

Ferdinand Hodler  
*Drawings—Selections from  
the Musée Jenisch Vevey*

**JUNE 16 TO OCTOBER 1, 2023**

**LARGE PRINT LABELS**

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Morgan  
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***Compositional study for “The Battle of Näfels,” 1897***

**Pen and brown and black ink on tracing paper, mounted on laid paper**

This is a study for one of several designs Hodler submitted to a competition to decorate the facade of the Landesmuseum Zürich with mosaics illustrating Switzerland’s history. The 1388 Battle of Näfels marked a decisive victory for the Swiss Confederation during a series of conflicts with Austria. The friezelike arrangement of five similar figures in the foreground is an early instance of Hodler’s application of his theory of parallelism, transforming what would have been a confused battle scene into a clear and monumental composition. The design earned him a prize but was not selected for production.

***Study of figures for “The Retreat from Marignano,” 1897–99***  
**Graphite pencil and stains of oil paint on paper, squared in  
graphite pencil**

***The Wounded Flag Bearer Hans Baer: Study for “The Retreat from Marignano,” 1898–1900***

**Graphite pencil, charcoal, and colored pencil on beige paper**

*The Retreat from Marignano*, which decorates the Hall of Arms in the Landesmuseum Zürich, celebrates the heroism of the Swiss soldiers defeated by French troops in 1515, a momentous event that led to Switzerland’s policy of neutrality. By concentrating on a few foreground figures, such as this wounded soldier struggling to carry a flag to his comrades, Hodler emphasized the human dimension of the dramatic scene. While this study includes figures surrounding the wounded man, the final painting shows him facing death alone. Hodler’s unconventional approach to the subject was highly controversial and generated a three-year public debate—and many revisions on his part—before he was allowed to execute the murals.



*The Retreat from Marignano: The Wounded Flag Bearer Hans Baer*, 1900. Fresco; 6 ft. 11 in. × 6 ft. 5 in. (210 × 194.5 cm). Landesmuseum Zürich, Inv. LM-41994. Photo: Donat Stuppan.

***Compositional study for “Departure of the German Students  
for the War of Liberation of 1813,” 1907–8***

**Graphite pencil and oil on paper, mounted on laid paper**

***Study of figures for “Departure of the German Students for the War of Liberation of 1813,” 1907–8***

**Graphite pencil on paper, squared in graphite pencil**

Obsessed with measurement, Hodler often relied on grids to reproduce the exact proportions of figures when transferring an image from paper to canvas. The multiple vertical lines here may be related to his use of a plumb line (a weighted string)—another one of his common practices—to accurately align body parts when drawing from a model.

***Study of female figure for "Departure of the German Students  
for the War of Liberation of 1813," 1907–8***

**Graphite pencil on paper**



***Study of female figure for “Departure of the German Students for the War of Liberation of 1813,” 1907–8***

**Graphite pencil and oil on paper, cut and pasted on Japanese laid paper**

Hodler’s studies for *Departure of the German Students for the War of Liberation of 1813* include many sketches of a female figure holding a soldier’s bag and sword and hiding her face in her elbow. Ultimately, however, he left her out of the composition, choosing to emphasize the loneliness of the men after they had taken leave of their loved ones. Hodler used such cutout figures to try different arrangements by moving pieces around. This one was probably pasted onto a blank sheet after the artist’s death.

***Study for “Departure of the German Students for the War of Liberation of 1813,” 1907–8***

**Charcoal and brush and india ink on tracing paper, mounted on paper**

***Study for “Departure of the German Students for the War of Liberation of 1813,” 1907–8***

**Graphite pencil on Fabriano paper**

The style of this drawing, in which the figures are rendered with basic outlines and few internal details, indicates that it was probably made using a tracing method. Because Hodler produced many studies for the same work, he frequently used tracing to revise a composition without having to redraw it from scratch.

***Figure study for “The Disappointed Souls,” 1891–92***  
**Pen and black ink and graphite pencil on tracing paper,  
mounted on gray laid paper**

*Study of figures for “Unanimity,” 1911–13*

**Graphite pencil and oil on paper, squared in graphite pencil**

***Compositional study for “Unanimity,” 1911***

**Graphite pencil on paper**

***Study of figures for “Unanimity,” 1911***

**Oil imprint and colored pencil on paper, cut and mounted on paper**

Hodler often viewed his models through a framed glass pane (also called a perspective frame), on which he drew their outlines and main features in oil paint. He would then apply a sheet of paper on the glass to imprint the oil marks on the verso and trace them on the recto. Although he usually continued to develop the drawing on the recto, on the present sheet he reworked the verso, adding red colored pencil to the oil outlines. The two figures were likely done from the same model, seen from slightly different points of view.

