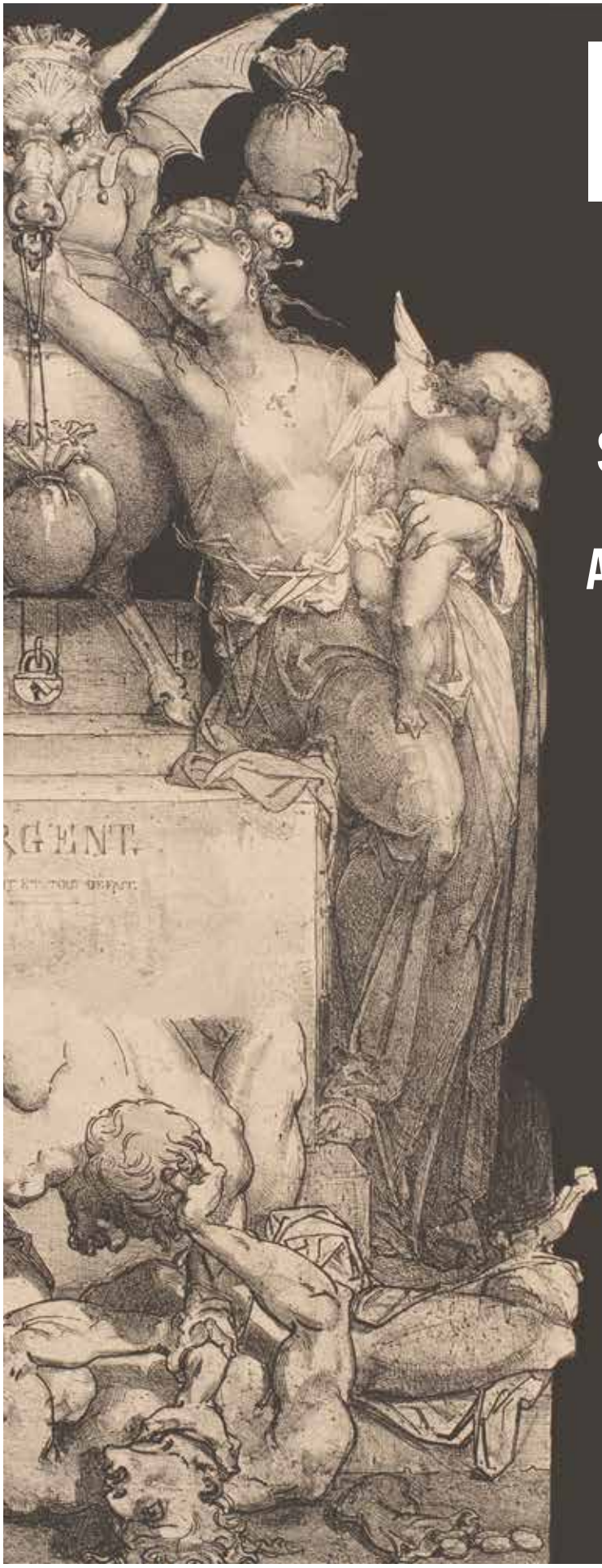


LARGE PRINT

SHADOW VISIONARIES: FRENCH ARTISTS AGAINST THE CURRENT, 1840–70

PLEASE RETURN TO BOX AS YOU EXIT THE EXHIBITION

SHADOW VISIONARIES: FRENCH ARTISTS AGAINST THE CURRENT, 1840–70

The mid-1800s in France was a tumultuous era that witnessed dramatic political, social, and cultural change. The impact of those transformations on art of the period has often been measured by the painting and sculpture shown at government-sponsored Salons, Universal Expositions, and other prominent exhibition venues, which tended to uphold official narratives of progress. Yet a focus on more private media, such as printmaking and photography, tells a different story. In fact, many artists felt at odds with their era's celebration of material advancement and modernization. Rejecting the prevailing current, such figures—described as "Shadow Visionaries" for this exhibition—chose dark subject matter oriented toward the irrational, spiritual, and fantastical. They used the distinctive characteristics of black-and-white media to convey intense emotions, while producing works of unsparing directness and rare beauty. Although some of the Shadow Visionaries evoked a sense of nostalgia, others dreamed boldly toward an alternate future, anticipating later art movements such as Symbolism and Surrealism.

This exhibition is organized by the Clark Art Institute and curated by Anne Leonard, Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

Major funding for *Shadow Visionaries* is provided by Hubert and Mireille Goldschmidt, with additional support from the IFPDA Foundation and the Troob Family Foundation.

VISIONARIES IN THE SHADOWS

Francisco Goya (1746–1828) was a major touchstone for French printmakers exploring dark, supernatural subject matter. His set of eighty *Caprichos* (published in 1799) offered a raw, modern vision of humankind existing in a state of disquiet, bewildered by an unfathomable universe. In addition, Goya's use of aquatint, a tonal method, in combination with etching revolutionized printmaking and left an enduring legacy. Taking cues from art as well as literature, French Romantic printmakers such as Eugène Delacroix made works that hinted at mysterious forces beyond the visible. The writer Victor Hugo observed in the 1820s that "in things there are more than things," and that "it's only when the physical world has completely disappeared from [one's] eyes that the ideal world can be manifested." This emphasis on the incomplete nature of visible reality would profoundly influence the Shadow Visionaries of the mid-century.

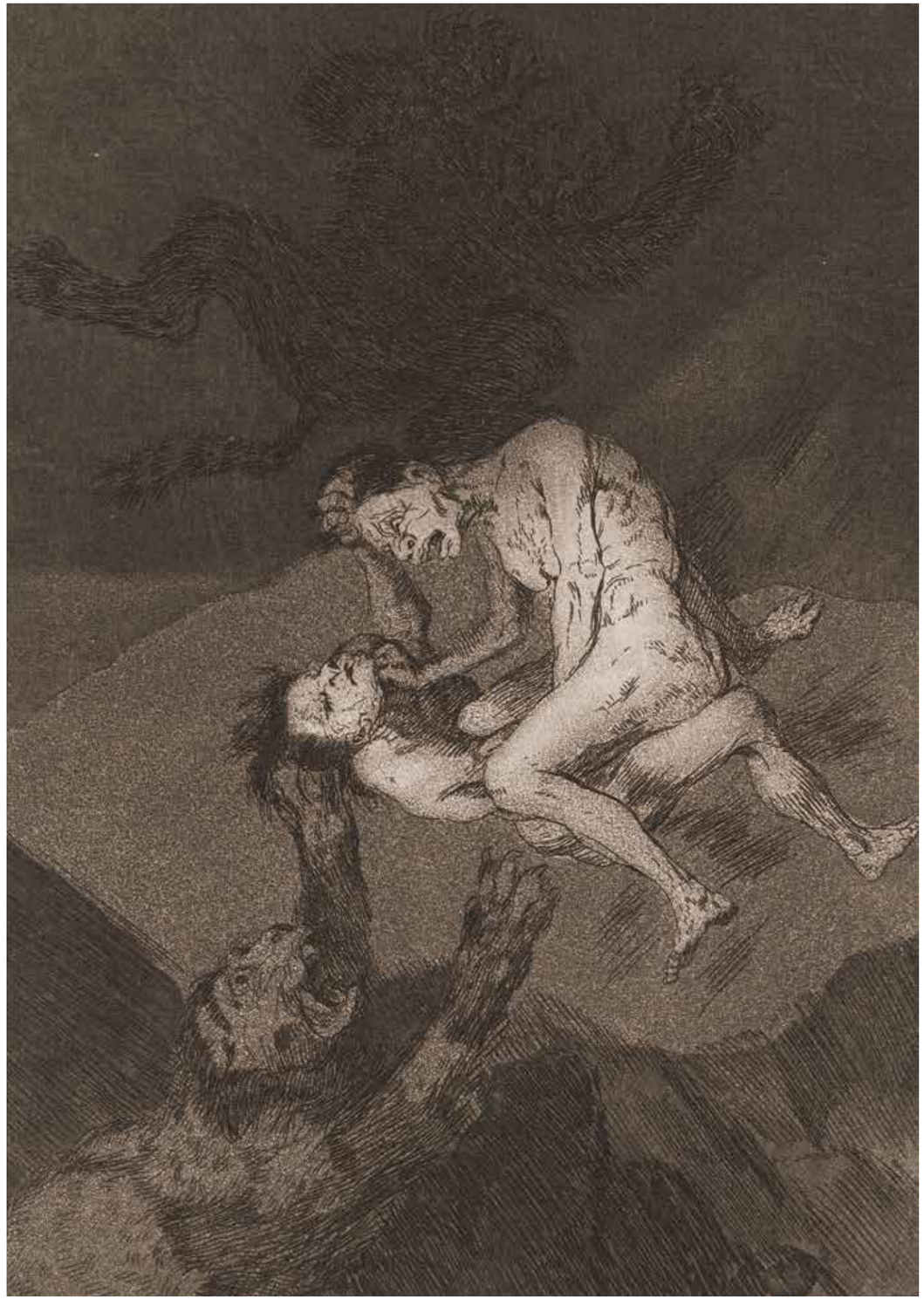
FRANCISCO GOYA
Spanish, 1746–1828

401

Who would have thought it!,
plate 62 from *Los Caprichos*
1799

Etching, burnished aquatint, and burin

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Eleanor A. Sayre
2002.508

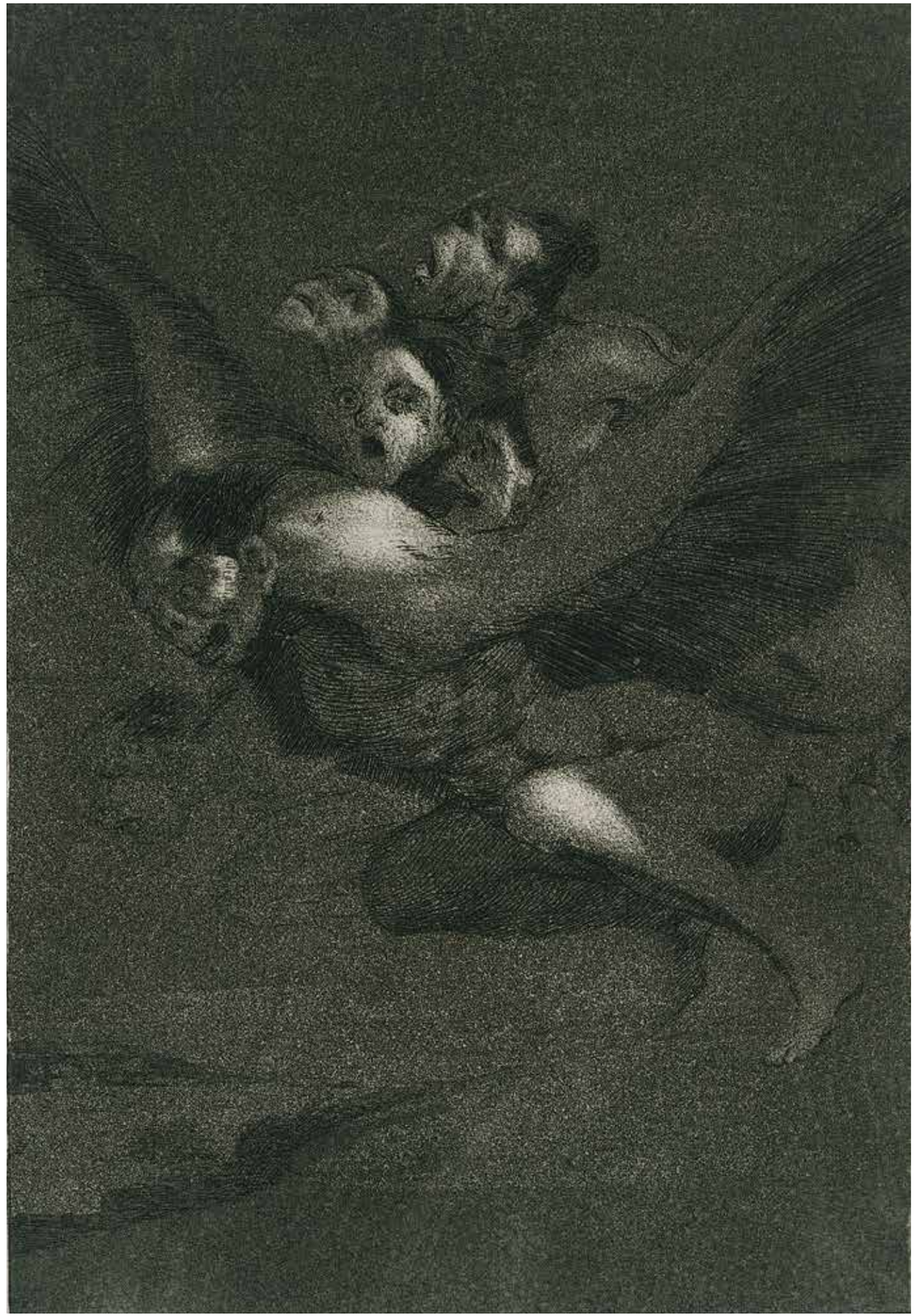


FRANCISCO GOYA
Spanish, 1746–1828

Bon voyage, plate 64 from *Los Caprichos*
1799
Etching, burnished aquatint, and burin

This haunting image, with the acerbic caption "*Buen Viage* (Bon voyage)," includes at least five monstrous heads. The main winged figure carries the others, whose grotesquely caricatured features suggest agony. Perhaps the most terrifying is the screaming figure near the center: with one eye sewn shut, it confronts the viewer with a direct stare out of its other eye. The mottled gradations of Goya's aquatint technique produce a highly ambiguous environment in which nothing, not even the ground under our feet, seems secure.

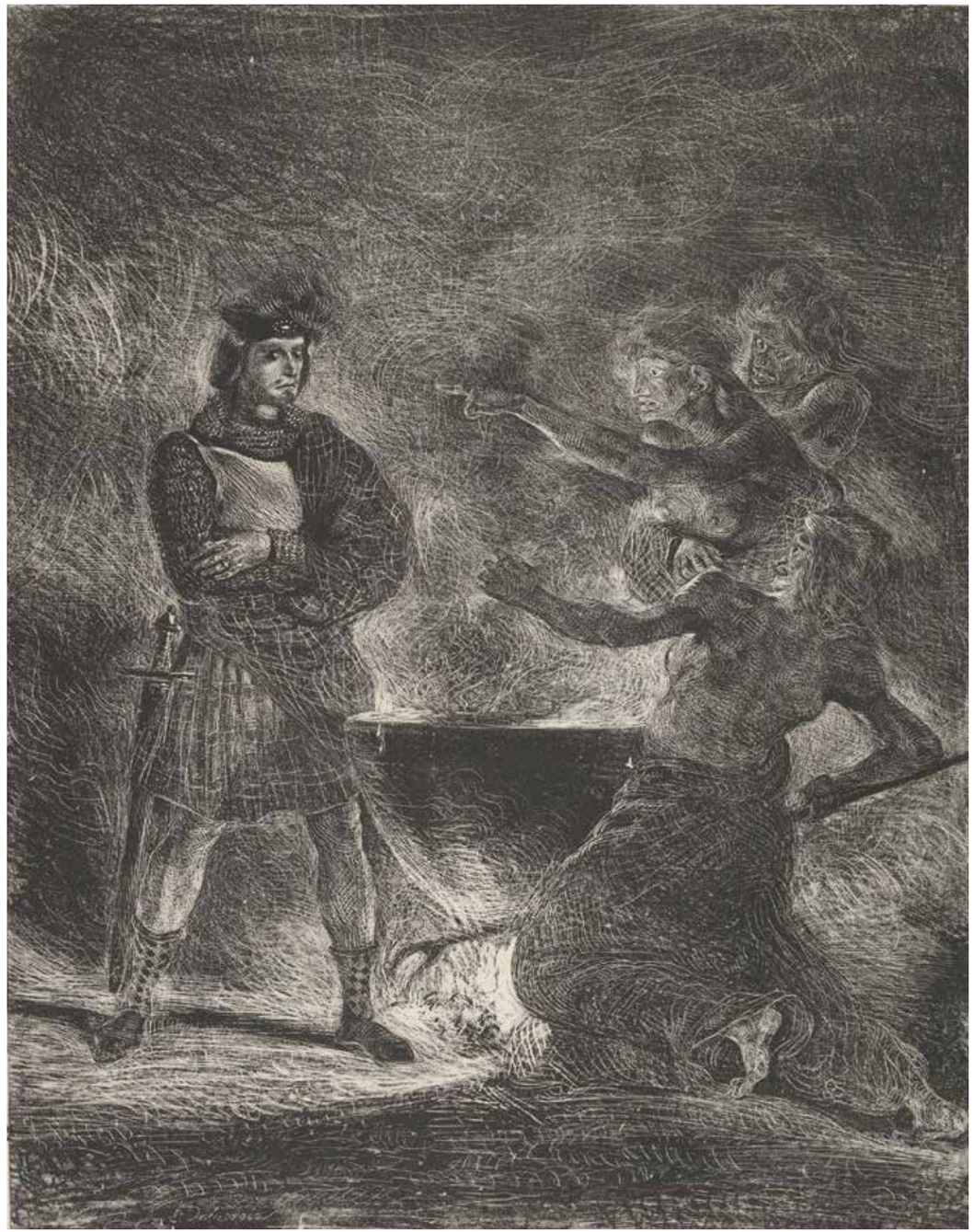
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Miss Katherine Eliot Bullard
14.1786



EUGÈNE DELACROIX
French, 1798–1863

Macbeth Consulting the Witches
(Macbeth, act 4, scene 1)
1825
Lithograph

Alongside his explorations in aquatint, Eugène Delacroix strived to translate its expressive possibilities into lithography, a newer print medium that involved drawing a design directly on stone with a greasy crayon. The repulsion between water and grease ensured that ink would adhere only to the design, which would then be transferred to paper during the printing process. Lithography enabled wide tonal variation and deeper blacks than had been achievable before. This meant that "dark" subject matter no longer posed a technical obstacle in printmaking. *Macbeth Consulting the Witches*, from act 4 scene 1 of Shakespeare's tragedy, includes much scratching on the lithographic stone after the main elements of the image were drawn, creating fearsome atmospheric effects.



