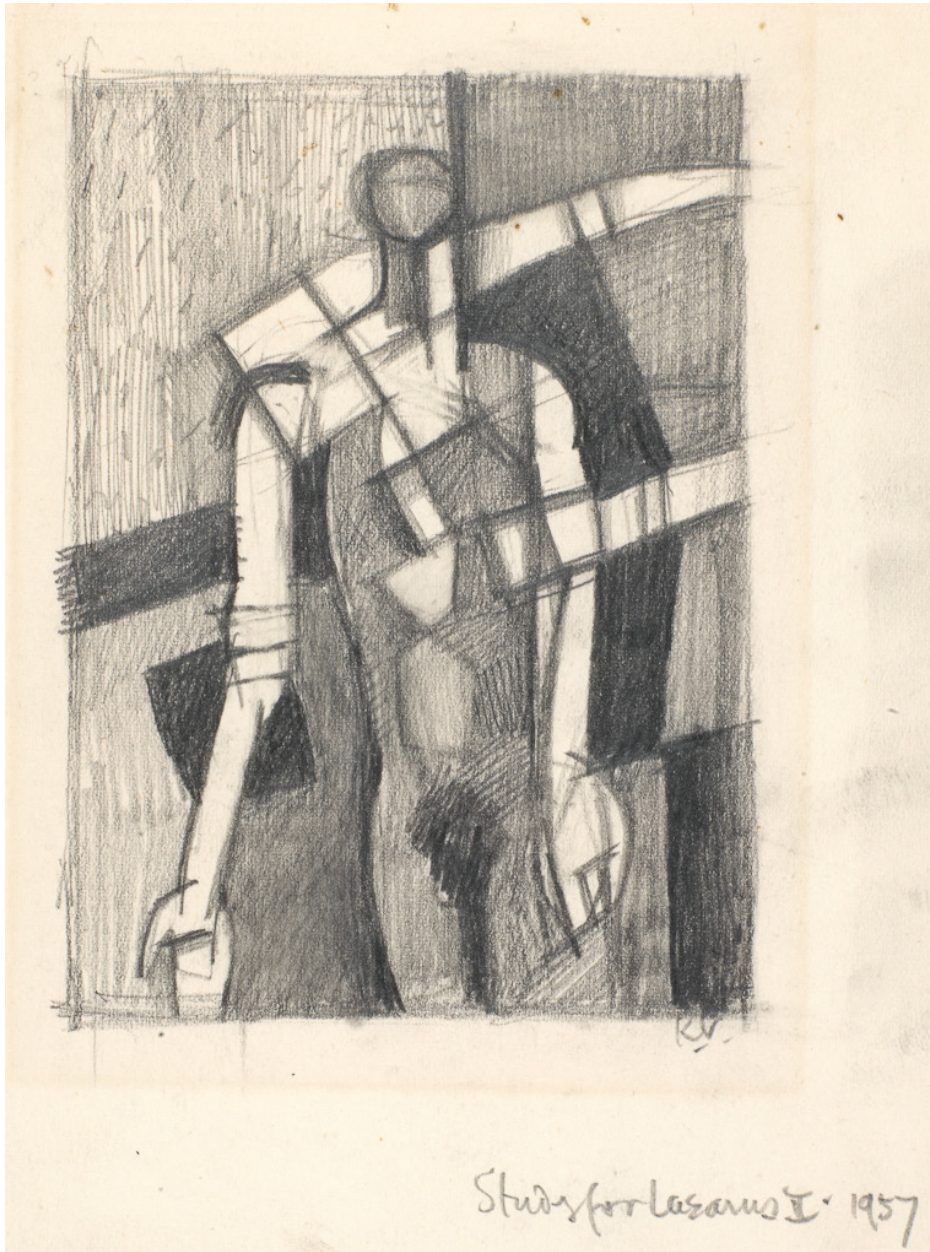




the women' - with a sometimes 'injurious' sadness, Symons wrote, only suddenly to repent, investing his contour with 'a caressing flexibility, which is, as Verlaine might have said or sung, a prayer to be pardoned' (*ibid*, p. 37).

The sitter in this drawing was the companion of Albert Grenier, a fellow student of Lautrec in the studio of Fernand Cormon; they eventually married in 1904. She was a favourite model of a number of other artists of the day, including Renoir, Degas and Albert de Belleruche, with the latter of whom she had an affair.





Keith VAUGHAN

1912 - 1977

**Male nude: study for  
Lazarus, 1957**

Graphite on paper

180 x 128 mm

Signed and dated, lower right: K.V.

*/Study for Lazarus II. 1957*

Bequeathed by Dr.W.M. Keynes,  
2010

PD.38-2010

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Vaughan painted a series of compositions on the Lazarus theme between 1956 and 1959. His reason for adopting this title is unclear, although it has been argued that it may reflect his preoccupation with death at the time, not least after his friend John Minton died of a drugs overdose at the end of 1956.

