



Discovering Degas

Volunteer Exhibition Training

Session 2

Wednesday 10th April 2024, 1pm-4pm

Pippa Stephenson-Sit, Curator of European Art
Laura Bauld, Curator, Decorative Arts (1603-1800)

1:00-1:30pm : Introduction to session

1:30-2:30pm: Collecting Degas

2:30-3:00pm: Tea break

3:00-3:50pm: Degas and Antisemitism

3:50-4:00pm: Reflections

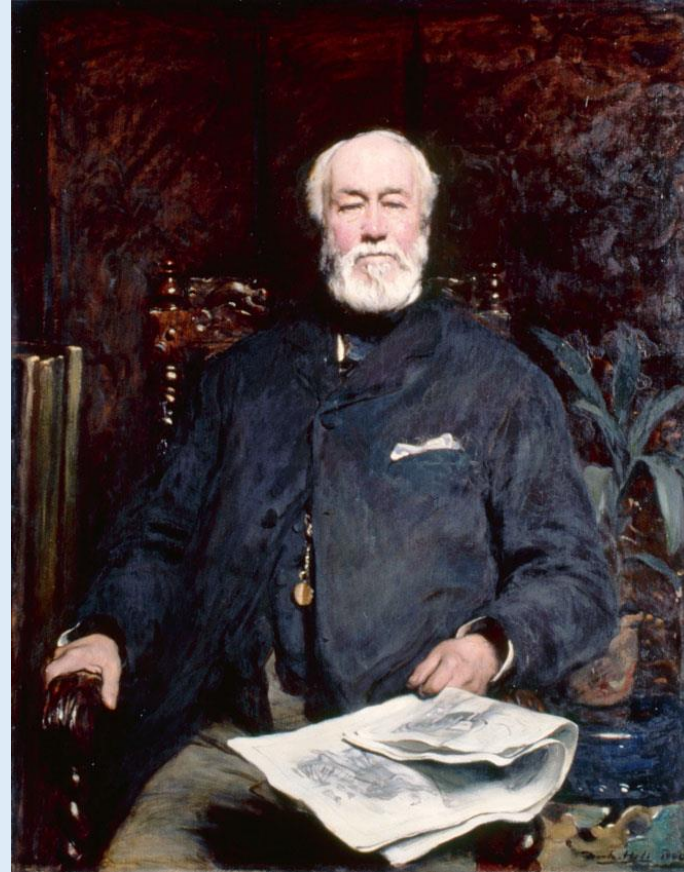


Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922)

- For most of his career, Degas entrusted Durand-Ruel to be his sole art dealer.
- Durand-Ruel supported the French Impressionists, long before they became accepted by the art establishment.
- His London exhibitions gave British collectors, such as Henry Hill (whose *Two Dancers on a Stage*, was bought through Durand-Ruel), their first taste of Degas, while his exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in 1905 brought together the biggest collection of Degas the UK had seen, with around 30 works by the artist on show.
- The first painting by Degas that Durand-Ruel sold was *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera "Robert Le Diable"*.

Henry Hill (1818-1882)

- Hill was a military tailor and former Quarter Master of the 1st Sussex Rifle Volunteers. He retired to Brighton and began collecting in earnest as he approached 60 years old, amassing more than 400 paintings.
- Hill was the first British collector to own a painting by Claude Monet.
- By 1876 Hill owned a total of seven paintings by the artist, including *Two Dancers on a Stage*, and the infamous *L'Absinthe*. This gave him the greatest collection of Degas in Europe at the time, larger even than that of French collectors.