EUGÈNE DELACROIX
French, 1798–1863

Hamlet Tries to Follow His Father's Ghost (Hamlet, act 1, scene 4)
1835

The Ghost on the Terrace (Hamlet, act 1, scene 5)
1843
Lithographs

Eugène Delacroix's suite of prints after another Shakespearean tragedy, *Hamlet*, likewise demanded that he push printmaking toward therepresentation of the supernatural. In each of these two scenes where the specter of Hamlet's father appears, Delacroix has his lithographic medium distinguish, to the extent possible, between ghostly and fleshly bodies.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1922
22.56.6, 22.56.7

EUGÈNE DELACROIX
French, 1798–1863

Mephistopheles Aloft
1828
Lithograph; illustration to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*
Paris: Charles Motte, 1828

A towering work of German literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's verse drama *Faust* inspired a suite of illustrations by Delacroix for the French edition of 1828. The most famous is this one, titled *Mephistopheles Aloft*, which likely took inspiration from Goya's *There it goes*, on view nearby. Mephistopheles's saucy comment about the devil, "I like to see the Old Man now and then, and take good care to keep on speaking terms," appears on the opposite page.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917
17.12

FRANCISCO GOYA
Spanish, 1746–1828

There it goes, plate 66 from *Los Caprichos*
1799
Etching and aquatint with burnishing

This print is often cited as a source for the most famous of Eugène Delacroix's illustrations to *Faust*, displayed nearby. The witch in Goya's print is carried by a flying devil that, despite its evident deformity, is a muscular force of evil—an aerial menace.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Eleanor A. Sayre
2002.510

EUGÈNE DELACROIX
French, 1798–1863

Interior of a Military Hospital
1828 or earlier
Aquatint

Interior of a Military Hospital is one of Eugène Delacroix's early experiments in aquatint, a relatively new tonal printmaking technique that Francisco Goya had raised to supreme expressive heights in the 1790s. Delacroix gained firsthand access to Goya's vanguard aquatint works (*Los Caprichos*) years before other French artists did. This was thanks to his friendship with the family of Ferdinand Guillemardet, who had served as ambassador to Spain between 1798 and 1800. Guillemardet's set of *Caprichos*, purchased directly from the artist, was the first to enter France.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1922
22.63.13

MEDIA CLAIMS AT MID-CENTURY

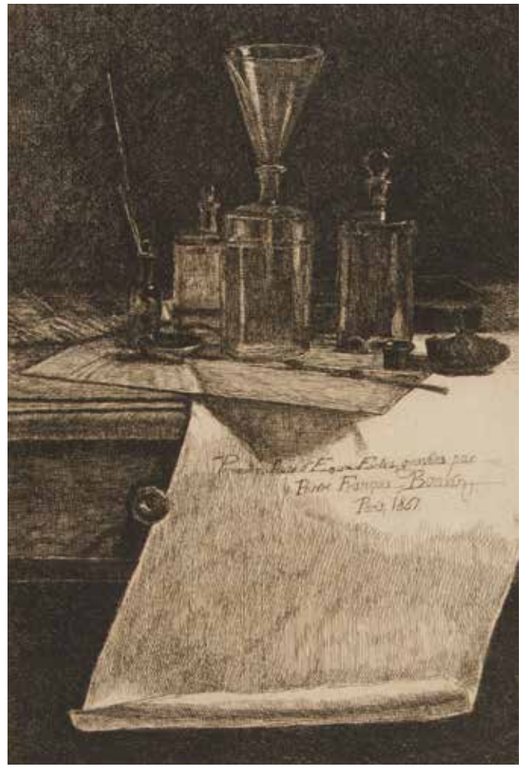
The invention of photography in 1839 shifted the purposes and perceptions of older media, especially printmaking. Photography did not enjoy fine art status in its first decades but won praise for its objectivity and accuracy. Consequently, printmaking's ability to reproduce other art forms—and to precisely depict reality itself—came into question. Early commentators on photography emphasized its mechanical qualities over its affective side. In response, etchers began to double down on their own medium's authentic qualities. Charles Baudelaire, for example, likened etched lines to handwriting that left a trace of the artist's personality on the copperplate. In the 1850s and 1860s, stakes were high for etchers to reclaim their status as creative artists through a focus on original compositions and exquisite printings. In 1862, the publisher Alfred Cadart and the printer Auguste Delâtre formed the Société des Aquafortistes (Society of Etchers), which went on to play a prominent role in promoting artistic etching.

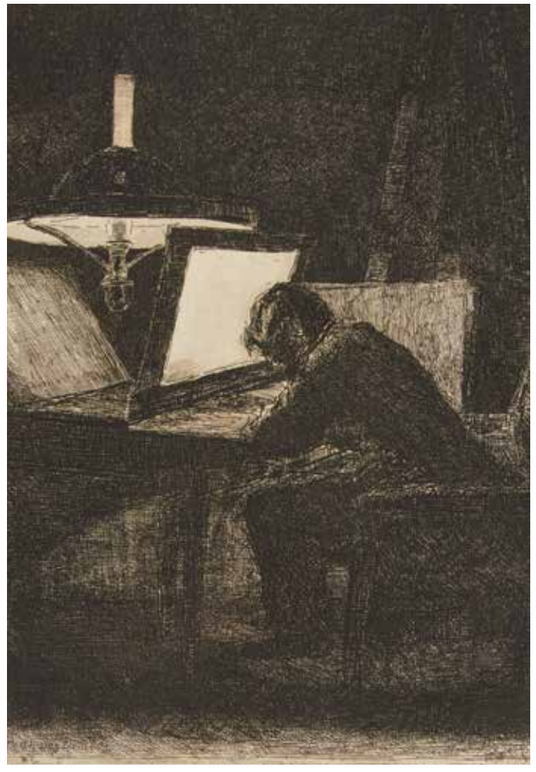
FRANÇOIS BONVIN
French, 1817–1887

Frontispiece, Etching Instruments

The Printmaker

1861
Etchings and drypoint





François Bonvin made only two dozen prints in his lifetime, including this pair that showcases the tools and craft of etching. Promoters of this art form in the early 1860s were keen to underscore the individual labor that went into etching a copperplate and the role of the artistic "hand"—an aspect that contrasted with the mechanical process of taking a photograph. Bonvin's *Printmaker* emphasizes toil in darkness, as if to cast the etcher as a conjurer of visions no less powerful and unearthly than the monsters in Francisco Goya's *Caprichos*.

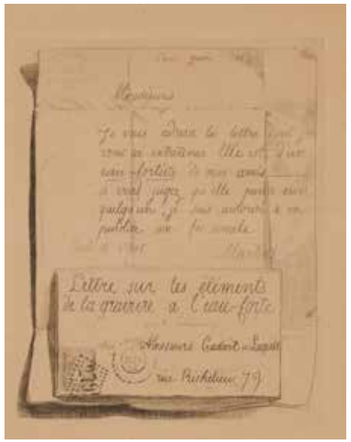
Clark Art Institute
2024.6.1, 2024.6.4

ADOLPHE MARTIAL POTÉMONT,
CALLED **MARTIAL**
French, 1827–1883

Letter on the Elements of Etching
1864
Etchings

With its clever visual-verbal interplay, Martial's *Letter on the Elements of Etching*—styled as a crash course for curious amateurs—offers an intimate look at how etchers viewed their art form in the 1860s. Publishers Cadart and Luquet advertised the work with the following description: "This little treatise, presented in the familiar form of a letter to a friend, gives the professional techniques of etching to anyone who knows how to draw, with an example etched opposite the explanation. With this treatise, two hours are enough to know the whole theory of etching. Practice and experience do the rest."

Clark Art Institute
2022.3a–e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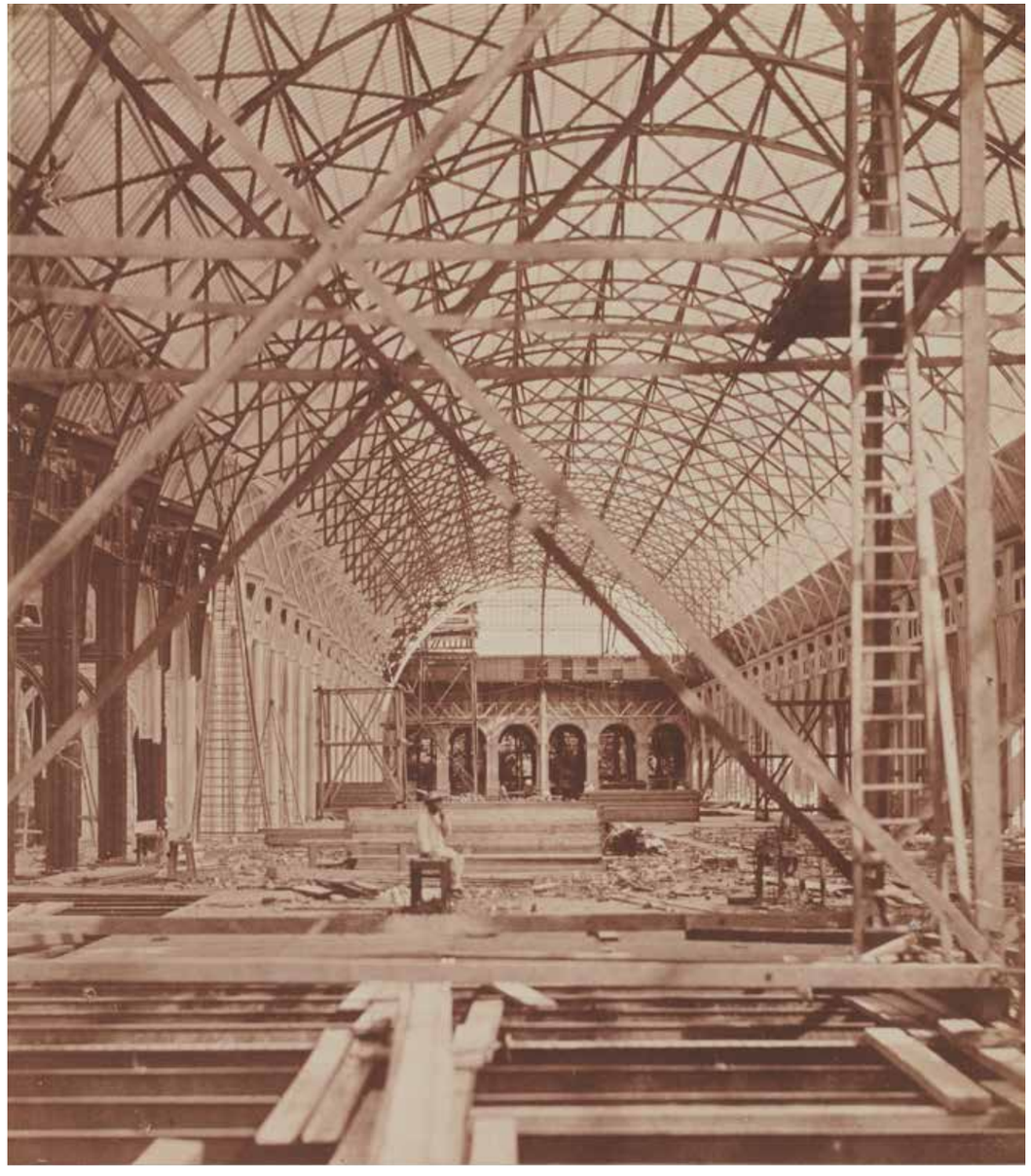
CAMILLE D' ARNAUD
French, active c. 1851–1863

AUGUSTE ADOLPHE BERTSCH
French, died 1871

Interior View of the Palais de l'Industrie under Construction for the 1855 Exposition Universelle
1854
Salt print from paper negative

Held in Paris, the Exposition Universelle of 1855 was an ambitious showcase designed to vaunt France's achievements in art and industry. For the Palais de l'Industrie, a vast new purpose-built edifice, Emperor Napoléon III took his cue from London's Crystal Palace erected just four years earlier. This photograph of the exhibition hall under construction shows a seated figure, amid debris and scaffolding, under the soaring iron-and-glass vault. Such a view of the labor required would have been unavailable to the Exposition's five million visitors.

Clark Art Institute
2001.6.1



ÉDOUARD BALDUS
French, 1813–1889

Statue of Pericles with Standing Man, Tuileries Garden
c. 1856
Salted paper print from wet collodion on glass negative

Although credited as an objective recorder of reality, photography in its early decades was also critized for taking the life out of its subjects. It seemed to render animate and inanimate beings with equal indifference. Those two categories meet in Édouard Baldus's *Statue of Pericles with Standing Man, Tuileries Garden*. Not only is the standing man poised at attention like the statue, with the folds of his cloak mimicking the folds of the sculpted drapery, Baldus's composition also insists on the literal overshadowing of the human by the human-made.

Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2003.35.5

HENRI LE SECQ
French, 1818–1882

Fragments of Ancient Terra Cottas
c. 1855
Salt print from waxed paper negative

One function of early photography was documenting collections. Here, Henri Le Secq records an assemblage of ancient terra cottas that belonged to Alexis Joseph Depaulis (1792–1867), a French sculptor and medallist whose collection of casts, medals, and seals now resides at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (where he studied) and at the Musée du Louvre. Whereas a printmaker tasked with reproducing these works would likely have given exclusive attention to their surface designs, Le Secq's camera captures details such as the deep shadows cast by the objects.

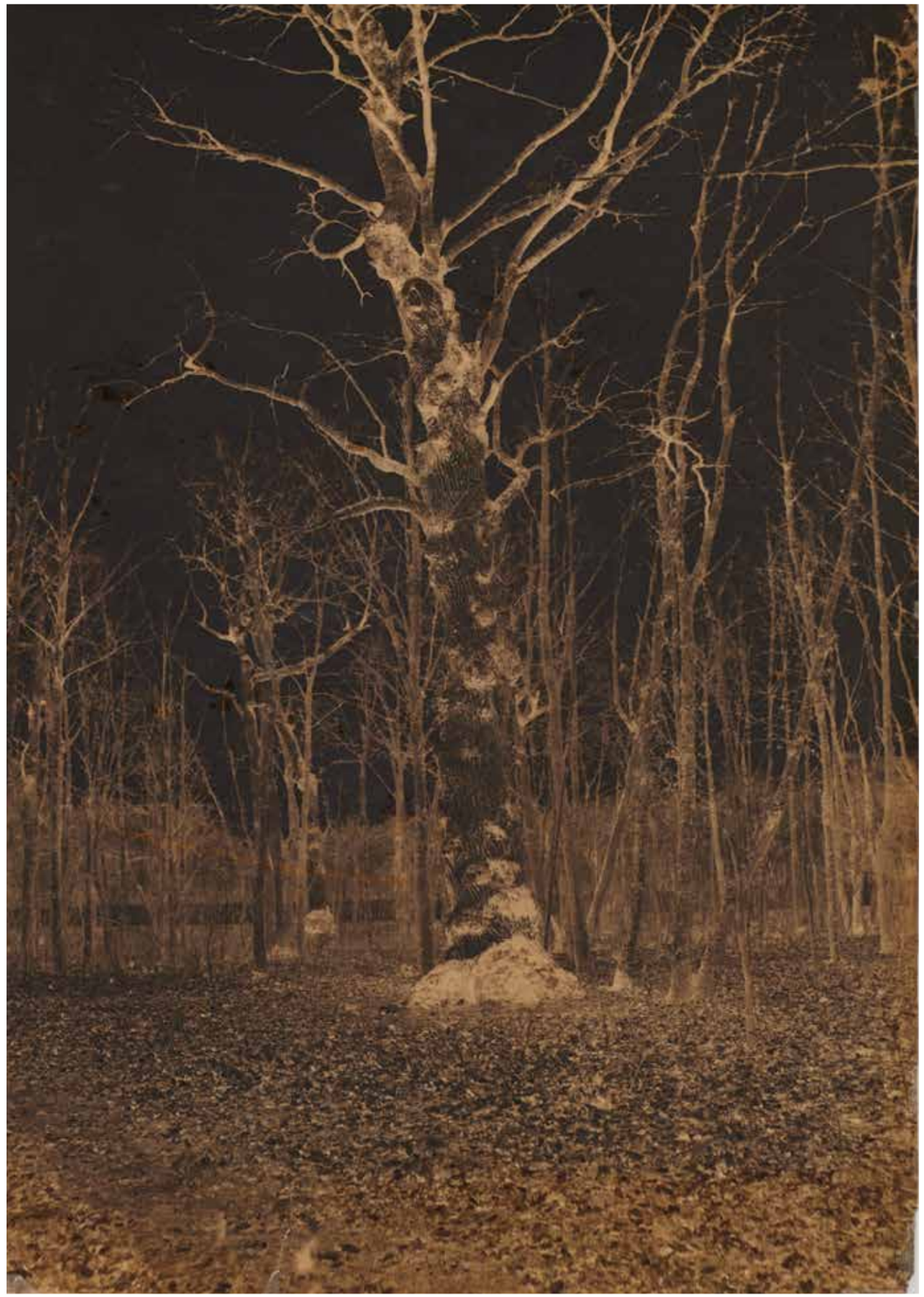
Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2002.51.8

COMTE OLYMPE AGUADO
French, 1827–1894

Tree in the Bois de Boulogne
1856
Waxed paper negative

The process of printing a photographic negative turns darks into lights, and vice versa. This simple principle of reversal means that the negative image can produce radically different effects on the viewer than its corresponding positive print. Here, what the photographer saw as a sunlit stand of trees transforms into an eerie night scene, where the branches are reminiscent of lightning or an ensnaring web.

Clark Art Institute
1999.4



HAUNTED NATURE

By the 1850s, the Forest of Fontainebleau was cherished by artists as a space of natural wonder and a refuge from rapidly modernizing Paris, about forty miles away. While Fontainebleau is strongly associated with the Barbizon painters' elevation of the landscape genre in France, the site also inspired printmakers and photographers to seek new expressive means in their respective media. The Shadow Visionaries did not see nature as an ever-bountiful, all-nurturing force as their Romantic forebears had done. Emphasizing qualities of darkness and shadow, artists such as Gustave Le Gray and Rodolphe Bresdin brought a haunting, eerie vision of tangled thickets and gnarled trees rather than verdant prospects and welcoming glades. They knew already that their beloved Forest of Fontainebleau was a sanctuary under imminent threat; day-trippers choked the sylvan paths even as loggers chopped down centuries-old trees. Nature needed protection as much as it offered it.

EUGENIO LUCAS VELÁZQUEZ
Spanish, 1817–1870

Scene with Figures
c. 1850
Ink and wash

Following the example of the British watercolor painter Alexander Cozens (1717–1786), the Spanish artist Eugenio Lucas Velázquez began using chance inkblots as a basis for landscape drawings. Francisco Goya in Spain and Victor Hugo in France were among the other artists who tried similar experiments building compositions from accidental phenomena. With prolonged looking, figures gradually emerge into legibility at the bright center of this drawing. Lucas Velázquez's manipulations of media perform a kind of perceptual magic, in which broad washes of ink and the sparest dabs of color produce a dematerializing effect.