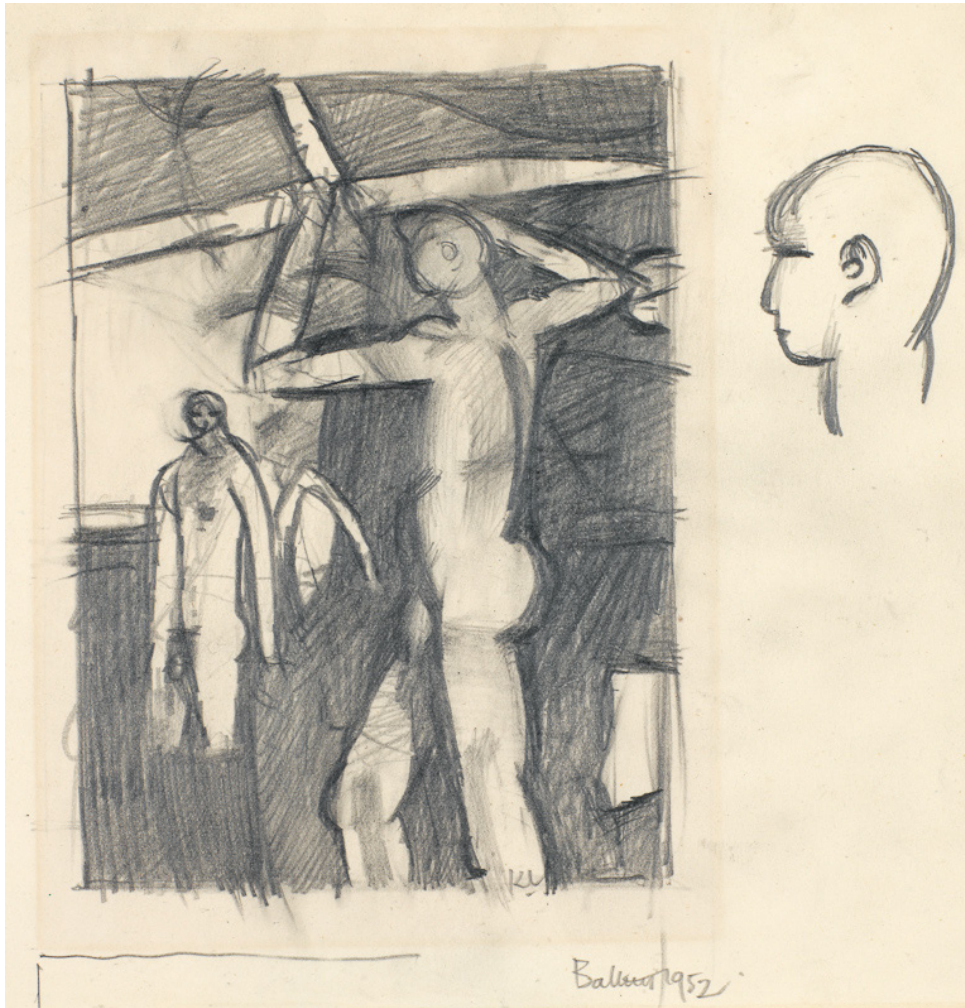
Many of Vaughan's surviving drawings come from notebooks and portfolios found in his studio after his death in 1957. They show that he used vigorously-drawn sketches such as to prepare carefully for his finished paintings, testing out various composition and distributions of light. This perhaps corresponded to a controlling facet of his personality of which he was himself very conscious: as he





wrote in 1961, 'The trouble has always been that I insist on being in control all the time. I have a fear of spontaneity and mistrust what probably I wrongly regard as 'accidents' (*Journals*, 1989, p. 129).






Keith VAUGHAN  
1912 - 1977

**Male nude: study for *The Bathers*, 1952**

Graphite on paper  
177 x 209 mm  
Signed and dated, lower right: K.V  
/ *Bathers* 1952  
Bequeathed by Dr.W.M. Keynes,  
2010  
PD.37-2010  
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Vaughan made numerous studies of male nudes throughout his life, often from models who were also his lovers. The majority are shown standing, often full frontal, and always eroticised. 'If one uses the image of a human figure,' he wrote, 'one must start by making it erotic – because that's the first thing that strikes you about it. But the erotic image soon ceases to be human and you paint the eroticism out. You don't just castrate it ... but transpose it into the flat plastic language of form and colour, which has its own needs and limitations. A man must have his genitals in art as well as life, but they serve a different end. They are not for using in bed, but for building a picture with ...' (Letter to E.M. Forster 18 April 1962,





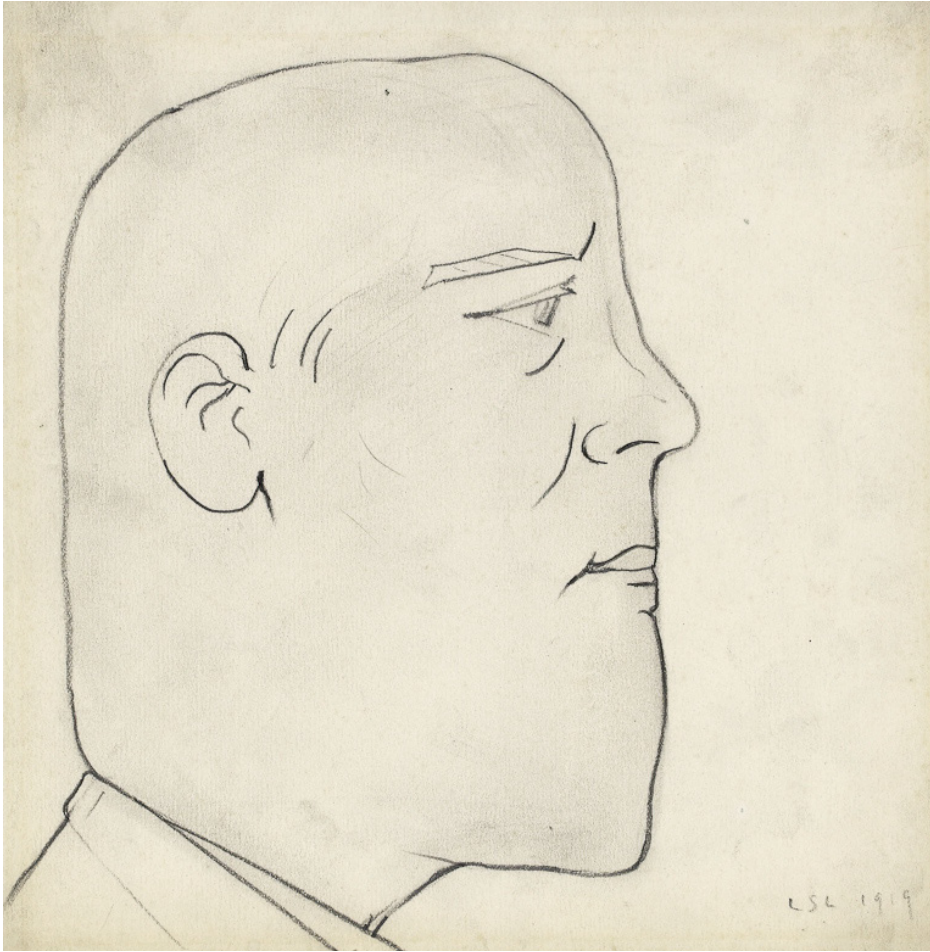
Quoted Yorke, *Keith Vaughan: his life and work*, 1990, p. 214).