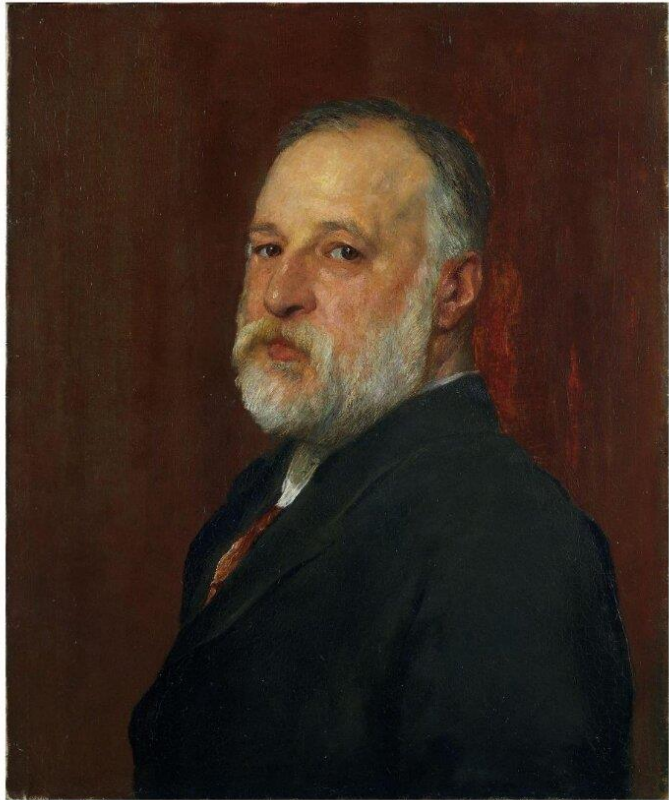


Captain Henry Hill, 1880
Frank Holl, oil on canvas,
Brighton & Hove Museums,
FA000603



Two Dancers on a Stage, 1874,
Oil on canvas, Lent by the Courtauld
Institute, London

Constantine Alexander Ionides (1833-1900)



Constantine Alexander Ionides, 1880,
George Frederick Watts, oil on canvas,
V&A Museum, CAI.1141

- Ionides was a textile merchant of Greek descent who lived in Brighton and London.
- From 1878 he built up an impressive collection of French 19th century art, liaising with dealers and directly through artists' studios.
- At his death he bequeathed his magnificent art collection to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Included in the gift was *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera "Robert Le Diable"*, the first Degas painting to enter a British public collection.



**The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera
Robert LeDiable, 1876,** Oil on canvas, Lent by
the V& A Museum, London

Louis Huth (1821-1905)

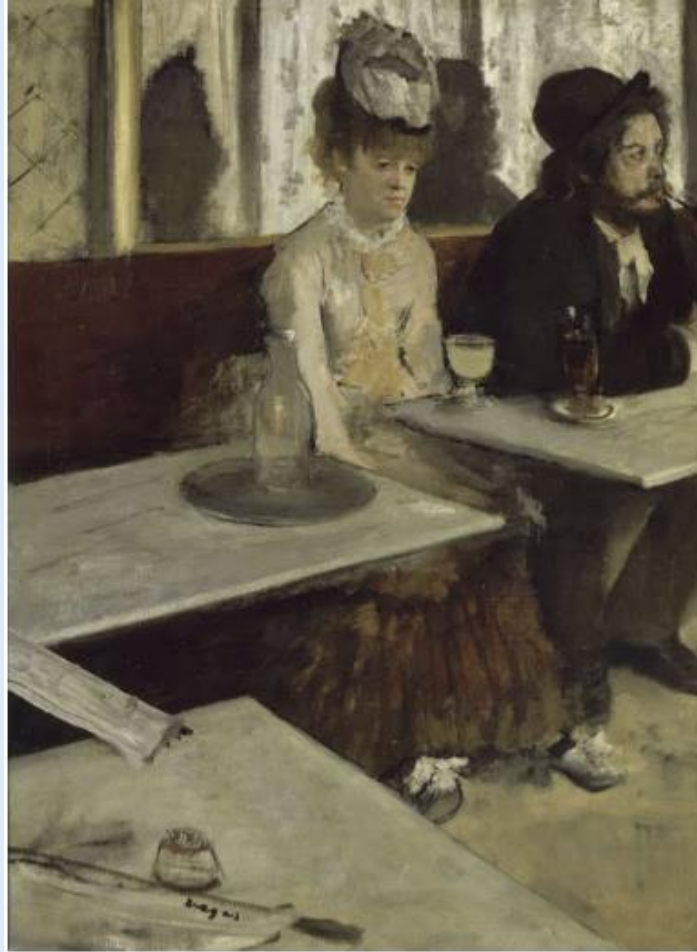
- The first Degas to be exhibited in Scotland was owned by the insurance company businessman, Louis Huth.
- In 1888 he lent *Le Foyer de la danse à l'Opera de la rue Le Peletier* to the foreign loan (oil paintings) section of the huge Glasgow International Exhibition. Huth had acquired it as early as 1873 from the Paris dealer Paul Durand-Ruel.
- His collection included artworks by Gainsborough, Corot, Constable, Eddy, Watts and Whistler, who painted a portrait of Huth's Scottish wife, Helen Ogilvy.

