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Jacopo Tintoretto (1518-1594) or Workshop
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Around 1560
Charcoal, black chalk, white opaque watercolour
Princes Gate bequest, 1978
D.1978.PG.99

The Venetian artist Jacopo Tintoretto had a flourishing workshop with numerous assistants. A crucial step in an artist's training was learning how to depict the human form by first copying sculptures. Tintoretto must have owned a smaller replica of this figure group by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), as there are over 60 drawings after this sculpture from Tintoretto's workshop. The repetition of the figure in the same position and identical dimensions reinforces the suggestion that this sheet was used as an educational exercise.

Blue paper provided an ideal mid-tone for exploring shade and volume of sculpture. Ri

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Govert Flinck's prolific use of blue paper coincides with his departure from the studio of his master, Rembrandt (1606/7–1669), and the development of his own mature style. From the 1640s he used a combination of black and white chalks on blue paper to skilfully model figures in a variety of positions, especially nude studies of women.

This figure represents one of the earliest documented cases of women posing nude in Western art, as a lawsuit informs us that in 1648, Flinck painted three sisters 'stark naked'.

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| | <p>contrast forcefully with the dark blue wash, the soldiers and their horses appearing like ghostly spectres in a nighttime battle.</p> |
| | <p>Jonathan Richardson the Elder (1667–1745)</p> <p>1728 Black and white chalk Robert Witt bequest, 1952 D.1952.RW.1552</p> <p>Jonathan Richardson was a prolific self-portraitist and frequently used blue paper, which provided a more subtle mid-tone for his chalks compared to white paper. Blue paper was also readily available, as it was widely produced to wrap white goods such as paper and sugar. In addition, he may have chosen blue paper for its historic association with venerable Venetian Renaissance artists such as Tintoretto and Veronese, whose drawings were well-represented in Richardson's own collection of over 4,700 works.</p> |

Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1688–1755)

1732
Brush and black ink, grey wash, white opaque watercolour
Private Collection, London

This is one of 276 drawings by Jean-Baptiste Oudry, all on blue paper, illustrating the fables of Jean de La Fontaine (1621–1695). In this tale, a dinner guest jokingly asks the fish he has been served whether he knows the fate of a friend lost at sea.

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Allan Ramsay (1713-1784)

1 p q L V N m a S A I ^ m A _ L L I A i N l y

Around 1746

Black and white chalk

Sir Robert Witt bequest, 1952

D.1952.RW.1401

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Louis-Marin Bonnet (1736–1793) after François Boucher (1703–1770)

1767

Chalk manner print
Private Collection, London

In the 18th century, pastel reached unprecedented heights of popularity as a drawing medium. These fabricated chinks, available in portable sticks, enabled artists to create luminous portraits in unlimited hues. Pastellists like Boucher favoured blue paper, as its tone and surface texture provided the perfect backdrop for the powdery chinks.

Printmakers were then faced with a new challenge: how to replicate the vibrant effects of these drawings in the limited palette of engraving. Bonnet made the significant invention around 1763 of a white printer's ink that could successfully imitate white chalk but would not discolour over time.

The first version of *Young woman with a rose* was printed on blue paper (see left). In the version on display here, Bonnet instead used a plate inked in blue to imitate blue paper, a more effective attempt to replicate the original drawing by Boucher.

Louis-Marin Bonnet after François Boucher, *Young woman with a rose*, 1765/67, chalk manner print, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Jean-Claude Richard, Abbé de Saint-Non (1727–1791) after Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806)

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UVmpalV kqNm

Around 1780

Etching, aquatint, white opaque watercolour
Princes Gate Bequest, 1978
B.1978.PG.115

Saint-Non was on

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William Turner of Oxford (1789–1862)

Birch Tree, Magdalen College

October 1855

Graphite, pen and brown ink, watercolour, opaque
watercolour

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