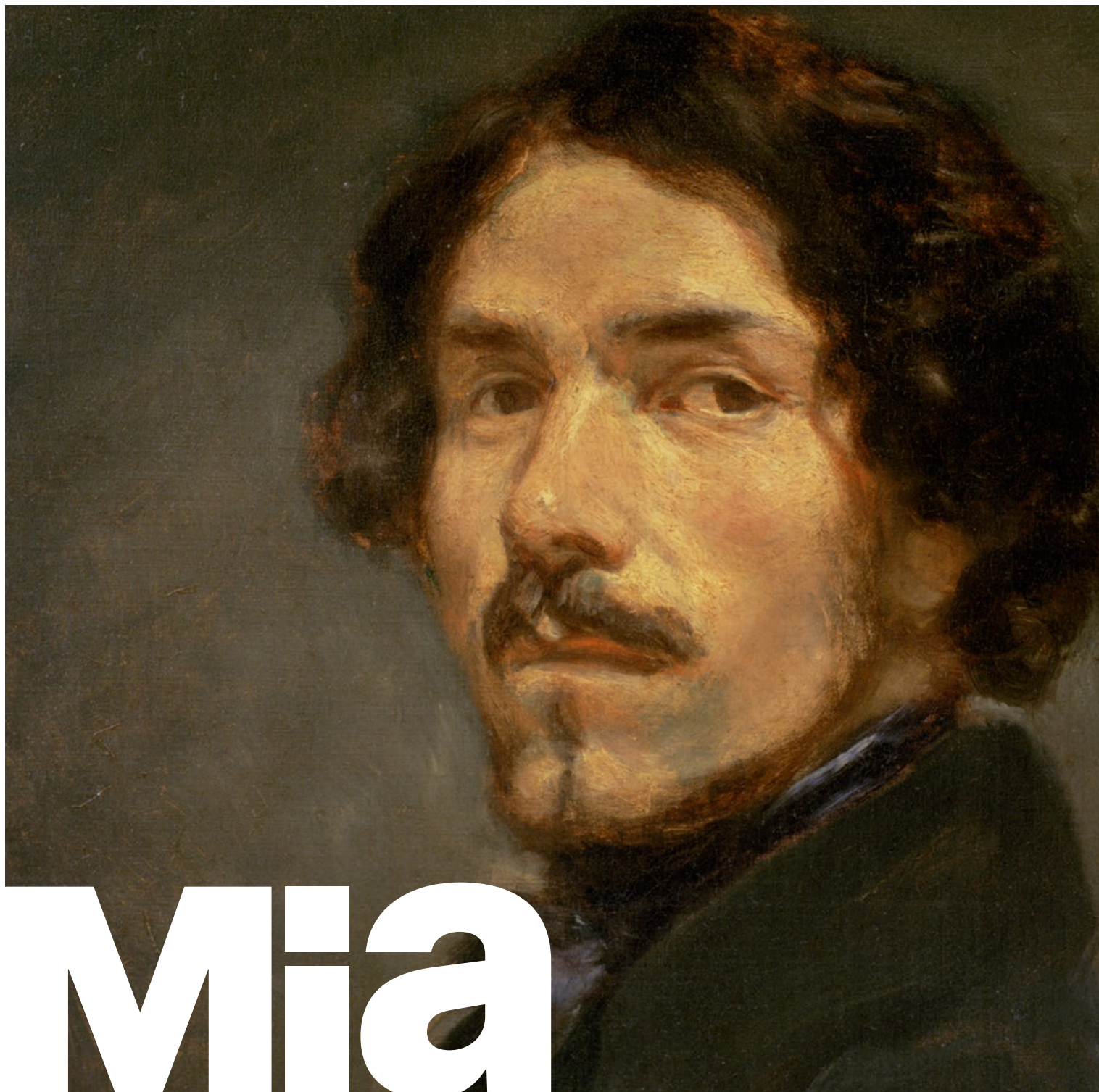


Minneapolis Institute of Art

Delacroix's Influence Fall's Must-See Show



Mia



Delacroix's Influence: The Rise of Modern Art from Cézanne to van Gogh

October 18, 2015–January 10, 2016

An Introduction for Teachers

Paul Cézanne

Edgar Degas

Eugène Delacroix

Paul Gauguin

Édouard Manet

Henri Matisse

Claude Monet

Pierre-Auguste Renoir

John Singer Sargent

Vincent van Gogh

Give your students a rare opportunity to see dozens of masterpieces by bold-faced names of nineteenth-century art. And discover the man who shaped modern art as we know it today. "Delacroix's Influence" features loans from more than 40 world-class museums, offering students an exceptional look at the development of artistic ideas over multiple generations.

Schedule a Class Tour Today:

Simply complete the tour request form at <http://new.artsmia.org/visit/plan-your-trip/tours/request-a-tour-online/>

We look forward to seeing you at Mia soon!

Cover: Eugène Delacroix, *Self Portrait* (detail), c. 1850, oil on canvas, The Uffizi Gallery, Florence; Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY



Delacroix and Modern Art

Imagine an art world without Impressionists like Claude Monet or Pierre-Auguste Renoir, or Post-Impressionists like Paul Cézanne or Vincent van Gogh.

