

# Edgar Degas

1834–1917 | French



*Ukrainian Dancers*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Painting Overview.....	4
Literature .....	8
Exhibited.....	26
Auction Comparables .....	58
Museum Comparables .....	59



Charcoal and pastel on tracing paper mounted on cardboard | 1899  
Stamped "Degas" (lower left)  
Paper: 22 7/8" high x 29 7/8" wide | 58 x 76 cm

“

*I'm going to show  
you the orgies of  
color I'm working  
on at the moment.*

- Edgar Degas  
On his Russian Dancers series, 1899

”





Edgar Degas's dancers need very little introduction — no artist has better captured the female body in fervent motion. This exceptionally rare pastel, entitled *Ukrainian Dancers*, is by far the stand-out work of the artist's famed series on these traditional folk dancers. Published in important literature and exhibited widely, this artwork is a testament to Degas's singular status as art history's master of the dancing female form.

*Ukrainian Dancers* exemplifies Degas' extraordinary ability to portray the dynamic energy of dancers, as it bursts with countless layers of luminous color and ethereal vibrancy. The artist's masterful, bold use of pastel in this composition is a hallmark of his work of the 1890s, when he turned to this expressive medium for greater spontaneity. Out of the 18 works in his Russian Dancers series of 1899, our pastel is a shining beacon of color, texture and dynamism. As the masterpiece of the series, it was prominently featured in its own room in the groundbreaking 2017 exhibition *Degas: 'Russian Dancers' and the Art of Pastel* at the J. Paul Getty

Museum. Many of the other pastels and sketches from this important series are housed in prestigious museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Gallery, London.

Degas became enthralled with these Ukrainian peasant dancers during his frequent visits to Parisian cabarets, where lively folk performances were popular after the French and Russian Empire Alliance in 1894. For Degas, these dancers offered an intriguing contrast to his graceful, restrained ballerinas. Our pastel practically vibrates with the unique vitality and visceral exuberance that the artist saw in these dancers, expressed in his emphatic line work and bold color palette. The thatched cottage on the horizon lends an authentic touch to the lush pastoral scene where Degas sets this dancing trio.

*Ukrainian Dancers* emphasizes Degas's unending search for new modes of expression and experimentation that characterized his later works like this one. Purchased originally by the artist's brother René de Gas at the first-ever Atelier Degas sale in 1918, this work has had an illustrious history ever since, being published and exhibited across the globe. ●



### PROVENANCE

Atelier Degas: 1st Atelier Degas Sale, 1918, acquired there by the artist's brother

René de Gas (1845-1921); his estate sale, 1927

Dieterle, Paris

Albert Sancholle Henraux (1881-1953), Paris

Private collection, Paris

Sam Salz (ca. 1894-1981), New York

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander M. Lewyt, New York, acquired from above 1953

Private collection

Private collection, acquired from Wildenstein, New York, 2008



LITERATURE

Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, *Catalogue des tableaux, pastels et dessins par Edgar Degas et provenant de son atelier*, May 6-8, 1918, lot 270, p. 143 (illustrated)

Paris, Hôtel Drouot, *Vente René De Gas*, November 10, 1927, lot 38 (illustrated)

P. A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1946, III, p. 688-689, no. 1187 (illustrated)

L. Browse, *Degas Dancers*, London, 1949, p. 413, cited under no. 243

E.P. Janis, "Shorter Notices: Degas Drawings" [review of Saint Louis exhibition, 1967], *Burlington Magazine*, CIX, No. 772, July 1967, p. 414

F. Russoli and F. Minervino, *L'Opera complete di Degas*, Milan, 1970, p. 134, no. 1076 (illustrated)

J. Lassaigne and F. Minervino, *Tout l'oeuvre peint de Degas*, Paris, 1974, no. 1076 (illustrated)

J. Manet, *Journal (1893-1899): Sa jeunesse parmi les peintres impressionnistes et les hommes de lettres*, Paris, 1979, p. 238, entry of Saturday, July 1, 1899 [English ed., *Growing up with the Impressionists: The Diary of Julie Manet* (trans. and ed. By R.deB. Roberts and J. Roberts), London, 1987, p. 177]

*25 Great Masters of Modern Art: Degas*, Tokyo, 1980, p. 124, 58 and 124 (illustrated)

R. McMullen, *Degas: His Life, Times, and Work*, Boston, 1984, pp. 432-433

Tübingen, Kunsthalle, and Berlin, Nationalgalerie, *Edgar Degas: Pastelle, Ölskizzen, Zeichnungen* (cat. by G. Adriani), 1984, pp. 395-396, cited under no. 223

P. Bjurström, *French Drawings: Nineteenth Century*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1986, n.p., cited under no. 1497

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, pp. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII

R. Thomson, "The Degas Exhibition in Ottawa and New York," *Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI, No. 1033, April 1989, p. 295

G.T.M. Shackelford, "Degas, la danse et la musique," *Connaissance des Arts*, 1993, illustrated p. 44

R. Kendall, *Degas Landscapes*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, 1994, p. 237-238 (fig. 208, caption includes incorrect Lemoisne number), 292, note 40, illustrated p. 230 (fig. 203) (color detail of landscape), 237 (fig. 208)

Singapore, Museum of Art, and elsewhere, *Monet to Moore: The Millennium Gift of Sara Lee Corporation* (cat. by R.R. Brettell, assisted by N. H. Lee), 1999-2000, pp. 34, 36, note 5, cited under nos. 8 and 9

Detroit, Institute of Arts, and Philadelphia, Museum of Art, *Degas and the Dance* (cat. by J. DeVonyar and R. Kendall), 2002-2003, cited in essay, "The Last Dancers," p. 288, note 97



### EXHIBITED

New York, Wildenstein, *Degas*, April 7 – May 7, 1960, no. 64 (illustrated)

Saint Louis, City Art Museum, *Drawings by Degas* (cat. by J.S. Boggs), January 20-February 26, 1967, no. 155 (entry by J.S. Boggs); also cited p. 226. Illustrated frontispiece (color). Exhibition traveled to Philadelphia, Museum of Art, March 10-April 30, 1967; and Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, May 18-June 25, 1967

New York, Acquavella Galleries, *Edgar Degas*, November 1- December 3, 1978, no. 50; also cited in essay by T.H. Reff, “Degas and the Dance,” n.p. (illustrated)

Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, *Degas*, February 9-May 16, 1988, no. 370; also cited in essay by J.S. Boggs, “Les dernières années, 1890-1912,” p. 485, and on p.581. Illustrated p. 584 (color). Exhibition traveled to Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, June 16-August 28, 1988; and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 27, 1988-January 8, 1989 [English language ed. of cat.; same pagination]

London, David Bathurst, Ltd., *Paintings, Pastels and Drawings by Edgar Degas*, June 12-July 5, 1991, no. 24 (illustrated)

Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Degas*, (cat. by R. Pickvance), June 19-November 21, 1993, no. 56; also cited pp. 87-88, 308 and 329 (illustrated)

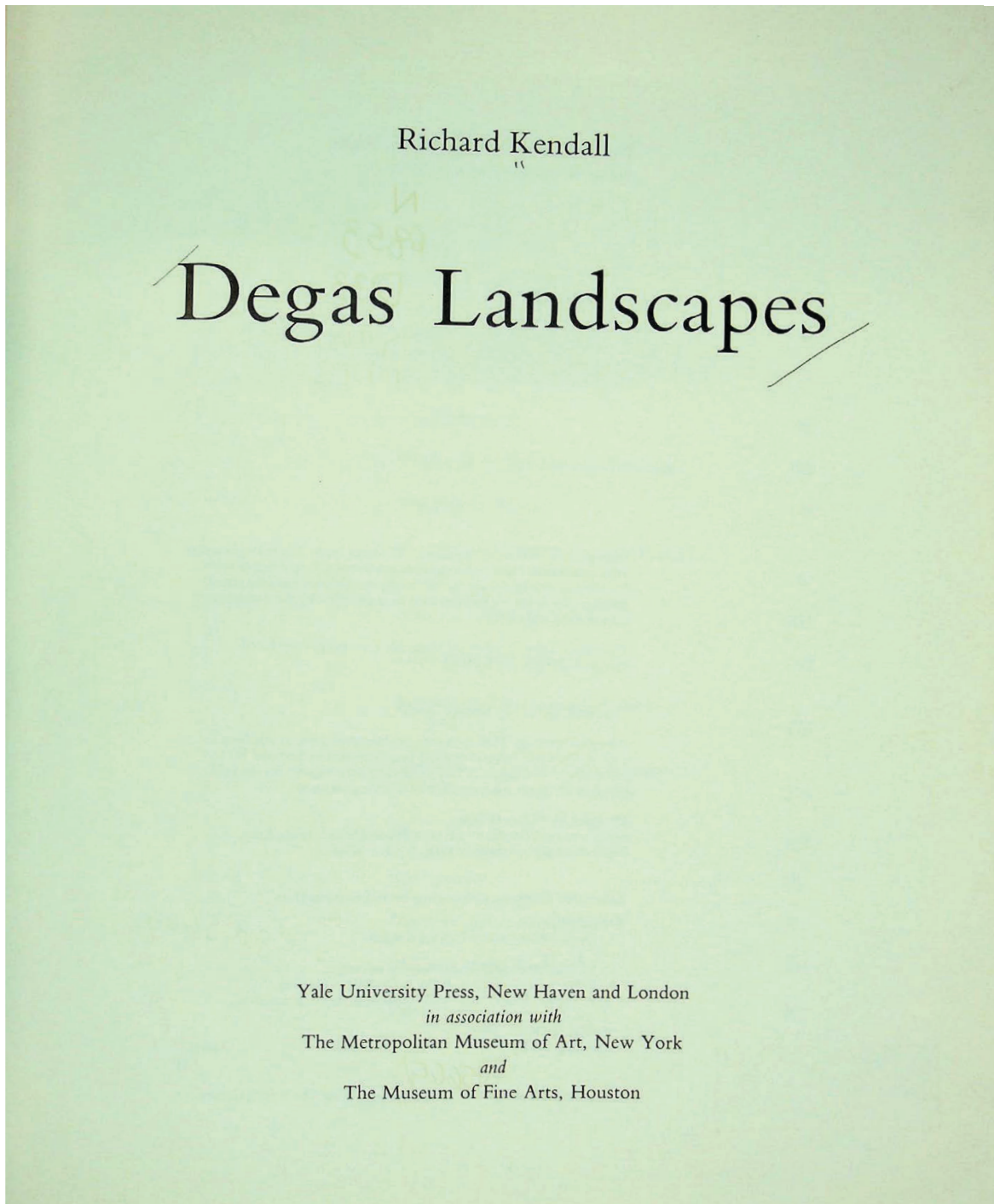
London, The National Gallery, *Degas: Beyond Impressionism* (cat. by R. Kendall), May 22 – August 26, 1996, no. 90; also cited pp. 104, 278, illustrated p. 281. Exhibition traveled to Chicago, The Art Institute, September 28, 1996-January 5, 1997 [pastel exhibited at Chicago venue only]

London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement* (cat. by J. DeVonyar and R. Kendall), September 17, 2011-December 11, 2011, p. 234-235 (illustrated)

Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Edgar Degas: The Late Work* (cat. by M. Schwander), September 30, 2012 – January 27, 2013, cited p. 80-81 and 257 (illustrated)

Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, *Degas: Russian Dancers and the Art of the Pastel*, May 19, 2015 – October 11, 2015 and May 3, 2016 to October 23, 2016 (on loan through 29 April 2017)





R. Kendall, *Degas Landscapes*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, 1994, p. 237-238; 292, note 40, illustrated p. 230, fig. 203 (color detail of landscape), 237, fig. 208 (caption includes incorrect Lemoisne number)







208. *Russian Dancers*, 1899, pastel, 62 × 45.7 (L 1184). Private collection.

clad women in the open air, their orange boots and garlanded hair like flames and glowing coals in the cool pasture.<sup>38</sup> Amongst the most majestic, *Russian Dancers* (fig. 208) reveals the sheer intensity of Degas' procedure. The girls' skirts, for example, were originally drawn over an outline of their legs, and a palette of blues, purples and violets used to tint the fabric. On top of this, further charcoal lines were added, then vigorous strokes of orange-brown to enrich the highlights. Throughout the composition, Degas' moved from line to colour, then colour to line, exhausting his repertoire of hatchings, spirals and flourishes of chalky pigment. In the less finished drawings, it is clear that Degas introduced colour at an early stage, while in other variants the dancers wear lilac, gold, viridian or sky-blue, as if to run the gamut of available hues. Degas himself was proud of this achievement, signing and selling a number of the pictures and describing the still-unfinished works to Julie Manet in 1899 as 'veritable orgies of colour'.<sup>39</sup> Most remarkable in *Russian Dancers* is the highly

237

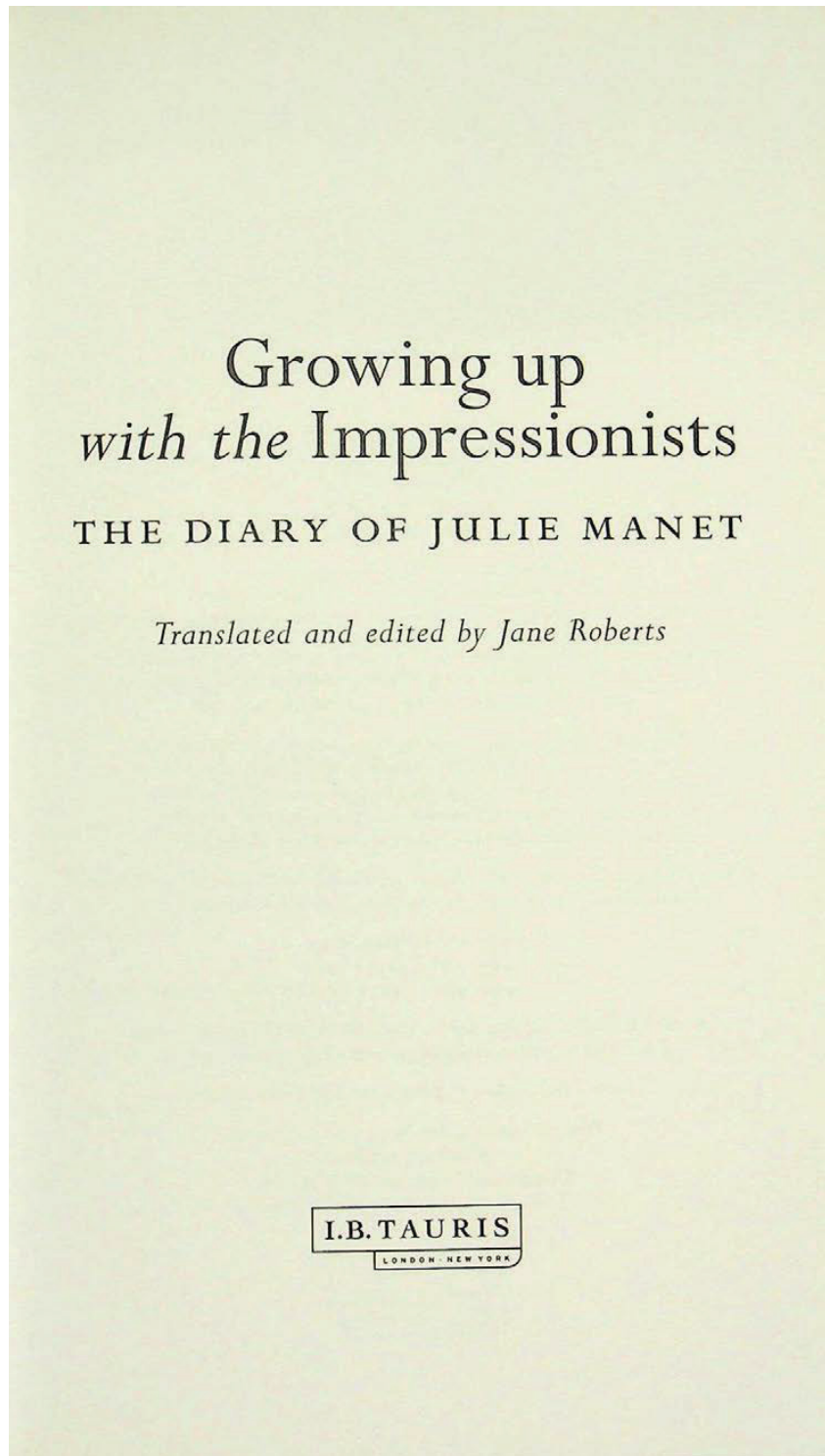
R. Kendall, *Degas Landscapes*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, 1994, p. 237-238; 292, note 40, illustrated p. 230, fig. 203 (color detail of landscape), 237, fig. 208 (caption includes incorrect Lemoisne number)





