

In the Drawing Room

Masterpieces from the Prat Collection

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Petit Palais
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday – Sunday from 10am to 6pm
Late-night opening Fridays until 9pm

INFORMATION
www.petitpalais.paris.fr

The Petit Palais is pleased to present a new exhibition devoted to the Prat Collection, undoubtedly one of the most remarkable ensembles of French drawings dating from the 17th to the early 20th century. Begun in the 1970s by Louis-Antoine and Véronique Prat, it is the first private collection to have been the subject of an exhibition at the Louvre in 1995. Twenty-five years later, the Petit Palais intends to bear witness to the vitality of the collection, which has been added to in recent years with some major works, on display for the first time. The 184 pieces shown here include some of the most important drawings by Callot, Poussin, Le Brun, Watteau, Prud'hon, Ingres, Delacroix, Redon, Cézanne and Toulouse-Lautrec.



Prud'hon, *Psyche enlevée par les Zéphirs*,
(Psyche taken by the Zephyrs), 19th century
Black chalk, with white highlights on blue paper, 33 X 17 cm,
Prat Collection

A panorama of French drawing from 1580 to 1900

The Prat Collection focuses on the drawing work of the French school prior to 1900 and offers an overview that is especially representative of three centuries of French art, from **Callot** to **Seurat**. The exhibition invites the public to follow this chronological thread with several thematic explorations.

The exhibit opens with a series of drawings from the 17th century that bear witness to the influence of Italy on French artists like **François Stella** in the late 1580s, whose work on display here is the oldest in the collection. **Le Lorrain**, **Jacques Callot**, **Poussin** of course, and **Vouet** also crossed the Alps into neighbouring Italy and the influence of this journey can be seen in their drawings.

The following section presents several sketches or preparatory drawings for the decoration at Versailles by **Le Brun**, **Coyppel** and **La Fosse**. In their selection of pieces, the two art collectors have always privileged works that are significant in terms of art history and some of their more famous drawings are connected to the genesis of several seminal works in French painting.

Next, the exhibition explores the Rococo style with its representations of courtly and love scenes by **Watteau** and **Boucher**. Continuing this tour of the 18th century, the drawings of **Quentin de La Tour**, **Chardin**, **Natoire** and **Greuze** may all be said to evoke the beginnings of realism and the search for a psychological candour in portraiture, as well as drawing from real life, or indeed the whimsical works of **Fragonard**.

The exhibition then examines the return of the antique influence in drawings, as can be seen in several pieces by **Jacques-Louis David**, including a preparatory sketch for *La Douleur d'Andromaque* (*Andromache Mourning Hector*). At the same time, other artists such as **Boilly** or **Prud'hon** were in the process of honing their own distinctive style. The early 19th century was also marked by the tensions between the affirmation of the Neoclassical style and the emergence of Romanticism.



Eugène Delacroix, *Cheval ruant* (Wild horse), 19th century.
Watercolour, gouache, 15.1 x 13 cm, Prat Collection



Odilon Redon, *Tête suspendue par une chaîne* (Head suspended by a chain),
19th century. Charcoal on beige paper, 45 x 37 cm, Prat Collection.

The drawings by **Gros**, **Géricault** and three beautiful ensembles by **Ingres**, **Delacroix** and **Chassériau** demonstrate a panoply of aesthetic trends that permeated this rich period. The exhibition goes on to examine academicism and realism after 1850 in the works of **Corot**, **Courbet**, **Millet**, **Daumier**, **Carpeaux**, **Gustave Doré** and **Puvis de Chavanne**.

A remarkable selection of drawings by writers complement this panorama with some magnificent wash and ink works by **Victor Hugo** and **Baudelaire**, along with Symbolist pieces by **Redon** or **Gustave Moreau**'s literary-inspired art.

The exhibit ends with the shift towards modernity seen in the offerings by **Manet**, **Degas** and **Rodin**. Experimental works by **Seurat** and **Cézanne** bring this presentation to a remarkable conclusion and form a fitting flourish to a collection developed and grown with the greatest of care by two passionate and committed collectors.

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CURATED BY :

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