Arrangement in Black, No. 2: Portrait of Mrs Louis Huth (1872-73)
James McNeill Whistler
Oil on canvas, Private Collection



Arthur Kay, c.1862-1939

- One of the earliest Scottish collectors of French Impressionism, Kay was a partner of Arthur & Co, a Glasgow drapery firm.
- He studied art in cities across Europe, including Paris and Berlin. Kay collected Old Master, Hague School, and Barbizon School pictures, as well as Impressionist paintings, some of which he bought through Alex Reid.
- He acquired two pictures by Degas, including *L'Absinthe*.



Dans un café, 1875-1876
Oil on canvas
Lent by the Musée D'Orsay,
Paris



Arthur Kay (1860-1939), Collector and Critic, 1930
Herbert James Gunn, oil on canvas on board,
National Galleries Scotland,
PG 2187

Alex Reid (1854-1928)

- From the age of 15, Reid worked for his father's business, which started selling pictures in 1877.
- Reid lived in Paris from 1886-89, getting to know artists and art dealers there. He returned to Glasgow and opened his own gallery in the city centre, La Societe des Beaux Arts.
- Known as 'Degas Reid', the dealer promoted Degas and French Impressionism more than any other Scottish art dealer at the time, selling to a vast network of collectors including William Burrell

Alexander Reid, 1887,
Vincent Van Gogh,
oil on board, Glasgow Museums



James Staats Forbes (1823-1904)

- Born in Aberdeen, Forbes enjoyed a successful career working in The Hague and London for a number of railway companies.
- Much of Forbes' art 2000-strong collection was 19th century French and Dutch. Only two were Impressionist: *A Peasant Woman* by Edgar Degas (which was later bought by collector Hugh Lane), and a painting by Claude Monet.
- Forbes lent 26 artworks to the 1886 Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, more than any other individual



A Peasant Woman, 1871
Oil on canvas
Lent by Hugh Lane, Dublin



James Staats Forbes (1823-1904), 1900
William Orpen, oil on canvas Manchester
Art Gallery, 1926.17

Hugh Lane (1875-1915)



- Hugh Lane worked as an art dealer with Colnaghi's in London, before in 1908 opening his own art gallery in Dublin. This was the world's first public modern art gallery.
- An avid collector and dealer of French Impressionism, Lane bought examples by Degas, including *A Peasant Woman* from the collection of James Staats Forbes.
- At the young age of 33, Lane was knighted for his services to art, and was appointed Director of Ireland's National Gallery of Art.
- He died aboard the RMS Lusitania, which sank in 1915

Sir Hugh Lane
Sarah Cecilia Harrison,
National Gallery of Ireland, NGI.1280

Audry Evelyn James Coats (1902-68)

- The daughter of steel millionaire William Dodge James (1854–1912), Coats was first inspired to collect French Impressionist pictures when visiting the Art Institute of Chicago, 1927.
- Coats was a socialite, mingling with celebrities such as Coco Chanel (1883–1971) and Salvador Dali (1904–89), as well as being included in Cecil Beaton's 1930 *Book of Beauty*.
- In 1938 she married, and later divorced, the youngest son of the 6th Earl of Radnor, and is sometimes known by this surname, Pleydell-Bouverie.
- Her impressive collection was lent to the Tate in 1954, including *Woman Ironing* by Degas.