J. Manet, *Journal (1893-1899): Sa jeunesse parmi les peintres impressionnistes et les hommes de lettres*, Paris, 1979, p. 238 [entry of Saturday, July 1, 1899]; English ed., *Growing up with the Impressionists: The Diary of Julie Manet* (trans. and ed. By R.deB. Roberts and J. Roberts), London, 1987, p. 177





J. Manet, *Journal (1893-1899): Sa jeunesse parmi les peintres impressionnistes et les hommes de lettres*, Paris, 1979, p. 238 [entry of Saturday, July 1, 1899]; English ed., *Growing up with the Impressionists: The Diary of Julie Manet* (trans. and ed. By R.deB. Roberts and J. Roberts), London, 1987, p. 177



## GROWING UP WITH THE IMPRESSIONISTS

We discussed Renoir's portrait of Choquet,<sup>449</sup> which Ernest thought very good. He was extremely talkative today and joked that as he was forced to carry the very large *Bataille de Nancy*<sup>450</sup> that Monsieur Degas had just acquired, he had decided to give it to me as a gift. I stayed behind to talk to him when everyone had left the saleroom, and think we really make rather a good couple.

Monsieur Degas invited us to accompany him in his carriage, with the Delacroix purchase, so we took our leave of the Rouarts. Monsieur Degas was very sorry not to have got the Choquet portrait ('the portrait of one madman by another', as he put it). He liked it enormously. Durand-Ruel bought it for only 3,500 francs, but Monsieur Degas had been especially relieved that Camondo<sup>451</sup> didn't buy it.

Zoë didn't seem in the least surprised to see Monsieur Degas coming back with paintings. 'When Monsieur told me he would be coming back to change, I was expecting him to bring back some pictures', she laughed. We studied the Delacroix paintings he owns – the one from the Desfossés sale is still the most poignant.

Monsieur Degas is an absolute darling. He was discussing painting with us, then suddenly added 'I'm going to show you the "orgies of colour" that I'm doing at the moment', and showed us up to his studio. We were very touched as he never shows anyone what he's working still on. He got out three pastels of women in Russian costumes<sup>452</sup> with flowers in their hair, pearl necklaces, skirts in lots of bright colours and red boots, dancing in an imaginary landscape that looked most realistic.

Monsieur Degas asked us which of the three looked the best; then showed us some torsos and dancers, all of which must pay for today's purchases!

J. Manet, *Journal (1893-1899): Sa jeunesse parmi les peintres impressionnistes et les hommes de lettres*, Paris, 1979, p. 238 [entry of Saturday, July 1, 1899]; English ed., *Growing up with the Impressionists: The Diary of Julie Manet* (trans. and ed. By R.deB. Roberts and J. Roberts), London, 1987, p. 177



EDGAR DEGAS' RUSSIAN DANCERS SERIES (1897-99):  
THEIR DATING, PASTEL TECHNIQUE, AND THEIR CONTEXT  
WITHIN HIS LATE PERIOD (1885-1908)

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate  
School of the Ohio State University

By

Lisa R. Bixenstine, B.A., B.F.A., M.A., M.A.

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1987

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L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



## LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	PAGE
I. Lemoisne 1181 (L. 1181): <u>Les Trois Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, National Museum, Stockholm . . . . .	236
II. Lemoisne 1182 (L. 1182): <u>Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection . . . . .	237
III. Lemoisne 1183 (L. 1183): <u>Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on tracing paper, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston . . . . .	238
IV. Lemoisne 1184 (L. 1184): <u>Danseuse Russe</u> , charcoal and pastel on tracing paper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Havemeyer Collection . . . . .	239
V. Lemoisne 1185 (L. 1185): <u>Danseuse Russe</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, Berwick-Upon-Tweed Borough Council, England . . . . .	240
VI. Lemoisne 1186 (L. 1186): <u>Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, Southeby, Parke, Burnet, New York (1979) . . . . .	241
VII. Lemoisne 1187 (L. 1187): <u>Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, Alexander Lewyt Collection, New York . . . . .	242
VIII. Lemoisne 1188 (L. 1188): <u>Danseuses Russes</u> , charcoal and pastel on paper, Private Collection (Christie, Manson and Wood International, sold 1977) . . . . .	243

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



repeated or adjusted outlines, and only a few notations of color.

In addition, L. 1187 is a finished pastel, but with a reversal of the rotational scheme of the figures in L. 1181-3. The foreground figure is borrowed from the central figure in the previous group of pastels; placed on the left, she faces sideways to the left, and kicks left. Behind her is the foreground figure from the previous group. (Essentially, their upstage relationships have been reversed). The third figure, behind on the right, is difficult to make out, but appears to have been slightly rotated to face toward the right, and kicks out of the picture space to the right. The figure placed behind and to the right of the foreground dancer in the sketch L. 1186 is apparently a study for the like figure in L. 1187. The rotation sequence is from the left to the right, counter-clockwise.

L. 1188 (48 X 67 cm, 19 X 26 1/2 inches) is a smaller variation on L. 1187. The two dancers, left and center, are the same, but the third dancer, behind on the right, has been nearly eliminated so that only a head is visible; a fourth dancer, with her back to us and much closer to the picture plane, is cropped at the edge in the right foreground of the composition. L. 1189 (54 X 71 cm, 21.6 X 28.4 inches, nearly the same size as L. 1187, but with a

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



Table 2: Dimensions According to Category of Work:  
Smaller versus Larger Side.

<u>Finished Pastel</u>	<u>smaller</u>	<u>larger</u>
L. 1182	61cm/24.75in	62cm/25.5in
L. 1183	*62.2cm/24.5in	62.9cm/24.75in
L. 1187	57cm/22.4in	75cm/29.5in
L. 1188	48cm/19in	67cm/26.5in
L. 1190	60cm./24in	*74cm/29.6in
L. 1191	59cm/23.6in	*62cm/25.5in
<u>Unfinished Pastels</u>	<u>smaller</u>	<u>larger</u>
L. 1181	53cm/21.2in(?)	*63cm/26.7in
L. 1189(?)	*54cm/21.6in	71cm/28.4in
Gotz 222	75cm/30in	99cm/39.5in
2nd V. 271	36cm/14.5in	72cm/28.5in
<u>Sketches</u>	<u>smaller</u>	<u>larger</u>
L. 1184	45cm/18in	61cm/24.4in
L. 1185	47cm/18.8in	67cm/26.8in
L. 1186	33cm/13.25in	53cm/21.25in
L. 1192	65cm/26in	80cm/32in
L. 1193	*57cm/22.5in	*67cm/26.4in
L. 1194	38cm/15.2in	60cm/24in
B & D	55.6cm/22.25in	64cm/25.75in
2nd V. 278	53cm/21.25in	38cm/15.2in

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII





L. 1181, with two layers of charcoal drawing as the base. The fact that L. 1183 is on tracing paper suggests that the composition was copied, either from one or several of his drawings, or from another three figured composition for a finished pastel (perhaps L. 1181 or L. 1182). One or two layers of color were first applied for the landscape, and then for the figures, all in non-descriptive, vertical or horizontal strokes. Then, most likely, a layer of black pastel was used to redefine the outlines again. Afterwards, more layers of pastel were added to parts of the figures and parts of the landscape, in a few areas following the contours of the forms, sometimes merely shortened to suggest contours and, in some areas covering, to varying degrees, outlines in black pastel. Decorative details were added last--flowers, beads, and skirt borders--, in thick, bold pastel marks. In L. 1182, delicate "pointillist" touches and "snow" dots were added.

L. 1187: A Different Composition

The figural grouping in L. 1187 (Lewyt Collection, New York, Plate VII) is unlike the three previously discussed pastels (see Chapter One). Its size is also different, 57 X 75 cm (22 1/2 X 29 1/2 inches), thus more

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



hair and hands.

In summation, L. 1187 is the most technically experimental of the examined works. And, apparently, Degas was seeking to emulate the qualities of oil painting --its fluidity and malleability--by manipulating the pastel so as to disguise its draftsman-like qualities--the directional linearity of the strokes. This painterly effect is most evident in the underlying layers of pastel, where it appears Degas moistened the pastel with water, sometimes enough to cause it to run, and blended the colors, perhaps with his fingers. Yet, the top layers, especially the sky-blue of the sky and upper landscape, and the veronese green of the lower landscape, for example, were left unblended, and crudely linear, suggesting that Degas was not completely satisfied with the results of his experimental first layers. Moreover, these top layers are also the brightest of the colors used in their respective areas, as though with them Degas was seeking to enliven the muddied composition that had resulted from blending the predominately earth toned colors beneath.

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Paris in 1909, complained that during the entire season, "they serve up Russian art like Russian food--too luxuriously and too copiously." (6) Degas' dancers are clothed too simply and conservatively to have been inspired by Bakst's costumes for the Diaghilev company.

But, perhaps, putting the question of a Diaghilev troupe performance as the source entirely to rest is a passage from Julie Manet's diary from July 1, 1899, concerning a visit to Degas' studio at 37 rue Victor-Masse:

He talked about painting, and then suddenly he said to us, "I'm going to show you some orgies of color I am working on at the moment." He took us upstairs to his studio, which greatly affected us, for he almost never reveals what he has in hand. He brought out three pastels representing women in Russian costume wearing flowers in their hair, pearl necklaces, white blouses, brightly colored skirts, and red boots, and dancing in an imaginary landscape that was more real than real. The movements were depicted in an astonishing drawing style, and the costumes in very beautiful hues. In one picture, the women were lit by a pink sun, in another their dresses were more boldly rendered, and in the third the sun had just vanished behind a hill, leaving a clear sky against which the women stood out in half tints. (7)

L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



242

Plate VII. Lemoisne 1187 (L. 1187): Danseuses Russes,  
charcoal and pastel on paper, Alexander Lewyt  
Collection, New York

1187



L.R. Bixenstine, "Edgar Degas' Russian Dancers Series (1897-99): Their Dating, Pastel Technique, and Their Context within His Late Period (1885-1908)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University), 1987, p. 11, 14, 38, 42-44, 48, 52-53, 58-60, 63-64, 73, 91-98, 104, illustrated p. 242, pl. VII



THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE

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Degas Drawings

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E.P. Janis, "Shorter Notices: Degas Drawings" [review of Saint Louis exhibition, 1967],  
*Burlington Magazine*, CIX, No. 772, July 1967, p. 414



## SHORTER NOTICES

and middle periods. We were presented with a richly varied and revealing array of early academic studies in pencil and charcoal from the fifties and sixties.<sup>3</sup> The exhibition unfolded grandly and magnificently from this particularly strong beginning into the seventies, offering a fine group of the various categories of modern life (jockeys, dancers, cafe-concerts, the circus) which Degas portrayed; and also representing his exploration of media, experiments with *essence*, gouache on silk (the fans). The eighties were represented in the show by a predominance of pastel as Degas's major medium, in the portraits of friends (Diego Martelli, Miss Cassatt) and friends' children (Hélène Rouart, cat. Nos. 125 and 126, and Hortense Valpinçon, cat. Nos. 113 and 114).

It is with respect to Degas's late period, the nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century, that Miss Boggs's conception of his development seems to break down. The late period is characterized as follows: 'The works of Degas's last years are naked exposures of the artist's own tribulations' (p.18). 'Degas's dancers aged with him and in doing so reflected his general pessimism at the beginning of the twentieth century' (p.228).

However, the very work selected as the frontispiece to the catalogue directly contradicts this characterization. In the *Russian Dancers* (cat. No.155), a large, highly finished, violently coloured, pastel painting, raised legs fan out from the centre of the format in heavy, swinging rhythms. Joy and, what is more important, a rhythmical linear ease never before seen in Degas's dancers predominate. The charcoal study for this pastel (cat. No.154) reinforces our impression of the final version. Its musical line trembles, vibrates, excites. The *Russian Dancers* exposes Degas's enormous strength of design and its expressive potential; it could stand alone as a consummation of his entire artistic development. Anecdote, social documentation and tints *à la Goncourt*, which clothed Degas's forms in the past have been discarded in favour of an emphasis on internal rhythms, and a system of vibrant pure hues which reinforce them. The exhibition's greatest defect was its failure to face up to and represent well this formal culmination.

An inadequate understanding and characterization of the late period led to its inadequate representation. The addition of rather poor charcoal sketches to a few really fine drawings like *After the Bath* (cat. No.141) plus the unexpected inclusion of a number of finished pastel paintings (cat. Nos.142, 143, 155) (which raise the question of definition of 'drawing' in Degas's work and of what constitutes finish in a drawing) gave the ensemble a 'mixed bag' look.

Miss Boggs's view of Degas is not unlike, nor has it gone beyond that of a mid-nineteenth-century *littérateur*. Like Goncourt in 1874, what she admires and understands is Degas's struggle against and emergence from classicism and his achievement as a painter of modern life. She has not realised the significance of what her own exhibition showed so well, that is the insistence on formal problems and formal solutions which underlies every surface portrayal.

