

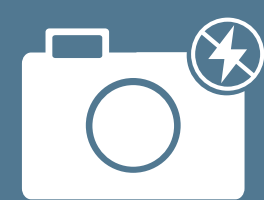
Artists on the Move

Journeys and Drawings

In an age before mass travel, European artists from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries were surprisingly peripatetic. Whether it was a short journey or a long one, a temporary visit or a permanent relocation, artists' mobility had considerable impact on their practice. Through their travels they became exposed to different techniques, styles, materials, and iconographies, while at the same time disseminating their own knowledge and traditions wherever they went.

Migrant masters strategically adjusted to their new milieus not only socially but also artistically. Some adapted to local traditions, while others continued to create in their customary manner. Others again altered aspects of their art from one occasion to the next, depending on the expectations of audiences.

Drawing was the preferred medium of traveling artists to record what they encountered on the road thanks to its relative ease and the portability of materials. Through the act of drawing, which required concentrated looking and careful observation, they learned about their environments and preserved what they deemed most important.



Non-flash photography and video for personal use are welcome in the exhibition.

Leaving Home

Artists undertook journeys for a variety of reasons. Some left their homes voluntarily to hone skills, pursue work opportunities, or satisfy a curiosity to see faraway lands. Others fled to escape hardship or persecution. The yearning for tranquility caused a number of them to withdraw to remote places, while many more were attracted to major political and cultural centers.

For centuries, Rome was an important destination for artists. With its abundance of publicly accessible ancient monuments and modern works of art, Rome served as an ideal classroom for those who wished to expand their knowledge. In addition, the city was home to a large consumer market—including the papal court—that frequently commissioned and acquired art.

Encounters: The Land

Struck by the novelty, strangeness, and beauty of unfamiliar environments, traveling artists often drew their surroundings, including sweeping landscapes, sprawling cities, and the flora and fauna of a place. Some of these drawings were intended to be finished works of art. Others functioned as memory aids that could be returned to later and reworked into larger compositions.

Artists favored dry media, such as chalk, metalpoint, and pencil, because they were portable and required minimal preparation. Sketchbooks protected sheets from creasing while also serving as hard surfaces to work on. To transport and use watercolor, which was particularly suitable for depicting fleeting weather and light effects, artists initially fabricated their own cases. But starting in the eighteenth century, art-supply companies began to manufacture paint boxes equipped with the necessary tools and materials.

Encounters: People

Traveling artists drew the people they encountered in order to commemorate new acquaintances, but frequently they treated these likenesses as interesting motifs, material for their art. While many such portraits appear to be objective, artists often approached their subjects with preconceptions, which are reflected in the representations they produced. This was particularly true when they portrayed people of other religions, races, or nations. Rather than focusing on commonalities, artists emphasized difference by exaggerating physical features, highlighting the strangeness of clothing, and depicting activities that countered European norms. Consequently, their images reinforced and perpetuated stereotypes about foreigners.

Encounters: Arts

One of the great benefits of travel was exposure to works of art from different periods and places. Artists not only viewed the many sculptures, paintings, and drawings that were displayed in public, but they were often granted access to collections housed in private residences. In an era when mechanical reproductions were still relatively rare, they kept a record of what they saw—and of what piqued their interest—by drawing. In the process they would improve their skills by reflecting on how others rendered form, created compositions, and used colors.

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