In 1952, he began to gather together nude studies from life drawings into multi-figure compositions he described as 'Assemblies', and over the following two decades produced nine works with this title. Often set in spare landscape settings, his strongly geometrical figures closely recall nude studies executed in watercolour by Paul Cézanne in the 1890s. In fact, Vaughan greatly admired Cézanne's work, and in 1952, the year he made this drawing, hung a reproduction of one of the latter's most celebrated paintings, *Les Grandes Baigneuses* ('The Large Bathers', 1899-1906) in his new studio in Belsize Park, London. At precisely this time Vaughan was being acknowledged by contemporary critics as a true heir to Cézanne, notably in his structural use of form.

*Admittedly a single figure avoids psychological drama, which arises when two or more are present, when inter-personal as well as formal relationships have to be solved. A favourite device of Vermeer (and myself) is to turn the second figure back to the viewer, thus presenting the viewer in relation to the first figure.*

(Keith Vaughan, *Journals*, 4 October 1959)





L.S. LOWRY

1887-1976

**Portrait of a man in profile, 1919**

Graphite on paper, laid down  
215 x 208 mm

Signed and dated in graphite,  
lower right: LSL / 1919

Given by Donald Melville, 1998  
PD.19-1998

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Very few of Lowry's drawings were made as preparatory studies for paintings; most, like this drawing, were made as independent works in their own right. Figure subjects feature prominently among them, as they do in his paintings: in particular, he became increasingly drawn to subjects he described as, 'Creatures on the scrap-heaps of life; the defeated ones. Those strange and lonely creatures who have been most notably and preposterously stamped by physical infirmity, ugliness and poverty' (Levy, *Drawings of L. S. Lowry*, 1963, p.22).





Christopher LE BRUN, P.R.A.  
b. 1951

**Untitled (12.5.83) 1983**

Graphite on paper  
758 x 570 mm  
Signed and dated in graphite,  
lower right: *Le Brun 12.5.83*  
Given by the Friends of the  
Fitzwilliam Museum, 1999  
PD.16-1999  
© Christopher Le Brun / The  
Bridgeman Art Library

Christopher Le Brun works as a painter, sculptor and printmaker, and in 2000 was made the first Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy in London; he was named President of the Royal Academy in December 2011.

In the 1980s, he made a number of drawings independently of his paintings which allowed him to explore a potential subject through a free association of ideas and images, as they occurred. To work with the necessary ease and fluidity, Le Brun began by using very soft pencils – 8B or 9B – but came to prefer large graphite sticks, which gave a thicker mark, and did not need constant sharpening, but

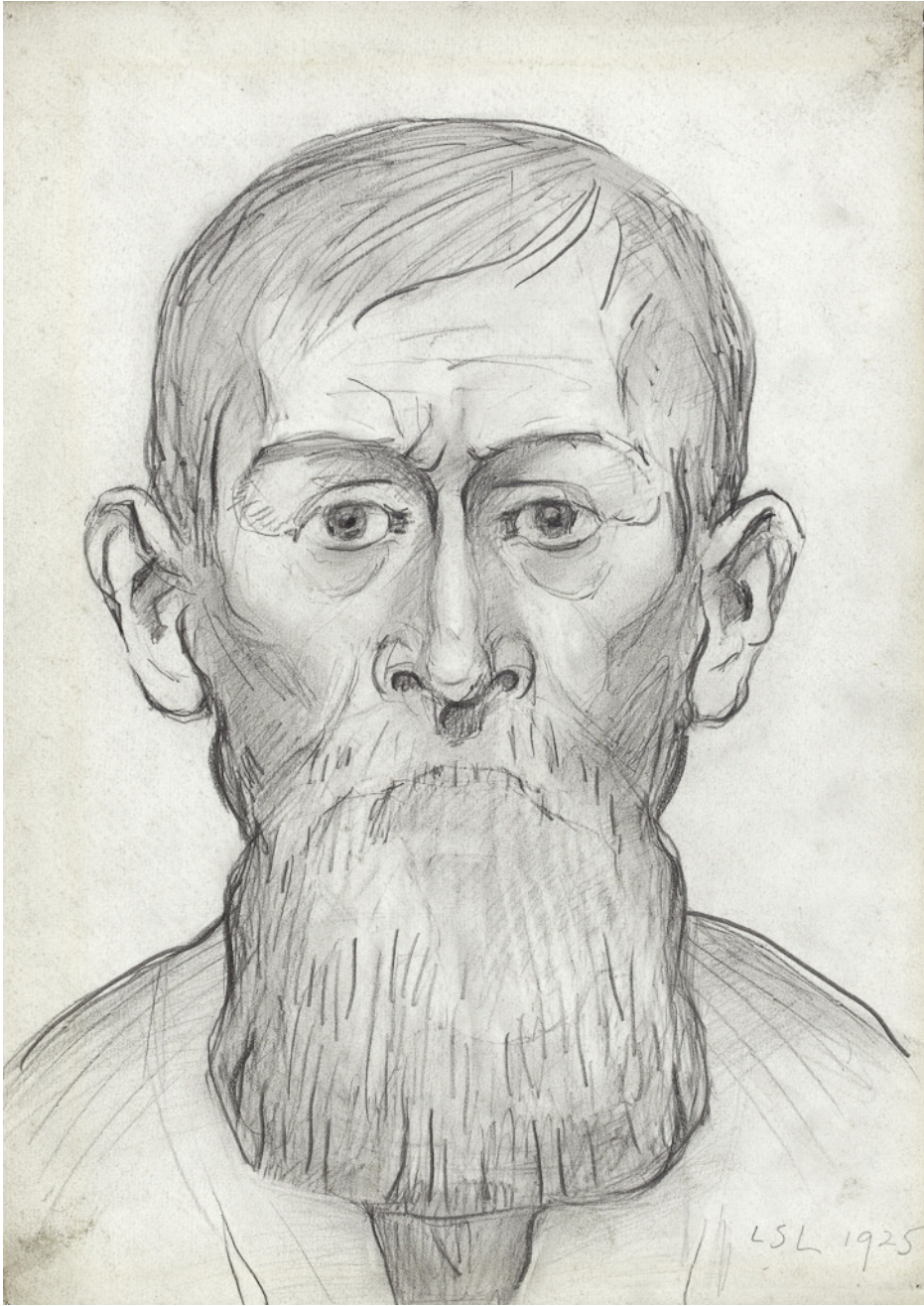




instead could ‘run continually without interruption, like paint to some extent.’ Eventually, through rubbing out and reworking, Le Brun was able to arrive at a potent ‘atmosphere of suggestion’ which convinced him.

