



Drawings & Prints

THE WESTERN ART PRINT ROOM

ASHMOLEAN

MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Works held in the collection include:

Altdorfer	Goya	Pissarro
Bakst	Grünewald	Poole
Beerbohm	Guardi	Poussin
Benois	Guercino	Raphael
Blake	Hermes	Rembrandt
Bosch	Holloway	Rossetti
Boucher	Holman Hunt	Rowlandson
Burne-Jones	Ingres	Rubens
Canaletto	A. & G. John	Ruskin
Carracci	Korovin	Sandby
Claude	Lear	Sickert
Cotman	Leonardo	Spencer
Cox	Michelangelo	Tanner
Cozens	Millais	Tiepolo
Degas	Nash	Tintoretto
Desmet	Van Ostade	Titian
Dürer	Palmer	J. M. W. Turner
Friedrich	Pasternak	Underwood
Gainsborough	Perugino	Watteau
Girtin	Piper	and many others



visiting the **PRINT ROOM**

Since works on paper fade quickly when exposed to light and are extremely fragile, the Ashmolean's excellent and wide-ranging collection of British and other European watercolours, drawings and prints is kept for consultation in the Print Room. This is situated in the Department of Western Art within the museum.

The Print Room

The Print Room is open to members of the public, students and visiting scholars alike for the study and enjoyment of drawings and prints from the collection. There is normally no need to make an appointment, but since space is limited it may be advisable to do so if you are making a special journey to the museum.



Once in the museum, visitors should ask to be announced at the Information Desk; they will then be given directions to the Print Room, where they will be asked to sign a register. All bags and other valuables must be left in the lockers provided, and pencil should be used for making notes.

Please note that the drawings by Michelangelo and Raphael have been shown extensively within the museum since their arrival in 1846. In an attempt to preserve these important drawings for future generations we endeavour not to over-expose them to light and changing atmospheric conditions.

Therefore, visitors wishing to see them are requested to make an appointment in writing or by e-mail (waprintroom@ashmus.ox.ac.uk), with a minimum of twenty-four hours' notice.

Although there is no lift access to the Print Room, items from the collection can be made available for visitors who have difficulty with stairs. Advance notice of such visits is helpful.

Opinions

Members of the curatorial staff of the Department of Western Art are usually available on Wednesdays (10am–1pm; 2–5pm) in the Print Room to give opinions on works of art brought in by members of the public. No comment on valuation can be made, and opinions are given on the understanding that neither the University nor any individual can accept liability for any opinion expressed.



The Collection

The Print Room of the Department of Western Art houses one of the finest collections in Britain of European prints and drawings from the fifteenth century to the present day. Many of the works were given to the University of Oxford by a few prominent benefactors in the nineteenth century, but it was during the tenure of Sir Karl Parker as Keeper of the Department (1934–62) that the Print Room was established on its present basis. Numerous drawings, by both Old Masters and more recent artists, were acquired by gift and purchase, and most Western European schools are now well represented.

At the heart of the collection is a large, representative group of drawings by *Raphael* and *Michelangelo*, which was acquired by public subscription in 1842 from the celebrated collection of the painter Sir Thomas Lawrence. Some years later, in 1855, there arrived the extraordinary gift from the collector Chambers Hall, including superb series of prints and drawings by *Claude*, the *Ostade* family and *Rembrandt*, as well as drawings by *Leonardo*. In 1863, many of the prints and drawings from the enormous bequest of Francis Douce (d. 1834) were transferred

from the Bodleian Library. Douce was particularly interested in Northern art of the Renaissance, and the bequest included important drawings and prints by *Dürer* and other German, French, and Netherlandish masters. The deposit in 1985 of the collection of *Guercino* drawings belonging to Sir Denis Mahon made the Ashmolean a principal repository of the work of this brilliant seventeenth-century draughtsman.

The collection of English drawings and watercolours also has its roots in the Douce and Chambers Hall collections and has been much enriched by subsequent gifts and purchases. It contains strong groups of works by *Rowlandson*, *Girtin*, *Alexander* and *John Robert Cozens*, *Cotman*, *Sandby*, and *Cox*. The group of drawings by *Samuel Palmer*, bought by Sir Karl Parker before the artist became as popular as he is now, is second to none, and works by the Pre-Raphaelites are also numerous, including over one hundred by *Burne-Jones*.