If it weren't for the innovations of Eugène Delacroix, an artist working during the mid-1800s in France, the course of art could have been dramatically different—and a lot less colorful.

Delacroix took risks and rejected conventions to create paintings that pushed boundaries of form and color. By giving up mere representation of the world in favor of passionate, poetic expressions, Delacroix led the way for many of the best-known artists of the modern era.

Above: Eugène Delacroix, *Lion Hunt*, 1861, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 98.2 cm, © The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, Potter Palmer Collection, 1922.404

'Emulate His Life'

Louis-Edmond Duranty, an early champion of Impressionism, encouraged young artists to fix their attention on Delacroix—"not to copy him, but to emulate his life and to learn how to disengage from the common herd." And they did. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, and Paul Cézanne all expressed admiration for Delacroix—for his genius, pathos, and vibrant color.

Take this portrait of Lord Ribblesdale, for example, by John Singer Sargent. An American working in Paris, Sargent found inspiration in one of Delacroix's well-known portraits, also in the exhibition, for his image of aristocratic chic. He likely knew this portrait from visits to the home of Impressionist artist Edgar Degas, a passionate admirer of Delacroix, who owned it.

Left: John Singer Sargent, *Lord Ribblesdale* (detail), 1902, oil on canvas, 258.4 x 143.5 cm, © The National Gallery, London, Presented by Lord Ribblesdale in memory of Lady Ribblesdale and his sons, Captain the Hon. Thomas Lister and Lieutenant the Hon. Charles Lister, 1916, NG 3044



Borrow from the Best

Artists pay respect to other artists in many ways, ranging from copying or collecting their work to referencing a celebrated work in one of their own creations.

Delacroix copied the Old Masters he most admired and freely borrowed their formal and technical ideas, especially those of Peter Paul Rubens. Likewise, modern French artists paid Delacroix the same tribute. Edgar Degas, for example, amassed 57 watercolors and drawings and 13 oil paintings by him.

More than 30 years after Delacroix painted *The Jewish Wedding in Morocco*, Renoir copied it. In 1881 Renoir traveled to North Africa to paint scenes inspired by Delacroix's representations of the region some 50 years earlier.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Jewish Wedding in Morocco (after Delacroix) (detail)*, about 1875, oil on canvas, 109 x 145 cm, © Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, Museum Purchase, 1943.1

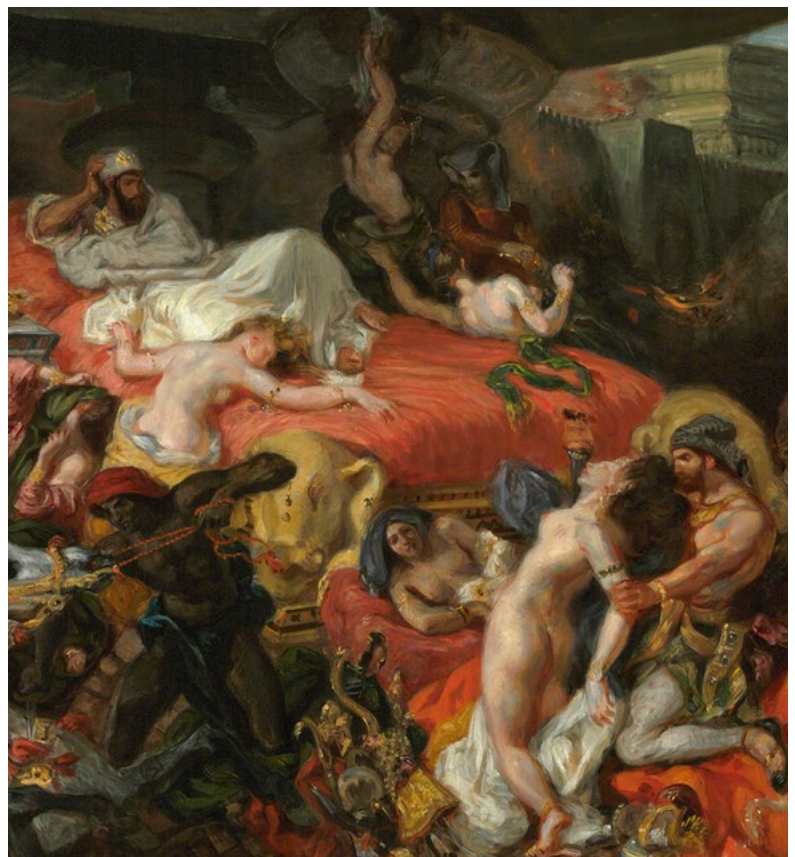
Orientalism

“Orientalism” is an antiquated term to describe art that represents Europeans’ fascination with the people and lifestyles of the lands then called the Orient, including present-day Turkey, Greece, the Middle East, and North Africa. These images were largely products of artists’ imaginations—erotic fantasies of lounging women come to mind—and Delacroix was no exception.