Although the drawing is untitled and far from representational, it draws to some degree on biographical detail of the artist’s life. Le Brun has commented that the subject – or perhaps inspiration – was a warship: the raking bow, funnel and forward mounted gun are just visible under the network of graphite marks. Born in Portsmouth, Le Brun and his family felt very much involved with the Falklands War in 1982; his mother also lived close to the Royal Navy Dockyard which was bombed heavily during World War II.





**L.S. LOWRY**

**1887-1976**

**Head of an old man,  
1925**

Graphite on paper, laid down  
370 x 263 mm

Signed and dated in graphite,  
lower right: *LSL 1925*

Given by Donald Melville, 2006  
PD. 20-2006

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Lowry studied at Manchester Municipal College of Art from 1905, where he drew from the casts after the Antique as well as from the life, and later, from 1919-25, continued his studies at Salford School of Art. He came to believe that, while painting could not be taught 'because everybody's colour sense is different', in drawing, the case was more clear-cut: 'the model is there and you get it either right or wrong, you see.'

Lowry used graphite pencil for almost all the drawings he made over a period of more than fifty years. His process was relatively consistent: he used an HB pencil to establish line and detail, but on the whole preferred the darker effects of soft





graphite pencils, 5B or 6B, smudging the marks with his fingers and erasing to create a strong sense of internal modelling. It could be that he has also used a carpenter's pencil in this drawing.





George ROMNEY  
1734-1802

Graphite on paper  
128 x 160 mm  
Bought, 1874  
M.D. 54a

Study for *The Temptation of Christ*, 1795-96

Romney's residing fame is as a portraitist, but, as his great friend John Flaxman (no. 29) remembered, his 'heart and soul' were given over to 'historical and ideal' painting – subjects drawn from literature and history. While very few finished paintings of this type survive, his drawings – over 600 of which are in the Fitzwilliam – show that he explored these themes relentlessly, and in a variety of media.

According to his son, John, most of these were 'executed in a slight, bold & rapid manner, just sufficient to convey the ideas' (*Memoirs*, 1830, p. 54). The source of these ideas has been disputed: some accounts claim that Romney did not himself invent them, but rather relied heavily on suggestions from those in his immediate



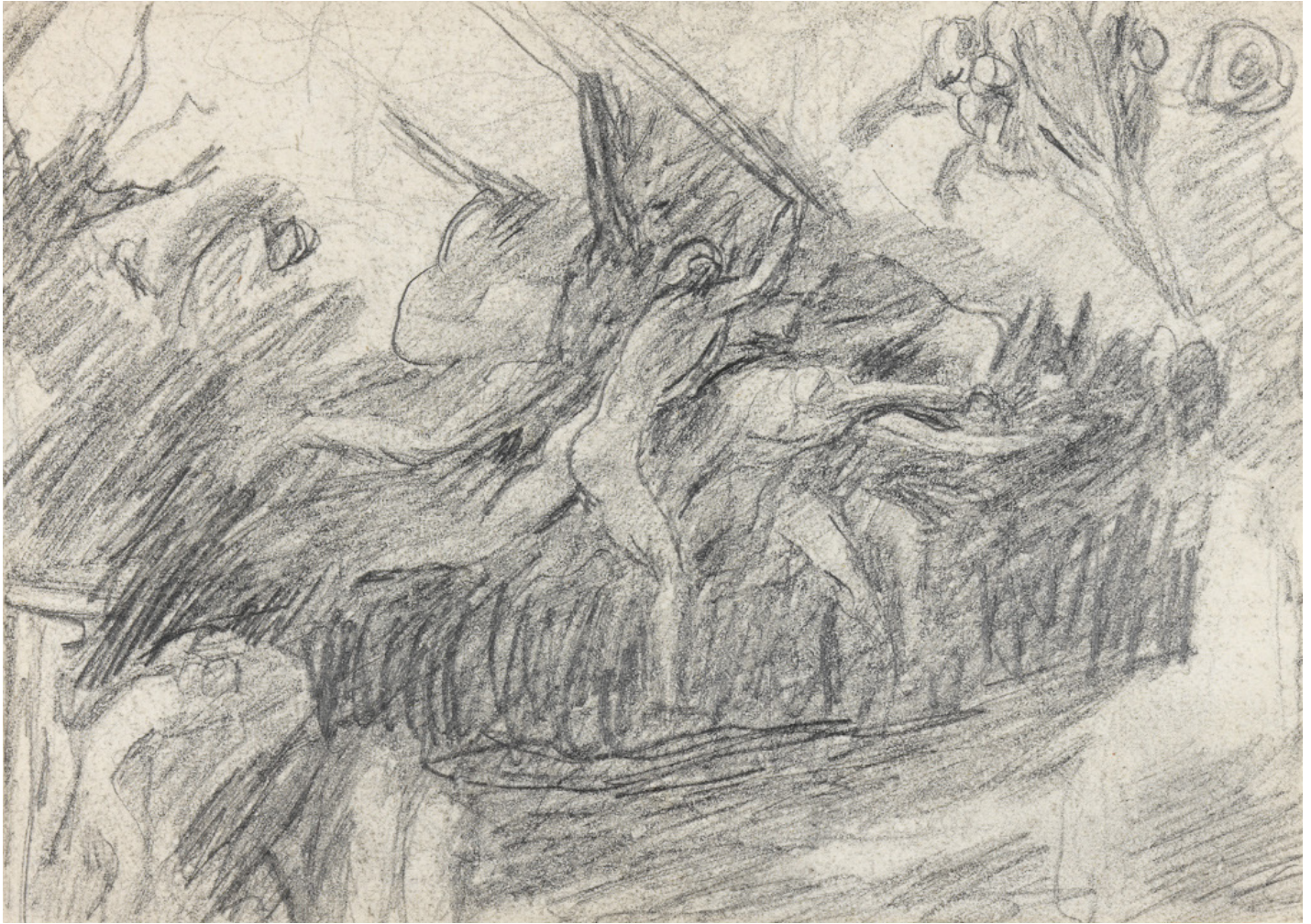


circle. Whatever the case, Romney evidently worked feverishly in order to set down successive ideas for compositions, which his friend and biographer William Hayley claimed served him as ‘hasty hints’ to be developed in painting sessions over the winter months. Certainly these drawings – originally part of a sketchbook – give every sign of having been made in rapid succession; the scoring just visible in the raking light on the darker parts of the drawing suggests that Romney used an inferior grade of graphite, with impurities that scratched the surface of the sheet.