Her view derives in part from her methodology. The catalogue introduction (a surprisingly short three pages) provides the following statements:

'In the drawings we can see the traditionalist and the revolutionary in Edgar Degas, never quite in conflict, never quite reconciled, but living together in the tension all his drawings reveal. This combination is not surprising considering

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the three especially beautiful life drawings of male nudes owned by David Daniels, New York (cat. Nos.7, 11, 12); copies made in the Louvre (e.g. the timid shorthand-diagram of Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi*, cat. No.20) and in the Uffizi; dour portraits of brothers and sisters and moving Michelangelesque studies for the ultimately unsuccessful history paintings (e.g. five studies for the *Daughter of Jephthah*, cat. Nos.28, 29, 30-32). A string of sensitive silvery pencil drawings from the late sixties follows; portraits of family members in Italy and in France, of Manet and the members of his circle, and the early jockeys (e.g. Baron Louis de Chollet's *Study for the Scène de Steeplechase*, cat. No.44, an exciting, almost cinematic, fantasy).

the background of his family which was more unconventional and adventuresome than the usual biographical accounts indicate' (p.16).

or later when speaking of the seventies:

'Although we know Degas was struggling with certain family humiliations, including possible bankruptcy, the image of him which emerges is that of the independent and urbane theatre-going artist, caustic and sophisticated, tempering his realism with an ironic humor' (p.18).

Miss Boggs's method is primarily biographical and psychological rather than formal, and it leads her into error.

Often, she mentions actual artistic influences in order to re-emphasize her biographical or in many cases psychological assumptions. For example, in entry two, for a drawing of the artist's sister, Marguerite, Miss Boggs states that Degas's drawings reveal that he found her to be 'as melancholy as he did all the members of his family'. This conclusion must be based on an examination of this and other drawings since we know nothing of Marguerite's temperament from other sources. She adds that allusions to artists like Perugino and Raphael reinforce this 'solemnity' (p.22). We are unsure of what we started with. Which are the facts? Which is the interpretation? Is the interpretation now being used as fact? Marguerite's melancholy and her solemnity are established on the basis that Degas's drawings of her look that way. The influences of Perugino and Raphael (whom Degas must have been copying at this time) strengthen this look, but on the other hand, did they not to some degree determine it? This kind of 'biographizing' forces objects into the somewhat degrading position of being illustrations of the artist's life rather than results of primarily artistic efforts.

Unfortunately, this procedure and its resulting confusion pervade the entire catalogue. While concrete discoveries made by other scholars like Theodore Reff and Phoebe Pool are acknowledged in the entries and are occasionally brought to bear on the drawings, Miss Boggs's own more idiosyncratic comments do not contribute to the usefulness of an attractive catalogue, since the reader is at some pains to separate out personal psychological reactions provoked by the drawings themselves which are then re-applied to the drawings as facts, from the known facts about the works.

Another kind of error results from this biographical-psychological approach when Miss Boggs is led to explain (on p.130) that a drawing titled (correctly) *Two studies for a Music Hall Singer* (cat. No.82) really depicts a duet. This error might be called 'genre-izing'.

An attitude like this limits understanding of Degas's late work. To characterize the figures of the late drawings as '... human beings ... caught up, or even trapped, in activities they could not determine' (p.226), or as drawings which betray Degas's lack of confidence in the individual (p.226) is completely to miss the point of the *Russian Dancers*, for example. (Note that Matisse's *Dance*, from 1909, five years later, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., is in the same spirit.) Miss Boggs says on p.224: 'The basic difference between these and earlier works is not so much in the degree of abstraction but in the movement which here seems the result of compulsion rather than of individual desire.' This statement betrays her disappointment that Degas's late dancers can no longer be treated psychologically or as social history. By the late period, the figures have become formal metaphors, liberated, by means of constant change and repetition, from the motifs so carefully observed and memorized in the practice rooms twenty-five years earlier. New rhythms have become formal metaphors of the dance, not less successful, less happy descriptions of it (cf. p.222). Degas's near blindness, personal frustrations, etc. have little to do with determining what has happened to his forms by the end of his life. The late period proves the biographical approach to be irrelevant. Where the major value of a work is artistic, biographical correlation is no explanation.



P. A. LEMOISNE  
*Membre de l'Institut*

# DEGAS

*et*  
*son œuvre*

*JB*

LES ARTISTES ET LEURS ŒUVRES

*Études et Documents publiés par*

PAUL BRAME et C. M. DE HAUKE

aux

ARTS ET MÉTIERS GRAPHIQUES

PARIS

P. A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1946, III, p. 688, no. 1187 (as dating from 1895), illustrated p. 689



## 1184.

- 1895 DANSEUSE RUSSE.  
Pastel. H. 0,61. L. 0,45, signé en bas, à gauche.  
*Voir : Volland, Album Degas (repr. pl. 87); H. Herz, Degas (repr. pl. 13); H. O. Havemeyer Collection, pp. 185-86 (repr.); G. Grappe, Degas, 1936, p. 42 (repr.).*  
Étude ayant servi pour les N<sup>os</sup> 1181, 1182, 1183, 1187, 1188.  
Cf. le dessin N<sup>o</sup> 278, 2<sup>e</sup> Vente Degas.  
Collection A. Volland, Paris. Collection H. O. Havemeyer, New-York. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York (Donation Havemeyer).

## 1185.

- 1895 DANSEUSE RUSSE.  
Fusain rehaussé de pastel. H. 0,67. L. 0,47, signé en bas, à gauche.  
*A droite bottes rouges, jupe à traits rouges, rouge et bleu dans cheveux.*  
Exposition : *Loan Exhibition*, Tate Gallery, Londres, 1934.  
*Voir : Volland, Album Degas (repr. pl. 51).*  
Étude ayant servi pour les N<sup>os</sup> 1181, 1182, 1183, 1187, 1188, 1189.  
Cf. le N<sup>o</sup> 1186.  
Collection A. Volland, Paris. Collection Albert S. Henraux, Paris. Collection de sir William Burrell, Londres.

## 1186.

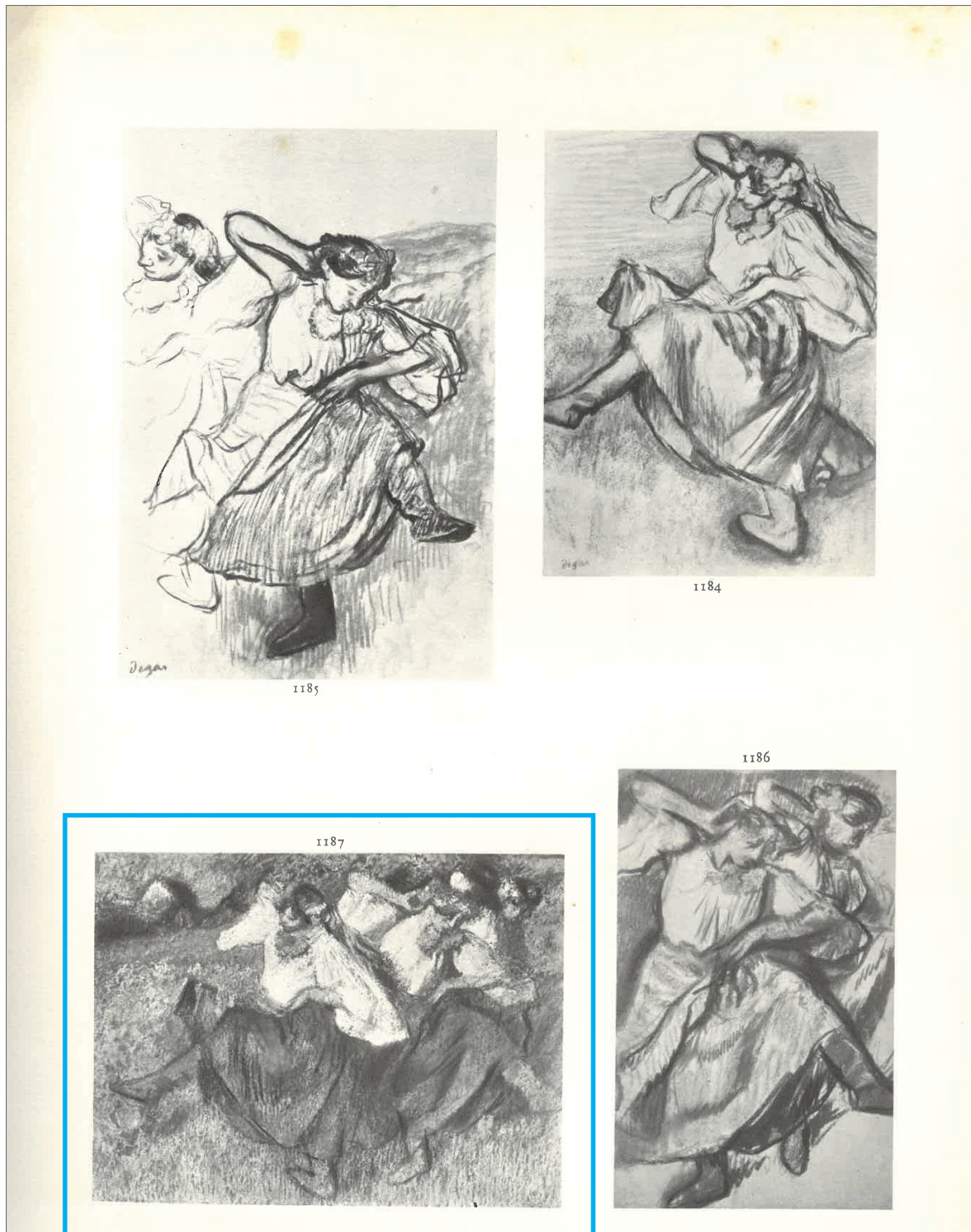
- 1895 DANSEUSES RUSSES.  
Pastel, signé en bas, à gauche.  
*Voir : Volland, Album Degas (repr. pl. 65).*  
Étude ayant servi pour les N<sup>os</sup> 1181, 1182, 1183, 1187 et 1188, 1189.  
Cf. le N<sup>o</sup> 1185.  
Collection A. Volland, Paris.

## 1187.

- 1895 DANSEUSES RUSSES.  
Pastel. H. 0,57. L. 0,75.  
Études : N<sup>os</sup> 1184, 1185, 1186; dessin : N<sup>o</sup> 278, 2<sup>e</sup> Vente Degas.  
Cf. le N<sup>o</sup> 1188.  
Atelier Degas (1<sup>re</sup> Vente, N<sup>o</sup> 270, repr.). Collection René de Gas, Paris (Vente 1927, N<sup>o</sup> 38, repr.). Collection Diéterle, Paris. Collection Albert S. Henraux, Paris.

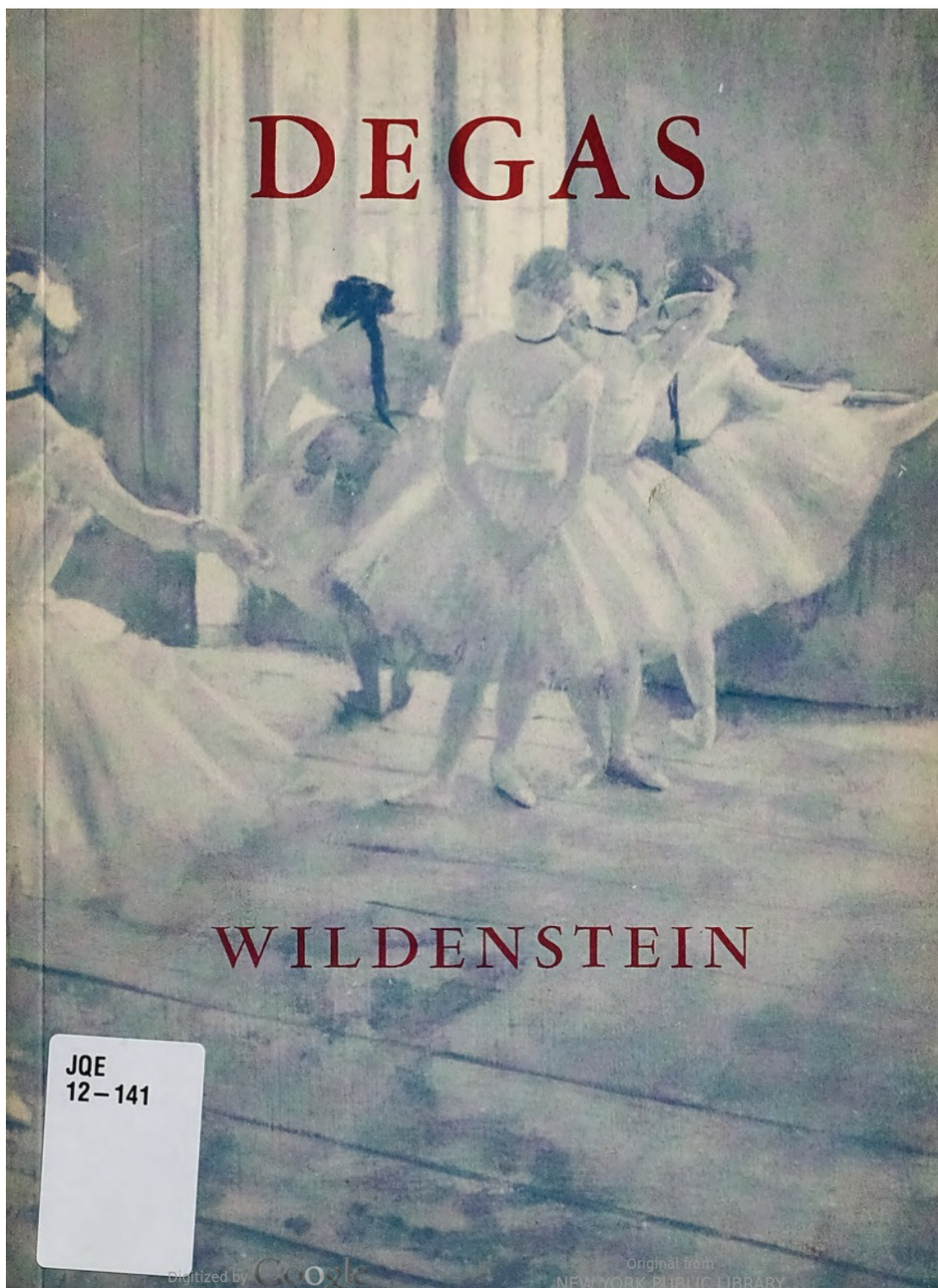






P. A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1946, III, p. 688, no. 1187 (as dating from 1895), illustrated p. 689





New York, Wildenstein, *Degas*, April 7 – May 7, 1960, no. 64 (illustrated)



LOAN EXHIBITION

# DEGAS

*for the benefit of  
The Citizens' Committee  
for Children of New York, Inc.*

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April 7 – May 7, 1960

**Wildenstein**  
19 East 64th Street, New York

New York, Wildenstein, *Degas*, April 7 – May 7, 1960, no. 64 (illustrated)