Audrey Evelyn James Coats,
'Mrs Dudley Coats', 1925, Tatler Magazine



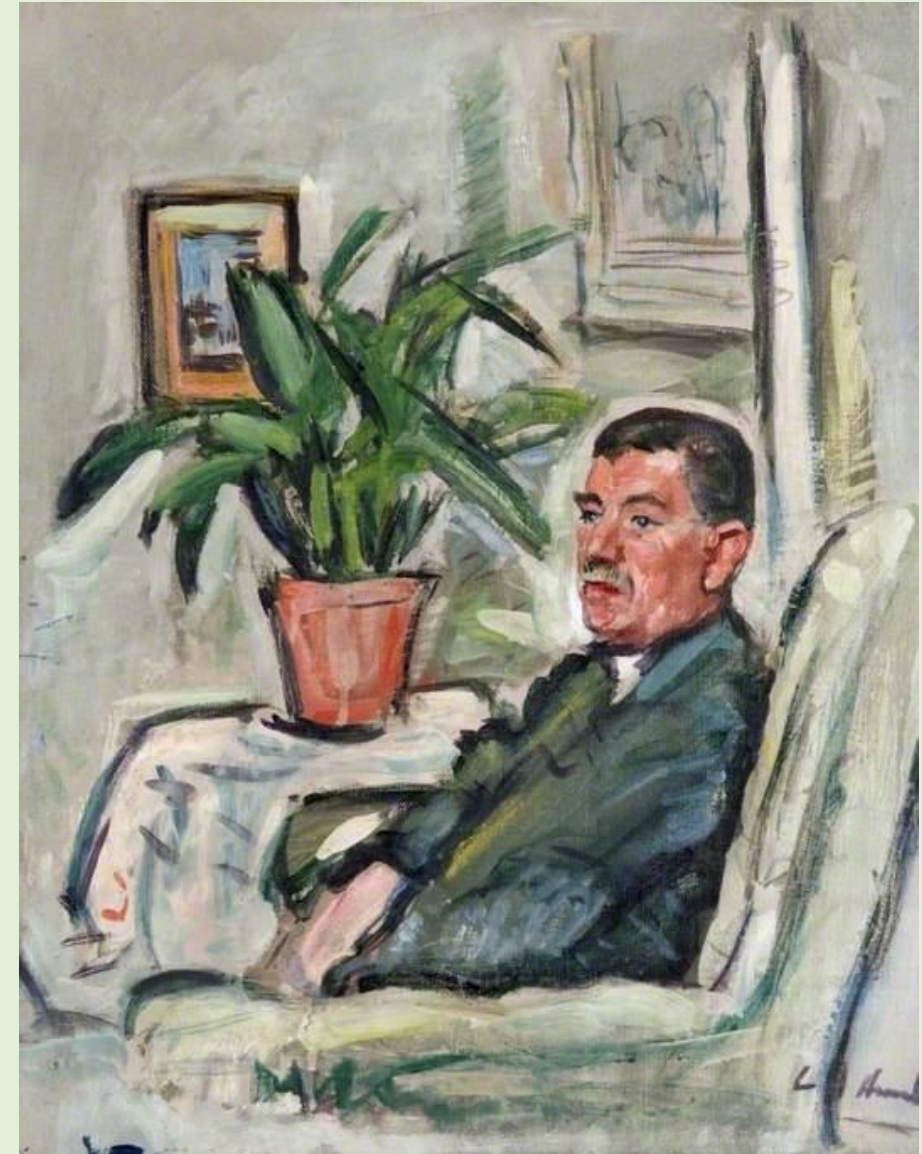
Woman Ironing, 1892-5
Oil on canvas
Lent by the Walker Art Gallery,
National Museums of Liverpool

William McInnes (1868-1944)

- McInnes, Leonard Gow and Ion Harrison were partners of the shipping company, Gow, Harrison & Co. The trio were also keen collectors.
- William McInnes was a patron of the Glasgow Boys and Scottish Colourists. He also collected French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, many bought through Alex Reid.
- His interest extended to Japanese prints, drawings, silver and glass, and he left his collection to Glasgow at his death.