DETAIL George Romney, *The Temptation of Christ* (no. 23a)





George ROMNEY  
1734-1802

Graphite on paper  
131 x 184 mm  
Bought, 1874  
M.D. 54b

Study for *The Temptation of Christ*, 1795-96

In his memoirs of his father's life, the artist's son, John Romney, recorded that, around 1795, his father had intended to paint a large canvas on the theme of the Temptation of Christ, but was prevented from finishing it after experiencing 'some slight paralytic affection' (*Memoirs*, 1830, p. 253). The painting was to have represented Christ, sitting impassively among the ghosts of Eve and Noah, a terrifying Miltonic Satan, and hordes of haranguing fiends, 'vociferating noise and boisterous insult'; had he completed it, his son claimed, it would have 'ranked him with Michelangelo' (*ibid*).





George ROMNEY  
1734-1802

**John Howard visiting a Lazaretto, c. 1791-2**

Graphite with (faded) pen and  
black ink on paper  
121 x 172 mm  
Bought, 1874  
MD.32a





George ROMNEY  
1734-1802

Graphite on paper, touched in  
(faded) pen and black ink  
109 x 75 mm  
Bought, 1874  
M.D. 32b

**John Howard visiting a Lazaretto, c.1791-2**

These two drawings record Romney's evolving ideas for a composition inspired by a contemporary publication by the philanthropist and prison reformer, John Howard, *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe* (1789), in which the author described the appalling conditions that prevailed in lazarettos (places used to quarantine the sick) across the Continent. Romney planned to executed one, or perhaps as many as three, oil paintings representing the 'scenes of human wretchedness' that Howard evoked in his book; none appears to have survived, although the Fitzwilliam owns twenty-seven drawings representing ideas for the finished compositions.





Barbara HEPWORTH  
1903-1975

### Study of a surgeon's hands, 1947

Graphite on gesso on  
strawboard

275 x 376 mm

Signed and dated, lower right:  
*Barbara Hepworth 2/12/47*

Bequeathed by Claude William  
Guillebaud, 1973

PD. 53-1973

© Bowness, Hepworth Estate

In 1947, Hepworth was granted permission by a surgeon-friend to make drawings of an operation at the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Hospital in Exeter, where her own daughter, Sarah, had once been a patient. Fascinated by the surgeons' concentration and dexterity, and by the stillness of the operating theatre, she made over fifty drawings on a sterilised pad, some of the team at work, others studies of hands engaged in a complicated bone operation. For Hepworth these ten-hour drawing sessions were a compelling experience: 'from the moment when I entered the operating theatre I became completely absorbed by two things: first, the extraordinary beauty of purpose and co-ordination between human beings





all dedicated to the saving of life. And the way that the unity of idea and purpose dictated a perfection of concentration, movement and gesture; and secondly, by the way this special grace (grace of mind and body) induced a spontaneous space composition, and articulated an animated kind of abstract sculpture very close to what I had been seeking in my own work' (Barbara Hepworth, *Drawings from a Sculptor's Landscape*, 1966, pp. 21-22).

Adapting methods used for metalpoint drawings – and, to an extent, tempera painting, Hepworth drew on a ground composed of several layers of what she described as the 'best flat paint procurable' (often Ripolin flat white), rubbing down or scraping the surface to achieve the hardness and depth she required. She liked to use 'Venus' pencils 'H - 4B' , depending on the hardness of the surface she had created.





DETAIL: Barbara Hepworth, **Study of a surgeon's hands** (no. 25)





Augustus JOHN  
1879-1961

**Study of Alexandra  
Schepeler, 1907**

Graphite on paper  
355x 253 mm  
Given by Sir Herbert Thompson,  
Bart., 1920  
No. 1024  
© The Artist's Estate / The  
Bridgeman Art Library

Augustus John worked in a wide variety of drawing media, but fine, closely-hatched pencil drawings such as this best reveal his inheritance of the French-influenced drawing techniques that were introduced to the Slade School of Art by Alphonse Legros (no. 9). John was one of the so-called 'generation of the 1890s' at the Slade, where his astonishing talent as a draughtsman soon led him to be compared to Renaissance masters, including Michelangelo.

Founded in 1871 by the collector and art patron, Felix Slade, the Slade offered its students a solid grounding in draughtsmanship. However, unlike other art schools in Britain, where students learned to draw with charcoal and chalk, afterwards





‘fudging out’ with rolled-up blotting paper or stumps, the Slade encouraged fluidity of contour and purity of line, ‘drawing on the point’, as it was called.

The sitter is John’s then mistress, the Russian-born Alexandra (Alick) Schepeler, with whom he had first become infatuated in 1906. He found in her ‘the paradox of Polish pride united to Russian abandon,’ a volatile femme fatale whom he expected at any moment to find ‘performing some diabolical incantation, or brewing a hellish potion.’





Agnolo di Domenico del  
MAZZIERE, called the  
MASTER OF SANTO  
SPIRITO  
1466-1512

**Head of a young man,  
looking upwards**

Metalpoint on pale brown  
ground, heightened with white  
199 x 148 mm  
Inscribed in brown ink, verso: *gan  
belleno; P*; numbered in graphite,  
upper right: 189  
Bequeathed by Charles  
Haslewood Shannon, 1937  
No. 2114

Metalpoint preceded the use of pencil in workshop practice. One of the key sources for understanding the technique of metalpoint is the treatise *Il Libro dell'Arte* (*The Craftsman's Handbook*) written by the Italian artist, Cennino Cennini at the turn of the fifteenth century. In it, Cennini singled out metalpoint (and silverpoint in particular) as an ideal medium for beginners, as its precise line encouraged discipline and control. He recommended preparing the ground with a mixture of ground bone, lead white and earth pigments and adding a liquid binding agent such as glue size, gum water, linseed oil or saliva. This preparation was then applied to the support - paper, vellum or occasionally wood - with a soft brush, generally in several layers, and burnished using a hard, polished stone such as agate





to obtain a smooth surface. As the metal stylus made contact with the prepared ground, it left a deposit which rapidly tarnished with the air to leave a thin grey line.

Graphite resembles metalpoint, but, by abrasion of the mineral on the support (generally paper or vellum), produces a rich textural stroke that is distinctive from the flat markings of a metal stylus.