64. *Dansentes Russes*, c. 1895

pastel, 23 x 30 inches  
L. 1187

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alex M. Lewyt

New York, Wildenstein, *Degas*, April 7 – May 7, 1960, no. 64 (illustrated)



# DRAWINGS BY DEGAS

ESSAY AND CATALOGUE BY JEAN SUTHERLAND BOGGS

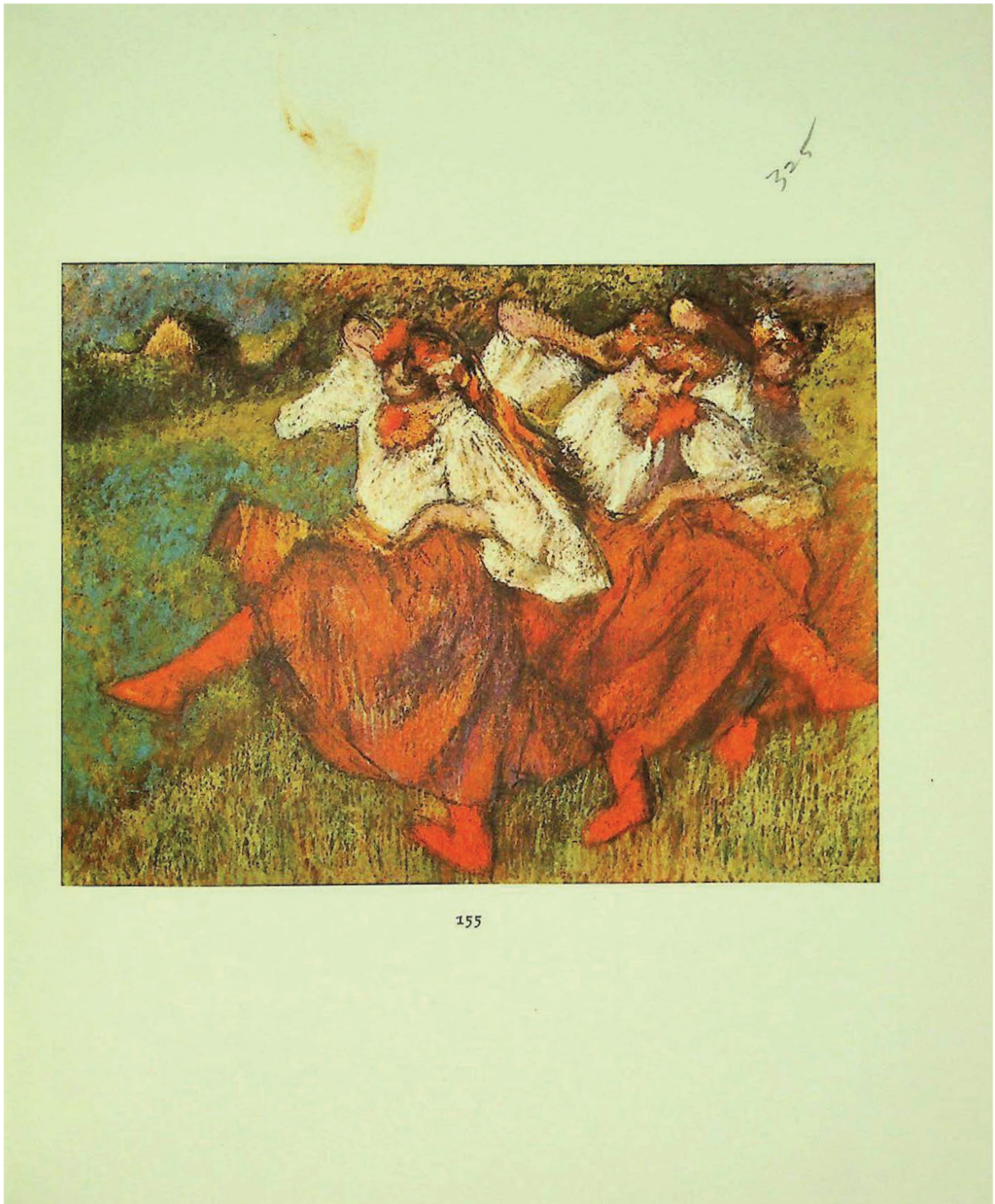
CITY ART MUSEUM OF SAINT LOUIS

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

THE MINNEAPOLIS SOCIETY OF FINE ARTS

Saint Louis, City Art Museum, *Drawings by Degas* (cat. by J.S. Boggs), January 20-February 26, 1967, no. 155 (entry by J.S. Boggs); also cited p. 226. Exhibition traveled to Philadelphia, Museum of Art, March 10-April 30, 1967; and Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, May 18-June 25, 1967





Saint Louis, City Art Museum, *Drawings by Degas* (cat. by J.S. Boggs), January 20-February 26, 1967, no. 155 (entry by J.S. Boggs); also cited p. 226. Exhibition traveled to Philadelphia, Museum of Art, March 10-April 30, 1967; and Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, May 18-June 25, 1967



23<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (61 x 47 cm.)  
 Provenance: *Vente Atelier Degas II*,  
 December 11-13, 1918, no. 335; John T.  
 Spaulding; his bequest June 3, 1948  
 Exhibitions: Boston 1935, no. 116; Boston,  
 Museum of Fine Arts, 1935, no. 116; Boston,  
*The Collection of John Taylor Spaulding*,  
 no. 92a, plate VIII; Cambridge 1957; New  
 York 1958, no. 41, pl. xxx  
 Literature: Browse no. 189  
 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON 48.872  
 Bequest of John T. Spaulding

154-155 *Degas's confidence in the individual, which had been so fundamental in his earlier works, even in his gently mocking portraits of Diego Martelli (no. 88) or Mlle S... (no. 127), disappeared toward the end of his life. He now began to see human beings as caught up, or even trapped, in activities they could not determine. One vehicle to express this was the dance, and one of the most effective of these the wild movements of a group of Russian peasants, so vigorous and so compelling that no single ballerina could escape. Since the dancers in the charcoal and red chalk drawings are like wraiths, it is interesting to look back some thirty years earlier to those ghostly nuns who performed in the ballet in Robert le Diable (nos. 63, 64). The comparison makes us realize how violently active and interdependent these Russian dancers are. In pastel (no. 155) we can see how Degas heightened the wildness of the effect with the intensity of the color and the vibrancy of the strokes of pastel.*

*These Russian dancers are so thrilling that no one has been content to leave them unexplained. Lemoisne (LEMOISNE 1181) believes them to be a troupe of Russian dancers who performed in their national costume at the Folies-Bergères in 1895. Miss Browse (BROWSE 242) sees them as dancing the Hopak from Le Festin staged by Diaghilev's company when it first visited Paris in 1909. The owner of both these drawings suggests it is from Boris Godunov. The quality of the line in the charcoal and chalk drawings is like that of Mme Rouart (no. 144), which we know to be from 1905, so that this late date is not impossible.*

226

Saint Louis, City Art Museum, *Drawings by Degas* (cat. by J.S. Boggs), January 20-February 26, 1967, no. 155 (entry by J.S. Boggs); also cited p. 226. Exhibition traveled to Philadelphia, Museum of Art, March 10-April 30, 1967; and Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, May 18-June 25, 1967



154 RUSSIAN DANCERS c. 1895-1905  
 VENTE III: 286 VENTE stamp l.l.  
 Study for LEMOISNE 1190  
 Charcoal with red chalk on buff paper  
 39½ x 30 in. (99 x 75 cm.)  
 Provenance: *Vente Atelier Degas III, April*  
*7-9, 1919, no. 286; A. Vollard; Mme de*  
*Galea, Paris*  
 MR. AND MRS. ALEX M. LEWYT, NEW YORK

155 RUSSIAN DANCERS c. 1895-1905  
 VENTE I: 270 VENTE stamp l.l.  
 LEMOISNE 1187  
 Pastel  
 23 x 30 in. (57 x 75 cm.)  
 Provenance: *Vente Atelier Degas I, May 6-8,*  
*1918, no. 270; Vente Succession de René*  
*de Gas, Hotel Drouot, Paris, November 10,*  
*1927, no. 38; Diéterle collection, Paris;*  
*Albert S. Henraux collection, Paris*  
 Exhibitions: New York 1960, no. 64  
 Literature: Lemoisne no. 1187  
 MR. AND MRS. ALEX M. LEWYT, NEW YORK

156 DANCERS ON THE STAGE c. 1905  
 VENTE III: 60  
 LEMOISNE 1461  
 Study for LEMOISNE 1459  
 Charcoal and pastel  
 22¾ x 23¾ in. (57 x 63 cm.)  
 Provenance: *Vente Atelier Degas III, April*  
*7-9, 1919, no. 60; Durand-Ruel; Knoedler,*  
*Paris; Mrs. John H. Winterbotham*  
 Literature: Lemoisne no. 1461; Browse  
 no. 255  
 THEODORA W. BROWN AND RUE W. SHAW,  
 CHICAGO

Degas's dancers aged with him and, in doing so, reflected his general pessimism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their frail bodies lost substance and became tremulous spirits. This charcoal has a rather anxious intensity in the foreground where the three dancers meet and talk to each other, but the dancers in the background are a flutter of red chalk. All seem ghosts of the memories Degas was trying to summon up from the past.



154

228

Saint Louis, City Art Museum, *Drawings by Degas* (cat. by J.S. Boggs), January 20-February 26, 1967, no. 155 (entry by J.S. Boggs); also cited p. 226. Exhibition traveled to Philadelphia, Museum of Art, March 10-April 30, 1967; and Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, May 18-June 25, 1967





# EDGAR DEGAS

NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 3, 1978

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New York, Acquavella Galleries, *Edgar Degas*, November 1- December 3, 1978, no. 50;  
also cited in essay by T.H. Reff, "Degas and the Dance," n.p. (illustrated)





50. DANSEUSES RUSSES, 1895

New York, Acquavella Galleries, *Edgar Degas*, November 1- December 3, 1978, no. 50;  
also cited in essay by T.H. Reff, "Degas and the Dance," n.p. (illustrated)



The nature of the change can easily be grasped by comparing, in this exhibition, two rehearsal pictures of the mid-1870s (nos. 14, 15) with two from the later 1880s (nos. 32, 45). Restrained and objective in appearance, the earlier ones show small figures in a large space, illuminated by a cool gray light falling *à contre jour*; the colors are low-keyed, relatively neutral, accented with a few sharp notes of red, yellow, or white. If there is a reminiscence of older art, it is of the subtly modulated tonalities of Velázquez, of whose «tender muddiness» Degas spoke with admiration at this time. The later dance pictures seem, by contrast, more subjective in vision — and quite literally, in the sense that they encompass a narrower segment of the scene, viewed from a more specific position. They are also more intense in coloring, dominated by large masses of complementary hue — orange and blue in one, red and green in the other — and by heavily accented, broken lines, whose brusqueness equals that of the colors. Here the late work of Delacroix, which Degas had studied in his youth and again in the 1880s, was an important source of inspiration. Still another aspect of this trend is evident in the *Danseuses Se Baissant* (no. 34) of about 1885, a composition whose shallow space and rhythmic repetition of shapes announce a new interest in creating bold surface patterns, another way of stressing the subjective character of the image. This compression of forms into a striking two-dimensional design continues to be seen in the dance pictures of the 1890s (e.g. no. 54), where the very application of the chalk in heavy, overlapping strokes further reinforces the appeal of the surface as such. Perhaps the outstanding examples of the extraordinary changes that occurred at this time are the pastels showing a troupe of Russian dancers who performed in Paris in 1895; one of the most brilliant in the series is in the present exhibition (no. 50). Here the rough, glittering surface and the deep, glowing colors — orange, lavender, and white in the costumes, bright blue and green in the ground — evoke a mood of opulence and reverie, like that in Redon's nearly contemporary pastels. And the popular, colorful form of the dance, with the figures in national costumes, reflects a taste altogether different from that which had led Degas to represent the graceful, fluid movements of the classical ballet twenty years earlier. He has moved from the decorum and discipline of the traditional form to the boisterous freedom of the folk dance.

If the evolution of Degas's vision of the dance is relatively easy to trace, the reasons for his attraction to it in the first place are more complex and obscure. Surprisingly, though this was by far the most important of his themes, no searching explanation of its interest and meaning for him has been offered. Yet such an explanation, however incompletely it is given here, inevitably sheds light on both the social and the personal grounds of his art. To a nineteenth century Parisian, especially one with Degas's middle-class background, the ballet was a familiar part of the contemporary scene. His father, a wealthy banker, was an enthusiastic patron of the Opera and introduced him to it at an early age. Some of the Opera's musicians were good friends of Degas, who portrayed them in 1868-69 in *L'Orchestre de l'Opéra* (Louvre), the earliest picture in which he showed dancers in traditional

New York, Acquavella Galleries, *Edgar Degas*, November 1- December 3, 1978, no. 50; also cited in essay by T.H. Reff, "Degas and the Dance," n.p. (illustrated)



# Degas

Jean Sutherland Boggs

Douglas W. Druick

Henri Loyrette

Michael Pantazzi

Gary Tinterow

Galleries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris  
9 February–16 May 1988

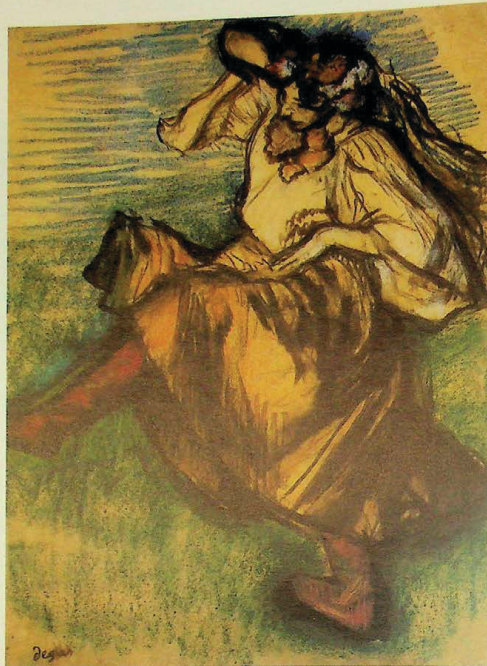
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa  
16 June–28 August 1988

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
27 September 1988–8 January 1989

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, *Degas*, February 9-May 16, 1988, no. 370; also cited in essay by J.S. Boggs, "Les dernières années, 1890-1912," p. 485, 581, illustrated p. 584. Exhibition traveled to Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, June 16-August 28, 1988; and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 27, 1988-January 8, 1989





369

369.

