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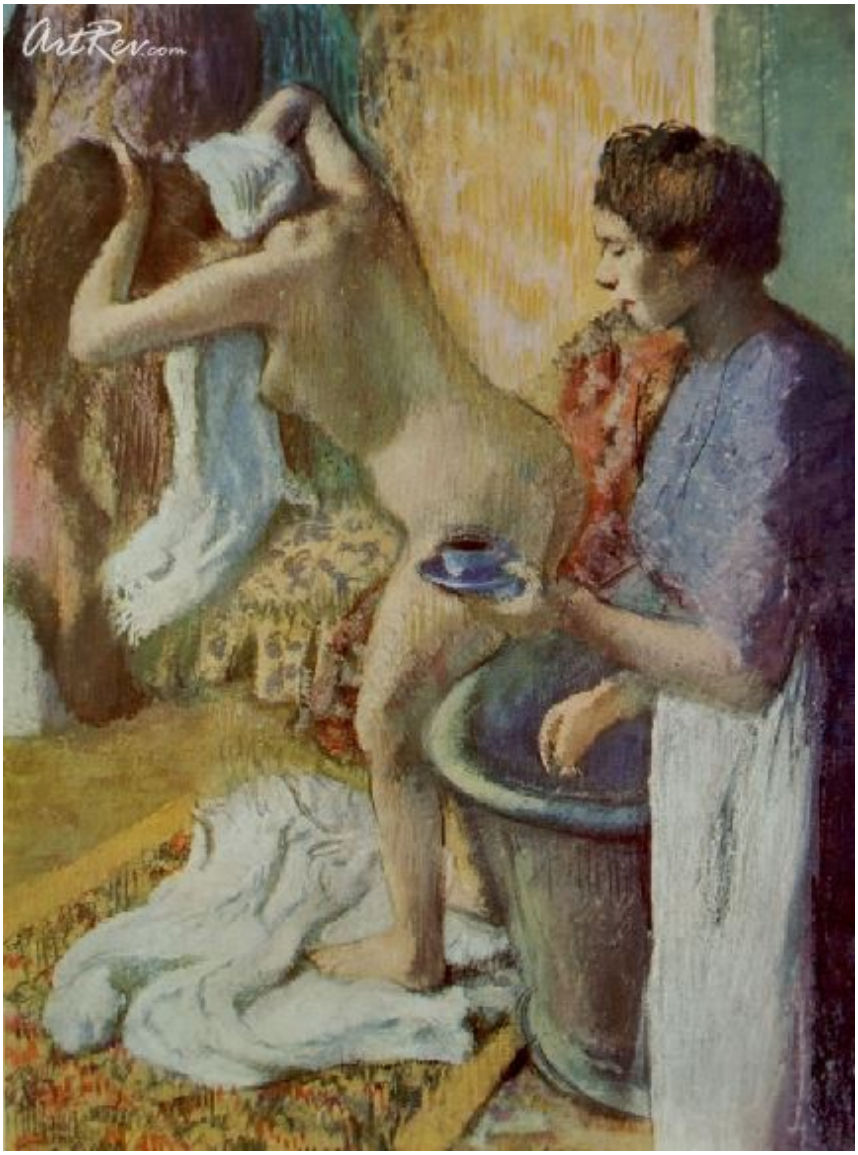
Breakfast after the Bath *by* Edgar Degas

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Impressionism



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Dimensions (As Shown)
7.5W x 10.25H Inches
19.05W x 26.04H cm

Medium
Original Lithographic Bookplate

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About Edgar Degas

(Hilaire Germain) Edgar Degas was a French painter and sculptor, whose innovative composition, skillful drawing, and perceptive analysis of movement made him one of the masters of modern art in the late 19th century.

Degas is usually classed with the impressionists, and he exhibited with them in seven of the eight impressionist exhibitions. However, his training in classical drafting and his dislike of painting directly from nature produced a style that represented a related alternative to impressionism.

Degas was born into a well-to-do banking family on July 19, 1834, in Paris. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under a disciple of the famous French classicist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, where Degas developed the great drawing ability that was to be a salient characteristic of his art.

After 1865, under the influence of the budding impressionist movement, he gave up academic subjects to turn to contemporary themes. But, unlike the impressionists, he preferred to work in the studio and was uninterested in the study of natural light that fascinated them. He was attracted by theatrical subjects, and most of his works depict racecourses, theaters, cafés, music halls, or boudoirs. Degas was a keen observer of humanity particularly of women, with whom his work is preoccupied and in his portraits as well as in his studies of dancers, milliners, and laundresses, he cultivated a complete objectivity, attempting to catch his subjects in poses as natural and spontaneous as those recorded in action photographs.

His study of Japanese prints led him to experiment with unusual visual angles and asymmetrical compositions. His subjects often appear cropped at the edges, as in Ballet Rehearsal (1876, Glasgow Art Galleries and Museum). In Woman with Chrysanthemums (1865, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City), the female subject of the picture is pushed into a corner of the canvas by the large central bouquet of flowers.

In the early 1870s the female ballet dancer became his favorite theme. He sketched from a live model in his studio and combined poses into groupings that depicted rehearsal and performance scenes in which dancers on stage, entering the stage, and resting or waiting to perform are shown simultaneously and in counterpoint, often from an oblique angle of vision.

On a visit in 1872 to Louisiana, where he had relatives in the cotton business, he painted The Cotton Exchange at New Orleans (finished 1873), his only picture to be acquired by a museum in his lifetime.

In the 1880s, when his eyesight began to fail, Degas began increasingly to work in two new media that did not require intense visual acuity: sculpture and pastel. In his sculpture, as in his paintings, he attempted to catch the action of the moment, and his ballet dancers and female nudes are depicted in poses that make no attempt to conceal their subjects' physical exertions.

His pastels are usually simple compositions containing only a few figures. He was obliged to depend on vibrant colors and meaningful gestures rather than on precise lines and careful detailing, but, in spite of such limitations,these works are eloquent and expressive and have a simple grandeur unsurpassed by any of his other works.

In 1881 he exhibited a sculpture, Little Dancer (a bronze casting of which is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), and as his eyesight failed thereafter he turned increasingly to sculpture, modeling figures and horses in wax over metal armatures. These sculptures remained in his studio in disrepair and were cast in bronze only after his death.

Degas was not well known to the public, and his true artistic stature did not become evident until after his death. He died in Paris on September 27, 1917.

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Sorry. No information about this medium is available.

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