Acquired by the donors as a work by the Florentine painter Lorenzo di Credi (c. 1459-1537), this drawing has subsequently been attributed to his near-contemporary, Agnolo di Domenico del Mazziere, who, with his brother, ran a highly-productive workshop in Florence from the 1480s onwards.

The study is preparatory to the painting of *The Virgin and Child between two angels, with Saints Bartholomew and John the Evangelist, and God the Father above*, in the Pinacoteca at Volterra in Tuscany.





Hilaire-Germain-Edgar DEGAS  
1834-1917

**Studies after G.B. Francia's *Madonna and Child with Saints* and *Madonna and child* by a follower of Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1859-60**

Graphite with traces of crayon  
on paper, laid down  
262 x 340 mm  
Bequeathed by A.S. F. Gow,  
through the National Art  
Collections Fund, 1978  
PD. 30-1978

Late in life, Degas claimed that no art was 'less spontaneous' than his: 'what I do is the result of contemplation and study of the great masters.' (quoted George Moore, 1890, in Thomson, *The Private Degas*, p.9). Surviving drawings, many made in sketchbooks used on successive visits to Italy, record that he copied avidly from an array of different artists and schools, most particularly works by Italian Renaissance painters.

Both paintings Degas has copied on this sheet are now in the National Gallery, London: on the left, Francia's *Madonna and Child with Saints*; on the right a *Madonna*





DETAIL: Edgar Degas, Study after *Madonna and child* by a follower of Leonardo da Vinci, (no. 28

*and child* by a follower of Leonardo. They were among the forty-six paintings acquired by the Gallery from Edmond Beaucousin, a friend of Degas's father.

Degas probably saw both pictures after his return from Italy in April 1859, and before the paintings left for London the following February.

His needle-sharp pencil line and densely-hatched shading is clearly inspired by metalpoint drawings by the sixteenth-century Italian artists who inspired him (see no. 27).





John FLAXMAN  
1755-1826

Graphite on paper (31 leaves)  
178 x 210 mm  
Given by Charles Fairfax Murray,  
1916  
No. 828

**Volume of pencil portraits, c.1803**

The Fitzwilliam owns an important collection of sketchbooks by John Flaxman, of which this is among the most charming and informal. The volume includes portraits of many of Flaxman's most intimate circle of friends and colleagues, including William Blake, Henry Fuseli and the sculptor Thomas Banks and his family. It was probably offered as a gift from Flaxman to his wife, Ann.

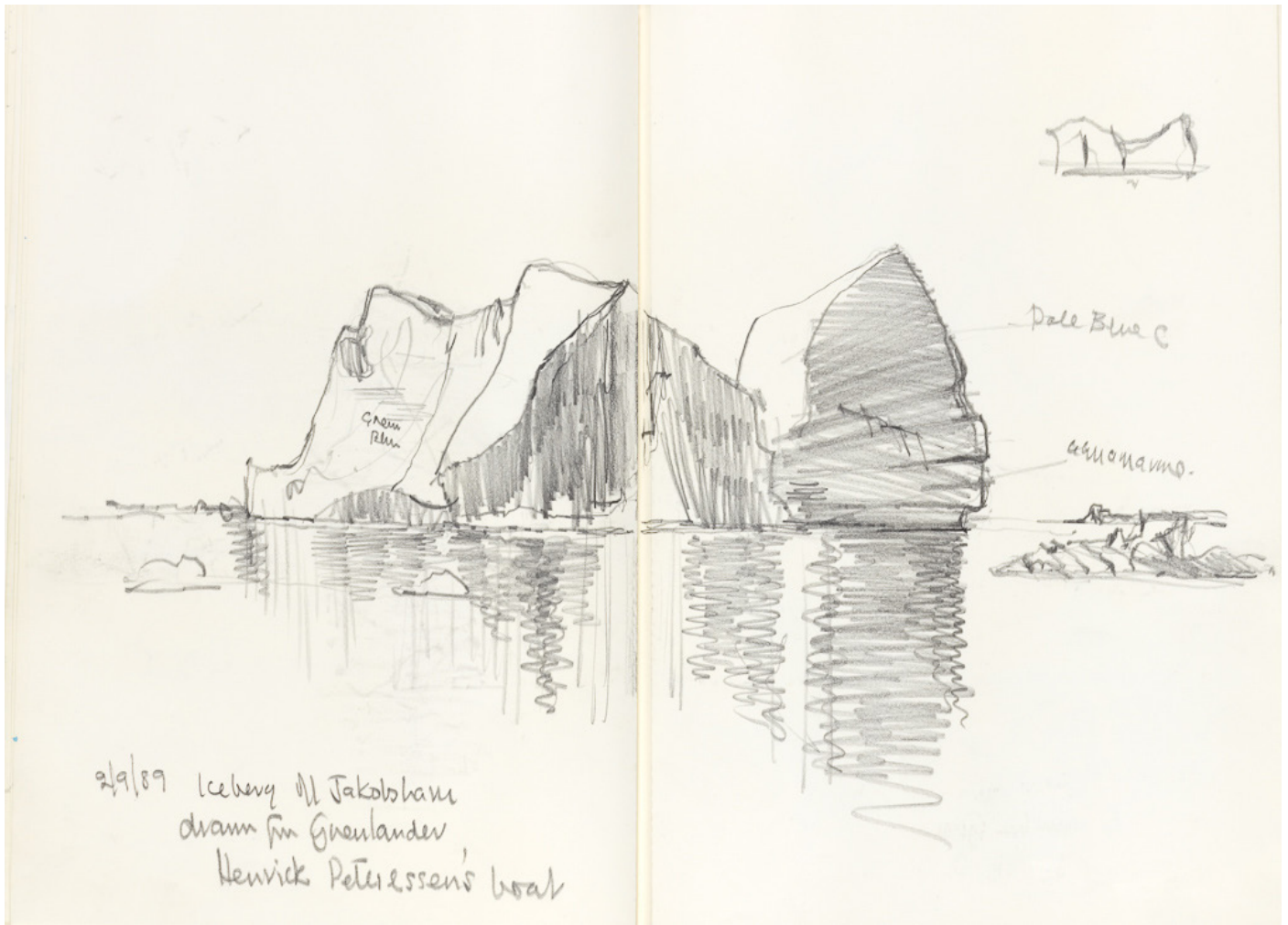
The portraits, all in graphite, are carried to varying degrees of finish. That of James Parker (f. 27, reproduced above), a fellow apprentice engraver of William Blake's, who later translated many of Flaxman's own designs for Homer's *Iliad* into print, for example, is elaborated in some detail; others, such as this family group (f. 14, which probably shows Matilda, daughter of another engraver-friend, Wilson Lowry,





on the right) are evidently drawn as more spontaneously observed sketches. Matilda was herself a gifted artist, who married an astronomer named Herring; she belonged to the same sketching club as Flaxman's wife, and exhibited publicly throughout her life, from 1805-55.