Dancers on a Bench, c.1898
Pastel on paper,
Glasgow Museums



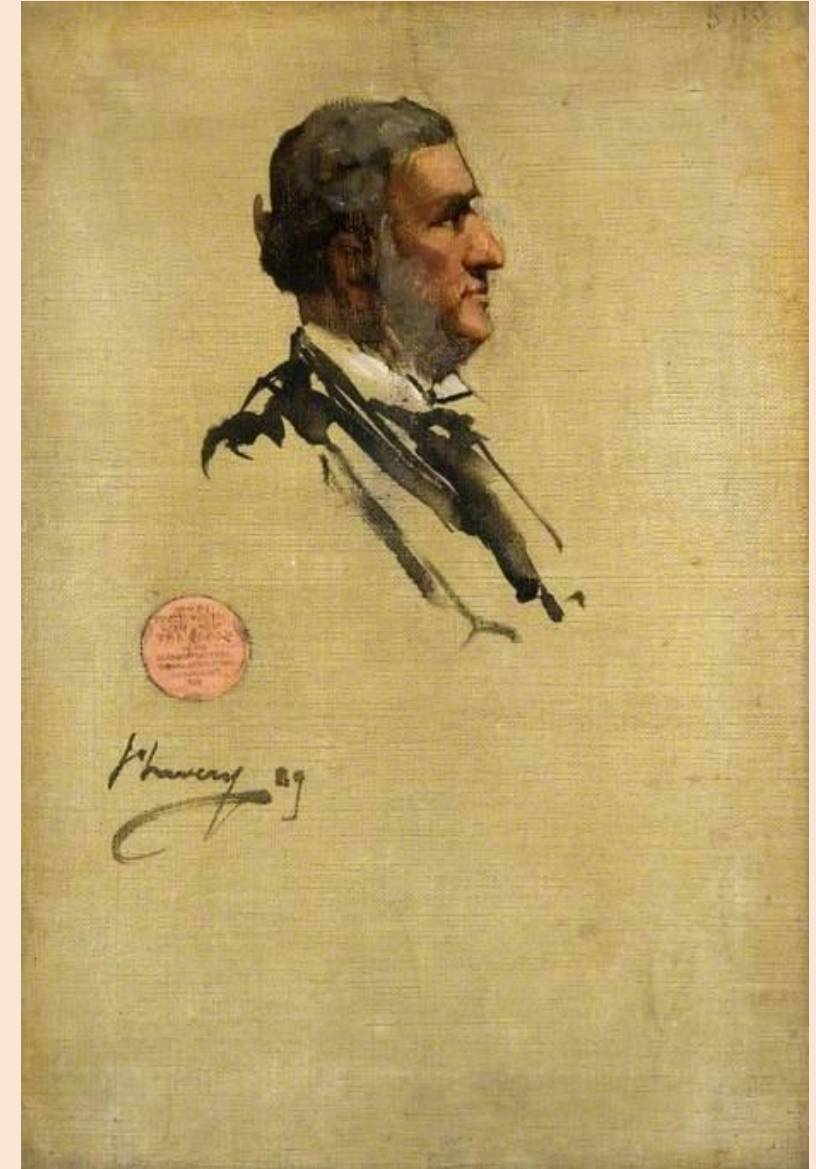
William McInnes, c.1929-31,
George Leslie Hunter, oil on canvas, Glasgow
Museums, 3404

Leonard Gow (1859-1936)

- Gow began collecting in the 1890s, continuing to purchase art for the rest of his life. Like his colleague McInnes, he too often bought through Reid, building up an impressive and broad collection of art, including the work of Degas.
- Burrell bought a number of artworks at the sale after Gow's death, including '*Jockeys in the Rain*'.