Clark Art Institute
2024.10

GUSTAVE LE GRAY
French, 1820–1884

Hollow Oak Tree, Fontainebleau
1849–52
Albumen silver print from glass negative

Unlike pine trees, planted expressly for use as construction materials, the oak stood for historical longevity in French forests. The forest canopy offered photographers unrivaled possibilities for experiments with light. In this example, sunshine seems almost to blister the photographic surface in the bright gaps between the trees—even as framing branches and clusters of foliage offer places for soft points of light to gently nestle. The backlit effect adds drama to the dark hollow of the tree, a central void around which the whole composition turns.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, bequest of Maurice B. Sendak, 2012
2013.159.38

GUSTAVE LE GRAY
French, 1820–1884

402

Rising Sandy Path, Fontainebleau
c. 1856
Albumen silver print from glass negative

In this photograph by Gustave Le Gray, a butterfly-shaped swath of sky sharply contrasts with an area of deep shadow obscuring the left side. This dark band, likely to be perceived as a chance effect or flaw, is perhaps the photograph's most salient feature. Like Rodolphe Bresdin's lithograph nearby, *The Holy Family at Rest Beside a Stream*, Le Gray's photograph manages to hold shadow and menace in balanced tension with light and safety. The forest path leading sunward promises quick escape from whatever might be lurking in the shadows.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, gift of the Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005
2005.100.47

RODOLPHE BRESDIN
French, 1822–1885

The Holy Family at Rest Beside a Stream
1853
Lithograph

Unlike the dark band in Gustave Le Gray's *Rising Sandy Path*, *Fontainebleau*, on display nearby, the heavily inked lower-right corner of this print by Rodolphe Bresdin seems surely a result of artistic intention. Bresdin allows the Holy Family to take peaceful repose on the other side of the stream from the dark thicket, protected from potential threat. Trees appear more prominent than the biblical protagonists and are endowed with a forceful presence. They don't just tower over the softly illuminated Holy Family but twist and tangle, sending forth gnarled branches that seem capable of action for ill or good.

Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Walter S. Brewster
1926.142

RODOLPHE BRESDIN
French, 1822–1885

The Forest of Fontainebleau
1880
Etching and drypoint

Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Walter S. Brewster
1923.176

RODOLPHE BRESDIN
French, 1822–1885

The Good Samaritan
1861
Lithograph

The Good Samaritan is widely considered Rodolphe Bresdin's masterpiece. The composition bursts at the seams with a mass of natural detail, including animals and vegetation of every sort. The references to the biblical story are almost swallowed up as a result.

Clark Art Institute
1967.8

ADOLPHE MARTIAL POTÉMONT,
CALLED **MARTIAL**
French, 1827–1883

Old Oaks at Bas Bréau
1860–70
Etching and drypoint

The Beeches
c. 1874
Etching

These two prints from Fontainebleau by Adolphe Martial Potémont, known as Martial, block the visitor's path with a wooded profusion or a surplus of underbrush. Like Gustave Le Gray's photographs and Rodolphe Bresdin's prints, Martial's images of the splendor of Fontainebleau accentuate dappled light effects and the idiosyncratic grandeur of old trees while maintaining the sense of a forest so thick that one might never find the way out.

Art Institute of Chicago, Elizabeth Hammond Stickney Collection
1887.455

Yale University Art Gallery, Walter R. Callender, BA 1894, Memorial Collection, gift of Ivy Lee Callender
1962.45.372

RODOLPHE BRESDIN
French, 1822–1885

Clearing in the Forest
1880
Etching

Clearing in the Forest belies its title by closing off access to the promised clearing; for the viewer, the effect is like looking through a keyhole choked in overgrowth.

Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Walter S. Brewster
1923.172

UNDERGROUND

The splendid avenues, boulevards, and shining new façades of Baron Haussmann's Paris necessitated the destruction of many existing structures—sometimes entire neighborhoods. By one count, twenty thousand buildings were torn down for thirty thousand new ones erected. Quarries on the edges of the city furnished building materials for the dramatic transformation closer to the center. Changes to the urban fabric did not occur just on the surface: creepy belowground sites like catacombs and sewers also figured on the city planners' agenda for renovation. Printmakers and photographers alike took peculiar inspiration from these hostile, barren, unpleasant places, perhaps finding in them literal expressions of the "underside" of urban progress. That subterranean locales could be photographed at all was a feat of technology, using artificial light, that Nadar helped to patent. In addition to the ecological costs of urban upheaval, the digging up of ground layers occasionally unearthed macabre surprises, surfacing as long-buried echoes from the past.

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

The Mummified Cat
c. 1862
Albumen silver print from glass negative

This startling image of a cat unearthed during restoration work at the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye outside Paris shows how excavations could bring the past forward into the present. The feline was buried in the castle's foundation around 1539, at a time when burying a live cat in the stones of a new building was considered good luck. It was preserved intact in those airtight surroundings for more than three hundred years. Incongruously displayed in Charles Marville's photograph as the sole organic matter alongside carved stone objects, it appears like a curious totem on a pagan shrine.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection,
gift of the Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005
2005.100.205

HENRI LE SECQ
French, 1818–1882

Quarry
c. 1855
Salted paper print from waxed paper negative

Bibliothèque du Musée des Arts Décoratifs
LES 5/486/T

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Quarry
1853
Salted paper print (Blanquart-Evrard)
from paper negative

Gypsum quarries located on the outskirts of Paris served as flash points for unrest and crime. These two photographs by Henri Le Secq and Charles Marville lay bare the scars and pock-marks of sustained mineral extraction at these unearthly places, which had a lawless reputation. Two resting workers appear at the lower right of Marville's *Quarry*, but Le Secq's view presents an unscalable mineral wall: implacable, inhospitable, with scrubby trees clinging to the top.

Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2002.48.6

JEAN CHARLES CAZIN
French, 1840–1901

The Quarries at Gentilly, by Night
1862
Charcoal and white chalk on blue paper

This drawing by Charles Cazin conveys the disproportionate industrial scale of quarry operations at Gentilly, outside Paris. Cazin's use of blue paper underscores the lunar strangeness of the scene. As carrion birds descend, a lone wanderer navigates a curving path between two enormous wheels that have an eerie resemblance to medieval torture devices.

Frits Lugt Collection, Foundation Custodia, Paris
2013-T.9

FRANÇOIS CHIFFLART
French, 1825–1901

Quarry near Montmartre
1865
Etching with drypoint

The quarries that fed the "hungry maw" of Baron Haussmann's reconstruction plans for Paris were dangerous and lawless places; they also stirred up associations with deep-seated fears enshrined in myth and literature. This etched composition by François Chifflart appears indebted to Gustave Doré's illustration for Canto III of Dante's *Inferno*: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter!" In the spirit of Dante, "hellish" could also describe the ecological damage wrought by quarrying at the city's edges.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund
2002.136.14

HENRI LE SECQ
French, 1818–1882

In the Cossacks' Field, Montmirail:Ravine and Rope Stretched Between Two Tree Trunks

In the Cossacks' Field, Montmirail: Earth, Roots, and Brambles

c. 1851–52
Salted paper prints from waxed paper negatives

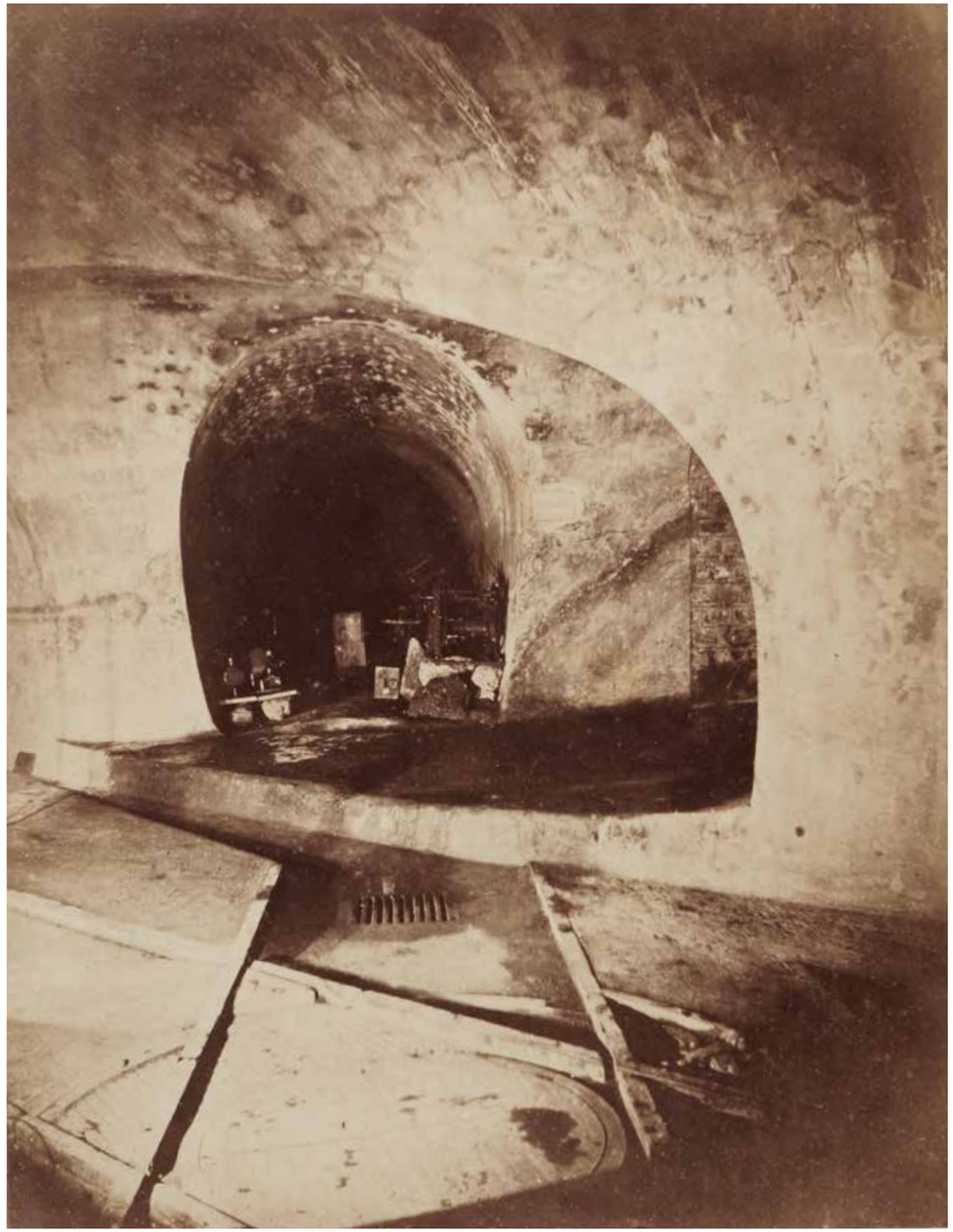
These two photographs by Henri Le Secq commemorate a Napoleonic victory from 1814 that cost thousands of lives. Subtle features—like the dug earth, the stones in the shape of a skull, and the tangled vines resembling a funeral wreath—evoke the fallen soldiers come to rest in this unmarked burial ground. In a poem by Le Secq titled "L'Humeur belliqueuse" (The Bellicose Mood), he pleaded for a halt to war and a unified front in "the only battle" worth fighting—that against human misery and suffering.

Bibliothèque du Musée des Arts Décoratifs
LES 3/436/T2, LES 3/433/T2

NADAR
(GASPARD FÉLIX TOURNACHON)
French, 1820–1910

Sewers of Paris, "Pont au Change Room"
1865
Albumen print

In 1865, Nadar went underground again to photograph the renovation of the Paris sewers. Post-renovation, the sewers were surprisingly clean—a triumph of Napoléon III's modernization program. Yet they remained contested spaces: as refuges and gathering places for protesters, they harbored threats to the social and political order despite being designed with the government's hardball tactics of suppression in mind. In Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*, published in 1862, the hero Jean Valjean wanders the foul sewers of the 1830s only to come upon his pursuer, Inspector Javert, at the exit. This noxious environment nonetheless offered Valjean his best chance at escape.



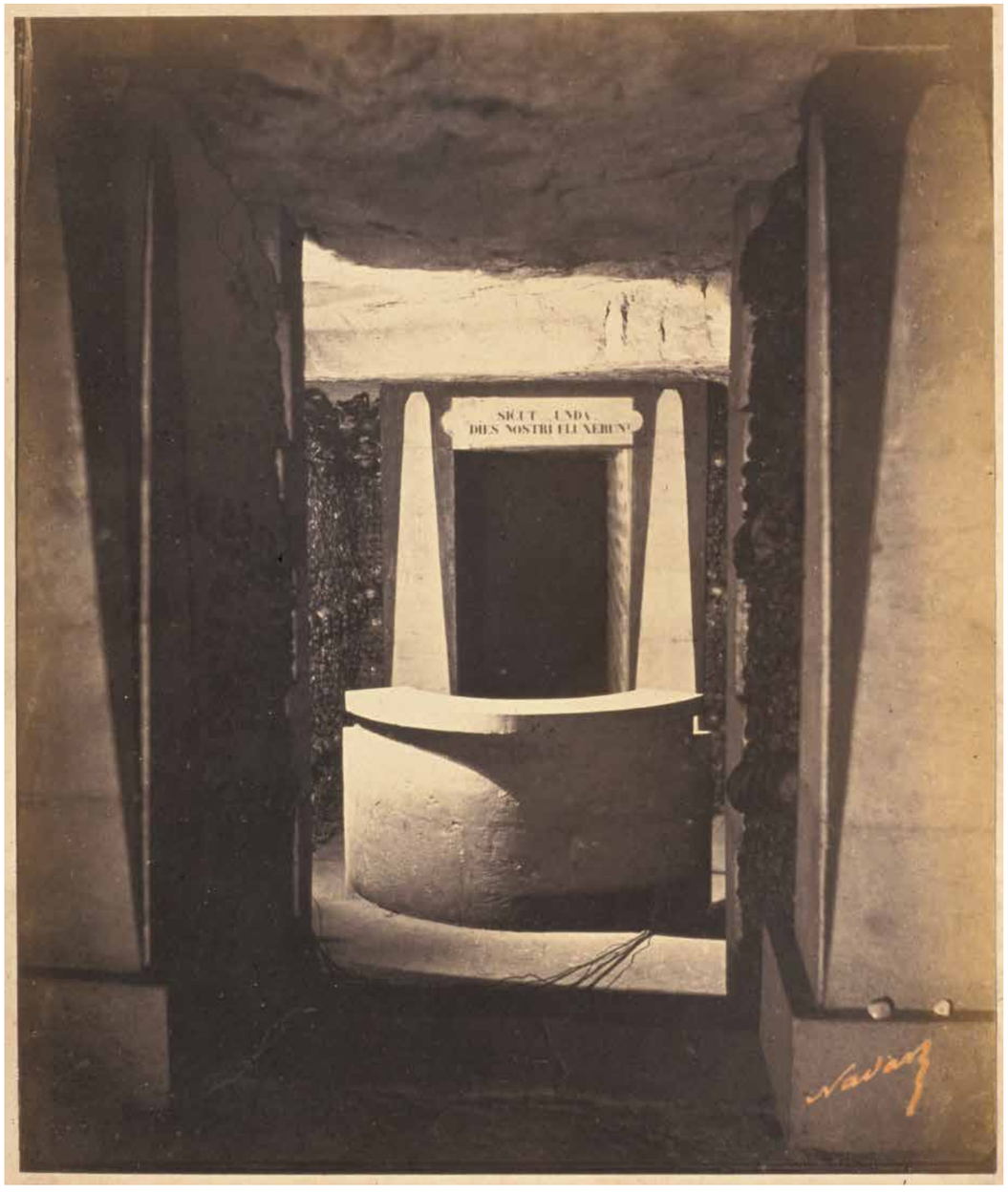
Clark Art Institute
2024.8.2

NADAR
(GASPARD FÉLIX TOURNACHON)
French, 1820–1910

Skull-Lined Walls in the Catacombs of Paris
1862
Albumen print from wet collodion on
glass negative

Since 1859 Nadar had been experimenting with photography by artificial light, and in 1862 he was commissioned by Ernest Lamé-Fleury, a mining engineer and quarry inspector, to photograph the Paris catacombs. In this macabre underground site, the mortal remains of Parisians across the ages were indiscriminately commingled. Amid so much death, the photographer was intrigued to find a few fish swimming in a small water basin, brought there on
a worker's whim.

Clark Art Institute
2001.10.1



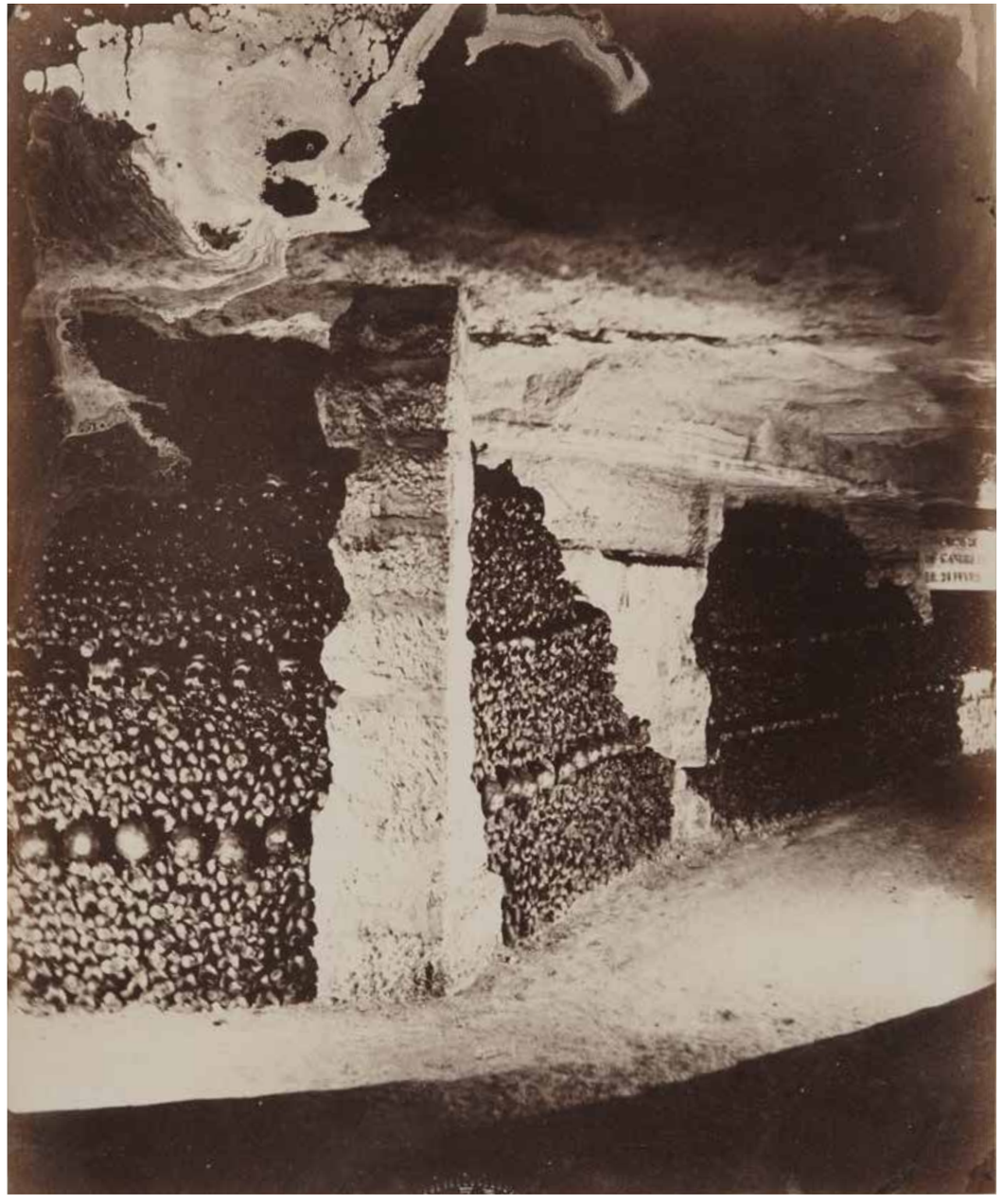
NADAR
(GASPARD FÉLIX TOURNACHON)
French, 1820–1910

407

Catacombs of Paris, "Hallucinations of shadow, light and collodion"
Façade no. 3
1862
Albumen print

Nadar approached his descent into the catacombs with relish, declaring: "We were going to penetrate, reveal the mysteries of the deepest and most secret caves." In this view, collodion imperfections in the negative produce a ghostly effect and make the catacombs seem even more haunted.