*Russian Dancer*

1899  
Pastel and charcoal on tracing paper  
24 3/8 x 18 in. (62 x 45.7 cm)  
Signed lower left in black charcoal: Degas  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.  
Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929.  
H. O. Havemeyer Collection (29.100.556)

Exhibited in New York  
Lemoisne 1184

This is a drawing for the figure in the left foreground of what was probably the third pastel Julie Manet saw in Degas's studio (cat. no. 370).<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising to see Degas at this time suggesting the texture of sky and grass so cursorily but effectively with pastel. The energy of the figure is also not unexpected. But these colorful garments make us realize the restrictions of the classical ballet tutu. Degas, who always had a feeling for dress—male or female—reveals it here in the bulky, glowing peach skirt and

584

the white blouse with dolman sleeves that floats above it. The accessories are right, too—the magnificent reddish boots, the peach, lavender, and pale blue flowers at the neck and hair, and the mass of deep blue ribbons that flow from the dancer's head-dress down her back. The variations within the broad movements come from the falling of the garments against the moving body.

Forceful as she is, the dancer still bows her head. Energetic as she is, the movement seems to be motivated by convention rather than by a radiant joy. This figure was used in the third composition, apparently to shove the former front dancer into second place and to take over the leading role herself.

1. Manet 1979, p. 238.

PROVENANCE: With Ambroise Vollard, Paris; Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, New York; her bequest to the museum 1929.

EXHIBITIONS: 1922 New York, (?) no. 82 (as "Danseuse espagnole [sic] en jupe rose"); 1930 New York, no. 154; 1977 New York, no. 50 of works on paper.

SELECTED REFERENCES: Vollard 1914, pl. LXXXVII; Havemeyer 1931, pp. 185–86, repr.; Lemoisne [1946–49], III, no. 1184 (as 1895); Browse [1949], no. 242; Minervino 1974, no. 1079; Shapiro 1982, pp. 10–11, fig. 2; 1984 Tübingen, p. 395.

370



Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, *Degas*, February 9–May 16, 1988, no. 370; also cited in essay by J.S. Boggs, "Les dernières années, 1890–1912," p. 485, 581, illustrated p. 584. Exhibition traveled to Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, June 16–August 28, 1988; and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 27, 1988–January 8, 1989



Fondation Pierre Gianadda,  
Martigny, Suisse

# Degas

Commissaire et auteur du catalogue de l'exposition  
Ronald Pickvance

Photographies des sculptures:  
Pierre-Alain Ferrazzini  
Traductions:  
Solange Schnall



19 juin - 21 novembre 1993  
Tous les jours de 9 à 19 h

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Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Degas*, (cat. by R. Pickvance), June 19-November 21, 1993,  
no. 56; also cited pp. 87-88, 308 and 329 (illustrated)





56  
Danseuses russes, 1899  
Pastel, 58,4 × 76,2 cm  
Vente I:270. Lemoisne 1187  
Mrs Alex Lewyt

Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Degas*, (cat. by R. Pickvance), June 19-November 21, 1993,  
no. 56; also cited pp. 87-88, 308 and 329 (illustrated)



## 4. Danseuses en scène

Dans dix vues très différentes les unes des autres, les danseuses en scène se produisent devant un public invisible (et les spectateurs que nous sommes, identifiés au public caché du tableau). Cela est particulièrement vrai de *L'Entrée en scène* (n° 48), où une vue légèrement plongeante (comme si nous, spectateurs, étions dans une loge et regardions la scène d'en haut) embrasse la danseuse et le «vide» à l'avant-plan de la scène (vide probablement déconcertant pour le public amateur de tableaux des années 1870-1880) qui contribue à accentuer le caractère insolite du point de vue. Cette audace dans le traitement de l'espace pictural a ici pour contrepoint la merveilleuse délicatesse de la facture, qui évoque l'extrême finesse de la peinture sur éventail en linon. La position de la *prima ballerina* sera souvent reprise par l'artiste, subtilement modulée, différant à chaque fois par l'intensité (l'emphase) du mouvement, l'éclairage et la tonalité.

Nous jouons à nouveau le rôle de «spectateurs par procuration» dans cinq pastels représentant les danseuses en scène (nos 53-57). La *Danseuse en mauve* (n° 53) est une variation sur le thème du pastel achevé vers 1878 (Lemoisne 471). Mais ici, la première danseuse est «en rose», le décor figure des montagnes, et le corps de ballet, à l'arrière-plan, est costumé à la mode orientale. La première danseuse pourrait très bien être Marie van Goethem, qui posa pour la sculpture de la *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans*. Le format oblong vertical semble volontairement choisi pour mettre en valeur la danseuse seule en scène, au moment où, en position de quatrième croisée, elle salue le public de son bras droit levé. Vers 1890, Degas reprendra la composition, substituant des arbres aux montagnes de la toile de fond et modifiant les costumes du corps de ballet dont il atténuera l'orientalisme. Le pastel sera appliqué plus simplement aussi; les détails du modelé et du graphisme seront alors plus schématiques. Il est intéressant de noter que la pose de la danseuse saluant sera reprise dans deux petites sculptures (S28 et S29) datant probablement de la seconde moitié des années quatre-vingt.

La pose de la *Danseuse saluant* de 1896-99 (n° 55) est comparable à celle de la *Danseuse en mauve*, bien que davantage tournée vers la droite. L'étude au pastel de la partie supérieure de la figure est apparentée à un très grand tableau (180 x 151 cm) qui représente une danseuse en pied faisant une révérence sur la scène, deux bouquets de fleurs à ses pieds et un paysage de montagnes derrière elle (Lemoisne 1264). Le pastel est en outre apparenté à la figure sculptée intitulée *La Révérence* (S45).

*Trois Danseuses, décor de paysage* (n° 54) est plus autonome que les précédents, dans la mesure où aucune variante peinte ou sculptée ne lui est apparentée. Le trio de ballerines est audacieusement présenté contre un paysage plus «naturel» que ceux générale-

## 4. Dancers on stage

Ten contrasting views of dancers on stage, performing before an unseen audience – and we are often that hidden audience. This is especially so in *L'Entrée en scène* (no. 48), where the dancer is seen slightly from above (as though we are in a box looking down) and where the 'empty' space of the foreground stage, disconcerting to a gallery-goer in the 1870s, further enhances the unusual viewpoint. By contrast, the painting itself is executed with a marvellous delicacy – as if the artist were painting a fan on fine linen. The position of the prima ballerina is one that Degas used often with subtle shifts of emphasis, lighting and colour.

We are also the replacement spectators in five pastels that show dancers on stage (nos. 53-57). *Danseuse en mauve* (no. 53) is a reprise of a pastel completed by Degas around 1878 (Lemoisne 471). There, however, the prima ballerina is une danseuse rose, the scenery is mountainous, and the corps de ballet in the background are wearing Eastern costume. The prima ballerina may well be Marie van Goethem, who modelled for the sculpture, *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans*. The long upright format seems deliberately chosen for the single dancer, as she stands in quatrième croisée acknowledging her audience with her raised right arm. Around 1890, Degas took up the composition again, but now he substituted trees for the mountainous background, and made his supporting dancers less immediately Eastern. Moreover, pastel is now applied more simply: particularities of modelling and drawing are much more schematic. Interestingly, the pose of the danseuse saluant was taken up in two small sculptures (S28 and S29) that probably date from the second half of the 1880s.

*Danseuse saluant* of around 1896-99 (no. 55) takes up a comparable pose to the *Danseuse en mauve*, but is now turned more to the right. The pastel study of the upper part of the figure is related to a very large painting (180 x 151 cm) showing a full-length dancer curtsying on stage, two bouquets at her feet and a mountainous landscape behind her (Lemoisne 1264). And the pastel is also related to the sculpted figure, *La Révérence* (S45).

More self-contained – in the sense of not having directly related variants in either painting or sculpture – is *Trois Danseuses, Décor de Paysage* (no. 54). It is an audacious image, not least in the fact that the trio of dancers are seen against what appears to be a 'natural' landscape rather than a theatrical backdrop. Such 'natural' landscapes became increasingly frequent in Degas's late paintings and pastels.

Much of Degas's late work remained private, locked away in his studio, rarely shown even to his closest friends. All the more precious, therefore, is the diary entry of Julie Manet (1878-1967),





ment peints sur la toile de fond. On verra ces paysages «naturels» se multiplier dans les peintures et les pastels de l'œuvre tardif.

L'œuvre de la dernière période de Degas est resté en grande partie confidentiel, enfermé dans l'atelier, rarement montré, même aux amis les plus proches. Le commentaire du *Journal* de Julie Manet (1878-1967), fille de Berthe Morisot, consécutif à une visite qu'elle rendra à Degas dans son atelier le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1899, est pour cette raison particulièrement précieux: «M. Degas, écrit-elle, est gentil comme un amour, il parle peinture puis tout à coup nous dit: 'Je vais vous montrer des orgies de couleurs que je fais en ce moment', et il nous fait monter dans son atelier. Nous sommes très touchées car il ne montre jamais ce qu'il fait. Il sort trois pastels représentant des femmes en costume russe avec fleurs dans les cheveux, colliers de perles, chemises blanches, jupes aux tons vifs et bottes rouges qui dansent dans un paysage imaginaire qui est des plus réels. Les mouvements sont étonnants de dessins et les costumes de très belles couleurs. Sur l'un, elles sont éclairées par un soleil rose, sur l'autre on distingue leurs robes plus crûment et sur le troisième le ciel est clair, le soleil vient de disparaître derrière le coteau et elles se détachent dans une demi-teinte. La valeur des blancs sur le ciel est merveilleuse; l'effet si vrai; ce dernier est peut-être le plus beau des trois, le plus prenant, c'est inouï, tout à fait emballant.»

Le dernier de ces trois pastels est celui de la collection de Mrs Alex Lewyt (n° 36). Le décor de plein air simulé évoque, plus que les toiles de fond habituelles, certains monotypes de paysages, tels que Degas en exécutera au début de la décennie 1890-1900. Au premier plan de la composition, les danseuses alignées comme dans une frise – les deux danseuses les plus proches du plan du tableau étant chacune une variation «sculpturale» sur le thème d'une seule et même pose – produisent cette «orgie de couleurs». Une composition apparentée par les éléments structurels (également propriété de Mrs Alex Lewyt; n° 57), offre une vue plus oblique que frontale des mêmes danseuses, mais il s'agit en l'occurrence essentiellement d'un fusain.

C'est encore un décor de paysage simulé qui caractérise l'arrière-plan de la grande peinture à l'huile de São Paulo (n° 53). Celle-ci est en fait étonnamment proche, par la forme et les couleurs, du pastel des *Trois danseuses* (n° 54). Quant aux quatre danseuses, elles constituent cette exception assez rare dans l'œuvre de Degas de n'avoir, en amont, aucun homologue graphique (dessin préliminaire) et, en aval, aucune contrepartie peinte ou sculptée. Il s'agit là, par ailleurs, d'un exercice sur l'extrême angularité de certains mouvements qui a peu d'équivalents dans l'œuvre de Degas: en effet, aux trois coudes pliés font contrepoint trois bras tendus, ce qui crée un jeu complexe d'axes

daughter of Berthe Morisot, after her visit to Degas's studio on 1 July 1899. "M. Degas est gentil comme un amour, il parle peinture puis tout à coup nous dit: 'Je vais vous montrer des orgies de couleurs que je fais en ce moment', et il nous fait monter dans son atelier. Nous sommes très touchées car il ne montre jamais ce qu'il fait. Il sort trois pastels représentant des femmes en costume russe avec fleurs dans les cheveux, colliers de perles, chemises blanches, jupes aux tons vifs et bottes rouges qui dansent dans un paysage imaginaire qui est des plus réels. Les mouvements sont étonnants de dessins et les costumes de très belles couleurs. Sur l'un, elles sont éclairées par un soleil rose, sur l'autre on distingue leurs robes plus crûment et sur le troisième le ciel est clair, le soleil vient de disparaître derrière le coteau et elles se détachent dans une demi-teinte. La valeur des blancs sur le ciel est merveilleuse; l'effet si vrai; ce dernier est peut-être le plus beau des trois, le plus prenant, c'est inouï, tout à fait emballant."

The last of those three pastels is that belonging to Mrs Alex Lewyt (no. 56). The simulated outdoor setting, rather than stage scenery, is akin to some of Degas's landscape monotypes of the early 1890s. In the foreground, a frieze-like composition of dancers – the nearest two a 'sculptural' variation on the same pose – perform "une orgie de couleurs." A contrasting composition, diagonalized rather than planar, and executed predominantly in charcoal, is also in the collection of Mrs Alex Lewyt (no. 57).

Yet another simulated landscape setting characterizes the background of the large oil-painting from São Paulo (no. 53). In fact, it is remarkably close in form and colour to the pastel of *Trois Danseuses* (no. 54). As for the four dancers, they are that rare phenomenon in Degas's oeuvre: poses without preliminary drawings or even directly related counterparts elsewhere. And, rarely, too, has Degas set himself such an extreme exercise in angularity: in effect, three bent elbows are counterbalanced by three outstretched arms, a complex interaction of differing axes and depths. Yet there are also clear indications of changes of intention. The dancer standing by the stage-flat, for example, has three arms à l'indienne, while the dancer at right (who is arguably a last addition to the composition) appears to have her head turned upwards in profile that is anatomically impossible vis-à-vis her body. Arbitrary stains of colour and loose, aberrant contours, now firm and decisive, now tenuous and fragile, suggest a date of around 1900.

Concluding this section are three late oil-paintings. The view in all of them is of the stage from the wings. In the first of these (no. 49), a top-hatted intruder is trapped at right between a trio of dancers

88

Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Degas*, (cat. by R. Pickvance), June 19-November 21, 1993, no. 56; also cited pp. 87-88, 308 and 329 (illustrated)



7 janvier, adresse un poème à Lafond pour le *Nouvel An*; il y célèbre son achat récent de trois œuvres d'Ingres et d'«une pièce très forte» de Delacroix, *Fleurs et fruits*.

28 janvier, Julie Manet demande à Degas un dessin destiné à illustrer une édition des poèmes de Mallarmé. Degas refuse parce que l'éditeur est dreyfusard.

26 mars, écrit à Francis Howard, secrétaire de la Société Internationale de Londres, pour s'opposer à l'exposition de ses œuvres sans sa permission expresse.

25 avril, la veille de la vente de la collection Desfossés, Julie Manet vient examiner les tableaux exposés à l'hôtel Desfossés et relève les noms de Corot, Manet, Renoir et Monet, ainsi que *La Mise au Tombeau* de Delacroix «qui est magnifique». Elle rencontre Degas qui, le doigt pointé vers Ernest Rouart, déclare: «Un jeune homme à marier.»

6 juin, Julie Manet dîne chez Degas en compagnie du peintre Jeanne Baudot (1877-1957) et de Louis et Ernest Rouart. Julie décide le soir même qu'elle épousera Ernest Rouart.

29 juin, Julie Manet rencontre Degas à l'exposition qui précède la vente de la collection Chocquet.

