

# WHITNEY

## Press Release

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## THE WHITNEY TO PRESENT *HOPPER DRAWING* The First In-Depth Study of the Artist's Working Process



Edward Hopper (1882–1967), Study for *Nighthawks*, 1941 or 1942. Fabricated chalk and charcoal on paper; 11 1/8 x 15 in. (28.3 x 38.1 cm)  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase and gift of Josephine N. Hopper by exchange 2011.65  
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**NEW YORK, NY, FEBRUARY 21, 2013**—This spring, the Whitney Museum celebrates Edward Hopper's achievements as a draftsman in the first major museum exhibition to focus on the artist's drawings and working process. Along with many of his most iconic paintings, the exhibition features more than 200 drawings, the most extensive presentation to date of Hopper's

achievement in this medium, pairing suites of preparatory studies and related works with such major oil paintings as *New York Movie* (1939), *Office at Night* (1940), *Nighthawks* (1942) and *Morning in a City* (1944). The show will be presented in the Museum's third-floor Peter Norton Family Galleries from May 23 to October 6, before traveling to the Dallas Museum of Art from November 17, 2013 to February 6, 2014 and the Walker Art Center from March 15 to June 22, 2014.

Culled from the Museum's unparalleled collection of the artist's work, and complemented by key loans, the show illuminates how the artist transformed ordinary subjects—an open road, a city street, an office space, a house, a bedroom—into extraordinary images. Carter E. Foster, the Steven and Ann Ames Curator of Drawing at the Whitney, organized the show based on his in-depth research into the more than 2,500 works on paper by Hopper in the Whitney's collection. These pieces trace the artist's process of observation, reflection, and invention that was central to the development of his poetic and famously uncanny paintings. The works on view will span the artist's career, from early drawn exercises of his student days to *Sun in an Empty Room* (1963, private collection), one of the last paintings Hopper completed, and are concentrated on mid-century sheets related to his best-known oil paintings.

“By comparing related studies to paintings, we can see the evolution of specific ideas as the artist combined, through drawing, his observations of the world with his imagination,” says Mr. Foster. “In other instances, his drawings provide a crucial form of continuity among thematically related paintings, a kind of connective tissue that allowed Hopper to revisit and re-examine ideas over time.”

While exhibitions and scholarly publications have investigated many aspects of Hopper's art—his prints, his illustrations, his influence on contemporary art, to name a few—this exhibition will, for the first time, illuminate the centrality of drawing to Hopper's work and allow a fresh look at his landmark contributions to twentieth-century art. His drawings help to untangle the complex relationship between reality—what Hopper called “the fact”—and imagination or “improvisation” in his work. They ultimately demonstrate his sensitive and incisive responses to the world around him that led to the creation of paintings that continue to inspire and fascinate.

Though the slowness and deliberation of Hopper's creative process—and his relatively small output of oils—has long been noted, it is only through an examination of his drawings that we can understand the gestation of the artist's ideas and the transformations they underwent from paper to canvas. However, the artist only occasionally exhibited or sold his drawings, retaining most of them for personal reference and using them throughout his career as he developed the lifelong themes and preoccupations of his major oil paintings.

Hopper's education as an artist was fairly traditional, with intensive early training in drawing—particularly drawing the nude human figure. This included life drawing classes at the New York School of Art, where he studied from 1900 to 1906 with the celebrated exponent of modern American realism, Robert Henri. Early and formative travels to Paris and Europe between 1906 and 1910 produced an important body of work; the exhibition will include recently identified pages from his Paris sketchbooks, featuring lively and acute observations of street life and café culture. Later, in the 1920s, Hopper continued to hone his life drawing skills at the Whitney Studio Club (the precursor to the Museum), near his Greenwich Village studio. These skills served Hopper throughout his career, especially after the early 1930s, when he shifted from painting directly from nature to improvised subjects, deepening his drawing practice as he imagined ideas for his oils.

The exhibition opens with an overview of Hopper's drawing career. As a draftsman, Hopper favored black chalk and the rich and subtle tone he was able to achieve with it. This section includes a number of highly finished sheets executed from life, as well as illustrations, portraits, and preparatory studies.

The exhibition continues with seven sections combining paintings with their preparatory studies and related works. One of the most significant of these brings together two of Hopper's most important canvases, the Whitney's *Early Sunday Morning* (1930) and *Nighthawks* (1942), lent by the Art Institute of Chicago. *Nighthawks* will, for the first time, be shown with all nineteen of its known drawn studies, including a highly finished sheet recently acquired by the Whitney for its

permanent collection. These drawings show the development of every element of this iconic painting, from the massing of its oblique architectural space to the precise arrangements of figures around the nighttime coffee shop's counter. Shown together, *Early Sunday Morning* and *Nighthawks* will emphasize the artist's interests in New York City's shifting urban fabric, and the two pieces' close conceptual relationship to one another as summations of his impressions of urban life. Groundbreaking archival research done in the course of the exhibition's development has uncovered, for the first time, the precise building on Seventh Avenue on which *Early Sunday Morning* was based, as well as invaluable historic photographs of the Greenwich Village corners and architecture that inspired *Nighthawks*—questions that have puzzled historians of Hopper's work for decades.