Clark Art Institute
2024.8.1



MAXIME LALANNE
French, 1827–1886

Demolitions for the Drilling of the Boulevard St. Germain (Old Paris)
1863
Etching

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, with additional funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985
1985-52-1940

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Construction of the avenue de l'Opéra: The Butte des Moulins (from the rue Saint Roch)
c. 1876–77
Albumen print from collodion negative

The apparent calm that pervades Charles Marville's *Rue Estienne, de la rue Boucher* (on view nearby) is only a prelude to inevitable demolition; the rubble at the cordoned-off end of the street hints at the approaching fate of the nearer buildings to either side. The scene in Marville's *Construction of the avenue de l'Opéra: The Butte des Moulins*, meanwhile, could be mistaken for a war zone. The ambiguity leaves the viewer bewildered as to the identity of the men left standing—workers or displaced residents?—and hard-pressed to believe that the effect of the bulldozers has been benevolent.

Musée Carnavalet, Paris
PH938

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Rue Estienne, from the rue Boucher
1862–65
Albumen silver print from glass negative

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, purchase,
Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Kravis Gift, 2005
2005.100.358

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Boulevard Henri IV (from the rue de Sully, fourth arrondissement)
c. 1877
Albumen print from collodion negative

Musée Carnavalet, Paris
PH43102

GOTHIC NOSTALGIA

A potent source of national pride, France's Gothic architecture had nevertheless suffered long periods of neglect, leading to worries about its upkeep and ultimate survival. Mounting concern for the dilapidated state of centuries-old monuments prompted the French government in 1851 to launch a comprehensive program of photographic documentation known as the Missions héliographiques. Five official photographers accepted assignments to record historic structures in regions throughout France. The resulting images, though not published at the time, were intended to marshal support for the repair and restoration of vulnerable edifices. Their unexpected viewpoints staged a direct encounter with the historical past, sometimes tapping into mournful emotions of nostalgia, loss, and grief. The drive to preserve old buildings in France's provinces coincided with a frenzy of new construction in Paris, where Baron Haussmann oversaw a massive transformation of the cityscape throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Study of Four Male Saints, Chartres
1854
Albumen print from waxed paper negative

The photographer Charles Marville was not part of the Missions héliographiques but worked closely with Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879), an eminent architect and restorer. This study by Marville recalls Viollet's claim that the stones of Chartres cathedral had spoken to him. Viollet also wrote about the sculpted heads on the portals of Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris as if they were sentient beings:

> Who do you find? The mark of intelligence and moral power in all its forms. . . . Several heads animated with an unadulterated faith have the features of enlightened figures; but how many more express a doubt, pose a question and meditate on it?

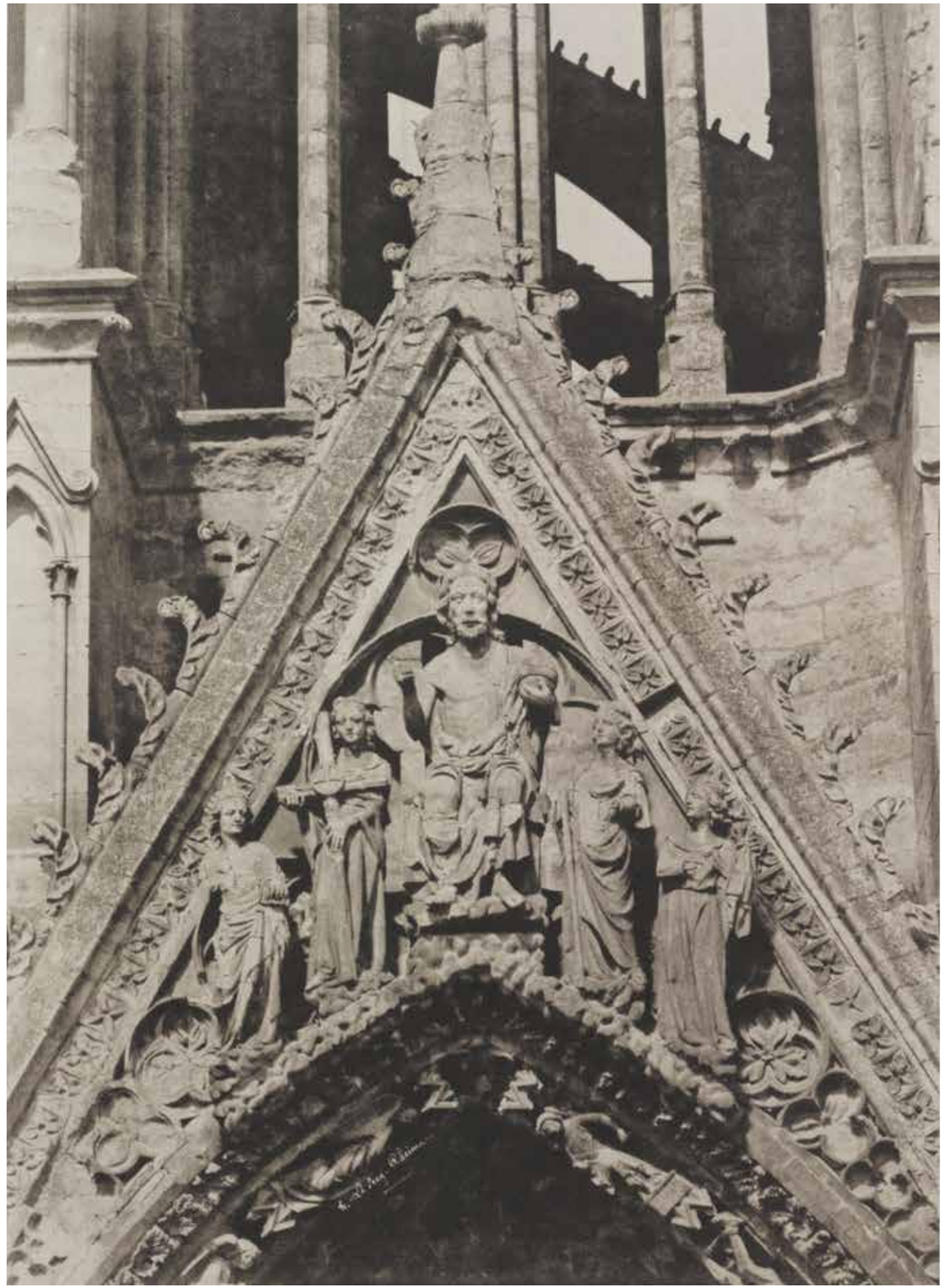
Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2006.38.2

HENRI LE SECQ
French, 1818–1882

Reims Cathedral: Details of the Portal
1852 (negative); c. 1870 (print)
Photolithograph from waxed paper negative

This photograph of Reims cathedral adopts Henri Le Secq's typical focus on architectural details rather than complete views. The sculpted figures of God and the saints appear to be close to the viewer and profoundly tactile, suggesting an unmediated encounter that erases spatial and temporal distance. The photograph's elevated exterior viewpoint, inaccessible to ordinary visitors to the cathedral, aids the fantasy of spiritual communion with the past.

Clark Art Institute
2003.1



AUGUSTE MESTRAL
French, 1812–1884

Angel for Sainte-Chapelle from the atelier of Geoffroy-Dechaume
c. 1851–53
Salt print from waxed paper negative

Auguste Mestral joined Gustave Le Gray as an architectural photographer on the Missions héliographiques, working in the southern regions of France. This photograph, made back in Paris, records a newly carved stone sculpture by Adolphe-Victor Geoffroy-Dechaume (1816–1892) made for one of the spires of the thirteenth-century High Gothic structure known as the Sainte-Chapelle.Geoffroy-Dechaume's angel, set against a blank sheet in Mestral's photograph, expresses a timeless Gothic sensibility that seamlessly merges past and present.

Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2002.4

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

Moulins Cathedral, Narthex
1863
Albumen silver print

One purpose of photographing France's architectural heritage was to make a case for the restoration of old buildings that otherwise might crumble away due to neglect. Charles Marville's *Moulins Cathedral, Narthex* depicts the interior of a cathedral in central France undergoing renovation. Among Marville's photographs of medieval architecture, it is exceptional for the candid, even careless look it offers at interior debris and construction materials. A far cry from the reverence normally accorded to Gothic churches, it underscores instead the fragility of a centuries-old monument.

Philadelphia Museum of Art, gift of Robert Yoskowitz and Elissa Young, 2021
2021.127.2

HENRI LE SECQ
French, 1818–1882

Wooden Staircase at Chartres
1852
Salted paper print from paper negative

Deputized to photograph Chartres cathedral in 1852, Henri Le Secq found time to stroll through the residential part of town, where he came across this house with a sixteenth-century carved-oak spiral staircase. While highlighting this historic feature, Le Secq bridged the centuries with his attention to the cloth garment hanging at right, evidence of the building's present-day use.

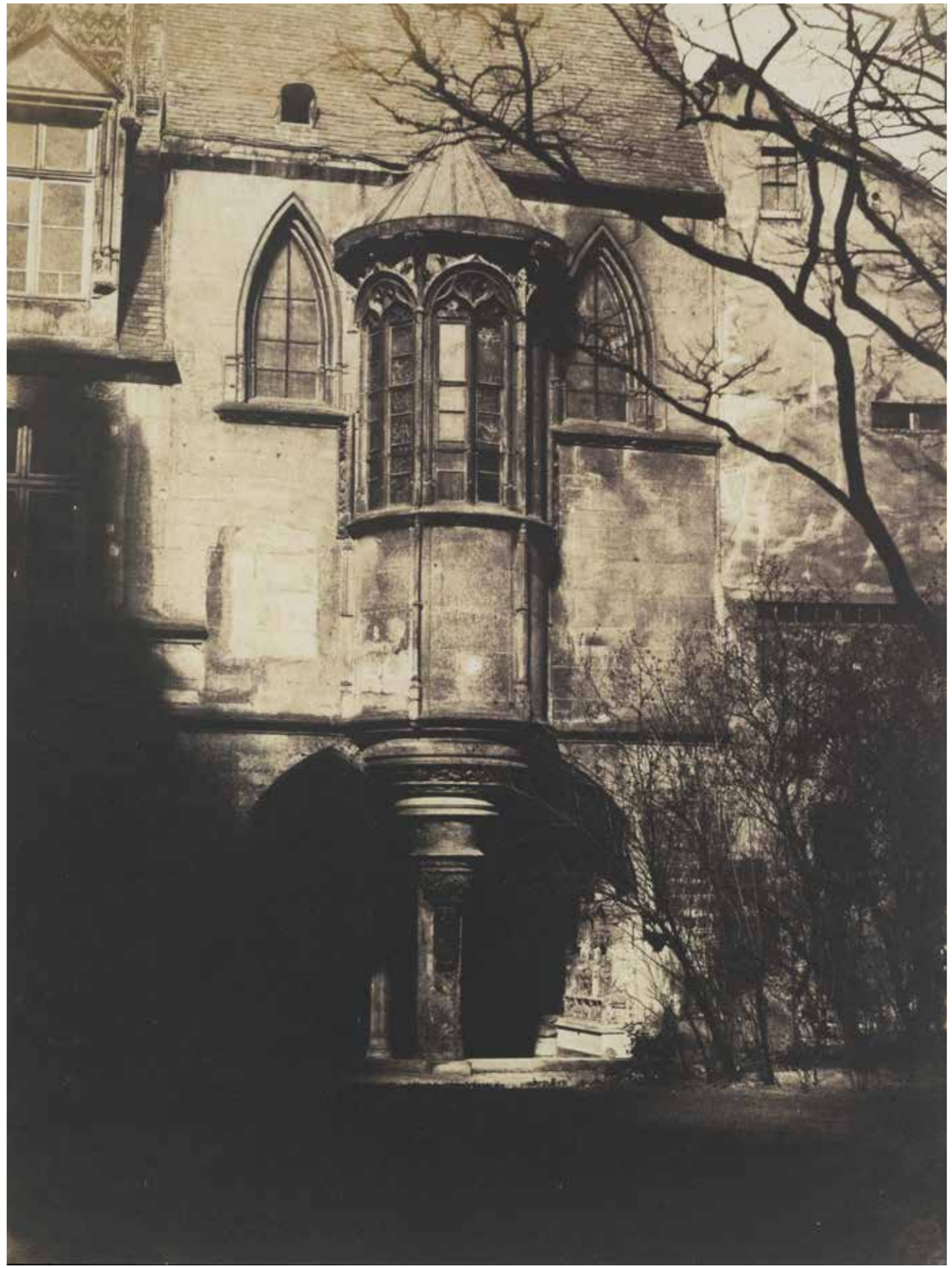
Metropolitan Museum Art, Gilman Collection, purchase, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 2005
2005.100.35

GUSTAVE LE GRAY
French, 1820–1884

Hotel de Cluny, Paris
c. 1851
Salted paper print from paper negative

Separate from the Missions héliographiques, Gustave Le Gray also took an interest in Gothic monuments around Paris. This view captures the Hôtel de Cluny, which had become a museum of medieval art in 1843. The powerful darkness invading the lower left portion of the photograph blends with the shadowed doorways to give a sense of history's mysterious and inaccessible qualities, even in the authentic presence of old stones.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel and Rogers Fund, 1996
1996.293



ÉDOUARD BALDUS
French, 1813–1889

Tour Saint Jacques
c. 1858
Albumen silver print from glass negative

The Tour Saint Jacques, seen also in *The Vampire* by Charles Meryon (on display nearby), stands in central Paris and was once part of a complete Gothic church. This image by Édouard Baldus makes clear its monumental scale in relation to the surrounding buildings, some of which had been recently cleared away for the sake of major urban transformation.

Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2007.53.7

CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

Rue des Chantres
1862
Etching

These two works give different perspectives on Notre-Dame's massive cathedral spire, added by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in 1859. Charles Marville's photograph truncates the spire, giving greater prominence to the gargoyles and the standing angel. Conversely, the exaggerated vertical format of Charles Meryon's etching *Rue des Chantres* captures the spire's full height. Its upward pull creates a kind of tug-of-war with the restless human activity down below. Meryon's gritty portrayal of back-street strife and violence jars with photographic representations of the Gothic.