***Figure study for “Unanimity,” 1911***

**Graphite pencil and oil on paper, with oil imprint on verso**



***Compositional study for “Female Eurhythmy,” ca. 1895–96***

**Pen and india ink, colored pencil, and graphite pencil on  
beige paper**

**Musée Jenisch Vevey, private collection**

***Study for “Female Eurhythmy” or “Emotion,” 1895–96 or after 1902(?)***

**Graphite pencil and gouache on paper, cut and pasted on paper painted with oil and crayon**

Hodler often cut out figures from one drawing and pasted them onto another to explore different compositions. Here, he seems to have been working out the placement of the female figure within a field of flowers—one of his favorite ways to symbolize the unity of humankind and nature. The identical flowers illustrate Hodler’s idea that repetition conveys “an impression of unity that will charm you. . . . The effect is greater, the impression stronger than if there were a mix of flowers of different colors and shapes.”

***Figure study for “Spring,” 1900–1901***

**Graphite pencil, pen and black ink, and traces of oil paint on paper, squared in graphite pencil**

***Study of male figures for "Day," 1880s–1890s***

**Graphite pencil, pen and india ink, and gray wash on beige paper, mounted on beige laid paper**

***Compositional study for “Day,” ca. 1898–99***

**Graphite pencil and pen and black ink on tracing paper,  
mounted on laid paper**

*Study of figures for "Day," 1898–99*

Graphite pencil, pen and india ink, and traces of brown wash  
on paper, squared in graphite pencil

***Figure study for “Day,” ca. 1898–99***

**Graphite pencil, stump, pen and brush and black ink, gray wash, and traces of oil paint on Fabriano paper, squared in graphite pencil**

*Figure study for "Day," ca. 1898–99*

**Graphite pencil and stump on Fabriano paper, squared in  
graphite pencil**



*Figure study for "Day," ca. 1898–99*

Graphite pencil and traces of oil paint on paper, squared in graphite pencil

***Figure study for “Day,” ca. 1899–1900***

**Graphite pencil and watercolor on paper, cut and pasted on  
Japanese laid paper**

**“Day,” fragment, 1899**

**Oil on canvas**

**Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase,  
Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund; inv. no. 1988.65**

This painting was long thought to be a figure study for *Day*. A recent investigation established that it is instead a fragment from an early version of the painting, which Hodler cut up and reworked to sell the parts individually. On the right, under the green paint, the elbow and feet of a neighboring figure are still visible. That figure appears on another fragment, now in the Schindler collection at the Musée Jenisch Vevey. The two parts are reunited here for the first time since Hodler cut the canvas apart. No other fragments from this painting have been identified.

**“Day,” fragment, 1899**

**Oil on canvas**

Hodler’s combination of realism, expressionism, and eroticism in his depictions of the female nude, as exemplified here, was a key influence on early twentieth-century Austrian artists, notably Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele. A version of *Day* appeared in the important 1904 Secession exhibition in Vienna, which featured thirty-one paintings by Hodler and was critical in establishing his international reputation.

***Compositional study for “View into Infinity,” 1910–11***

**Graphite pencil and colored pencil on graph paper**

***Compositional study for “View into Infinity,” 1910–13***

**Graphite pencil, oil, and black ink on paper, cut and pasted on paper, squared in graphite pencil and mounted on beige paper**

**Musée Jenisch Vevey, Rudolf Schindler bequest, 2015**

***Figure study for “View into Infinity,” 1913–14***

**Graphite pencil, brush and black ink, gray wash, and oil on  
Fabriano paper, squared in graphite pencil, with oil imprint  
on verso**

***Study for "Blossoming," 1910–11***

**Oil on tracing paper, mounted on paper**



***Study of hand for “View into Infinity,” 1915–16***  
**Oil and charcoal on tracing paper, mounted on  
gray cardboard**

***Study of head for “View into Infinity,” 1913–15***

**Oil on tracing paper mounted on paper, mounted on cardboard**

In the final stage of preparation for his monumental paintings, Hodler made full-size drawings of details such as heads and hands, working directly in oil to try out the flesh colors, highlights, and shading. Tracing paper allowed him to easily transfer an image from one support to another.

***Compositional study for “Blossoming,” 1911–17***

**Graphite pencil on white paper, cut and pasted on beige paper painted with oil**

Cutout and collage were some of the strategies Hodler used to develop his compositions. These processes allowed him to move figures around and experiment with different arrangements, as in this study. Such practices highlight the functional, utilitarian aspect of Hodler’s drawings, which he did not hesitate to cut up and repurpose for the sake of experimentation. Although the technique evokes Henri Matisse’s 1940s cutouts, for Hodler it was not an end in itself but a working method.