**Keith GRANT**  
Born 1930

### **Sketchbook, Greenland, 1989**

Graphite on paper  
215 x 330 mm  
Inscribed in graphite, lower left: 2/9/89  
Iceberg off Jakobshavn, drawn from  
Greenlander/ Henrick Peteressen's boat;  
and, upper right, with colour notes.  
Open to show f. 16: Tabular iceberg, the  
ice fjord, Jakobshavn  
Given by the artist, 1996  
PD. 47-1996  
© Keith Grant

Keith Grant's passion for the northern landscapes of Scotland, Norway and Iceland was fuelled as a student at the Royal College of Art by one of his teachers, Colin Hayes. While he has painted in a range of climates and landscapes, he remains attached to remote, elemental, regions, and now lives and works in Norway.

Grant used this sketchbook during his first visit to Greenland in 1989 (he has returned on two further occasions). In the detailed journals he kept during this visit, also in the Fitzwilliam, he wrote of the overriding impression of greyness that he experienced in this powerful arctic landscape, but one which was composed





of infinitely subtle modulations of grey: 'grey clouds, grey sea and everywhere ice floes and icebergs ... The sea calm and of a luminosity which seems tarnished like old silver.' Yet, far from excluding colour, the 'dove-grey ground' set it in a different register: ice-bergs fluoresced the 'most subtle of blues and greens', and snow was 'stained with reds, ochres and madders.' 'Will I be able to remember the colour of the sea, the hues of the 'germoline sky' and the green; the ethereal pallor of ice?' Grant wondered; the colour notes made on many of drawings were clearly intended as a verbal prompt.

Asked 'why graphite?', Grant responded, as many artists would, 'I can't be without it', adding, 'it works no matter what the temperature!'



1819	Cash Received £ s d.	1819	Cash Paid £ s d.
May		May 23	British Gallery 5 2 04
27	of Sir Gore Ouseley for 3 Plates Engraved for his Brother Sir W <sup>m</sup> } 20 - -	24 <sup>th</sup>	to Colanaghi with 4 Prints by Kolbe for 3 - from Raphael of fourth, hope &c. } 1 - -
30	of H. Palmer for a Ticket of adm <sup>n</sup> to Spring Garden for 6 persons - } 6 - -	27	to M <sup>r</sup> Geo. Jackson for 4 Carved old Frames } 8 11 -
	of Miss Doig on account - 6 6 -		to M <sup>r</sup> for one Carved Frame - 18 -
June 5	of M <sup>r</sup> Doig on account in Part for Engraving M <sup>r</sup> Whiting &c. - 6 6 -		a Prints after Reynolds - 4 -
9	of M <sup>r</sup> Doig for Lead Pencils & a Jappan <sup>d</sup> Tin Box &c. } 3 17 -		washing &c. - 2 -
11	of M <sup>r</sup> Doig for 2 doz. of Chalk Pencils - 12 -		to M <sup>r</sup> Palmer for a Purse - 1 4
11	of Miss Doig on account in Part Payment for Engraving a Portrait of M <sup>r</sup> Whiting &c. - 3 3	31 <sup>st</sup>	to M <sup>r</sup> Jones for Assistance in Engraving a small Portrait of M <sup>r</sup> Whiting } 5 - -
17	of M <sup>r</sup> Vines on account - 10 - -	June 2	to M <sup>r</sup> Jackson for a small frame - 4 6
19	of M <sup>r</sup> Lochran, Bookseller, belton for two small Portraits in water colour after deducting the account against me } 3 - -		to M <sup>r</sup> Smith for Etchings by Eusebius - M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from Chiswick &c. } 6 6
	2 s. 6 d. - 3 6 -	5	to M <sup>r</sup> Hunt for a Tin Box &c. Jappan <sup>d</sup> - 5 6
	3 s. 1 d. - 3 1 -		to M <sup>r</sup> Brookman & Langdon for Pencils 3 1 -
			to M <sup>r</sup> Palmer for a Hole Case - 3 -
		4	to Jackson for 3 old frames one 1 lb. 0 & 1 5 0 } 3 1 -
			to Smith & Womersley for 4 doz. of Chalk Pencils - 1 4 -
			to M <sup>r</sup> of German Chalk - 5 -
			to M <sup>r</sup> of German Chalk - 10 6
		13	5 Copy Books - 6 3
		14	To Dr. Spurzheim for his Book on Insanity - 14 -
			to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -
			to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -
		16	to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -
		17	to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -
		18	to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -
		19	to M <sup>r</sup> Howitt for Prints from the Poulton &c. 1 7 -

John LINNELL  
1792-1882

'Cash book', December 1813- February 1822

Bought with a grant from the  
Heritage Lottery Fund, together  
with contributions from the  
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Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust,  
2000  
MS. 20-2000

Linnell was a pivotal figure in nineteenth century British art. A pupil of the landscape painter and drawing master John Varley, he formed a close friendship with William Blake (no. 6) and later became father-in-law to Samuel Palmer. In addition to owning an important collection of his paintings, drawings and watercolours, the Fitzwilliam houses a significant archive of Linnell's correspondence, journals, and other manuscript material.

Linnell's account books show how carefully he sourced materials for his paintings and drawings. He acquired 'black lead pencils' from a number of different suppliers, but, like many writers and artists of the day, including Mary Shelley and Samuel





Prout (no. 7), seemed to set store by those made by the firm Brookman & Langdon, and may have been prepared to pay a premium for them: while in May 1817, he bought 10 'black-lead pencils' from an unknown source for 12/-, the account book records that the following month, on June 5<sup>th</sup>, he paid over three times that - £3 1/- - for an unspecified number from Brookman & Langdon. The firm seems to have ceased trading in the 1860s (see <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-suppliers/b/british-artists-suppliers-1650-1950-br.php>).