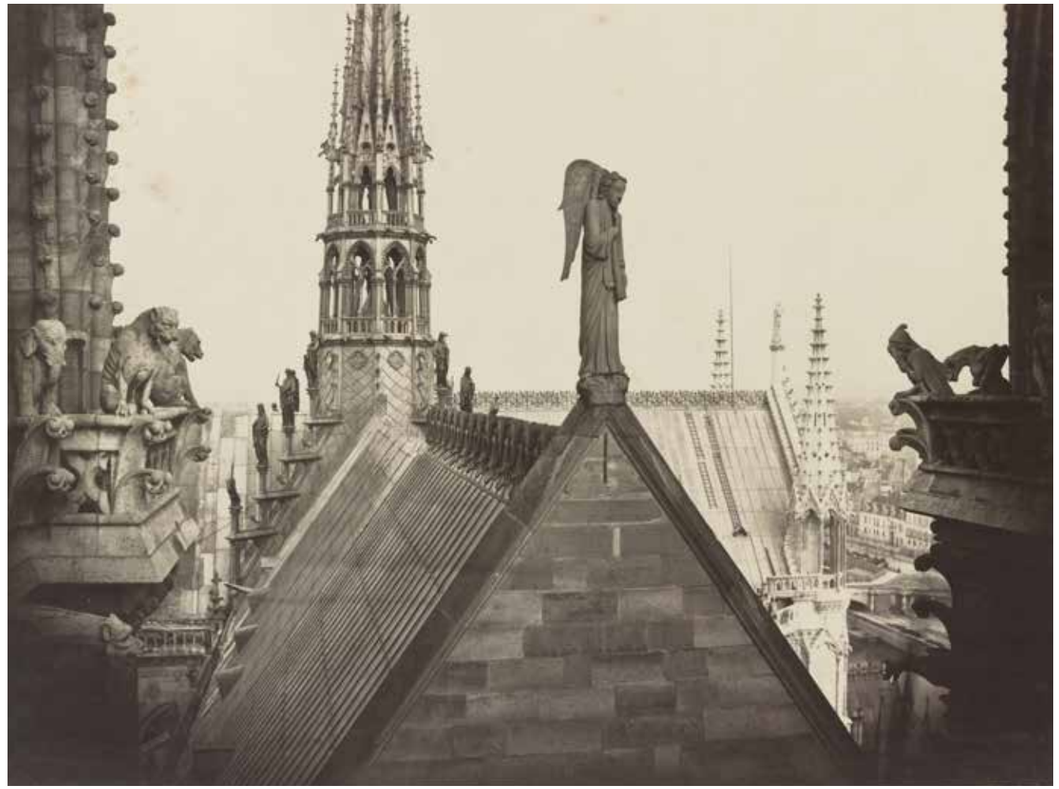
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917
17.78.14

CHARLES MARVILLE
French, 1816–1879

404

Notre Dame, Paris, France. View from spire of roofs, statuary, and gable
c. 1860
Albumen silver print from glass negative

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Hunt Collection in the AIA/AAF Collection



CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

A Chimera of Notre Dame, Paris
1853
Graphite

Like *The Vampire* print on view nearby, this drawing by Charles Meryon adopts the vantage point of one of the sculpted chimeras (monsters) added to Notre-Dame cathedral during its mid-nineteenth-century restoration. The verse text, also by Meryon, addresses the hybrid creature directly: “What do you contemplate, hideous monster of war / In the gaping abyss into which your eye is plunged?” While the verse invites multiple interpretations, a later mention of the character Esmeralda underscores the cultural currency of Victor Hugo’s novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

Clark Art Institute
1955.1857

EUGÈNE VIOLLET-LE-DUC
French, 1814–1879

Notre-Dame in 1482
Etched illustration to Victor Hugo's
Notre-Dame de Paris
Paris: E. Hugues, 1877

The 1877 edition of Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* included nearly 200 etchings and wood engravings by leading printmakers including Charles Meryon, François Chifflart, and Hugo himself. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, the great architectural restorer of Notre-Dame cathedral, contributed five illustrations to the volume; in the one displayed here, he depicts the Notre-Dame façade as it would have appeared in 1482—with doors flung open to the faithful.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Lev Tsitrin, 2008
2008.195.1

CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

405

The Vampire (Le Stryge)
1853
Etching

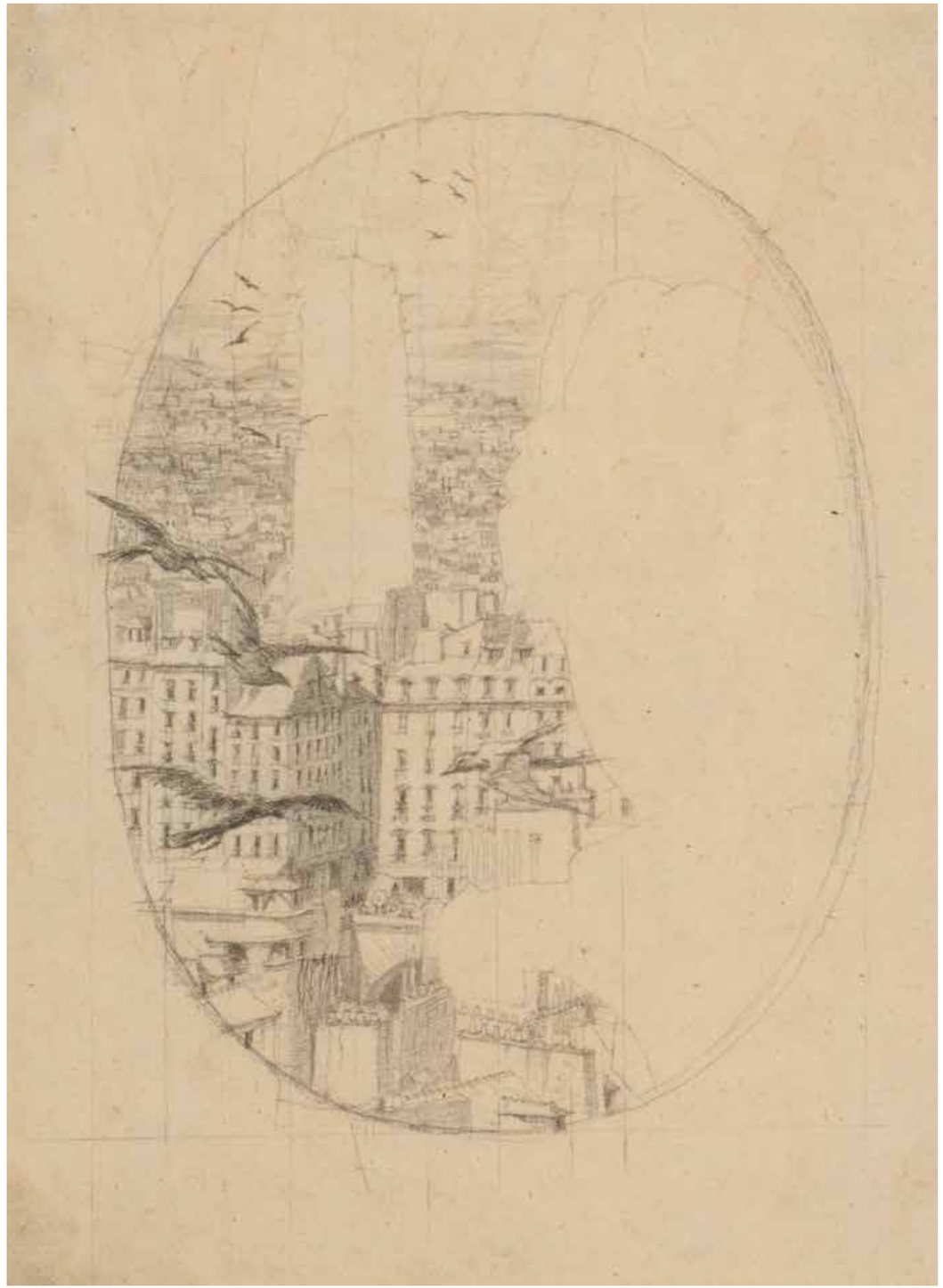
Charles Meryon's profile view of the gargoyle on the north parapet of Paris's Notre-Dame cathedral is an icon of Gothic moodiness. Yet, when Meryon made the etching, the sculpture was brand-new, a modern appendage designed by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and only recently hoisted into place. Meryon's Paris etchings attest to his sense of loss as urban transformation swallowed up medieval neighborhoods, like the one where he grew up. The two drawn studies together form a composite of the print, giving special prominence to the gargoyle, the medieval Tour Saint Jacques in the background, and a swarm of birds.

Clark Art Institute
1968.4

CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

Study for "Le Stryge": The City and the Birds
c. 1853
Graphite

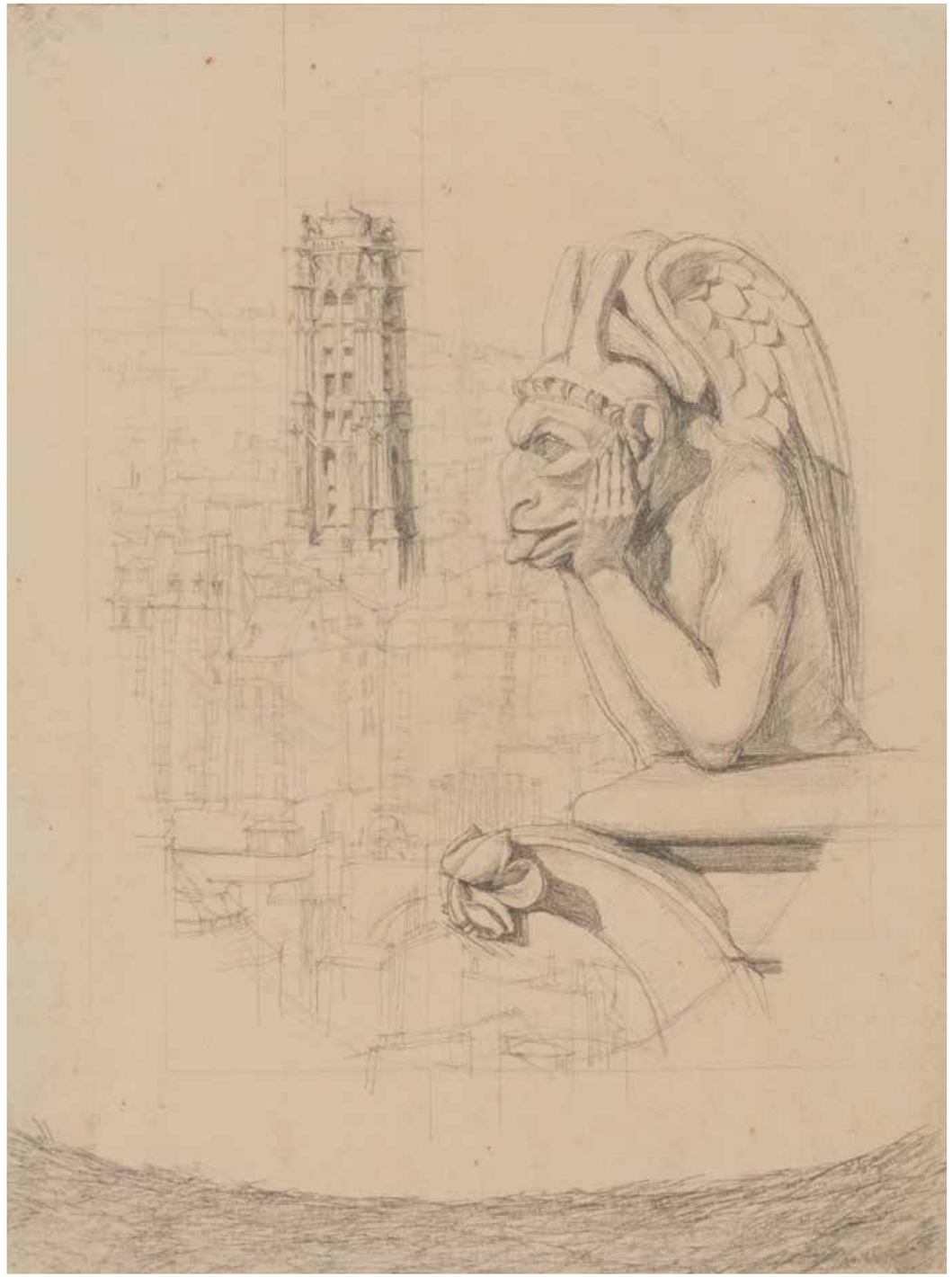
Clark Art Institute
1955.1853



CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

Study for "Le Stryge": The Chimera and the Tour Saint Jacques
c. 1853
Graphite

Clark Art Institute
1955.1834



ÉDOUARD BALDUS
French, 1813–1889

Cloister of Saint Trophîme, Arles
c. 1859
Albumen print from wet collodion on glass negative

Édouard Baldus's *Cloister of Saint Trophîme, Arles*, has long been recognized as a photographic tour de force, with its sharp adjacencies of light and shadow. Although Baldus's main assignment for the Missions héliographiques in Arles was to photograph the ancient Roman ampitheater, he also stopped at the medieval church of Saint Trophîme. The double-columned arches of the cloister and the dark void at the far end are particularly striking, but the sheer tactility of each block, brick, and stone makes an astonishing effect.

Clark Art Institute, long-term loan from the Troob Family Foundation
TR2003.78.1

GUSTAVE LE GRAY
French, 1820–1884

Middle Portal, Church of Saint-Jacques, Aubeterre
1851
Salted paper print from paper negative

For the Missions héliographiques, photographer Gustave Le Gray was assigned to central and southwest France, including the town of Aubeterre, with its twelfth-century church of Saint-Jacques. The multiple arches of the central portal, receding layer by layer within a massive stone façade, converge at a doorway completely obscured in shadow. This void adds an enigmatic dimension to the allegedly documentary image.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1991
1991.1058

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Discipline in the Monastery
c. 1859
Etching

The publisher Alfred Cadart was instrumental in the etching revival of mid-nineteenth-century France, cofounding the Société des Aquafortistes (Society of Etchers) in 1862. A year earlier he issued a collection of etchings by Alphonse Legros as his first single-artist portfolio. Dedicated to the poet Charles Baudelaire, the set included *Discipline in the Monastery*, etched by Legros around 1859. This print features cruel subject matter as well as an aggressive technique. Consistent with the depicted act of flogging, Legros made a harsh attack on the copperplate, with the acid bite completing the work of ruthless laceration.

Clark Art Institute
1980.7

HOPE AND DESPAIR FOR SOCIETY

Although a drive for social reform is more typically associated with Realist artists of the same period, the Shadow Visionaries were by no means disconnected from contemporary reality. The main difference was that, rather than depicting the world's woes in literal terms, they tended to express them through symbolism or allegory. Identifying as outsiders, these individuals rejected conventional societal norms and made it their business to confront issues like death, pain, and loss with raw, unsparing directness. Certain Shadow Visionaries lived in conditions of extreme poverty and material suffering. In addition, several experienced mental instability or spiritual crises that, in the most severe cases, led to suicide or confinement in an asylum. To the extent that they advanced hopes for social change, they voiced these as a critique of the Second Empire's triumphalist values of industrial progress and material prosperity, pleading instead for the causes of pacifism and a morally purifying religious faith.

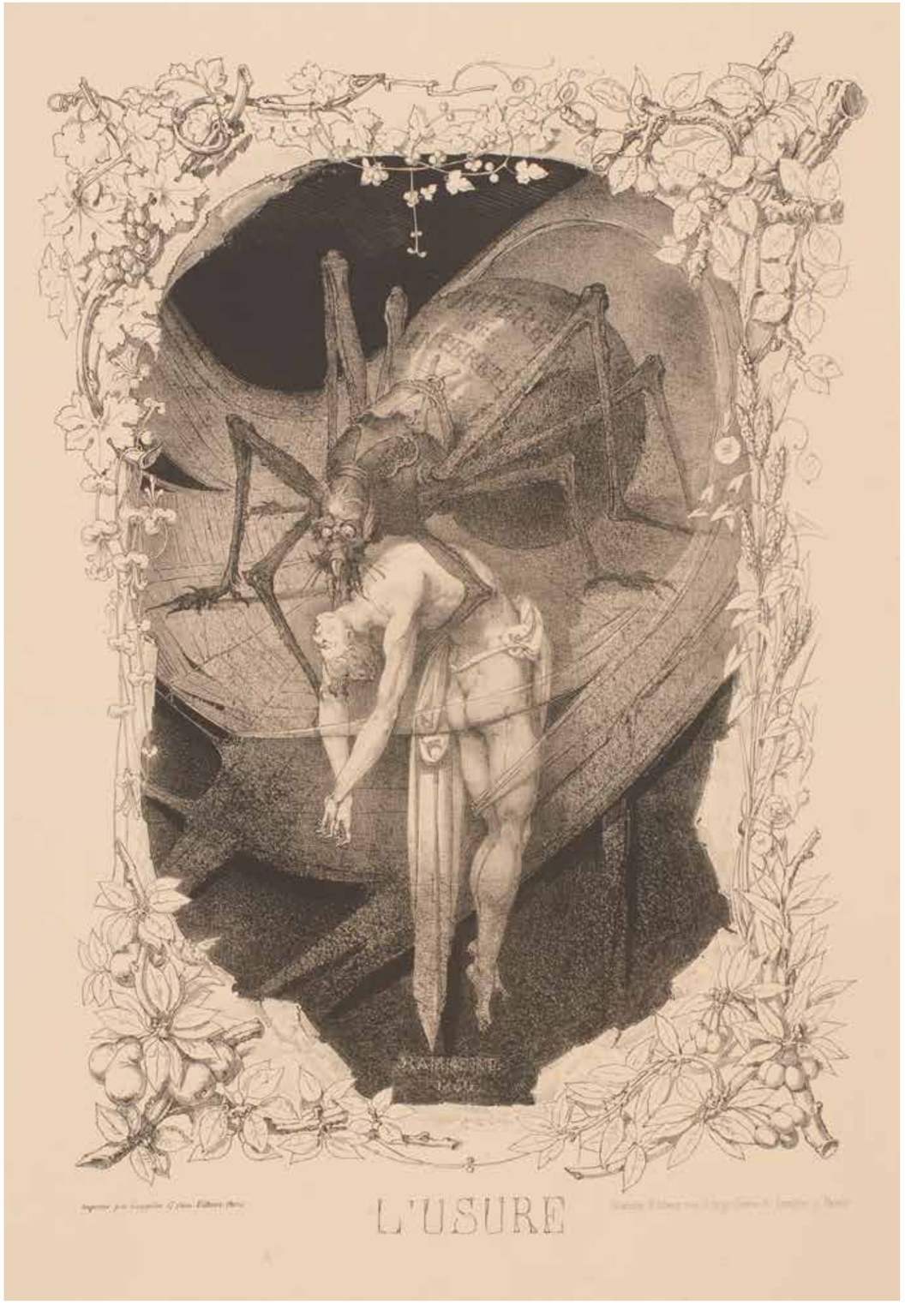
CHARLES RAMBERT
French, active c. 1836–1867,
died before 1899

409

Usury
1850
Lithograph

In the early 1850s, the little-known Charles Rambert brought to light a catalogue of social ills and denounced them as the shameful underside of the industrial progress that would be celebrated just a few years later in the pageantry of the Exposition Universelle of 1855. Rambert considered money the root cause of society's worst problems: rapacious lending and rampant speculation, buttressed by greed, led to gaping socioeconomic inequality and moral decay. Rambert's allegorical lithographs, accompanied by decorative borders and quasi-religious verses, are calls for spiritual purification and reform.

