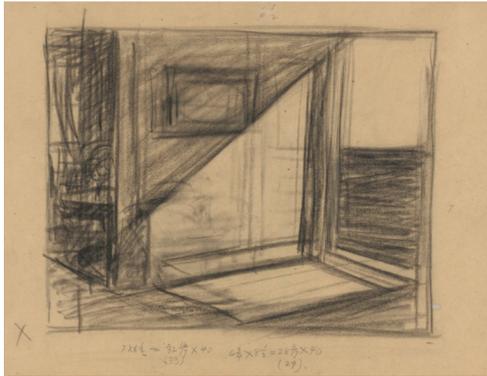


GALLERY ACQUIRES IMPORTANT EDWARD HOPPER DRAWINGS

For Immediate Release—New Haven, CT, May 29, 2009... The Yale University Art Gallery has announced its purchase of **important preparatory drawings by American artist Edward Hopper for two of his celebrated paintings, *Rooms by the Sea* (1951) and *Western Motel* (1957)**, both in the Gallery's collection. The drawings related to *Rooms by the Sea* are rendered on two sides of a single sheet of paper, while the sheet related to *Western Motel* contains a single sketch. Each of the drawings provides rare insight into the evolution of the related painting.



Edward Hopper, Studies for *Rooms by the Sea* (recto), 1951. Charcoal. Yale University Art Gallery, Katharine Ordway Fund.

Preparatory studies for Hopper's paintings are particularly important, since by the time the artist took brush to canvas he had worked through most of the compositional problems (x-rays of these canvases only rarely show any alterations).

Jock Reynolds, The Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Gallery, states, "These wonderful working drawings shed light on Hopper's creative process, while also providing important documentary information about the paintings to

which they are related. For the Gallery, where studio art and art history students are a constant presence, such works provide a terrific teaching resource."

Helen Cooper, Holcombe T. Green Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture, adds, "The Gallery's collection of paintings by Edward Hopper, a highlight of its world-renowned holdings in American art, has been greatly enriched by the acquisition of these studies. They join several other pencil and charcoal studies by the artist in the collection, including another preparatory drawing for *Western Motel* and 17 sheets for *Sunlight in a Cafeteria*, of 1958. All of these studies reward close looking: When viewed beside their finished paintings they illuminate the path that Hopper took in the formulation of his final compositions."

Rooms by the Sea and the Studies

Rooms by the Sea, widely recognized as one of Hopper's most mysterious works, is one of only three known Hopper interiors without figures. Suggested by a view from the

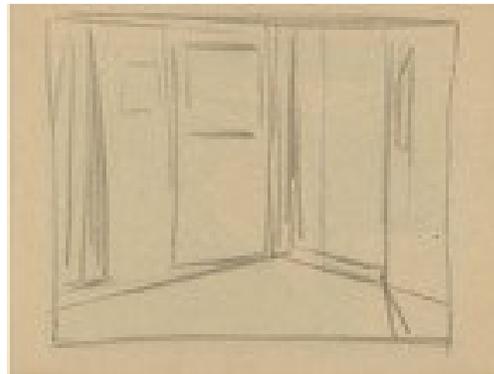


Edward Hopper, *Rooms by the Sea*, 1951. Oil on canvas. Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903.

house that Hopper and his wife, Jo, built on a bluff overlooking the bay at Truro, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, the painting depicts a room whose door opens—seemingly directly—onto the ocean. Although glimpses of furnishings in a back room imply a human presence, Hopper's primary interest in the painting seems to be the shaft of bright sunlight that falls across the wall and floor of the bare front room, yielding an

image that evokes feelings of both profound silence and unease.

The studies for *Rooms by the Sea* open a window into Hopper's creative process. His initial concept is represented by the simple view on the verso of the sheet, showing an open door, a wall, a floor, and a glimpse of the space outside the house. The fuller study on the recto adds a number of details, including a framed picture on the front wall, a rug in front of the open door, and, in the rear room, a sofa and a round table. In the painting, Hopper pares the composition to its essential details, moving the framed picture to the back room; removing the rug; repositioning the door from the left to the right side of the jamb; and replacing the round table with a rectilinear dresser. The end result is an enigmatic and haunting image of a sun-struck interior.