Of particular relevance to the University are the gifts of *John Ruskin*, Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford in the 1870s and 1880s. His collection was used to illustrate his lectures and the teaching in the School of Art that bears his name. It includes some three hundred and thirty of his own drawings and seventy-seven sheets by *J.M.W. Turner*.

Among the holdings of works by twentieth-century artists, there is a large group of caricatures by *Sir Max Beerbohm*, as well as drawings by *Sickert* and the *Camden Town Group*. Thereafter the collection concentrates on the figurative tradition in drawing, including the Lewin Gift of *John Piper* drawings and prints, and on twentieth-century British wood engraving. It includes major archival



collections of a number of engravers, such as *Gertrude Hermes*, *George Mackley*, *Robin Tanner*, and *Leon Underwood*. This has been augmented in recent years by the deposit of the Diploma Collection of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers. For *livres d'artiste*, visitors may consult items in the Christopher Hewett collection.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Print Room became one of the principal centres for the study of Impressionism, thanks to the donation of the Pissarro family collection. This comprises paintings, prints, drawings, books, and letters by *Camille*, *Lucien*, *Orovida*, and other members of the *Pissarro* family. The Ashmolean also holds the most significant collection in Britain of

nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian drawings, much of which was bequeathed by Mikhail Braikevitch (1874–1940), including ballet designs by *Bakst*, *Benois* and *Korovin*. A fine group of drawings by *Leonid Pasternak* was presented by his daughters in 1958. The Talbot collection contains a remarkable range of Russian topographical material, especially prints of St Petersburg. Dr Grete Ring's bequest of nineteenth-century German and French drawings, including works by *Caspar David Friedrich* and *Edgar Degas*, came to the Ashmolean in 1954. It forms the nucleus of a collection of nineteenth-century German drawings hardly equalled outside Germany. In recent years, the Ashmolean has acquired a significant group of contemporary German and Swiss prints.

Of primarily historical interest, but still containing items of great artistic value, are two print collections formed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Alexander Hendras Sutherland (d. 1820) and his wife grangerized folio editions of

Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* and Burnet's *History of His Own Time* with over nineteen thousand portraits and topographical views illustrating the text, which were presented by Mrs Sutherland in 1838. Secondly, the Revd F.W. Hope amassed a vast collection of topographical prints and portraits of British and foreign sitters, which he presented to the University in 1850.

An extensive collection of drawings of Oxford, made for the Oxford Almanacks, is on deposit from the Oxford University Press. However, the Ashmolean does not have a specialized collection of local topography, and visitors interested in Oxford topography should contact the Oxfordshire History Centre, Temple Road, Cowley OX4 2HT [t] 01865 398200. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshirehistory

Prospective visitors to the Print Room will find details of works in the Ashmolean collections in the Bibliography (pp. 9–11), and may find it useful to consult the relevant volume prior to making a visit. Alternatively, searchable databases of the collections are being progressively made available on the internet through "Online Collections" at www.ashmolean.org.

To search the drawings and prints collection, visit the homepage, click on **Collections**, then on **Online Collections**. You can then reach the search page by clicking on the links **Western Art Drawings Collection** and **Western Art Prints Collection**. At the time of writing, the French, Italian and Russian drawings collections, as well as the great majority of 15th- and 16th-century Italian prints, forming part of the Douce bequest, are online.

Drawings and prints by and after Rembrandt can be found by clicking on **Rembrandt Collection**, and Ruskin's teaching collection by clicking on **The Elements of Drawing, John Ruskin's Teaching Collection**.

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Opening hours

Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–1pm & 2–5pm

Closed Sunday and Monday. Also closed for several days over the Christmas period and on Good Friday

A minimum of twenty-four hours' notice in writing or by e-mail is required for an appointment to see the drawings by Michelangelo and Raphael. These drawings are extremely fragile, and therefore this is required for conservation reasons.

Opinions on works of art belonging to members of the public: Wednesday, 10am–1pm and 2–5pm.

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Front cover: Ottavio Leoni (1578–1630), *The Artist's Son as a Baby* (detail), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), *Portrait of an Old Man* (detail), Lucien Pissarro (1863–1944), *Portrait of Camille Pissarro* (detail), Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833–1898), *Head of a Woman* (detail)
Page 4: Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), *Study of a Nude Man*
Page 5: Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), *St Anthony reading*
Page 6: Thomas Girtin (1775–1802), *Stonehenge during a Thunderstorm* (detail)
Page 7: Léon Bakst (1866–1924), *Design for Mme Kuznetsova's Costume in Act III of 'Thamar'*