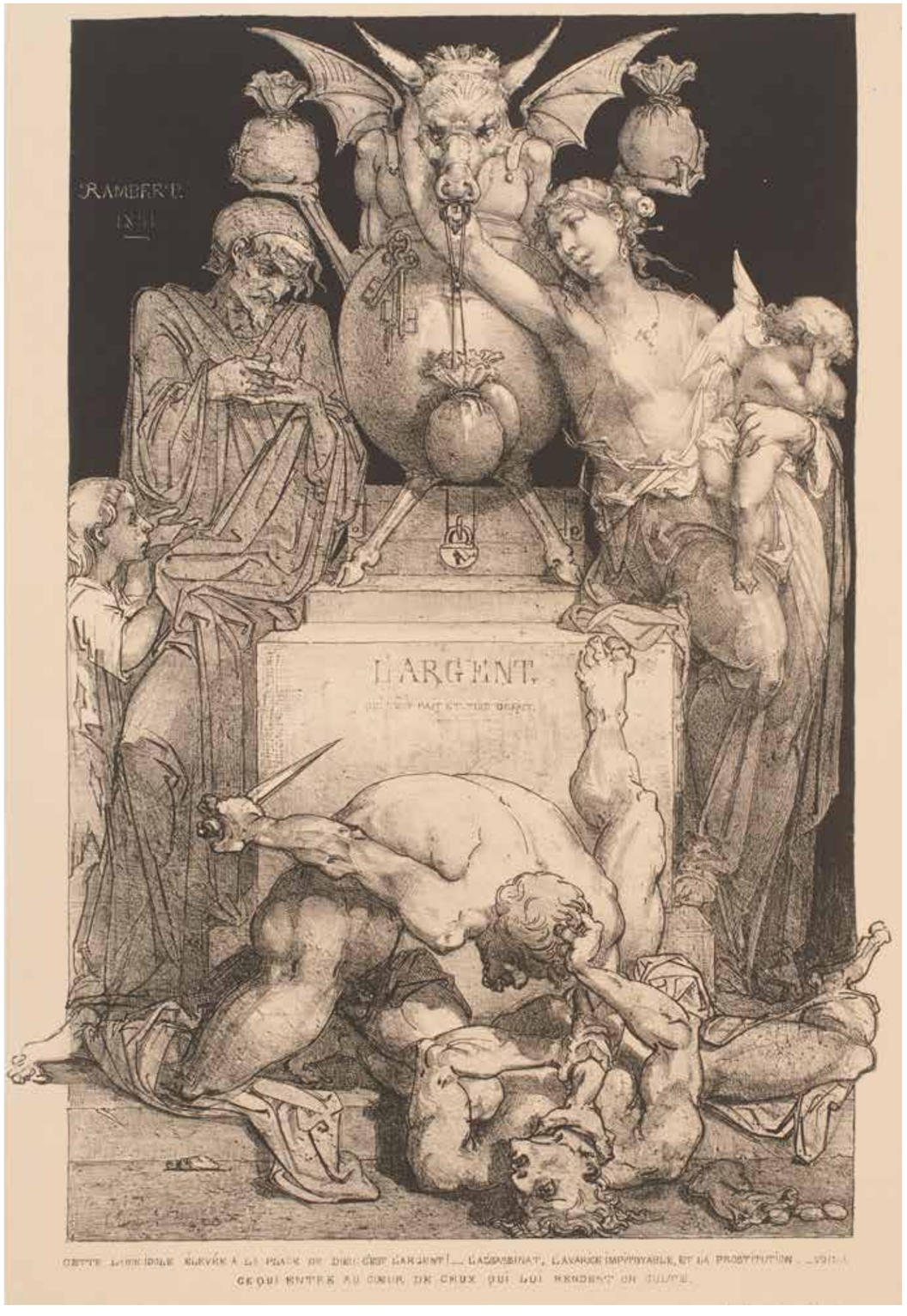
Clark Art Institute
2022.13.1



CHARLES RAMBERT
French, active c. 1836–1867, died before 1899

Money
1851
Lithograph

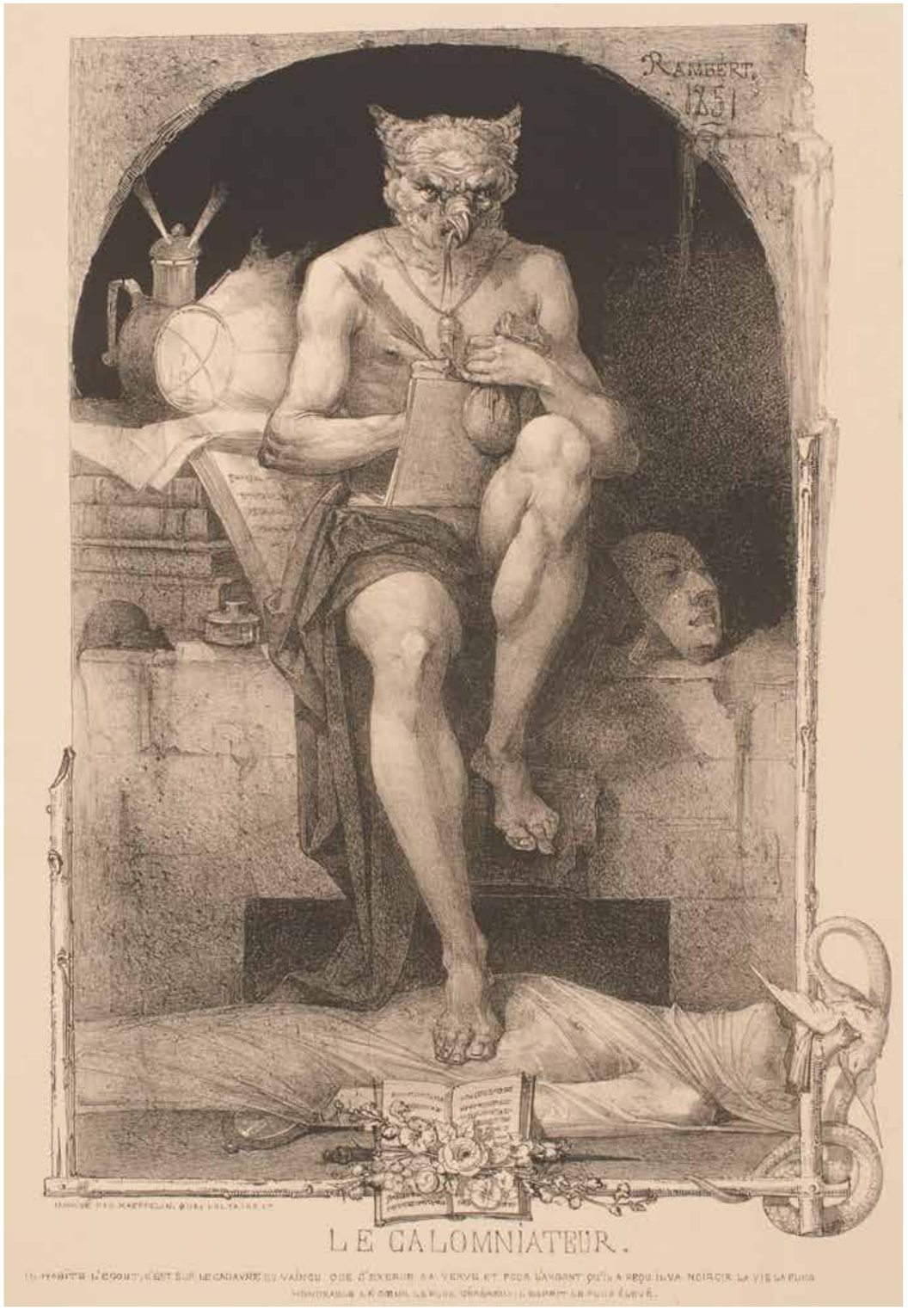
Clark Art Institute
2022.13.2



CHARLES RAMBERT
French, active c. 1836–1867, died before 1899

The Slanderer
1851
Lithograph

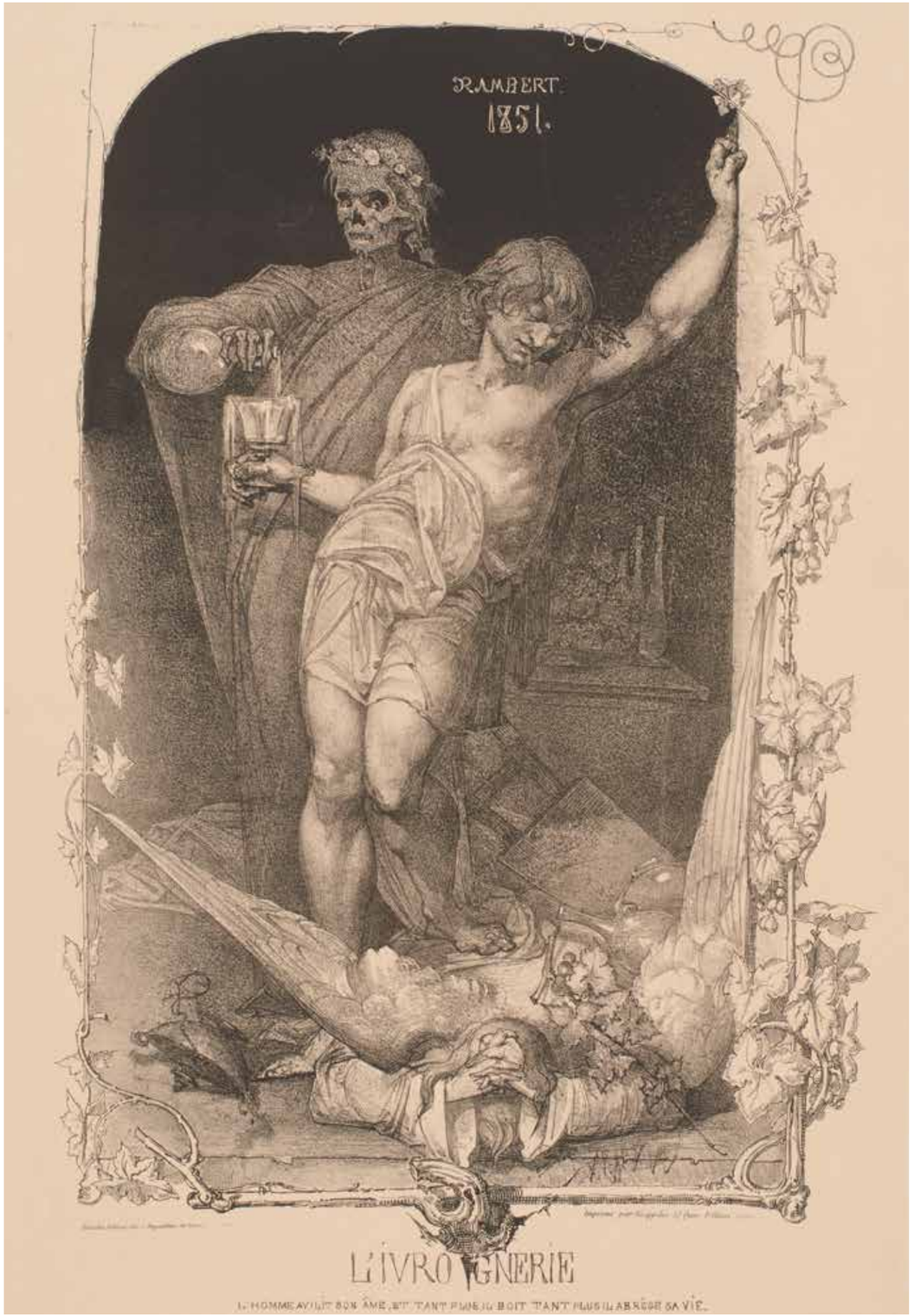
Clark Art Institute
2022.13.3



CHARLES RAMBERT
French, active c. 1836–1867, died before 1899

Drunkenness
1851
Lithograph

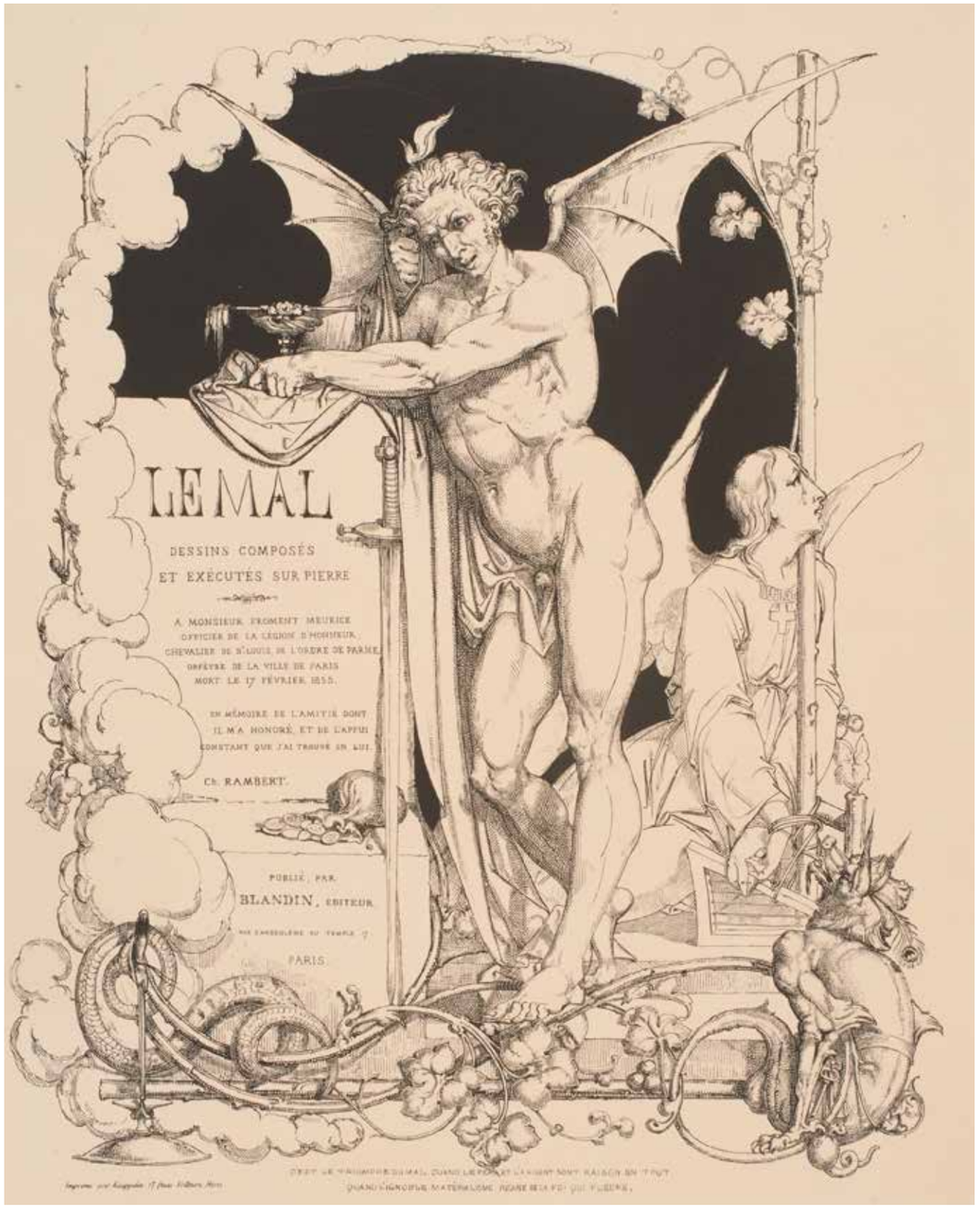
Clark Art Institute
2022.13.7



CHARLES RAMBERT
French, active c. 1836–1867, died before 1899

Evil
1855 or later
Lithograph

Clark Art Institute
2022.13.15

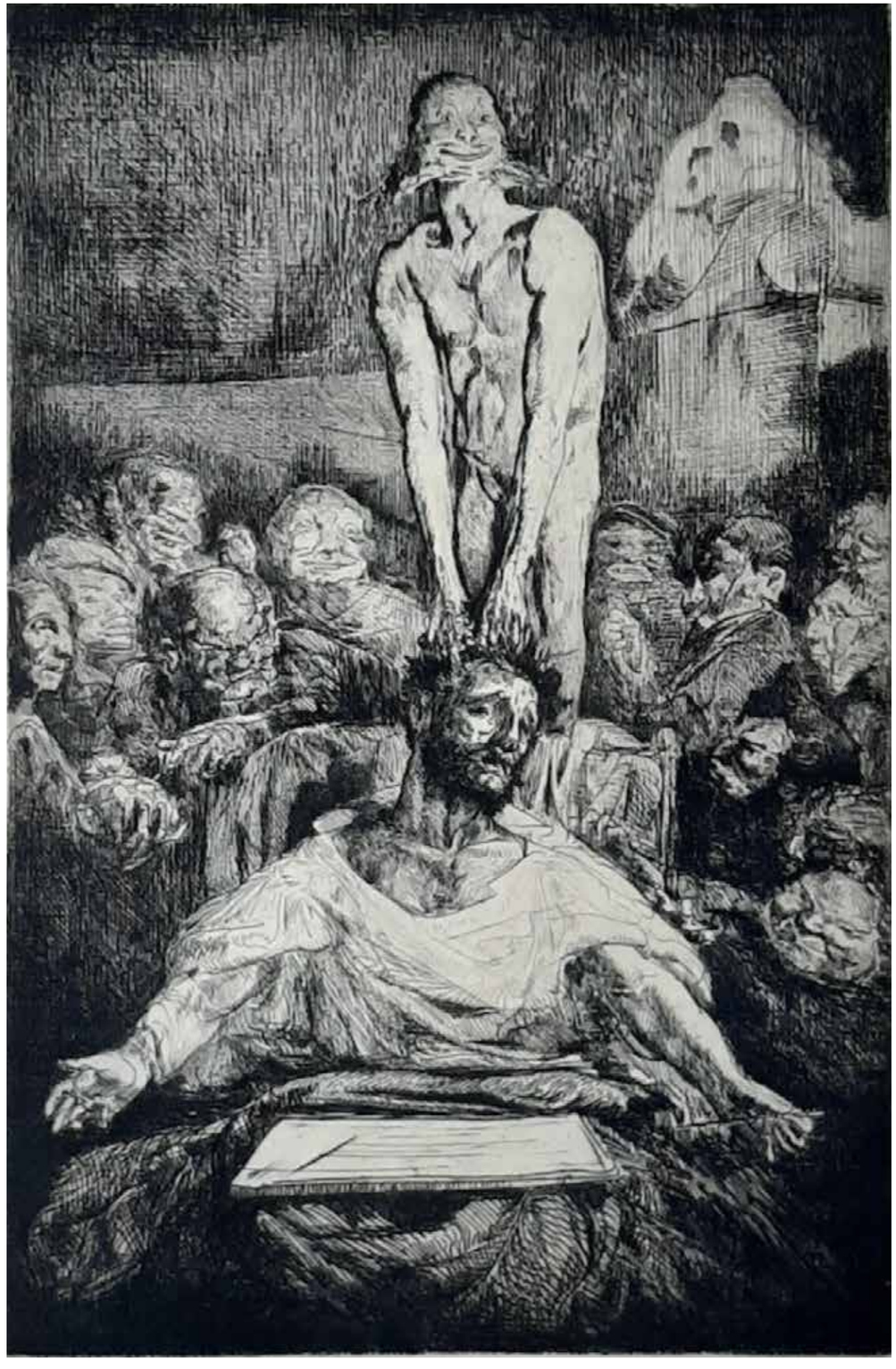


FRANÇOIS CHIFFLART
French, 1825–1901

The Nightmare
c. 1876
Etching

In this etching, François Chifflart manifests his debt to Francisco Goya, who drew a similar figure *in extremis* as the first plate of his *Disasters of War* print portfolio. That opening image, titled "Sad forebodings of what is to happen," indicates the theme of the entire set, with its undercurrent of the evil humans are capable of inflicting upon one another.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1969
69.670.74



ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

410

The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar

The Pit and the Pendulum, No. 1

Shadow

1861
Etchings

All three of these etchings were intended as illustrations to a French edition of Edgar Allan Poe's tales, translated by Charles Baudelaire, and they constitute the high point of Alphonse Legros's early printmaking. Legros exploited basic techniques of etching to accentuate the terrifying elements of Poe's tales. In *Shadow*, simple parallel lines produce the supersize shadow on the wall, blending it seamlessly with the candle flames. In *The Pit and the Pendulum*, the etched lines are most deeply bitten in the lower right, where rats have congregated.

