

The Department of Prints and Drawings

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Number 58, Spring 1970

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58089ac>

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Publisher(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN

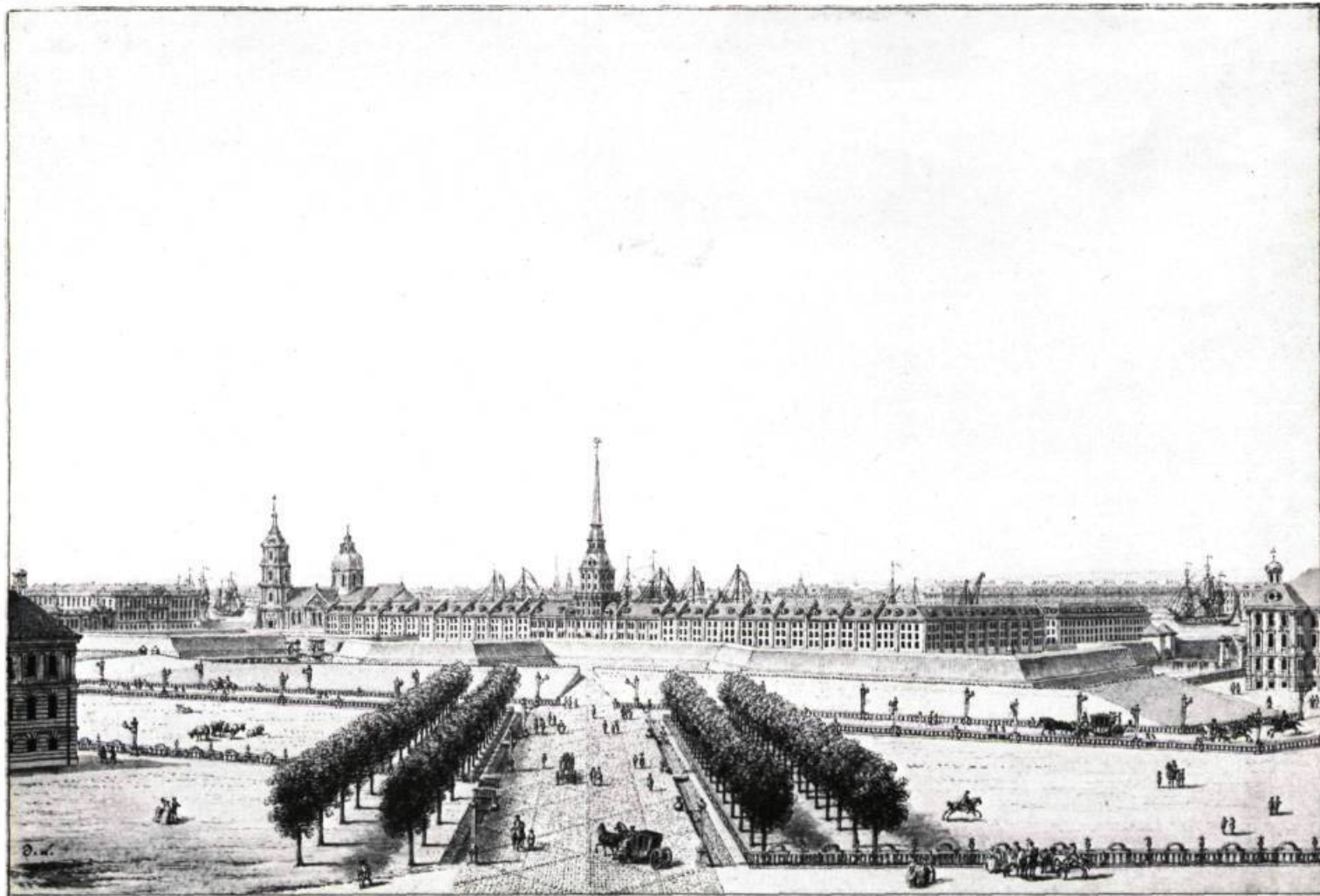
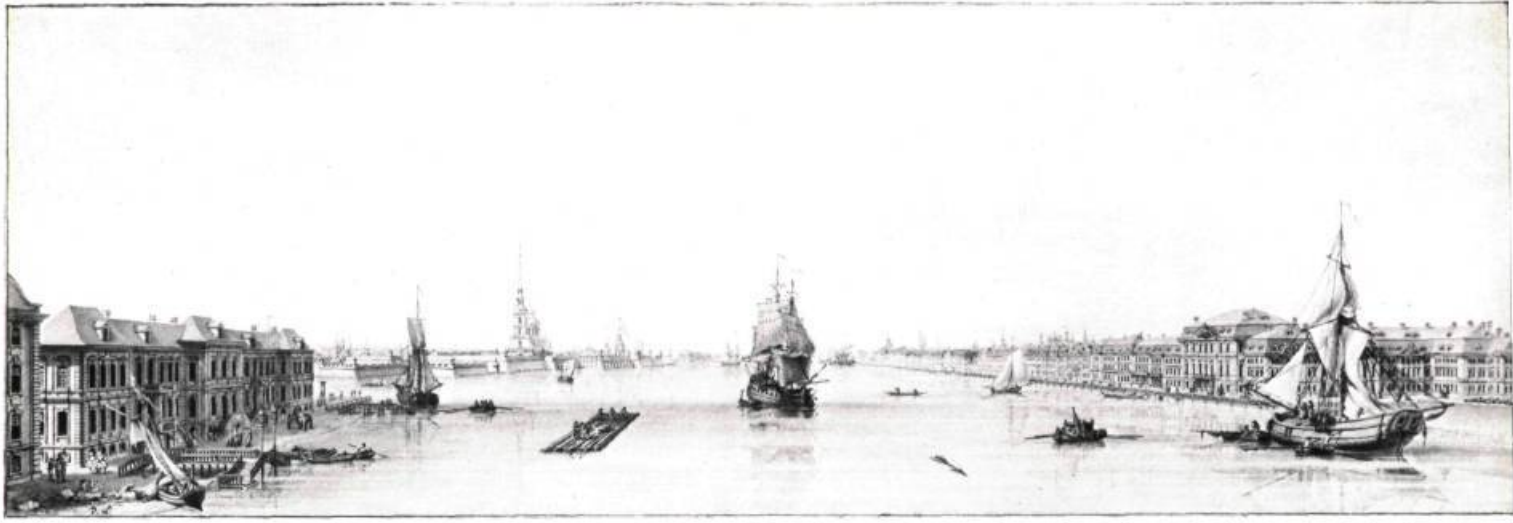
0042-5435 (print)