***Compositional study for “Blossoming” with child, 1916–17***  
**Graphite pencil, colored pencil, and oil on tracing paper,  
mounted on Canson gray laid paper**

***Compositional study for “View into Infinity,” 1910–13***  
**Oil, graphite pencil, and colored pencil on tracing paper,  
mounted on beige paper**

***Compositional study for “Blossoming” with child, 1914–15***  
**Pen and brush and brown ink on graph paper**

This small study exemplifies the quick notations that Hodler made when first conceiving a painting. Three gently curving lines at the top suggest a vast, cosmic space. Below, six figures aligned horizontally are connected through their extended arms, with the two end figures echoing each other across the sheet. Though modest and unassuming, the drawing contains the essence of Hodler’s pantheistic vision of humankind’s communion with nature, a theme he explored in endless variations on the same composition: a frieze of women parallel to the picture plane, connected to one another and to the natural surroundings through their expressive poses and gestures.

***Compositional study for “Blossoming” with child, 1914–15***

**Pen and black ink and colored pencil on graph paper**

## ***Study for “Joyful Woman,”* ca. 1911**

### **Oil on canvas**

This monumental figure reflects Hodler’s interest in early twentieth-century dance theories that promoted the use of natural rhythms and movements. Avant-garde choreographers such as Isadora Duncan (1877–1927) encouraged dancers to wear loose, free-flowing garments, like the dresses on the women in Hodler’s paintings. His contemporaries noted the sense of rhythm characteristic of his style. Artist Henry van de Velde (1863–1957), for instance, described Hodler’s line as “animated by an essentially eurythmic force which raises his compositions to a strangely musical sphere.”



## ***Figure study for “Sacred Hour,” 1907***

### **Oil on canvas**

The painting *Sacred Hour* depicts four female figures sitting amid rosebushes. In this study for one of the women, the pronounced contours reflect Hodler’s belief in the decorative function of the outline, which, he wrote, “constitutes an expressive feature and an element of beauty in itself. . . . The more concise the outline, the stronger it will be.” Hodler inherited this conviction from his teacher Barthélemy Menn (1815–1893), who had been a student of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres’s (1780–1867) and derived from the French master’s lessons a keen sense of the importance of line as the essence of drawing.

***Study of a head for "Sacred Hour," 1906–7***

**Graphite pencil, crayon, and traces of oil paint on tracing paper, mounted on laid paper**

## ***Portrait of Berthe Hodler-Jacques, ca. 1898***

### **Oil on canvas**

Hodler married Berthe Jacques (1868–1957), his second wife, in 1898, around the time he made this portrait. She had begun posing for him four years earlier and would remain a frequent model for his Symbolist paintings. At a certain point, Hodler painted over his wife's high bun, which she had stopped wearing when it went out of fashion. After collector and artist Rudolf Schindler acquired the painting in the mid-1950s, he took the unorthodox step of removing Hodler's overpaint, restoring the work to its original state.

***Study for portrait of Berthe Hodler-Jacques, ca. 1898***

**Graphite pencil on paper, squared in graphite pencil**

***Portrait of Berthe Hodler-Jacques, ca. 1917***

**Oil on canvas**

## ***Portrait of Paulette, 1915***

**Graphite pencil, pen and brown and black ink, and traces of oil paint on JCA France laid paper**

Pauline-Valentine Hodler-Magnenat (1913–1999), also called Paulette, was the daughter of Hodler and his mistress Valentine Godé-Darel, who died of cancer fifteen months after giving birth. Paulette was eventually adopted by Hodler's wife, Berthe Hodler-Jacques.

## ***Study for the self-portrait “of Nérís,” 1915***

**Pen and brown ink on tracing paper, mounted on paper**

In June and July 1915, Hodler spent several weeks at the French spa town of Nérís-les-Bains, near Vichy, to treat his asthma attacks. This period marked an artistic turning point as his interest in color's expressive potential deepened. The change was notable in landscapes he made there and in two self-portrait paintings inscribed “Nérís 1915,” to which this drawing is related. In them Hodler depicted himself looking younger and more energetic than in any other self-portraits done before or after. “I seem to be doing very well again,” the sixty-two-year-old artist wrote to a friend in early July.