The exhibition also showcases Hopper's magisterial 1939 painting *New York Movie* (lent by the Museum of Modern Art) and the group of fifty-two preparatory studies Hopper made for this work, the largest number of drawings that exist for any painting in his oeuvre. These sheets trace Hopper's nearly two-month long process of working through the idea for this piece, from his exploratory sketching trips in several Broadway movie palaces to a long and nuanced series of compositional studies for the dark, ornate interior depicted in the work, which he based on the Palace Theatre in Times Square. As with *Early Sunday Morning* and *Nighthawks*, photographic documentation of the actual sites that inspired the work will be included in the display.

The exhibition will provide similar insight into the creation of many of Hopper's other celebrated paintings, such as *Soir Bleu* (1914, Whitney Museum), *Manhattan Bridge Loop* (1928, Addison Gallery of American Art) and *From Williamsburg Bridge* (1928, Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Office at Night* (1940, Walker Art Center), *Conference at Night* (1949, Wichita Art Museum), *Gas* (1940, MoMA), *Rooms for Tourists* (1945, Yale University Art Gallery) and a number of others. These works will be paired and grouped to emphasize the artist's interest in and revisiting of a relatively narrow set of themes and subjects over the course of his nearly seven-decade-long career.

## **Hopper at the Whitney**

The work of Edward Hopper (1882-1967) has been presented often by the Whitney throughout the institution's history, beginning with his first-ever solo exhibition, held at the Whitney Studio Club in 1920. Hopper was included in the first Biennial in 1932, and in numerous Annual and Biennial exhibitions throughout his lifetime. The Whitney organized two major lifetime retrospectives of Hopper's work in 1950 and 1964. In 1970, the Whitney received more than 2,500 drawings, along with paintings, watercolors, and prints that were bequeathed by the artist's widow, Josephine. This group of works, which spans childhood drawings to major paintings, is the foundation for research and understanding of this singularly important figure in American art and culture. Since then, the Museum has organized several major exhibitions of Hopper's work, including *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist* (1980-81), *Edward Hopper and the American Imagination* (1995), and, most recently, *Modern Life: Edward Hopper and His Time* (2010-11).

### **About the Catalogue**

*Hopper Drawing* is accompanied by a richly illustrated, approximately 250-page catalogue designed by McCall Associates and distributed by Yale University Press. This catalogue, the first in-depth study of Hopper's drawings, will be an indispensable resource for scholars and the public. It will feature a number of drawings reproduced for the first time, along with photographs and other archival materials that richly contextualize the works. Organized, like the exhibition, into a series of dossiers examining pairs or groups of related paintings and drawings, the catalogue was written primarily by Carter E. Foster, including an extensive overview of Hopper's achievements as a draftsman. The catalogue also includes contributions by Daniel S. Palmer, Nicholas Robbins, Kimia Shahi, and Mark W. Turner.

### **Exhibition Support**

Significant support for this exhibition is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Dietrich Foundation, The Selz Foundation, Barney A. Ebsworth, Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield, The Robert Lehman Foundation, Jane Carroll, Aaron I. Fleischman and Lin Lougheed, Arlene and Robert Kogod, and an anonymous donor.



### **About the Whitney**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 19,000 works by more than 2,900 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is constructing a new building, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in 2015.

### **Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art**

<b>...as apple pie</b>	Through early 2013
<b>Sinister Pop</b>	Through March 31, 2013
<b>Dark and Deadpan: Pop in TV and the Movies</b>	Through March 31, 2013
<b>American Legends</b>	Through November 2013
<b>Blues for Smoke</b>	Through April 28, 2013
<b>Jay DeFeo: A Retrospective</b>	February 28-June 2, 2013
<b>The White Rose</b>	April 25-May 12, 2013
<b>I, YOU, WE</b>	Opens April 25, 2013
<b>Stewart Uoo and Jana Euler</b>	Opens May 10, 2013
<b>David Hockney: The Jugglers</b>	Opens May 22, 2013
<b>Hopper Drawing</b>	May 23-Oct 6, 2013
<b>Robert Irwin: Scrim Veil—Black Rectangle—Natural Light (1977)</b>	June 27-Sept 1, 2013

*The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$18. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$14. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit [whitney.org](http://whitney.org).*