1923-3183 (digital)

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Cite this article

Fenwick, K. M. (1970). The Department of Prints and Drawings. *Vie des arts*, (58), 38–39.



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The Department of Prints and Drawings

In a country such as Canada whose culture stems mainly from its French and British heritage, the nature of this inheritance has played a considerable part in the development of the National Gallery's collections. The French representation, though other schools have by no means been neglected, has always therefore been of prime concern and our purpose here is to acquaint readers of *Vie des Arts* with the extent of that representation in the department of prints and drawings.

As far back as 1912 drawings by such nineteenth-century French masters as Daubigny, Millet and Rousseau were entering the collection. (p. 40, figs. 1 and 2). Since then numerous and varied examples have been added. These include seventeenth-century drawings by Du Monstier, Vouet, Claude and others; and a number by the leading draughtsmen of the eighteenth century, Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard and the Saint-Aubins and their contemporaries. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are also well represented by some of the most significant artists of the period, among them Ingres, Corot, Daumier, Renoir, Moreau, Redon, Matisse and Rouault. Examples most recently acquired have been a rare drawing by Jacques Bellange (1594-1638) (p. 43, fig. 3); two exquisitely detailed views of St Petersburg, as it was then called, by Louis-Nicolas de Lespinasse (1734-1808) whose topographical works are notable for their exactness, delicacy and elegance (figs. 1 and 2); a small pastel of remarkable freshness by Delacroix; one of Steinlen's typical studies of cats (fig. 3); and a water-colour by Bonnard.

The strength and quality of the French representation was noted by British and Italian critics with the showing last year of a selection of European drawings from the National Gallery's collection at Colnaghi's in London and at the Uffizi in Florence, and especially by French critics and connoisseurs when the drawings were later shown in Paris at the Louvre in the exhibition galleries of its Cabinet des dessins.

This interest in the French aspects of our culture also extends to the work of Quebec artists who at their best stand securely alongside their European counterparts. Two outstanding examples recently acquired have been a study of a boy reading by Ozias Leduc and Suzor-Côté's *Girl with Garland* (fig. 4).

Nor has the print collection lagged behind in representing the major French print-makers from Jean Duvet (1485-c. 1561) (p. 42, fig. 1), Dürer's distinguished contemporary, through to Toulouse-Lautrec, Villon and Picasso, who in this context may be considered as French and whose complete *Vollard Suite* is owned by the Gallery. Later acquisitions have included Bellange's masterpiece, *The Adoration of the Magi* (p. 42, fig. 2) and some brilliant impressions of the work of the great eighteenth-century masters of the colour-print.

While it is not possible to exhibit the collection as a whole a number of prints and drawings are usually on view in the print galleries. Those that are not are readily accessible to students and visitors in the department's study room where they may be seen on application to the curators.

(Traduction française, p. 80.)



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1. LESPINASSE, Louis-Nicolas de (1734-1808) View of St Petersburg looking up the Neva with the Admiralty and the Buildings of the Academy of Science, Pen, brown ink, wash and watercolour heightened with gouache; 8 3/4 x 25 1/2 in.; Signed lower left: D.L. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Acquired 1969.
2. LESPINASSE, Louis-Nicolas de (1734-1808) View of the Admiralty at St Petersburg. Pen, brown ink and watercolour; 8 3/4 x 12 3/4 in.; signed lower left: D.L. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Acquired 1969.
3. STEINLEN, Théophile-Alexandre (1859-1923) Cats Charcoal on paper; 11 1/2 x 13 in.; Signed lower right: Steinlen. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Acquired 1968.
4. SUZOR-CÔTÉ, Marc-Aurèle de Foy (1869-1937) Girl with Garland. Black chalk on buff paper; 20 3/4 x 15 in.; Signed and dated lower right: A. Suzor-Côté/Paris-05. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Acquired 1968.