
Title of Object

View of Tangier

Photo of Object (optional)



Object Information

Artist: Eugène Delacroix

Country: France

Date of Object: 1852-1853

File Created: 10/1/2016

Accession Number: 93.67

Author of File: Debora Lynch-Rothstein

Material/Medium: Oil on canvas

Reviewer of File: Kara ZumBahlen

Department: Paintings

Last Updated/Reviewed: 7/6/2017

Culture: French

Tour Topics

Passion-place, Group 4, Highlights 1600-1850, Passion for Place, European art, The Expressive & Imaginative effects of color, women, cultural encounters, fashion/dress, architecture, Romanticism, Minnesota/local, James J. Hill, cemetery, landscape, gender roles, funerary/afterlife, Orientalism, Jewish, Morocco

Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. Look closely at this painting. What do you think Delacroix saw that influenced him the rest of his life?
2. What words would you use to describe this painting? What do you see or feel that makes you say that?
3. What is the setting, the climate, the landscape, and what is interesting about the people?
4. Delacroix was more interested in recreating the feeling of a place than showing exactly how it looked. How does this painting make you feel? What do you see that makes you say that?
5. Now that we know that Delacroix wrote and sketched about his trip to Morocco in journals and letters and painted his pictures when he returned home, think of a time you traveled to a new place. What were some of the memories you had? How did you share those memories with other people?

6. Imagine that you can take a walk into this painting. Where and what would you do? What sounds might you hear? What kinds of things might you smell in the air? Where would you walk?

Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

1. A monumental, voluptuous woman stands in the foreground, towering over two men sitting on the grass and rocks. She's wearing the richly textured attire and jewelry of a Moroccan Jew. Her clothing is relaxed and her upper chest and arms are bare. This is inconsistent with her being outdoors, where custom would have required her to wrap herself in a veiled mantle. Her frontal pose and mysterious gaze project an image of classical calm and beauty. Delacroix called this, the "animated composure" of antique art that he highly regarded in Moroccan women. This painting reiterates Delacroix's belief that in Morocco, he had "living antiquity, Romans and Greeks at his doorstep". The statuesque woman in this painting has the appearance of an interpretation of a sculpted figure in an ancient Greek relief or funerary stele. (Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art, 146-148)

2. On the left of the men is a burial headstone and on the right of the woman is a colorful aloe plant. In the middle ground is the walled city of Tangier. In front of the wall are some figures in at a tomb of a Moorish saint and on the right are figures on horses. Delacroix wrote extensively about the funerary monuments outside Tangier's walls and the Friday tradition of women, strictly veiled, laying palm fronds on burial mounds and monuments. (Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art, 146-148)

3. The walled city is sprawling on a hill near a body of water. The sky in the background is atmospheric bright blue and filled with clouds.

4. The scene is filled with color, shapes, and pictorial elements, drawing our eye from one area to another. The light in the painting casts lots of shadows; face of the woman, one of the men, and the area near the headstone. The use of the color white, highlights the houses, clouds, turbans and blouses. Rich lush color is used to enhance the texture of the painting; clothing, jewelry, landscape, and stonewalls.

5. A preparatory watercolor for this painting was done in either 1836 or 37. Delacroix identified the subject as "View of Tangier. Seated Moors, Tomb of a Saint" Based on the date, the watercolor was done after Delacroix's return from N Africa . He was a part of a diplomatic delegation. The final painting had a number of changes from the watercolor. (Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art, 146-148)

Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

1. Delacroix's journey to Morocco in 1832 had a significant influence on his art, based on the numerous sketchbooks (7) he brought back with him. Delacroix traveled to Morocco via Spain and Algeria as part of a diplomatic delegation, led by Comte de Morny, who was to negotiate a treaty with the Sultan Moulay Abd al-Rahman. (Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art, 25) He drew inspiration from these sketches, watercolors, and notes to compose a number of major paintings throughout his life.

2. We know a lot about Delacroix because he was a gifted writer whose journals and letters are considered a "painter's bible". In his writing, the people of Tangier were often depicted as exotic, picturesque and classic. Like other artists of his time Delacroix had studied from Greek and Roman sculptures. He also traveled to London and saw the Parthenon (Elgin) marbles. He felt that time had stopped when he visited Morocco.

3. As an art historical phenomenon, orientalism was a French invention beginning with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt at the beginning of the 19th century, to 130 years of French colonization of N Africa. Delacroix was one of the first French artists to visit N Africa after the French invasion of Algiers in 1830. Delacroix viewed the Arabs and Jews as "living antiquity" like the Romans and Greeks. Their simple attire projected their character of "nobility". Many artists followed Delacroix's lead in seeking out new places and exotic cultures for inspiration. (Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art, 99)

4. Prior to Delacroix's visit to N Africa, Delacroix had based his eastern subjects on a conception of the East that was formed by poetry, travelers' tales, popular illustrations, and his own imagination. The six months abroad opened his senses. His privileged status gave him access to rituals and locations denied the ordinary traveler. He discovered the customs, color, and light of the East and a civilization that was as old as antiquity but had continued unbroken. He would later say, "the aspect of this country will remain forever in my eyes, all my life long the men of this noble race will live and move in my memory, it is they who have really brought back to me the beauty of the ancients."

5. The complexity of Delacroix lies in his imaginative power, which was the basis for his creative process. At the same time, he refers to nature/the real/the concrete before allowing his mind to create a world of forms. His esthetic concept combines classical inspiration with a Romantic taste for the Middle Ages. While his composition alternates between Baroque vitality and rhythmic balance, the technique is Romantic: his touch is bold, color is the essential medium of expression and his forms are modeled in light and shade.

Current Mia Label Information (optional)

This painting once belonged to James J. Hill (1838-1916), the Minnesota railroad magnate whose collection of European paintings forms the basis of the Institute's nineteenth-century holdings.

Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Eugene Delacroix, *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix*, Phaidon Press, 1951.

Simon Lee, *Delacroix*, Phaidon Press, 2015.

Patrick Noon and Christopher Riopelle, *Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art*, exh. cat., National Gallery Company Limited, 2015.

Tom Prideaux, *The World of Delacroix 1798-1863*, Time Life Books, 1966.

Prop ideas:

Image of a watercolor over pencil on paper, Delacroix, *Moroccans outside the Walls of Tangier*, 1836 or 1837, Morgan Library & Museum, New York, Thaw Collection: <http://corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=247007>



Delacroix's sketch book:



New Your Art Resources Consortium: <http://www.nyarc.org/content/delacroix-morocco>