

Edgar Degas (1834 –1917) was one of the outstanding draftsmen of the nineteenth century, and drawing was not only a central tenet of his art but also essential to his existence. Through an examination of his drawings and pastels, this book reveals the development of Degas’s style as well the story of his life, including his complicated relationship with the Impressionists. Following a broadly chronological approach, the author discusses the artist’s various subject areas, from the images of dancers—which form over half of Degas’s total oeuvre—to nudes, laundresses, milliners, and the less well-known racehorse and landscape drawings. He covers the whole career, from when Degas was copying the Old Masters to learn his craft to when he ceased work in 1912 because of failing eyesight, and sets him within the artistic context of the period. Extensive research, including a careful study of the artist’s detailed notebooks, has resulted in a comprehensive exposition with, at its heart, over 200 pencil, black-chalk, pen-and-ink, and charcoal drawings and pastels of timeless appeal.

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