For further details of the Linnell archive, see: <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/linnell/intro.htm>





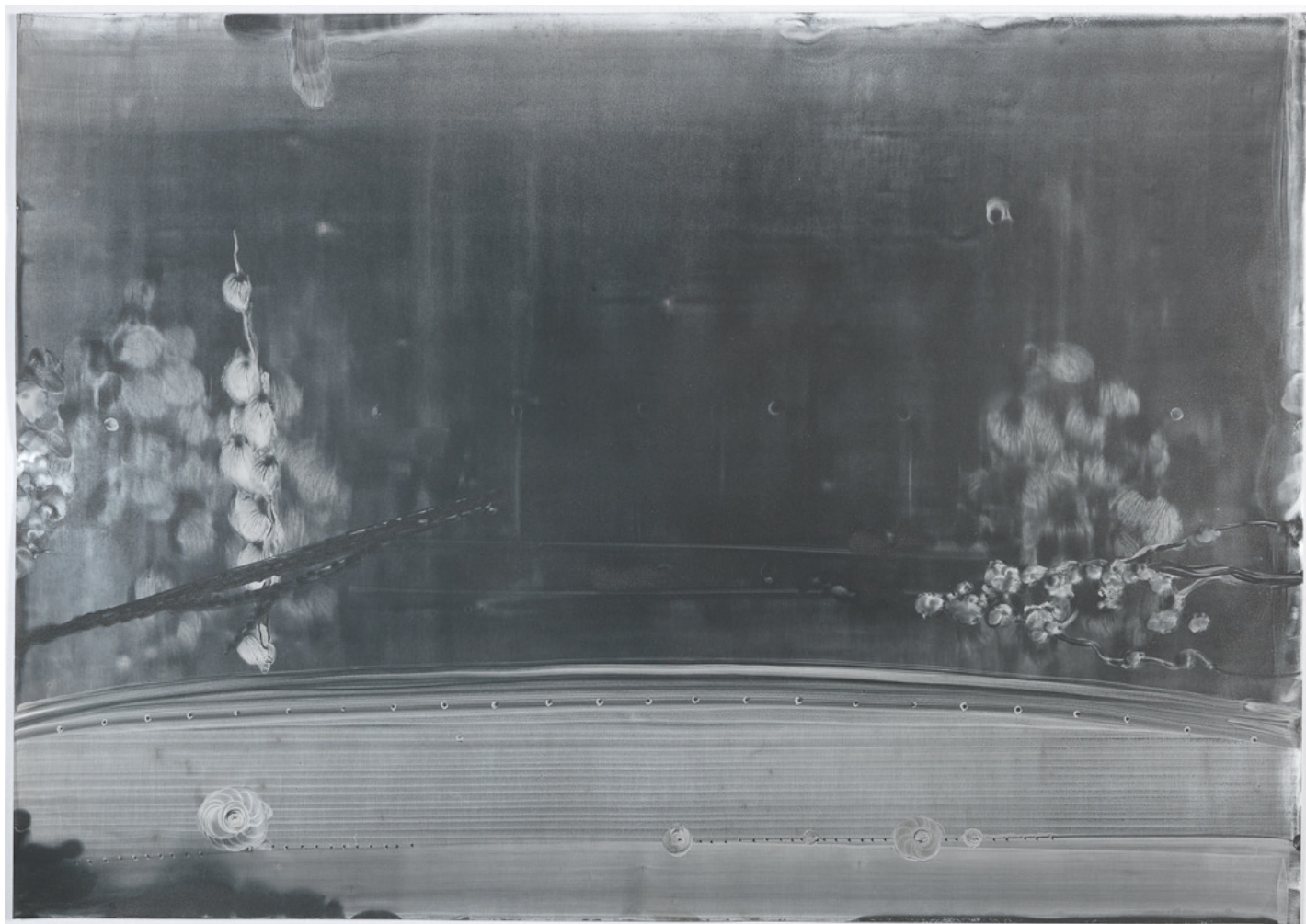
Gabriel FERRIER  
1847-1914  
**Sketchbook, with  
views and copies of  
paintings made in  
Italy, c.1875**

Graphite on paper  
140 x 84 mm  
Given by Jane Roberts, in  
memory of Marianne Joannides,  
2008  
PD.I-2008

Open to show f. 10, recto.

Gabriel Ferrier worked mainly as a portraitist and as a decorator of public buildings; one of the most visible of his large-scale works are his ceiling paintings representing the Seasons in the restaurant of the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Ferrier studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and in 1872 won the coveted *prix de Rome*, which allowed him to travel to Italy to study for three years at the expense of the State. This sketchbook is one that he used during his stay, and contains mainly copies of paintings by Italian artists whose works Ferrier saw in churches and galleries, for the most part in Venice.





Christopher COOK  
b. 1959

**Drivetime**, 2003

Graphite powder with oil, resin  
and solvents on coated rag paper  
720 x 1020 mm  
Given by the Friends of the  
Fitzwilliam Museum, 2003  
PD. 61-2003  
© Christopher Cook

Christopher Cook works with a highly personal graphite-based medium. Mixing graphite powder, oil, resin and solvents, he pours or brushes the solution on to coated paper or primed aluminium, and works it with a variety of implements. Using a raw material associated with draughtsmanship, but defying categorization as drawing (Cook refers to them simply as 'graphites'), images such as *Drivetime* fuse the gestural presence of painterly brushstrokes with the blurred graininess of early photography.

The medium demands that the artist work intensively, responding quickly to the various possibilities thrown up by his process, in sessions that can last up to thirty-






six hours, but that often result in a failure - or rehearsal – that is wiped away and retried. These are works that relish the imaginative openness of the undefined: improvisational, fluid, indefinite, they operate by poetic allusion rather than description.

Originally a painter of strongly coloured symbolic imagery, Cook was drawn to work in graphite - and a monochromatic range - on his return from a four month residency in India, where he had made a sequence of sand drawings. Cook has since extended this reference to include other Asian influences, such as Chinese ink painting, and Zen calligraphy. For him the greyscale opens out creative possibilities rather than limiting them: 'the possibility for improvisation is extended because there is no colour to point in set directions. I recognize this in the mists of Chinese and Japanese painting, a miasma in which one searches, and from which, gradually, form emerges.'





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