ART INSTITUTE PRESENTS MAJOR CHICAGO COLLECTION OF WORKS ON PAPER

Dreams and Echoes Features More than 100 Works Spanning Five Centuries from the Collection of David and Celia Hilliard

The Art Institute of Chicago is pleased to present

Dreams and Echoes: Drawings and Sculpture in the David and Celia Hilliard Collection, an exhibition of 115 works on paper and small sculptures, ranging in date from the 16th to the late 20th century.

The exhibition, on view from October 20, 2013 to February 16, 2014 in the Jean and Steven Goldman Prints and Drawings Galleries in the Richard and Mary L. Gray Wing of the Art Institute, showcases the wide range of the Hilliards’ interests, from well-known artists such as Edgar Degas and Henri Matisse to 17th-century Dutch landscape artists to the visionary work of the Symbolists. Drawn from one of the most significant private collections in Chicago, Dreams and Echoes represents 40 years of a shared enterprise and the unerring eyes of the Hilliards, who have followed their intellectual curiosity to acquire strong examples of French, German, and British art across many periods, with a particular focus on the late 19th century.

Alongside the work of its acknowledged masters, there is also the fresh perspective of the less familiar but startling and distinctive art of the Symbolists, precursors to the modern and heralds of a revolutionary change in style and subject matter.
“Working with both Celia and David Hilliard has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my many years at the Art Institute,” said Douglas Druick, President and Eloise W. Martin Director of the museum. “They have been staunch supporters of the museum for nearly four decades, and they have come to embody for me all that is remarkable about the American museum model of private support, which relies on the generosity of individuals motivated not only by a passion for art but by a vision of civic responsibility. We are grateful not only for the opportunity to showcase this remarkable collection but also for the more than 60 works they have already given or promised to the museum. With this gift, the Art Institute’s distinction as one of the best collections of works on paper in the world is assured well into the future.”

“Collecting is for us a journey,” said David and Celia Hilliard. “It’s an intellectual journey, and we hope that visitors will be able to see in this exhibition the migration of our interests through centuries of artists and their works. But it has been a literal journey too, an exciting and rewarding engagement with scholars, dealers, and other collectors here and abroad. Underscoring it all is the passion we share for drawings, which are for us the embodiments of an artist’s first and truest impulse and testaments to the sense of struggle on paper to give these thoughts a fresh and vivid form. It is this ever-present character of experimentation, of problems as yet unresolved, that is so engaging.”

The Hilliards started their collection with a focus on prints of the 19th and 20th centuries and bravely ventured into areas that were then somewhat underrepresented in the Art Institute’s collection, such as the mysterious world of Northern European Mannerist artists, French artists of the 17th century, and landscapes by Dutch, Italian, French, and British masters of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Hilliards gradually found their way back to the 19th century through British and then French landscapes, achieving, along the way, a rather effective art historical survey. One artist who appealed to them repeatedly was Odilon Redon, and, by the time of the Art Institute’s landmark exhibition *Odilon Redon: Prince of Dreams* opened in 1994, they owned three significant Redon drawings, all of which were included in the exhibition and are included here as well.
Also among their in-depth 19th-century French holdings are three distinct, compelling drawings by Jean-Francois Millet and three by Edgar Degas—two very early and one very late drawing. Increasingly, the Hilliards’ interest has focused on other 19th-century European masters such as James Ensor, Jan Toorop, Giovanni Segatini, and William Degouve de Nuncques, as well as 20th-century visionaries including Alfred Kubin, Giacomo Balla, and Matisse. Their latest passion—represented in the exhibition—is for 19th-century small scale sculpture by Romantic and Symbolist artists. This return to the 19th century, the genesis of their collection, expresses the consistency of the Hilliards’ sensibilities: across all periods, they have been drawn to works that provoke, intrigue, and transport the viewer to another plane, an alternate reality.

The Hilliards have been involved with the Art Institute, in many different capacities, for nearly 40 years. In 1974, David Hilliard became a member of the museum’s then-new Auxiliary Board, and thus began their association. As a trustee, David Hilliard has held leadership positions on three curatorial advisory committees, and Celia Hilliard on two; they are both deeply involved in the museum’s libraries. A cultural historian, Celia Hilliard authored an issue of the Art Institute’s Museum Studies publication devoted to the museum’s first president, Charles L. Hutchinson. Both together and individually, they have shown a rare and profound dedication to the Art Institute.

*Dreams and Echoes: Drawings and Sculpture in the David and Celia Hilliard Collection* is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue, edited by Suzanne Folds McCullagh, the Anne Vogt Fuller and Marion Titus Searle Chair and Curator of the Department of Prints and Drawings, with assistance from Melissa L. Gustin, exhibition research associate. The catalogue features illustrations and essays on 91 works in the collection, with contributions from more than 50 curators and scholars. The catalogue is distributed by Yale University Press and is also available in the Museum Shop for $45.00.


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Thursdays until 8:00

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s days.
Children under 14 always free
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City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a “Museum Passport” card from any library branch for free general admission to the eleven members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.
The Art Institute of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the citizens of Chicago.