Jockeys in the Rain
c.1883-6,
Pastel on tracing
paper, Burrell
Collection



Leonard Gow, 1889
John Lavery, oil on canvas
Glasgow Museums, 1976

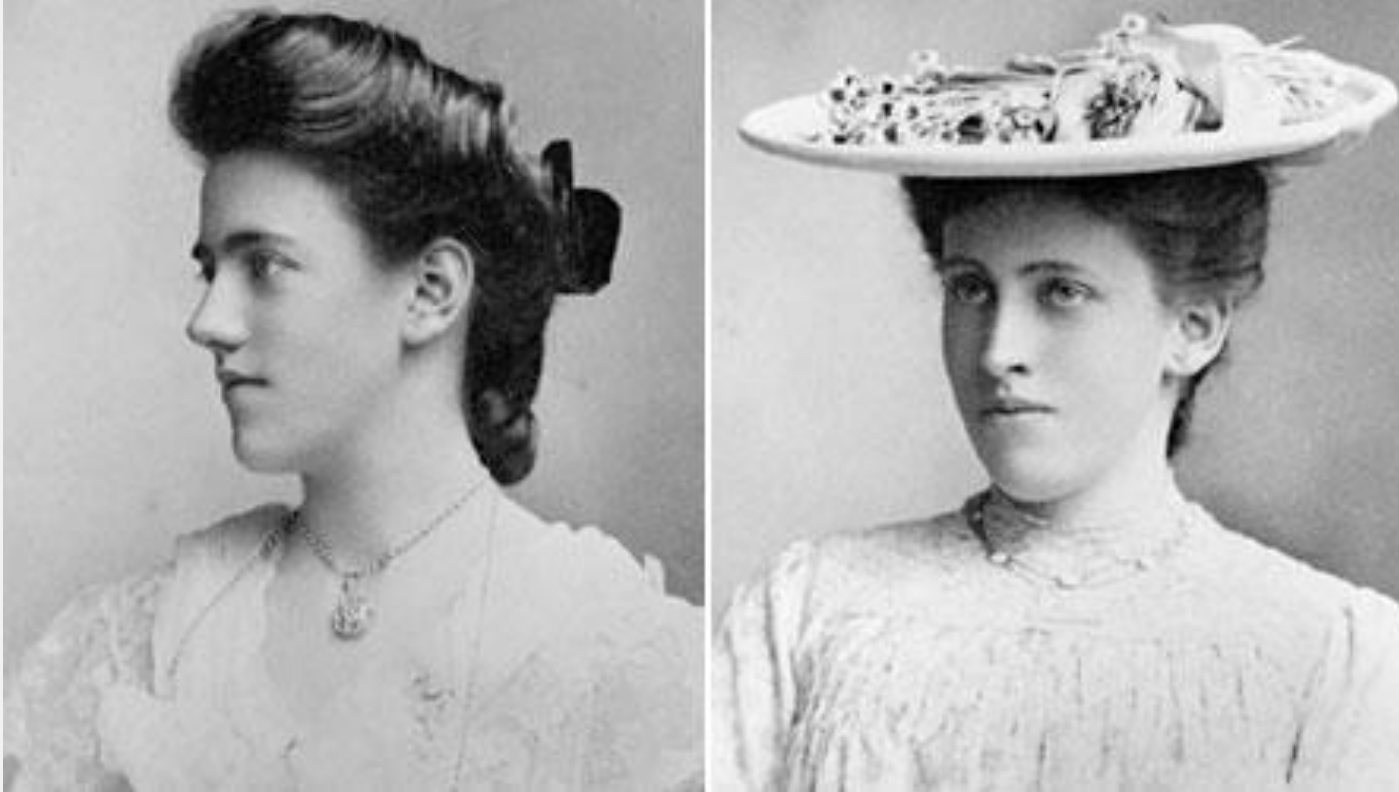
Sir Alexander Maitland QC(1877-1965) and Rosalind Maitland (1879-1959)

- Scottish lawyer Alexander Maitland QC and his musician wife, Rosalind, built an impressive art collection.
- Their first Impressionist purchase was Degas's *Study of a Girl's Head*, which they acquired in 1926 through David Croal Thomson, an art dealer who also supplied pictures to Burrell.
- The Maitlands bought further pictures and sculptures by Degas, as well as important examples by other Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.
- They donated 21 artworks to the Scottish National Gallery in 1960, with five more gifted in 1965.



A Study of a Girl's Head, late 1870s
Edgar Degas, oil on canvas,
Lent by the National Galleries Scotland

Gwendoline Davies (1882-1951) and Margaret Davies (1884-1963)



Gwendoline and Margaret Davies. Photos courtesy of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales



- Gwendoline and Margaret were amongst the first to collect French Impressionism in Britain.
- The granddaughters of coal and railway entrepreneur David Davis of Llandinam, the sisters used their inherited wealth to start buying French Impressionism from 1912 onwards, including the work of Degas.
- Informed by trips to Europe and a passion for art history, their collecting resulted in an astonishing gift of 260 objects to the National Museum Cardiff. This completely transformed the Welsh national art collection.