## ***Self-portrait, 1918***

### **Graphite pencil on graph paper**

The introspective quality of Hodler's portraits is heightened in his self-portraits, in which the artist's inquisitive eyes evoke both determination and self-scrutiny. In this drawing, one of Hodler's last self-portraits, the fixed gaze at the center of a face marked by illness conveys the anxiety of a man confronting his mortality.



***Self-portrait, 1915–16***

**Graphite pencil on Sihl Mills laid writing paper**

***Study for portrait of Fredrik Robert Martin, 1916–17***

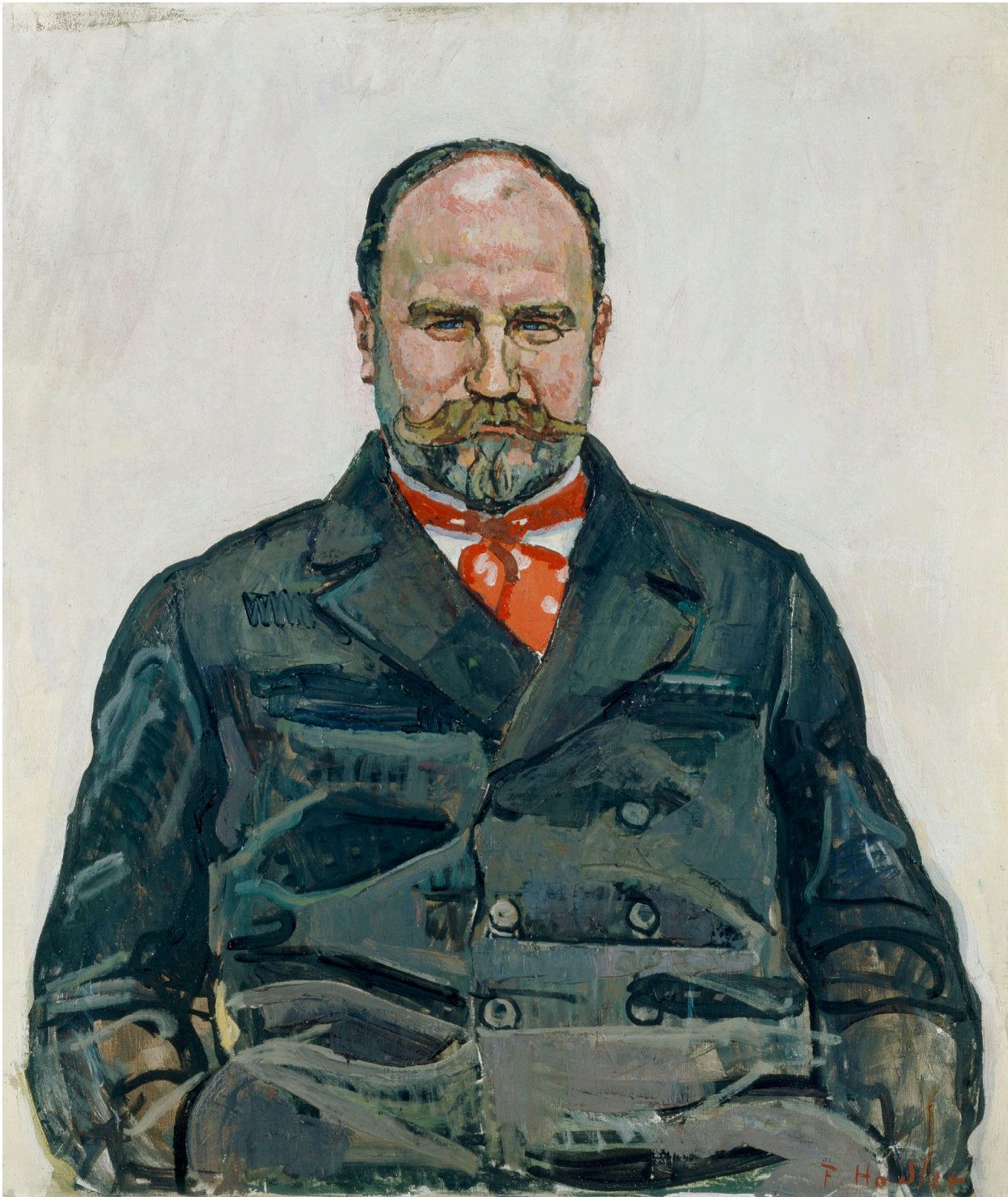
**Graphite pencil on Fabriano paper, squared in graphite pencil**

**Verso:**

***Study for portrait of Fredrik Robert Martin and Study of female nudes, 1916–17***

**Oil imprint and graphite pencil**

As he did for many of his figure studies and portraits, Hodler used a glass pane in a wooden frame to make this portrait of Swedish art historian Fredrik Robert Martin (1868–1933). Looking through the frame, Hodler captured Martin's main features in oil paint on the glass. Next, he applied a sheet of paper to the glass to imprint the oil on the verso. With a pencil, he then traced the lines, visible through the paper, on the recto, where he further developed the drawing. Because Hodler reused a sheet on which he had previously drawn, the verso image of Martin is superimposed with studies of female nudes.