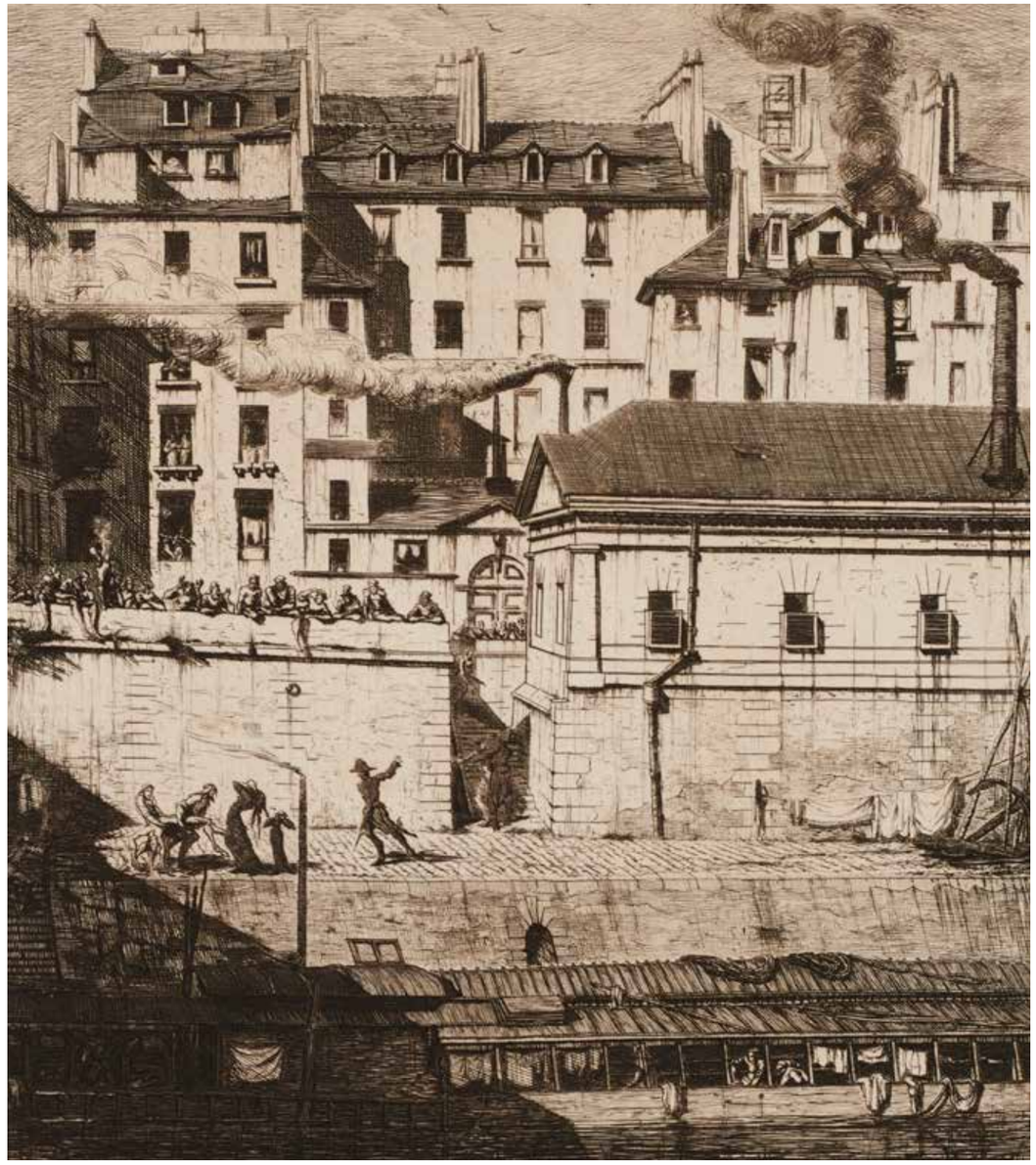
Yale University Art Gallery, gift of Mrs. Howard M. Morse
1957.45.22
Yale University Art Gallery, gift of Alan Fortunoff
1985.71.60, 1985.71.59

CHARLES MERYON
French, 1821–1868

The Morgue
1854
Etching

The Paris morgue was located on the south bank of the Île de la Cité, where drowning victims were often fished out of the Seine. In Charles Meryon's etching, a row of urban gawkers watches the spectacle of a dead body being brought out for identification. In an accompanying printed poem, Meryon wrote, "May you never have to view here upon this black marble slab the awful effigy of some dear one."

Clark Art Institute
1968.5

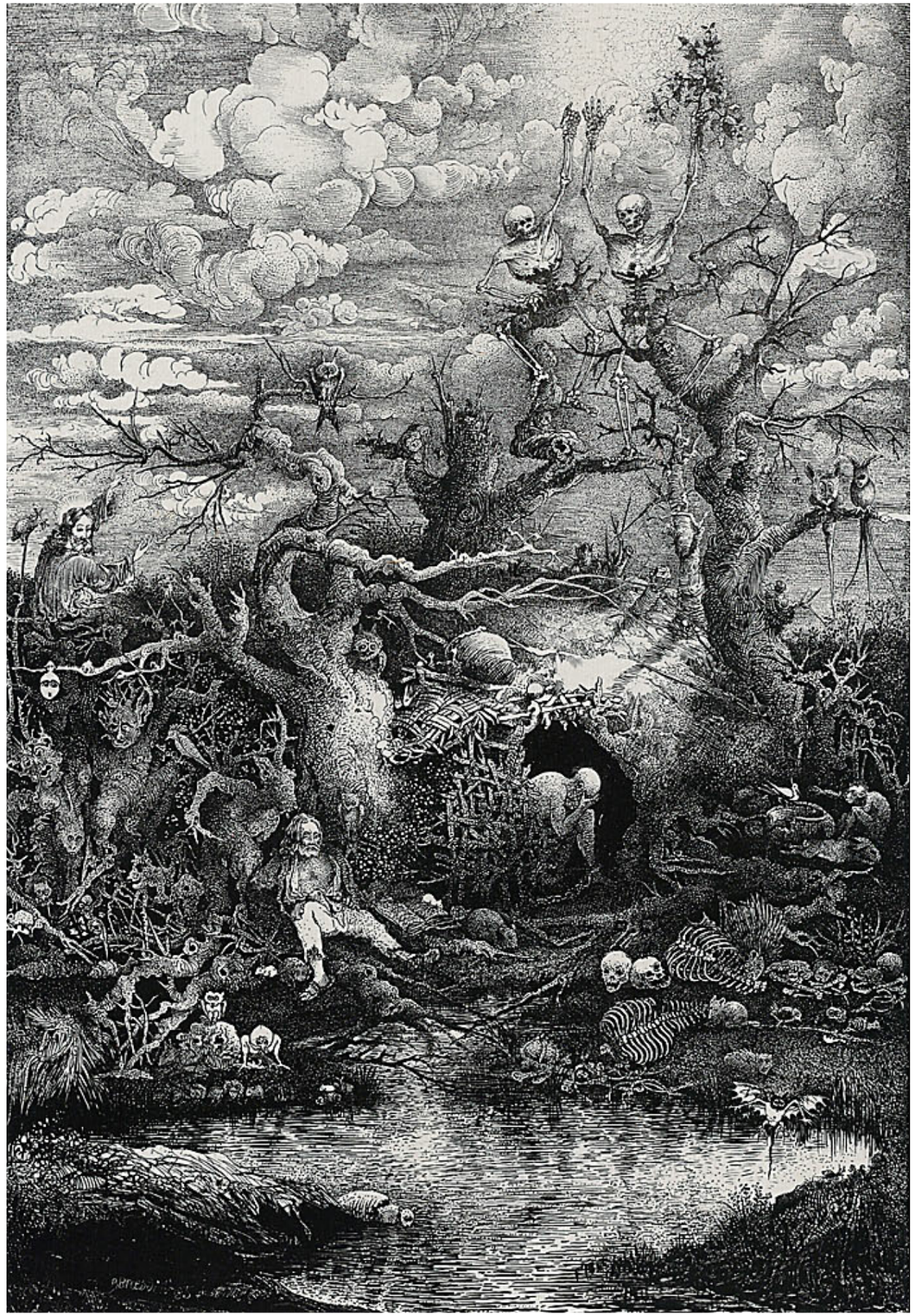


RODOLPHE BRESDIN
French, 1822–1885

The Comedy of Death
1854
Lithograph

The author Joris-Karl Huysmans left an indelible description of this intricately crafted print, with its trees and vegetation "taking on the forms of demons and phantoms, and covered with birds with the heads of rats." Among the human figures, "a hermit with his head in his hands meditates in the depths of a grotto, and an unfortunate lies dying, worn out by privations, with his feet before a pond."

Art Institute of Chicago, Ada Turnbull Hertle Fund
1986.854



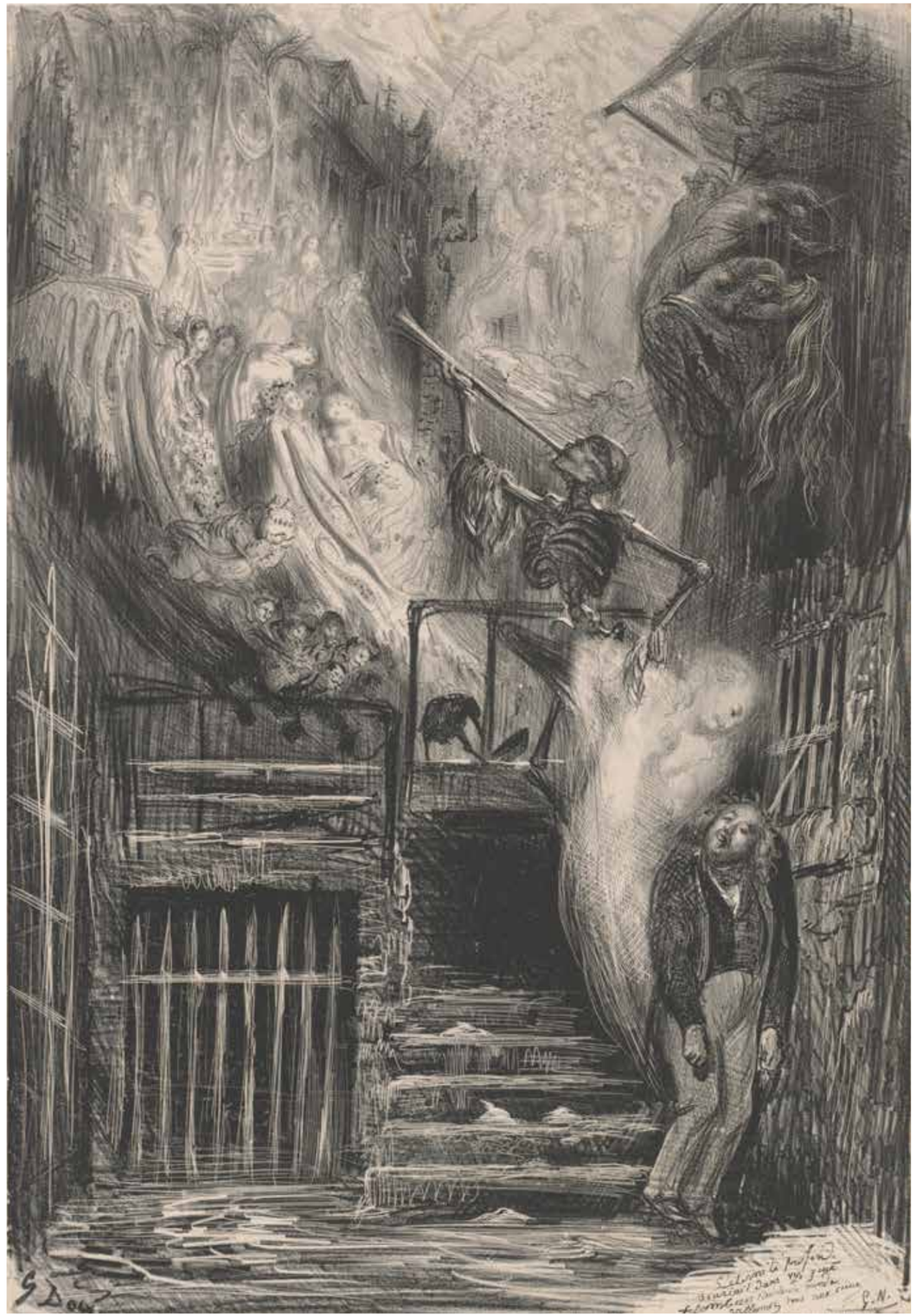
GUSTAVE DORÉ
French, 1832–1883

408

Rue de la Vieille Lanterne
(The Suicide of Gérard de Nerval)
1855
Lithograph on chine collé

This lithograph by Gustave Doré commemorates the suicide of his friend, the poet and dreamer Gérard de Nerval. Nerval's writing often wrestled with the gap between poetic life and reality; he described himself as "wandering between two worlds, one dead [and] the other powerless to be born." Nerval, after being hospitalized for mental illness, finally succumbed to a crisis of despair and hanged himself on the night of January 25, 1855.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC,
gift of the Prouté Family in Honor of Andrew Robison
2016.134.3



FRANÇOIS CHIFFLART
French, 1825–1901

Cholera in Paris
1865
Etching with drypoint

The cholera epidemic that raged through Paris in 1865 followed other outbreaks, including in 1832 and 1849, which underscored ever more urgently the need to reform urban sanitation and public health. This print by François Chifflart, commemorating the lives lost to the disease, evokes a spirit world or community of souls floating above the desolate city.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund
2002.136.8

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Death of the Vagabond
1879
Etching and aquatint

A technical tour de force and Legros's largest print, *Death of the Vagabond* produces stunning atmospheric effects through contrasts of line and tone. The Realist artists of the time were known for depicting images of farmers, peasants, agricultural workers, and others whose lives were entwined with the land. Legros's print has been seen in Realist terms for its insistence on its subject's relation to the earth. At the same time, the symbolic weight of the vagabond coming to his final rest at the foot of a moribund tree anticipates the allegorical prints Legros would make years later.

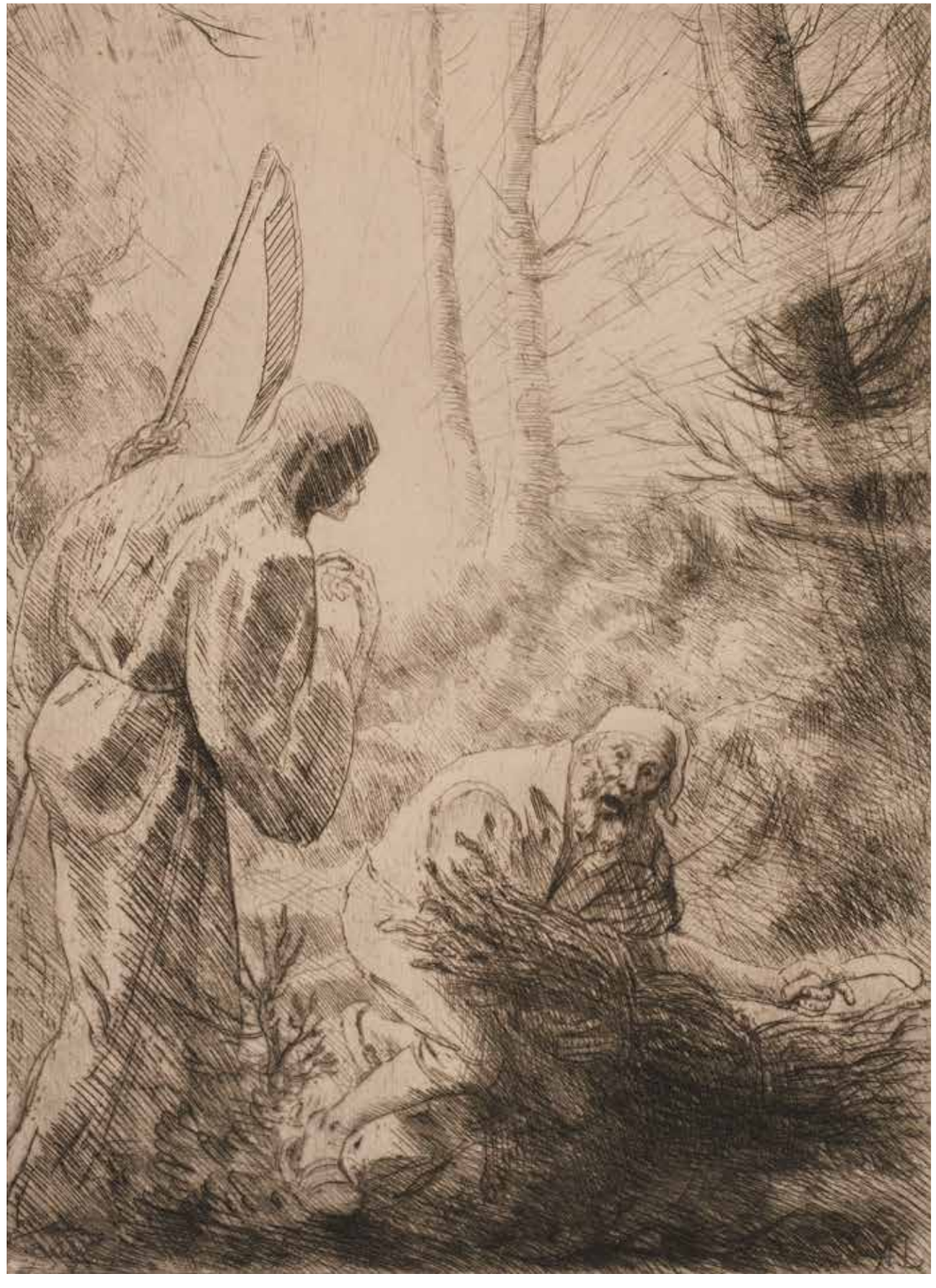
Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Mrs. Herbert F. Perkins
1941.1059

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Death and the Woodsman
1875–80
Etching and drypoint on laid paper

Jean de la Fontaine's moralizing fable *Death and the Woodsman* (1668), about the tired woodcutter who calls upon Death to take up his heavy load, was a popular subject among French artists of the nineteenth century. Alphonse Legros produced multiple variations on the theme, including this, his most iterated print. In Legros's hands, an ordinary moment of rural labor becomes a mystical encounter charged with spiritual illumination.