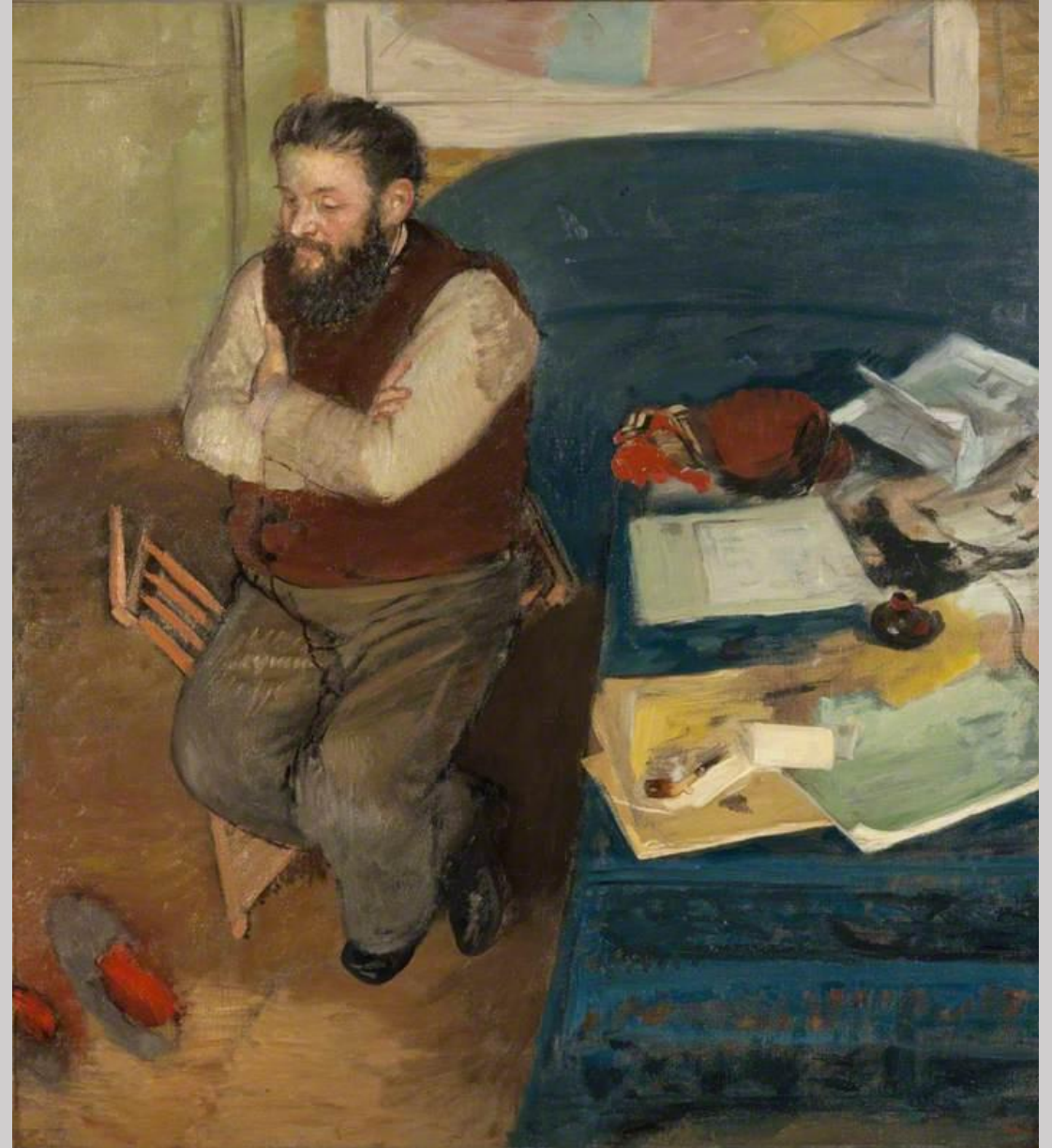
Elizabeth Russell Workman (1874–1962)

- Born in Dunbartonshire, together with her husband, Elizabeth built an impressive collection of French modern paintings.
- Recognised for her enlightened eye, it was Elizabeth who was behind many of the purchases. Her tastes were more adventurous than most, including work by Gauguin and van Gogh.
- The Workmans collected Degas as early as 1916, via Alex Reid, and added other important artworks such as *Portrait of Diego Martelli* to their collection, before being forced to sell it all in 1931, after Robert lost their fortune.

Portrait of Diego Martelli, 1879

Oil on canvas

National Galleries Scotland



David W.T. Cargill (1872-1939)

- Cargill was a director of the Burmah Oil company, which had been founded by his father.
- With a taste for both the Scottish Colourists and French Impressionism, Cargill started collecting the work of Degas in 1922, purchasing *Jockeys Before the Race* through Alex Reid, before adding several other works by the artist.
- When Cargill died, proceeds from the sales of his impressive collection established the William A. Cargill Charitable Trust, which still today provides funding support to hospitals, societies, and charities.



Jockeys Before the Race, 1879

Oil essence, bodycolor, pastel on paper,
Lent by Birmingham, Barber Institute