Edward Hopper, *Studies for Rooms by the Sea* (verso), 1951. Charcoal. Yale University Art Gallery, Katharine Ordway Fund.

Western Motel and the Study

Western Motel pictures a woman seated on the edge of a bed in an unadorned motel room, looking directly out at the viewer. Two packed suitcases at the lower left corner of the composition and a robe thrown over the arm of the chair at the lower right suggest that the woman has either just arrived or is just preparing to depart. A large picture-window looks out

onto the windshield of a Buick and the profile of buttes beyond. As with the earlier painting, *Western Motel* is marked by simple lines and a stark geometry of light and dark.

The study for *Western Motel* shows two seated figures at the left and one at the far right, in what appears to be a motel lobby. A picture window looks out onto a sign atop a tall post and the front of a car against a landscape. The vista continues through a second picture window at the left, balanced by a solid wood door at the right.



Edward Hopper, *Western Motel*, 1957. Oil on canvas.
Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903



Edward Hopper, Study for *Western Motel*, 1957.
Charcoal and graphite. Yale University Art Gallery,
Everett V. Meeks, B.A. 1901, Fund

Once again, in creating his painting, Hopper altered and stripped away details included in the study. Most notably, three figures have been reduced to one, and a motel lobby space has become a motel room. The picture window occupying the left wall of the sketch has become a solid wall in the painting, highlighted by a shaft of bright light, and the solid wood door at the right has become a glass door.

Edward Hopper

Born in Nyack, New York, Edward Hopper (1882–1967) maintained a commitment to realism throughout his career, despite the rising popular preference for abstraction. In 1933, a retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, sparked a debate over whether Hopper was, in fact, a “modern” artist. By the time of his 1950 retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in New York, with Abstract Expressionism on the rise, he was viewed as an artist working in an obsolete style. Yet by 1964, when his work was the subject of another retrospective at the Whitney, Hopper was hailed as a forefather of the newly ascendant Pop Art and Photorealism.

Today, Hopper is internationally regarded as one of the most important and influential American artists of the twentieth century, one whose work speaks to a wide

audience. Over the last three decades, groundbreaking exhibitions of his work have been shown in major museums in American and abroad.

Yale University Art Gallery

The Yale University Art Gallery, America's oldest and one of its most important university art museums, was founded in 1832, when patriot-artist John Trumbull donated more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then, the Gallery's collections have grown to number more than 185,000 objects, spanning the globe and ranging in date from ancient times to the present day. In addition to its celebrated collections of American paintings and decorative arts, the Gallery is noted for its important holdings of Greek and Roman art, early Italian paintings, later European art, Asian art, African art, art of the ancient Americas, and Impressionist, modern, and contemporary works.

The Gallery's ongoing installation of works from these collections is complemented by a variety of special exhibitions and public programs. Moreover, in an effort to share its works with a broad public, the Gallery also organizes collections-based exhibitions that travel to museums nationwide.

In 2006, as part of a ten-year renovation and expansion project, the Gallery completed the restoration of its iconic Louis I. Kahn Building. It is presently preparing for the final phase of the project, which includes the renovation of its Swartwout building and of Street Hall, the two historic structures adjacent to the Kahn building.

Located at the corner of Chapel and York Streets in New Haven, Connecticut, the Gallery is open to the public free of charge: Tuesday–Saturday 10:00 am–5:00 pm, Thursday until 8:00 pm (September–June), Sunday 1:00–6:00 pm. Closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, the public may visit <http://artgallery.yale.edu>, or call 203.432.0600.

* * *

For additional press information, please contact Adrienne Webb, Public Information Coordinator, Yale University Art Gallery: 203.432.2124, or adrienne.webb@yale.edu.