1<sup>er</sup> juillet, après la vente de la collection Chocquet, où il a acheté deux Delacroix, Degas revient à son atelier avec Julie Manet et l'une de ses cousines. Elles admirent *La Mise au Tombeau* de Delacroix, acquis récemment à la vente Desfossés. Mais, surtout, Degas leur montre trois pastels: «... des orgies de couleurs que je fais en ce moment.» Ce sont, leur dit-il, «... des femmes en costume russe avec fleurs dans les cheveux, colliers de perles, chemises blanches, jupes aux tons vifs et bottes rouges qui dansent dans un paysage imaginaire qui est des plus réels». Il y a tout lieu de penser que ces trois pastels correspondent à L.1182, L.1183 et L.1184. (Voir également n<sup>os</sup> 56-57).

10 août, Degas dîne chez Durand-Ruel; Renoir est l'un des convives.

19 septembre, Dreyfus est gracié. Degas a beaucoup de peine à admettre ce jugement.

16 novembre, Julie Manet note dans son *Journal* la brouille intervenue récemment

entre Degas et Renoir, déclenchée par Renoir lorsque celui-ci vendit un pastel de Degas. Offensé, Degas lui écrit alors une lettre bien sentie. Les deux peintres s'étaient déjà querellés par le passé, mais jamais aussi sérieusement qu'en ces dernières semaines du siècle.

14 décembre, Alexis Rouart accompagne Degas à l'Opéra pour écouter *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

1900

30 avril, Degas reçoit à dîner le journaliste antidreyfusard Maurice Talmeyr, dont il a fait la connaissance au Mont-Dore en août 1897, ainsi que Forain et M<sup>me</sup> Potocka, célèbre par sa beauté.

31 mai, est l'invité d'honneur à l'occasion du double mariage de Julie Manet et Ernest Rouart, et celui de Jeanne Gobillard (1877-1945) et Paul Valéry (1871-1945) à l'église Saint-Honoré-d'Eylau, à Paris.

25 juin, écrit à Paul Poujaud, avocat et homme d'une très vaste culture, en musique contemporaine notamment, pour l'inviter à dîner, lui annonçant: «Vous verrez du nouveau, surtout un petit Cuyp!» Degas a acheté ce tableau représentant un cheval, désormais attribué à Cuyp, au marchand de tableaux Hector Brame, en avril 1900.

1901

Au cours de l'année, René, frère de Degas, sera décoré de la Légion d'Honneur; Bartholomé, après quatorze ans de veuvage (Périe est morte en 1887), épousera un jeune modèle, Florence Litessier.

28 août, écrit à Joseph Durand-Ruel, mentionnant une blanchisseuse qu'il a réussi à finir.

1902

Apparemment aucune des lettres de Degas écrites en 1902 n'est parvenue jusqu'à nous.

30 septembre, Bartholomé écrit à Lafond, déplorant l'attitude distante adoptée par Degas à son égard.

1903

8 mai, mort de Paul Gauguin aux îles Marquises, à l'âge de 54 ans.

septembre, Degas écrit à Alexis Rouart: «On est toujours ici, dans cet atelier, après

des cires. Sans le travail, quelle triste vieillesse!»

13 novembre, mort de Camille Pissarro, à l'âge de 73 ans. Degas ne l'a pas revu depuis l'affaire Dreyfus.

30 décembre, écrit à Bracquemond une missive au ton mélancolique, «Vous avez oublié la revue mensuelle [*Le Jour et la Nuit*] que nous voulions autrefois lancer?»

1904

mai, Degas, qui souffre depuis deux mois d'une grippe intestinale, reçoit la visite de Daniel Halévy qui voit, avec stupéfaction: «... vêtu comme un vagabond, un homme amaigri, *un autre homme*».

fin juillet, écrit à Paul Poujaud pour lui demander quelle est, dans son cas «après les sept reprises de grippe gastro-intestinale». Il n'aime ni la Suisse ni les Pyrénées («Les Pyrénées, c'est loin et chaud») et lui demande ce qu'il pense du Jura.

3 août, dans une lettre à Hortense Valpinçon, Degas dit espérer lui faire une courte visite.

10 août, écrit à Durand-Ruel: «- Je fais force de rames pour vous donner bientôt quelque chose.»

23 août env., très vraisemblablement sur le conseil de Poujaud, Degas décide d'aller faire une cure de montagne à Pontarlier dans le Jura.

28 août, depuis Pontarlier, Degas écrit à Durand-Ruel pour lui demander 200 francs.

7 septembre, Degas écrit à Alexis Rouart, de Pontarlier où il est depuis quinze jours, et où son état s'améliore légèrement. A l'aller, il est passé par Epinal, Gérardmer, Munster, Colmar, Belfort, Besançon, Ornans. Au retour, il passera peut-être par Nancy.

27 décembre, «C'est vrai, mon cher ami, écrit Degas à Alexis Rouart, tu dis bien, vous êtes ma famille. Donc à dimanche avec joie.»

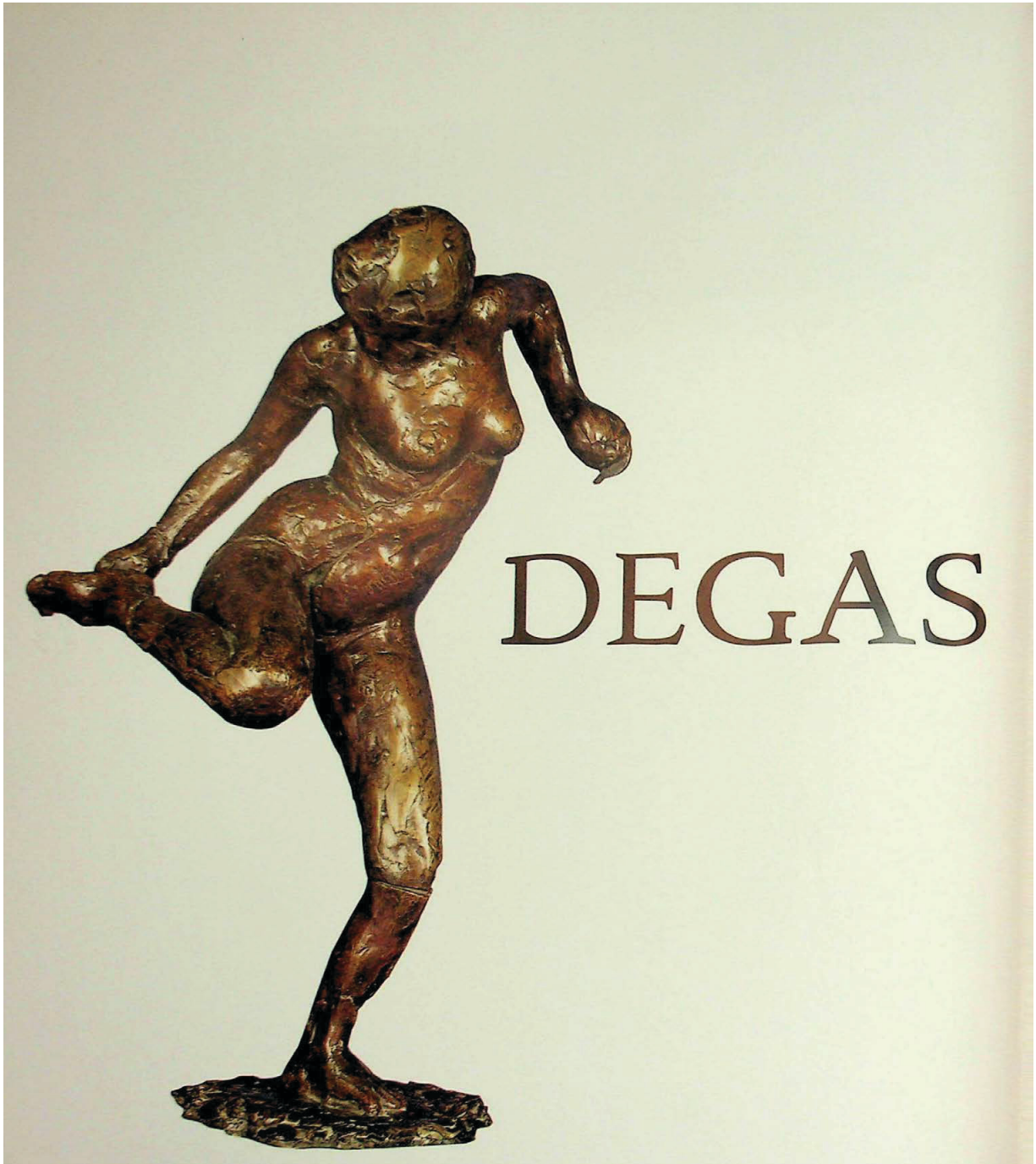
1905

février, Durand-Ruel organise à Londres (Grafton Galleries) une immense exposition des Impressionnistes qui comporte trente-cinq œuvres de Degas.

308

Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Degas*, (cat. by R. Pickvance), June 19-November 21, 1993, no. 56; also cited pp. 87-88, 308 and 329 (illustrated)





London, The National Gallery, *Degas: Beyond Impressionism* (cat. by R. Kendall), May 22 – August 26, 1996, no. 90; also cited pp. 104, 278, illustrated p. 281. Exhibition traveled to Chicago, The Art Institute, September 28, 1996-January 5, 1997 [pastel exhibited at Chicago venue only]



*Richard Kendall*

# *beyond Impressionism*

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What are we to make of this wilful, almost aleatory, distribution of intense colour in works that are otherwise so pondered and deliberate? Are we to take Pauline at her word, seeing it as a 'hit-and-miss' affair that resulted in a single study that 'pleased' the artist, leaving a folder full of 'rejects' in its wake? If there was nothing on which to base our judgement other than the cluster around the *Red ballet skirts*, from which only one work was signed and sold in Degas's lifetime, such an assessment might be plausible, irrespective of the profligate expenditure of time, energy and materials involved.<sup>98</sup> And it is certainly true that considerable numbers of unfinished drawings and pastels of this and other subjects, many linked in serial relationships, were found in Degas's studio after his death. But few 'families' of related images coincide so neatly with the model's testimony and few are so consistent with this quasi-Darwinian, survival-of-the-fittest approach. More common is the sequence of studies that includes three or four fully developed compositions, several of which may be signed, varying not just in their colouristic pitch but in subtle details of staffage and décor, in refinements of format and nuances of surface. The cycle around *Dancers* (cat. 23), for example, includes at least five near-identical representations of a group of resting ballerinas that almost exhaust the palette, from lavenders to sky blues, the fieriest of pinks to the most sonorous browns.<sup>99</sup> Far from offering a hierarchy of finish and marketability, however, we find that all these works were sumptuously enriched, all carry the artist's signature and all were sold to either Durand-Ruel or Vollard in Degas's lifetime.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the populous family of *Russian dancers* (cat. 89–96) incorporates five or more signed works in its number, though here it is predominantly and surprisingly the less-developed specimens, such as the vibrant *Three Russian dancers* from Stockholm (cat. 83), that were surrendered to the market.<sup>101</sup> Conversely, a picture such as the magnificent *Russian dancers* (cat. 90) from the Lewyt collection, a masterpiece by any standards, remained unsold, revealing substantial flaws in Pauline's anecdotal account.

Not for the first time, our understanding of Degas's late craft may be advanced by a remark of Paul Valéry's, taken from an extended reflection on the painter's draughtsmanship, his willpower and his serialism. Valéry notes the reluctance of Degas to admit 'that his work has reached its final stage. . . . At times he turns back to those trial sketches, adding colours, mingling pastel with charcoal; in one version the petticoats may be yellow, in another purple'. As if to summarise his thoughts, the writer adds, 'Degas was one of that family of abstract artists who separate form from colour or from subject.'<sup>102</sup> Written in Paris in the 1930s, when the idea of a 'family of abstract artists' was both localised and historically specific, Valéry's text appears to appropriate Degas for one of the principal currents of modernism, even as he acknowledged the artist's

104

historic roots. As Valéry knew well, the separation of form and colour had a particular, even painful, resonance throughout Degas's career, echoing back to the doctrines of Ingres and the example of Delacroix, the rigour of Florence against the seductiveness of Venice. In these pastels, however, the time-honoured argument approaches a new and less-easily defined resolution. While the forms of Degas's late imagery may be swamped by waves of luxuriant colour, they were almost invariably founded on a deep-rooted sense of composition and sustained by the most buoyant of draughtsmanship. If these rainbow-hued scenes represent Degas's final liberation from Ingres, they are no more truly 'abstract' than their engagement with bodily movement, muscular exhaustion and corporeality allows.

Inverting Valéry's formulation, we might say that colour was never more purposeful nor instrumental in Degas's subject matter than in these last pastels. The closer that two renderings of *Russian dancers* become in their conformation, the more we respond to their finely nuanced hues, to the hints of dawn in one, of autumnal lassitude in another, to a wild eruption of pagan energy in a third. Colour is never arbitrary, but fiercely contested across every inch of the scene and inextricably bound up with the pattern of depicted form. In the *Russian dancers* series, entire planes of pastel have been shifted from russet to ochre or purple to white, while last-minute flourishes of charcoal impose order on impending chromatic chaos. Close scrutiny of such works exposes these tortuous processes at work, the principal dancer's dress in *Red ballet skirts*, for example, revealing itself as a vivid crocus yellow in a former incarnation and the face of the same ballerina disclosing an alternative, more anatomically precise, set of features. Georges Jeannot confirmed this practice at first hand, writing of a picture begun in a range of cool blues and greens that he found transformed, a few days later, into one 'in the key of orange', echoing Valéry's account of the 'redrafting, cancelling and endless recapitulation' that went into such studies.<sup>103</sup>

In generating these extraordinary mutations, Degas separated form from colour only to fuse it together again in complex and utterly original ways. Seen as sequences, his groups of multi-hued pastels have the closest affinity with the suites of poplars and grainstacks of Monet, the urban landscapes of Pissarro and the obsessive Provençal scenes of Cézanne, while carrying the argument further, into the complex terrain of figuration. Like Monet and Pissarro, Degas would experiment with a shift of hue in a repeated form or explore a rise or fall in chromatic temperature; like Cézanne, he tightened intervals and masses or redistributed space with each successive alignment. More than any of these artists, however, Degas granted himself the right of invention, transforming a given pictorial challenge by changing a form, such as a prominent dancer's skirt, from yellow to scarlet, or, as Jeannot tells us,

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## THE FIGURE AND THE LANDSCAPE

(cat. 100) remind us of Degas's active support for Gauguin during this decade; while the sensuous geometry of *Houses at the foot of a cliff* and *View of Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme* (cat. 99), compares with and perhaps exceeds in audacity the contemporary work of Cézanne.<sup>67</sup> These latter canvases are deceptively simple in appearance, yet extraordinarily complex in structure. Only recently yielding to analysis, they seem to be synthetic reformulations of observed elements, constructed by Degas from disparate views of the town in a collage-like process, which may depend on photography or conceptual verve but has few equals in the age before Cubism.<sup>68</sup>

A further challenge shared by Degas with these artists, as well as with a large number of their peers, was that of the monumental figure composition set in the open air, rivalling those of Titian and Poussin, Delacroix and Courbet, yet asserting its modernity. Almost all the prominent Impressionists tackled the theme at some stage in their careers, from Monet's early, gigantic picnic scenes to Renoir's later fresco-like bathers, though it is arguable that none entirely resolved the demands of the genre. One of Degas's first major canvases, the 1860 *Young Spartans* (fig. 108), was essentially a figure-in-the-landscape study, though still dependent on history and inevitably painted in the artificial surroundings of the studio. Later in that decade, at a time when she was much involved with Degas, Berthe Morisot admired a more contemporary effort by Bazille, noting that 'he has tried to do what we have so often attempted – a figure in the outdoor light', and drawing attention to the demands and contradictions of *plein-air* technique in this context.<sup>69</sup> Degas's *Beach scene* (London, National Gallery) of 1869 belongs to this evolution (though the artist insisted in later life that it was contrived indoors), as do numerous open-air portraits, horse-racing scenes and rural conversation pieces from the Impressionist years.