Clark Art Institute
1977.50



SPACES OF DREAMS

For artists of any era dissatisfied with the status quo, one means of escape has been imagining new or alternative worlds. The mid-nineteenth century in France was no different. Victor Hugo, artist and writer, spent nearly two decades in exile, but many other Shadow Visionaries pursued dreams of “elsewhere” from within France. Between fall 1853 and summer 1855, while Hugo lived on the island of Jersey, he engaged in regular séances, using the help of a medium to communicate with the spirit world. This impulse to bridge the gap between the realms of the dead and the living connects with the desire, in the burgeoning genre of science fiction, to link known and unknown worlds through supernatural leaps of the imagination. Book illustrations in this genre show how art and literature provided mutual inspiration in the quest to envision otherworldly realms.

VICTOR HUGO
French, 1802–1885

411

Fantastic Castle at Twilight
1857
Pen and brush and brown and black ink, with stamp, heightened with touches of white gouache, partly rubbed

As Florian Rodari has written about Victor Hugo's castle drawings, "These impregnable fortresses . . . are all but indissociable from their equivalents in hollows, caves, underground passages, and dungeons, from which one can escape only by some superhuman feat of will; or they are lairs which shroud the runaway, hero or criminal in darkness." Here, the fanciful, multitowered castle looks vulnerable in its immensity, wildly illuminated as if—amid a swirling, celestial turbulence that one can only call electrical—lightning has just struck it.

Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection
2010.115

VICTOR HUGO
French, 1802–1885

Castle Overlooking a River
1847
Pen, brown ink wash, crayon, and stencil

A literary titan with a prodigious output of novels, poems, and other writings, Victor Hugo also made thousands of drawings that underpin his reputation as an artistic visionary. Disgusted by Louis-Napoléon Boneparte's coup d'état of December 1851, Hugo went into exile in Brussels through August 1852. He then moved to the island of Jersey in the English Channel and was sent in 1855 to the neighboring island of Guernsey. He did not return to France until 1870. Fascinated with the medieval castles of legend, Hugo turned repeatedly to this theme in his drawings, using ever-changing combinations of media.

Private collection

MAXIME LALANNE
French, 1827–1886

Victor Hugo's House
1864
Etchings on chine collé

This set of prints by Maxime Lalanne is based on twelve photographs taken in 1861 by a visitor to Hauteville House, Victor Hugo's home in exile on the island of Guernsey. The series begins with the approach to the harbor, then proceeds to the house and inside, where a baroque gloom hangs over the dark interiors. Though unoccupied, the rooms exude Hugo's heavy, insistent presence, whether in the large capital "H" over the dining-room fireplace (plate 4) or the papers strewn over the desk in the "Look-Out," a bona fide man cave (plate 9). After this tour through Hugo's domestic surroundings, the actual portrait of him in his garden (plate 12) seems almost superfluous.

Yale University Art Gallery, gift of Allen Evarts Foster, BA 1906
1965.33.387–398

St. Peter Port, Guernsey, plate 1

Hauteville House, plate 2

The Vestibule, plate 3

Fireplace in the Dining Room, plate 4

The Red Room, plate 5

The Oak Gallery, plate 6

Fireplace in the Oak Gallery, plate 7

Door of the Oak Gallery, plate 8

The Look Out, the Office of Victor Hugo, plate 9

The Look Out, plate 10

The Bedroom of Victor Hugo, plate 11

Victor Hugo in His Garden, plate 12

ÉMILE BAYARD
French, 1837–1891

This plain would be nothing but an immense ossuary and *What gigantic oxen*
Wood engravings; illustrations to Jules Verne's *Around the Moon*
Paris: Hetzel, 1875

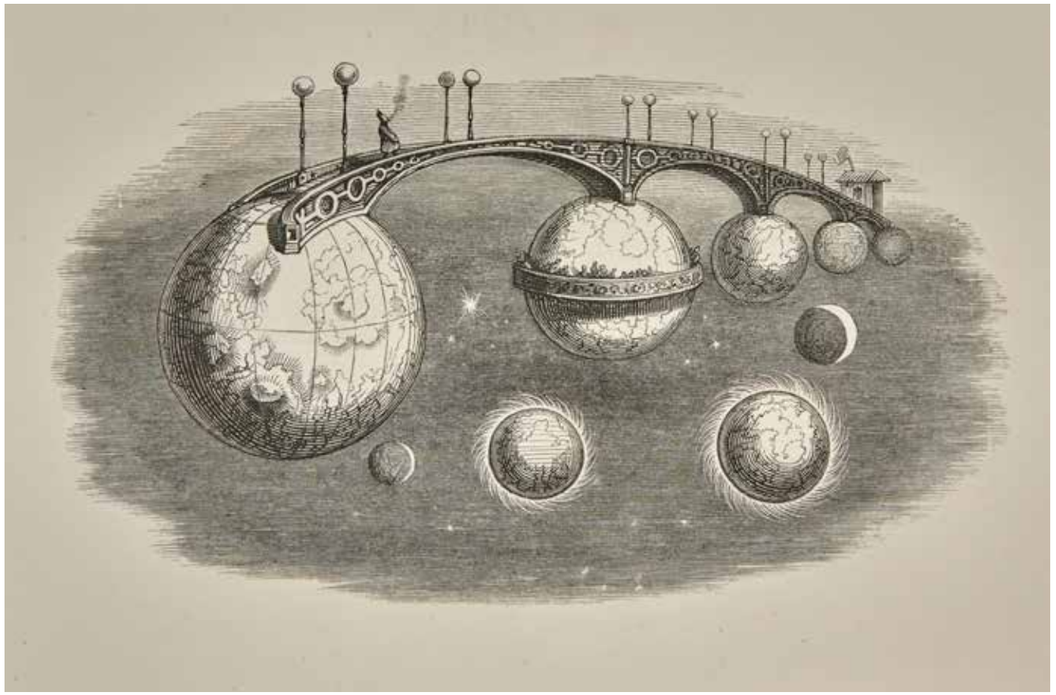
Jules Verne's adventure tales achieved stratospheric success, in part due to the talents of his illustrators. Émile Bayard made these remarkable depictions of the lunar surface against a starry backdrop for Verne's *Around the Moon*. The text describes the lunar plain, with its bones and other evidence of a long-dead civilization, as an "immense ossuary on which rest the mortal remains of a thousand extinct generations." Verne's travelers conclude on a note of profound annihilation: "In any event, in its current state, this world was the image of death, without it being possible to say that life had ever animated it."

Clark Library, Rare Book Room
N27 .V531.1d

J.J. GRANDVILLE
French, 1803–1847

Mysteries of the Infinite
Lithograph; illustration to Taxile Delord's
Another World
Paris: H. Fournier, 1844

Another World, today recognized as a masterpiece of illustration by J.J. Grandville, was a commercial flop in its own time. Many of Grandville's futuristic fantasies are surprisingly domestic, such as this image for the book chapter "Mysteries of the Infinite." It proposes travel to other planets via wrought-iron bridges, helpfully outfitted with glass-globed streetlamps. Continuing on the note of comfort, text and image inform us that the rings of Saturn are "nothing but a circular balcony where the Saturnians come in the evenings to take the air."



Clark Art Institute Library, Rare Book Room
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FRANÇOIS CHIFFLART
French, 1825–1901

In the Roman Campagna
1881
Etching

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Elisha Whittelsey Collection,
Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1968
68.673.13

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Death's Triumph: After the Battle
1898
Etching

Deriving from old iconographic traditions, these images meditate on the social ills with which humanity seems forever saddled, such as violence and debauchery. Their message is unremittingly bleak, even casting doubt on the redemptive power of faith and prayer.

Yale University Art Gallery, gift of Alan Fortunoff
1985.71.33

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Death's Triumph: Death Carrying Away Drunkenness and Lust
c. 1894
Etching

Yale University Art Gallery, gift of Alan Fortunoff
1985.71.31

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Death's Triumph: The Useless Mouths
c. 1892–1900
Etching

Clark Art Institute
1988.198

CODA

A pupil of Rodolphe Bresdin and heir to his dark artistic vision, Odilon Redon worked through visionary themes of human destiny and spiritual questioning in his so-called *noirs*— drawings and prints executed entirely in black and white. In the 1880s and 1890s, Redon became a primary standard-bearer of the Symbolist movement. Yet his work also looks back to the example of Francisco Goya's print cycles. In multiple lithographic series, Redon revealed humans perched at the edge of a metaphorical abyss, confronting their deepest doubts and fears. Redon's prints often include poetic captions evoking the textual sources from which his iconography derives. Apart from those literary cues, the images owe much of their symbolic and expressive power to the balance of inky darkness with the luminosity of paper.

ALPHONSE LEGROS
French, 1837–1911

Head of a Man
Late 1870s
Etching

ODILON REDON
French, 1840–1916

Closed Eyes
1890
Lithograph

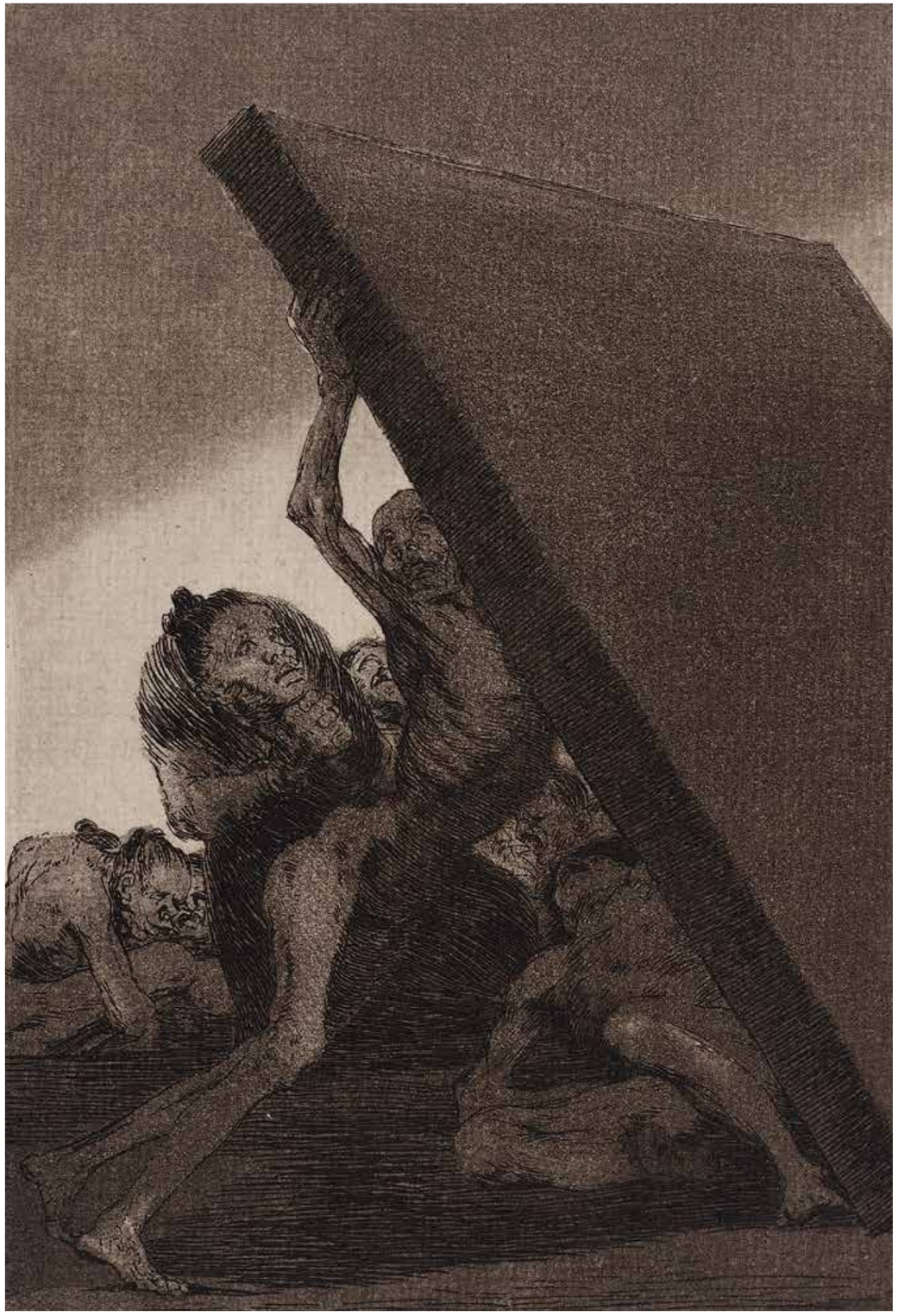
These images, by different artists using distinct print techniques, both convey deep introspection. Alphonse Legros exploited his etching medium to obscure most of the surface in black cross-hatchings, letting the man's face and collar emerge only barely. Vertical lines in the bottom margin give the illusion of excess ink dripping down from above. Odilon Redon's serene androgynous figure with closed eyes, executed more lightly, exudes an oceanic isolation that equates somehow to the dark interiority of Legros's man in profile.

Clark Art Institute
1988.224, 1962.97

FRANCISCO GOYA
Spanish, 1746–1828

And still they don't go!, plate 59
from *Los Caprichos*
1799
Etching, burnished aquatint, and burin

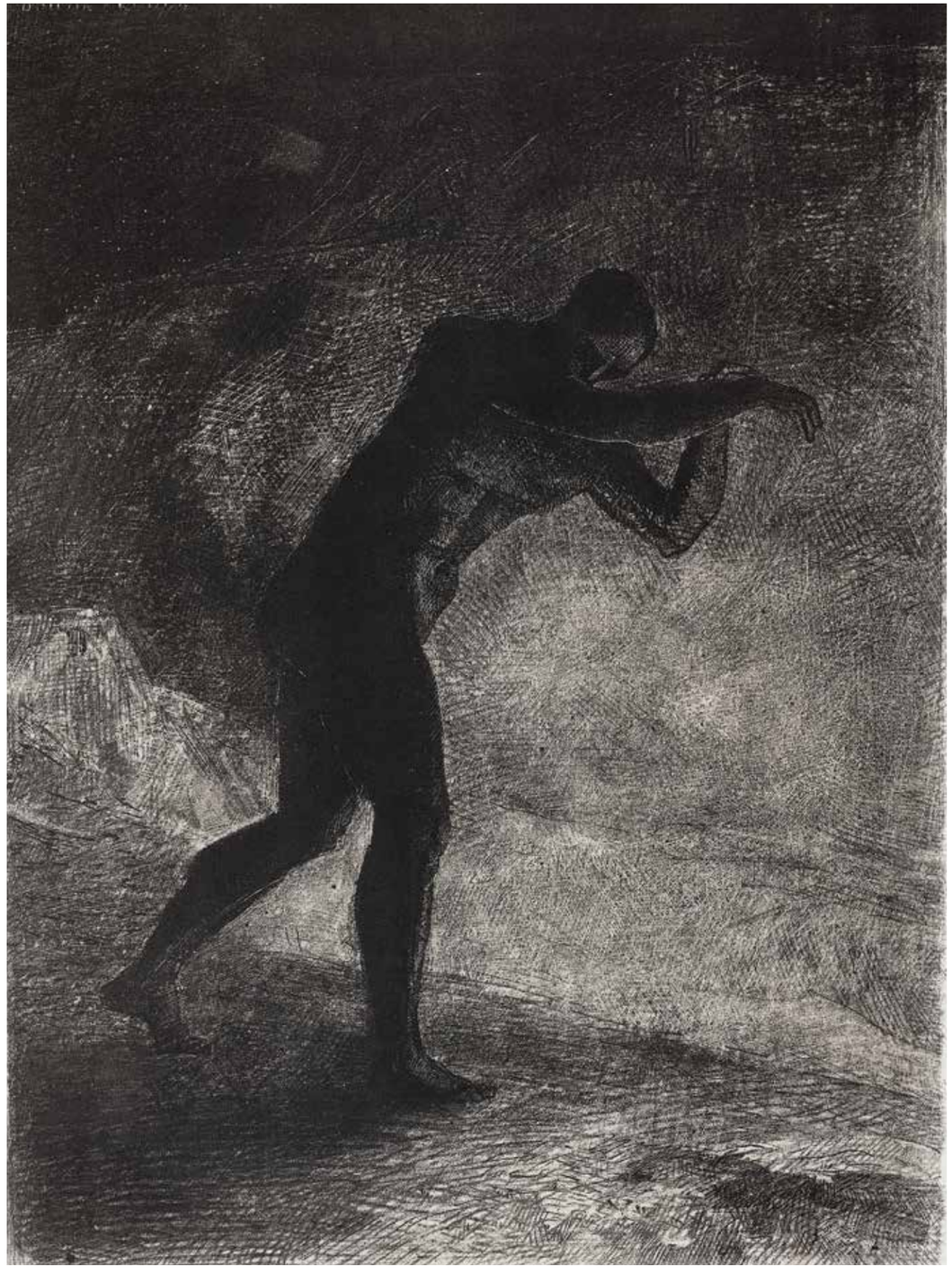
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Miss Katherine Eliot Bullard
14.1785



ODILON REDON
French, 1840–1916

And man appeared, questioning the earth from which he emerged and which attracts him, he made his way toward somber brightness, plate 8 from *The Origins*
1883
Lithograph on chine collé

"Somber brightness," in the extended title for this print from Odilon Redon's *Origins* series, sums up the device of clarity-in-obscurity that the artist used across multiple lithographic suites. The solidly built man, groping toward an uncertain future, forms a bookend with the emaciated figure in *And still they don't go!*, from Francisco Goya's *Caprichos* (on view nearby). In Redon's own time, his work was compared to Goya's. Both artists seemed to imply that, from the dawn of our species, humankind's worst impulses were driving us "to the abyss," as a critic put it in 1886.



Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Lee M. Friedman Fund
67.281

ODILON REDON
French, 1840–1916

412

It is the devil, bearing beneath his two wings the seven deadly sins, plate 2 from *The T emptation of Saint Anthony* (First Series)
1888
Lithograph

Odilon Redon saved some of his darkest blacks for *It is the devil*, plate 2 of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. This lithographic album from 1888 was the first of three Redon would produce in response to Gustave Flaubert's novel of the same title. Massive, frontal, and deeply unsettling, the Devil, bearing an armful of deadly sins, confronts the viewer as the very incarnation of terror. This was not art for the boulevard or the exhibition hall; it called for intimate spaces in which the full impact of the image could be absorbed.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of William Perkins Babcock, by exchange
M21690

ODILON REDON
French, 1840–1916

And the rider was called Death, plate 3 from
The Apocalypse of Saint John
1899
Lithograph on chine collé

Through the 1890s, Odilon Redon continued to produce lithographs exploring the unsettling borderland terrain described by critic Émile Hennequin as "that desolate region which exists on the borders of the real and the fantastic." In this image from *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, the time-tested iconography of Death on a pale horse leaves Redon's viewer in no doubt that the gaunt rider wields the power of destruction.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of W. G. Russell Allen
60.708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