These artworks must be considered in the context of France’s geopolitics of the time: its conquest of Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, its embrace of the Greek War of Independence against the Turks (1821–32), and its colonization of North Africa.

Delacroix’s orientalism evolved in three consecutive phases: the imagined or literary; the experienced, derived from his travels; and the reimagined.

Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus (reduced replica) (detail)*, 1846, Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 82.4 cm, © Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, The Henry P. McIlhenny Collection in memory of Frances P. McIlhenny, 1986, 1986-26-17





Orientalism: Imagined

Delacroix's first orientalist phase was prompted by the poetry of Lord Byron's *Turkish Tales* (1813).

This loosely brushed painting is one of four illustrating the British poet's "heroic poem" *The Bride of Abydos, a Turkish Tale* (1813). In the poem, the pirate Selim loves his cousin Zuleika, but her father, the Pasha Giaffir, has promised her in marriage to an aged Turkish chieftain. In desperation the lovers flee to a grotto by the sea, where the Pasha shoots Selim dead on the beach and Zuleika dies of grief.

As a young man, Delacroix wrote in his *Journal*, "Poetry is full of riches: always remember certain passages from Byron, so as to arouse one's passions eternally. The end of the *Bride of Abydos* is sublime."

Eugène Delacroix, *Bride of Abydos* (detail), 1857, oil on canvas, 47.6 x 40 cm, © Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, AP 1986.04



Orientalism: Experienced

Delacroix was one of the first artists to visit North Africa after the French invasion of Algeria in 1830. His initial paintings in response to that experience had an air of authenticity often lacking in works by later orientalists.

Convulsionists of Tangier recalls a scene witnessed by Delacroix in 1832 from an attic hideaway. Members of the Aïssaoua, a Sufi brotherhood founded in the sixteenth century, annually converged on their founder's funerary monument in Meknes, Tangier. He used ferocious brushwork to capture the intensity and kinetic energy of the scene's "furious torrent."

Eugène Delacroix, *Convulsionists of Tangier* (detail), 1837-38, oil on canvas, 95.6 x 128.6 cm, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of J. Jerome Hill, 73.42.3

Truth in Art

Delacroix promoted the idea that “imagination,” not “imitation,” was painting’s objective. He argued: “Before nature itself, it is our imagination that creates a painting; we see neither the blades of grass in a landscape nor the pores in the skin of a pretty face. Our eye, in its happy impotence in seeing infinite details, transmits to our spirit only what it must perceive; our spirit creates the actual work.”

For most of his followers, this modern theory of individual creativity, by which each artist renders nature not simply as it is seen but as he or she interprets it, was Delacroix’s most valued legacy.

Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, *The Dance Examination*, about 1880, pastel, 63.4 x 48.2 cm, Denver Art Museum Collection, Anonymous Gift, 1941.6, Photograph courtesy of the Denver Art Museum



‘We All Paint in His Language’

Following his death in 1863, Delacroix’s influence persisted for nearly five decades and over several generations of avant-garde artists.

Comprehensive retrospective exhibitions in 1864 and 1885 and the 1864 sale of the artist’s studio effects—which circulated over 800 artworks—had great impact on French artists coming to maturity after 1860. Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Neo-Impressionists, Symbolists, and Fauves alike borrowed Delacroix’s ideas from either his painted works or extensive writings.

Paul Cézanne said that “Delacroix’s palette is still the most beautiful in France, and I tell you no one under the sky had more charm and pathos combined than he, or more vibration of color. We all paint in his language.”

Paul Cézanne, *Standing Nude* (detail), about 1898, oil on canvas, 92.7 x 71.1 cm, Private collection, © Photo courtesy of the owner

Delacroix's Legacy in Prose

Our knowledge of Delacroix's perspectives on culture, society, and life comes from the profuse observations he recorded in his personal *Journals* on an almost daily basis between 1822 and 1824, and from 1847 until his death.

His writings include his own *Dictionary of Fine Arts* comprising a series of definitions started in 1857. Never completed, the *Dictionary* appeared in fragmentary form with the publication of his *Journals* in 1893.

The *Dictionary* became an important source for painter Paul Signac's treatise *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism* (1899).

Eugène Delacroix, *Christ on the Sea of Galilee* (detail), about 1853, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 61 cm, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929, 29.100.13



'Taking Up the Battle' in Delacroix's Name

This exhibition examines the radical role as mentor and archetype that Eugène Delacroix and his art played during his lifetime and subsequent decades.

As the bridge between Anglo-French Romanticism of the 1820s and the "New Painting" that came to be called Impressionism in 1874, Delacroix's influence reveals a progression by which, one after another, succeeding generations of avant-garde artists looked to his achievement.

Paul Gauguin declared, "I am pleased to imagine myself Delacroix arriving in the world thirty years later and taking up the battle that I have dared to assume, with his fortune and especially his genius what a rebirth would happen today."

Paul Gauguin, *Christ in the Garden of Olives* (detail), 1889, oil on canvas, 72 x 90 cm, © Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida, Gift of Elizabeth C. Norton, 46.5