In the mid-1880s, in publicly exhibited pastels such as the defiantly rustic *Girl drying herself* (fig. 163), Degas again laid claim to the ambitious, insistently modern nude-in-a-landscape motif. Though the striking of postures against outdoor painting continued, he more frequently turned to rural settings for his female bathers than is generally recognised. Like Cézanne, who admitted that he had failed to persuade models to pose for him outdoors, Degas continued to arrange his riverbank scenes and countryside toilettes in the studio, adding rocks, trees and grassy thickets from his own earlier sketches or from those of friends.<sup>70</sup> Some nude subjects were developed with both indoor and outdoor backgrounds (figs. 172–3) and even certain of his sculptures were implicitly located in the open air, like the *Seated woman wiping her left side* (cat. 54) who sits on a tree stump. Again, the lure of posterity played its part, tempting Degas towards scenes of muscular nudity that recall

the *Diana at her bath* of Titian or Poussin's *Baptism*, if only to prompt his irreverence. Poussin's picture, known in nineteenth-century France in copies and engravings, provided Degas with a moment of private humour when he introduced a figure from the master's composition – the seated nude who struggles with her stocking – into his majestic but probably unfinished *Bathers* (cat. 88).<sup>71</sup> Quoting also from bath studies and reclining nudes that date back to his youth, Degas locked together four massively stated bodies in every state of activity and lassitude, summarising his past even as he reached forward to the bathing parties of the Fauves and the anxious seashore nudes of Matisse and Picasso.

The culmination of Degas's ambition, however, as well as one of the most unexpected departures of his late career, was surely the series of *Russian dancers* (cats. 89–96), begun in 1899.<sup>72</sup> Conspicuously situated in the open air, or against highly naturalistic backcloths that make no reference to their stage settings, these triumphant pastels belong to the great tradition of European figure art. Surprisingly, they are also evidence of Degas's participation in a wave of curiosity for folk art and the exotic that swept through European culture in the early twentieth century. Though it is still not known who his models were, troupes of foreign dancers performed regularly in cabarets near Degas's Montmartre studio, and a taste for all things Russian, such as the 'Brutal colouring of a . . . Russian toy' noted by Jacques-Emile Blanche, was much in evidence in Paris, perhaps encouraged by the state visit of the Tsar in 1896.<sup>73</sup> Even closer to Degas's imagery were accounts in contemporary books on the dance of the wild steps and brilliant costumes in Balkan and Russian festivities, illustrated in Henri de Soria's 1897 *Histoire pittoresque de la danse* by a scene analogous to Degas's pastels (fig. 205). In de Soria's wood engraving, the near frenzy of the performers is vividly captured, but the bright colours of their outfits necessarily left to our imaginations.

Individually and cumulatively, Degas's *Russian dancers* fuse together many of the distinctive practices and themes of his late career; the progression from traced drawings, such as *Three Russian dancers* (cat. 96), to a sequence of compositional successors; the restatement of a single figure, for example the Metropolitan Museum's *Russian dancer* (cat. 92), in more complex contexts, such as the Stockholm *Three Russian dancers* (cat. 89); the exploration of expressive colour, from the descriptive hues of the Sara Lee Corporation's *Russian dancer* (cat. 91) to the explosive tints of *Russian dancers* (cat. 94); the fascination with energy, whether the dignified rhythms of the pastel in the Lewyt Collection (cat. 90) or the near-hysteria of *Russian dancers* (cat. 95); and, above all, the obsessive, relentless inventiveness of the artist when confronted by the female form, his sticks of charcoal and his pastels, and the imperious demands of his picture.

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THE FIGURE AND THE LANDSCAPE

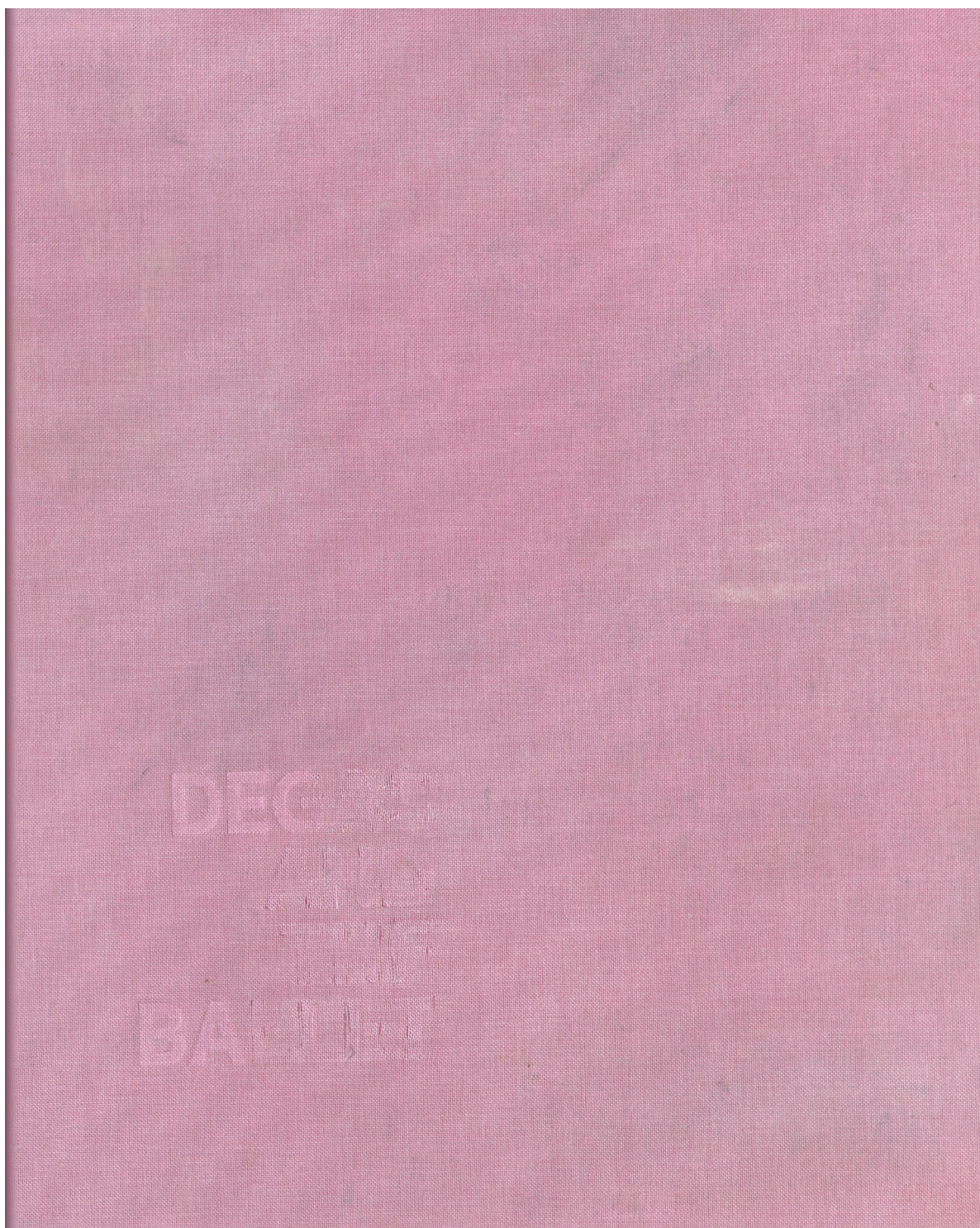


CAT. 90  
*Russian dancers*, c.1899  
Pastel on tracing paper  
58 x 76 cm (22<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 29<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)  
Mrs Alex Lewyt

281

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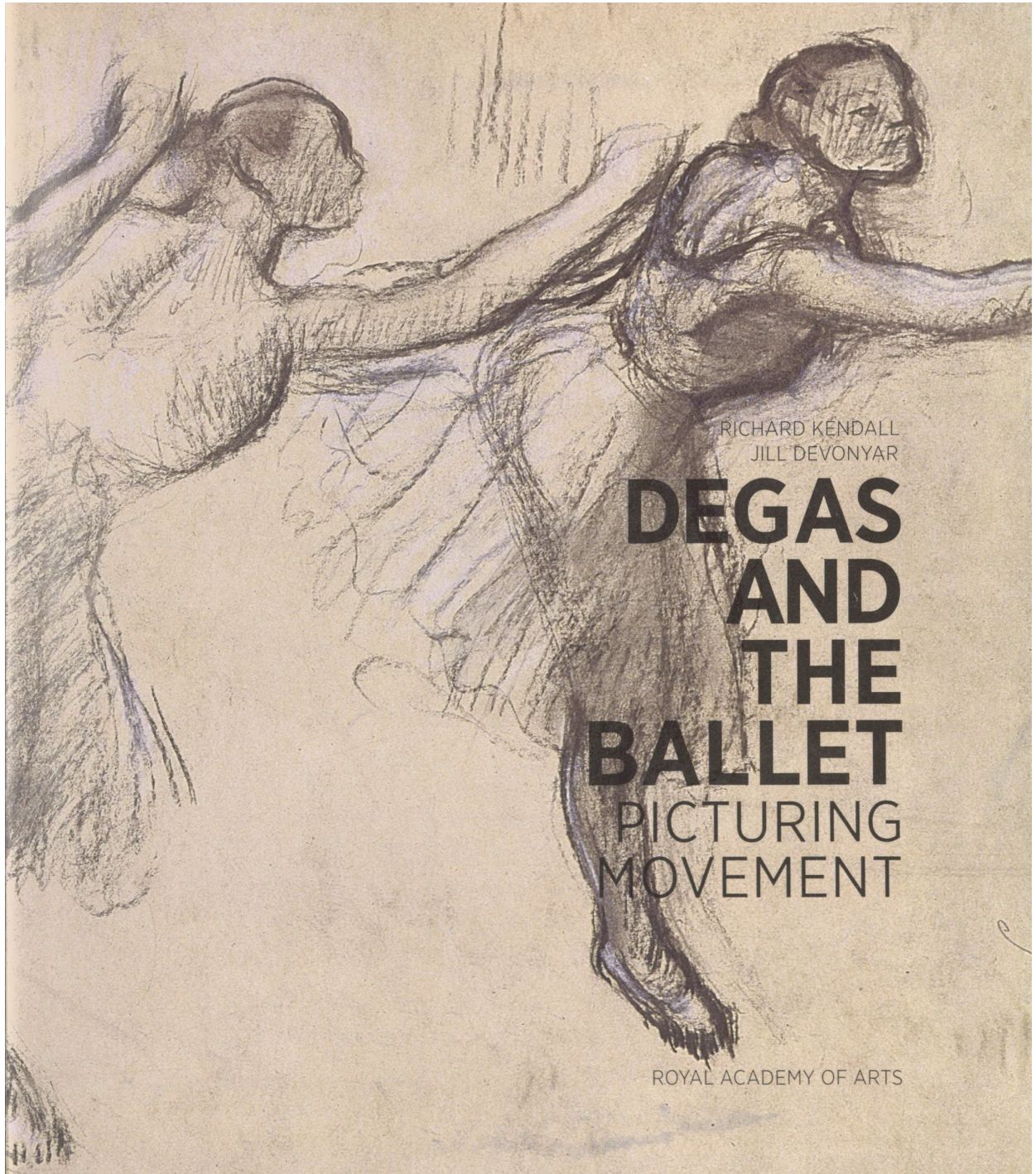




London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement*,  
(cat. by J. DeVonyar and R. Kendall), September 17, 2011- December 11, 2011, p. 234-235 (illustrated)







RICHARD KENDALL  
JILL DEVONYAR

**DEGAS  
AND  
THE  
BALLET**  
PICTURING  
MOVEMENT

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

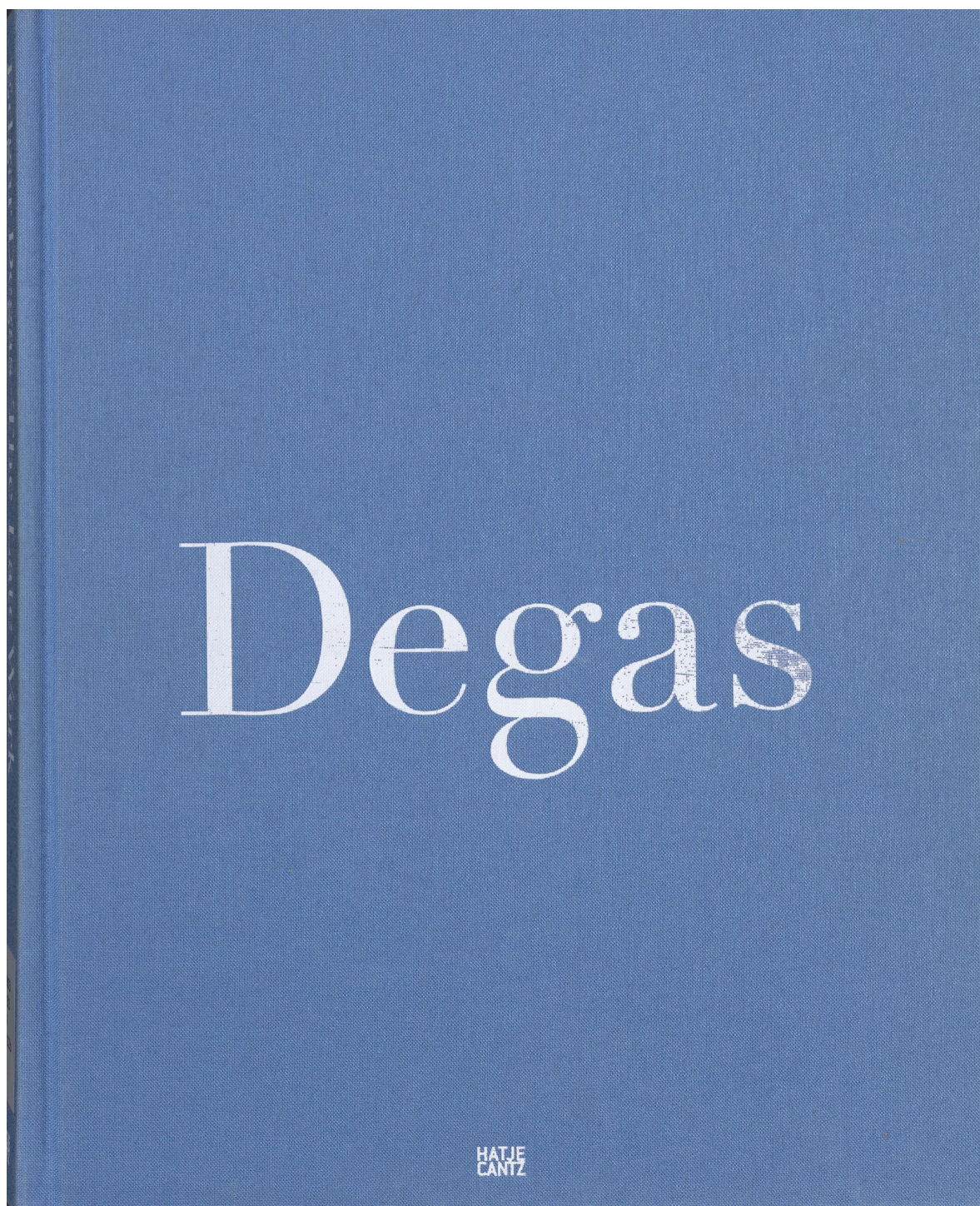
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Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Edgar Degas: The Late Work* (cat. by M. Schwander),  
September 30, 2012 – January 27, 2013, cited p. 80-81 and 257 (illustrated)