*Portrait of Fredrik Robert Martin, 1916/17. Oil on canvas; 36¼ × 31½ in. (92 × 80 cm). Kunsthaus Zürich, bequest of Alfred Rütschi; inv. no. 1965.*

***Study for a portrait of Mathias Morhardt, 1911–13***

**Graphite pencil on Fabriano paper, squared in graphite pencil, with oil imprint on verso**

French Swiss journalist and writer Mathias Morhardt (1863–1939) ardently supported Hodler throughout his career and contributed especially to the artist's popularity in France. The odd foreshortening of the figure, causing the head to appear small in proportion to the body, reveals that the artist was sitting close to his subject, a point of view Hodler favored in order to intensify his sitter's facial details. He adjusted the perspective in his six painted versions of the portrait.

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel with black ribbon, ca. 1908***  
**Graphite pencil and oil on Fabriano paper, with oil imprint  
on verso**

***“Portrait of the Titine”*: Valentine Godé-Darel, left profile,**

**4 November 1913**

**Graphite pencil and brush and brown ink on paper**

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel ill, right profile,***  
**November 1913(?)**  
**Graphite pencil on paper**

***Unfinished portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel and her daughter Paulette, 1914***

**Oil and graphite pencil on canvas**



*Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel ill, left profile,*

**November 1913**

**Graphite pencil and brush and brown ink on blotting paper**

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel dying, right profile,***

**13 January 1915**

**Graphite pencil on paper**

**Verso:**

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel dying, right profile and***

***The Dents-du-Midi***

**Oil imprint and charcoal**

Oil imprints on the verso of this drawing reveal that even in emotional moments (Godé-Darel would die on 25 January), Hodler used his perspective frame to portray his beloved. He outlined her features on the glass pane before transferring them to paper and completing the drawing on the other side of the sheet in pencil. His use of the device shows Hodler's concern with accuracy as he recorded the progression of cancer in Godé-Darel's frail body. Eschewing any suggestion of timelessness, his pitiless realism proclaims the closeness and tenderness of their relationship.

The mountain range on the verso may have been sketched from the window of Godé-Darel's bedroom in Vevey.

*Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel dying, left profile,*  
January 1915

Graphite pencil on paper, with oil imprint on verso

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel dying, 2 January 1915***  
**Charcoal, graphite pencil, and white chalk on gray paper**

***Portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel dying, January 1915***

**Graphite pencil and oil on paper, with oil imprint on verso**

***Lake Geneva with the Salève, ca. 1915–17***

**Pen and brown ink on graph paper; page removed from sketchbook**

**Musée Jenisch Vevey, Rudolf Schindler bequest, 2015**

As in his figure paintings, Hodler favored horizontal compositions in his landscapes. Whereas conventional landscapes typically feature a suggestion of depth from foreground to background, Hodler's are often constructed in bands parallel to the picture plane. The inscription in the lower part of the sheet lists exhibitions in which the drawing has been included, compiled by its former owner, Rudolf Schindler.

***Study for “The Dents-du-Midi from Champéry,” 1916***  
**Graphite pencil on paper**

***Landscape study: The Môle, the Mont-Blanc range, and the  
Petit-Salève, 1918***

**Brush and pen and brown ink on graph paper**



***The Tour Noire, the Aiguilles d'Argentière, and the Chardonnet  
seen from Montana, ca. 1915***

**Graphite pencil on Fabriano paper**

**Musée Jenisch Vevey, Rudolf Schindler bequest, 2015**

***The Eiger, the Mönch, and the Jungfrau above a Sea of Fog,*  
1908**

**Oil on canvas**

**Musée Jenisch Vevey, gift of the heirs of Prof. Arthur Stoll**

In the summer of 1908, taking advantage of a steam-engine train installed for tourists in 1893, Hodler spent two weeks on Switzerland's Schynige Platte, which afforded him spectacular views of the Bernese Alps. Mountain peaks above clouds and mist had been a favorite motif of the Romantics in the nineteenth century. Hodler, too, was attracted to the idea of infinity evoked by such vistas and sought to convey in his landscapes the strong emotions that nature could awaken.