# EDGAR DEGAS

## THE LATE WORK

*Edited by Martin Schwander  
on behalf of Fondation Beyeler*

HATJE  
CANTZ

Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Edgar Degas: The Late Work* (cat. by M. Schwander),  
September 30, 2012 – January 27, 2013, cited p. 80-81 and 257 (illustrated)





*Danseuses rouées*, c. 1899. Private collection

81

Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Edgar Degas: The Late Work* (cat. by M. Schwander),  
September 30, 2012 – January 27, 2013, cited p. 80-81 and 257 (illustrated)



*Trois danseuses rouges*, 1896  
*Three Dancers in Red*  
Pastel, 65.9 × 54.4 cm  
Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki  
Page 71

*Danseuses*, 1897–1901  
*Dancers*  
Pastel and charcoal on tracing paper, 65.1 × 77.8 cm  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. A. Alfred Taubman  
Lemoisne 1223  
Page 86

*Danseuses*, c. 1898  
*Dancers*  
Pastel on joined paper, 83 × 72 cm  
Fondation de l'Hermitage, Lausanne, Bequest of Lucie Schmidheiny, 1998  
Lemoisne 1328  
Page 85

*Deux danseuses au repos*, c. 1898  
*Two Dancers Resting*  
Pastel, 92 × 103 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Bequest of Baronne Eva Gebhard-Gourgaud, 1965  
Lemoisne 1329  
Page 91

*Danseuse*, 1899  
*Dancer*  
Pastel, 61 × 59.8 cm  
Private collection, Switzerland  
Lemoisne 1350  
Page 76

*Danseuses russes*, c. 1899  
*Russian Dancers*  
Pastel and charcoal on tracing paper, 57 × 75 cm  
Private collection  
Lemoisne 1187  
Pages 80–81

*Danseuses à la barre*, c. 1900  
*Dancers at the Barre*  
Charcoal and pastel on tracing paper, 111.2 × 95.6 cm  
National Gallery of Canada/Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1921  
Lemoisne 808  
Page 75

*Deux danseuses, corsages violets*, c. 1900  
*Two Dancers in Violet Tutus*  
Pastel, 79 × 51 cm  
Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal  
Lemoisne 1389  
Page 48

*Groupe de danseuses*, c. 1900  
*Group of Dancers*  
Charcoal and pastel, 57.2 × 69.5 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy of the Halcyon Gallery, London  
Lemoisne 1374  
Page 72

*Danseuses*, 1900–05  
*Dancers*  
Pastel, 83 × 107 cm  
Private collection  
Lemoisne 1256  
Page 90

*Danseuses évoluant*, 1900–05  
*Dancers on the Stage*  
Charcoal and pastel, 65 × 70 cm  
Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal  
Lemoisne 1462  
Page 73

*Trois danseuses*, 1900–05  
*Three Dancers*  
Charcoal and pastel on tracing paper, 54 × 76.5 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy of the Halcyon Gallery, London  
Page 36

*Danseuses aux jupes jaunes*, 1903  
*Dancers in Yellow Tutus*  
Pastel, 82 × 92 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy of M.S.F.A.  
Page 87

*Trois danseuses (jupes bleues, corsages rouges)*, c. 1903  
*Three Dancers (Blue Tutus, Red Bodices)*  
Pastel, 94 × 81 cm  
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel  
Lemoisne 1428  
Page 89

#### Sculptures

*Danseuse attachant l'épaulette de son corsage*, modeled 1880–1900  
*Dancer Adjusting the Shoulder Strap of Her Bodice*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 35.2 × 15.9 × 11.8 cm  
Collection Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny, Switzerland  
Rewald 25, Czestochowski/Pingeot 64 O  
Page 62

*Danseuse, arabesque ouverte sur la jambe droite, bras gauche dans la ligne*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer, Arabesque over Right Leg, Left Arm in Line*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 28.8 × 43.7 × 9.7 cm  
New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester  
Rewald 42, Czestochowski/Pingeot 3 D  
Page 39

*Danseuse attachant le cordon de son maillot*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer Fastening the String of Her Tights*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 43.1 × 21.6 × 15.3 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy of Christie's  
Rewald 28, Czestochowski/Pingeot 33 HER  
Page 66

*Danseuse au repos, les mains sur les reins, jambe droite en avant*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer at Rest, Hands Behind Her Back, Right Leg Forward*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 44.1 × 19.5 × 24.9 cm  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966  
Rewald 22, Czestochowski/Pingeot 63 E  
Page 67

*Danseuse, grande arabesque, deuxième temps*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer, Grande Arabesque, Second Time*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 43 × 61 × 28 cm  
Hamburger Kunsthalle  
Rewald 36, Czestochowski/Pingeot 15 O  
Page 38

*Danseuse, position de quatrième devant sur la jambe, première étude*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer, Fourth Position Front, on Left Leg (first study)*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 41 × 22.5 × 23 cm  
Kunsthalle Mannheim  
Rewald 55, Czestochowski/Pingeot 6 L  
Page 59

*Danseuse, position de quatrième devant sur la jambe, deuxième étude*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer, Fourth Position Front, on Left Leg (second study)*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 60.3 × 36 × 37 cm  
Collection of Walter and Minnie Bechtler, Switzerland  
Rewald 43, Czestochowski/Pingeot 58 T  
Page 58

*Danseuse s'avancant les bras levés, première étude*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer Moving Forward, Arms Raised (first study)*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 35 × 15.1 × 17.5 cm  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966  
Rewald 24, Czestochowski/Pingeot 19 F  
Page 78

*Danseuse s'avancant les bras levés, deuxième étude*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer Moving Forward, Arms Raised (second study)*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 65 × 25.5 × 22 cm  
Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Bequest of Henri-Auguste Widmer, 1936  
Rewald 26, Czestochowski/Pingeot 72 N  
Page 60

*Préparation à la danse, pied droit en avant*, modeled 1885–90  
*Dancer Ready to Dance, Right Foot Forward*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 56.8 × 32.2 × 22.4 cm  
Private collection  
Rewald 46, Czestochowski/Pingeot 57 Q  
Page 50

*Danseuse regardant la plante de son pied droit*, modeled 1890–1900  
*Dancer Looking at the Sole of Her Right Foot*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 46.2 × 25 × 17 cm  
Private collection  
Rewald 45, Czestochowski/Pingeot 40 H  
Page 47

*Danseuse mettant son bas, deuxième étude*, modeled 1890–1911  
*Dancer Putting on Her Stocking (second study)*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 43.2 × 17.3 × 27.3 cm  
Private collection  
Rewald 58, Czestochowski/Pingeot 70 Q  
Page 46

*Danseuse habillée au repos*, modeled c. 1895  
*Dressed Dancer at Rest, Hands Behind Her Back, Right Leg Forward*  
Posthumous bronze cast of original wax sculpture, 43.6 × 23 × 26 cm  
Private collection  
Rewald 52, Czestochowski/Pingeot 51  
Page 68

Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Edgar Degas: The Late Work* (cat. by M. Schwander),  
September 30, 2012 – January 27, 2013, cited p. 80–81 and 257 (illustrated)



## Degas: "Russian Dancers" and the Art of Pastel

May 19–October 11, 2015, GETTY CENTER

One of Degas's great late works, *Russian Dancers* (circa 1899), is on loan to the Getty Museum as the centerpiece of a special installation of late 19th-century French pastels.



*Russian Dancers*, 1899, Edgar Degas, pastel and brush on tracing paper. Courtesy of a private collection.

In this pastel, Degas celebrates the rambunctious abandon, bright colors, and elaborate folk costumes of Ukrainian peasant dancers, very much in contrast to the ethereal ballerinas for which he is famous. To Degas, the Russian peasants embodied the primitive and visceral human urge to dance. He captured this exuberance by applying layers of pure color on paper, artfully combining the immediacy of drawing with the vibrancy of painting.

*Russian Dancers* is joined by a selection of works from the permanent collection that depict Paris's flashy popular entertainments. These include Pierre Bonnard's *Le Moulin Rouge* (1889) and *At the Circus: Entering the Ring* (1899) by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

### Russian or Ukrainian Dancers?

The text above is retained as originally published, but current circumstances call for clarification.

The so-called Russian dancers in this pastel are Ukrainian dancers, and they performed in France at the end of 19th century as part of folk dance groups. Degas probably saw Ukrainian performers in Paris, given keen French interest in such culture after the establishment of the Dual Alliance between France and Russia in 1894.

Unfortunately, despite the importance and the uniqueness of the Ukrainian culture, those dancers were generically called "Russian dancers" in France because at that time the majority of Ukraine was still part of the Russian empire and the Tsar Alexander II had carried out a policy of Russification throughout the empire. Degas himself (mistakenly) titled a series of works with this name, and his titles remained, although he respected the Ukrainians for retaining their culture and traditions despite centuries of repression.

In the physical display there was a text panel with this additional information. The pastel is not in Getty's collections.

—Department of Drawings, J. Paul Getty Museum, spring 2022

Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, *Degas: Russian Dancers and the Art of the Pastel*,  
May 19, 2015 – October 11, 2015 and May 3, 2016 to October 23, 2016 (on loan through 29 April 2017)



EXHIBITED



Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, *Degas: Russian Dancers and the Art of the Pastel*,  
May 19, 2015 – October 11, 2015 and May 3, 2016 to October 23, 2016 (on loan through 29 April 2017)





## Russian Dancers

1899

### Edgar Degas

French, 1834–1917

Pastel on tracing paper

This extraordinary pastel is a testament to Degas's ability to rise to new challenges toward the end of his career. In a departure from his well-known depictions of ballet, Degas produced a dazzling series portraying the unfamiliar steps of Ukrainian folk dance. In this work, considered to be the masterpiece of the series, Degas's virtuosic handling of pastel achieves a harmony of color and texture that captures the dynamism and vitality of dance.

Lent by a private collection

L.2015.70

Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, *Degas: Russian Dancers and the Art of the Pastel*,  
May 19, 2015 – October 11, 2015 and May 3, 2016 to October 23, 2016 (on loan through 29 April 2017)



# AUCTION COMPARABLES



1

**Edgar Degas**

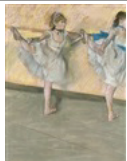
Title Danseuse au repos  
 Description Executed circa 1879. Signed Degas (lower right) Pastel and gouache on  
 Medium pastel and gouache  
 Year of Work Circa 1879  
 Size Height 23.2 in.; Width 25.2 in. / Height 59 cm.; Width 64 cm.  
 Misc. Signed  
 Sale of Sotheby's New York: Monday, November 3, 2008 [Lot 00014] Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale  
 Estimate No Estimate Received  
 Sold For 37,042,500 USD Premium



2

**Edgar Degas**

Title Danseuse au repos  
 Medium Gouache and Pastel  
 Year of Work 1879-1879  
 Size Height 23.2 in.; Width 25.2 in. / Height 59 cm.; Width 64 cm.  
 Misc. Signed  
 Sale of Sotheby's London: Monday, June 28, 1999 [Lot 00004] Impressionist and Modern Art  
 Estimate 5,000,000 - 7,000,000 GBP (7,911,392 - 11,075,949 USD)  
 Sold For 17,601,500 GBP Premium (27,850,474 USD)



3

**Edgar Degas**

Title Danseuses à la barre  
 Description Edgar Degas (1834-1917) Danseuses à la barre signed and indistinctly inscribed 'Dega'  
 Medium pastel, gouache and charcoal  
 Year of Work Circa 1880  
 Size Height 25.9 in.; Width 20 in. / Height 65.8 cm.; Width 50.7 cm.  
 Misc. Signed, Inscribed  
 Sale of Christie's London: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 [Lot 00009] Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale  
 Estimate 4,000,000 - 6,000,000 GBP (7,857,002 - 11,785,504 USD)  
 Sold For 13,481,250 GBP Premium (26,480,554 USD)



Edgar Degas | *Ukrainian Dancers*

Circa 1899

**Medium:** Pastel and charcoal on tracing paper laid onto millboard

**Dimensions:** 28<sup>3/4</sup> x 23<sup>1/4</sup> inches | 73 x 59.1 cm



THE  
NATIONAL  
GALLERY

The National Gallery  
*London, England*



## Edgar Degas | *Russian Dancers*

Circa 1899

**Medium:** Pastel on tracing paper mounted on cardboard

**Dimensions:** 24<sup>1/2</sup> x 24<sup>3/4</sup> inches | 62.2 x 62.9 cm



Edgar Degas | *Dancers in Ukrainian Dress*

1899

**Medium:** Charcoal and pastel, on tracing paper, mounted on cardboard

**Dimensions:** 24<sup>3/4</sup> x 25<sup>1/2</sup> inches | 62.9 x 64.8 cm



Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York, United States



## Edgar Degas | *Dancer in Ukrainian Dress*

1899

**Medium:** Pastel over charcoal on tracing paper

**Dimensions:** 24<sup>3/8</sup> x 18 inches | 61.9 x 45.7 cm



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Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York, United States



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