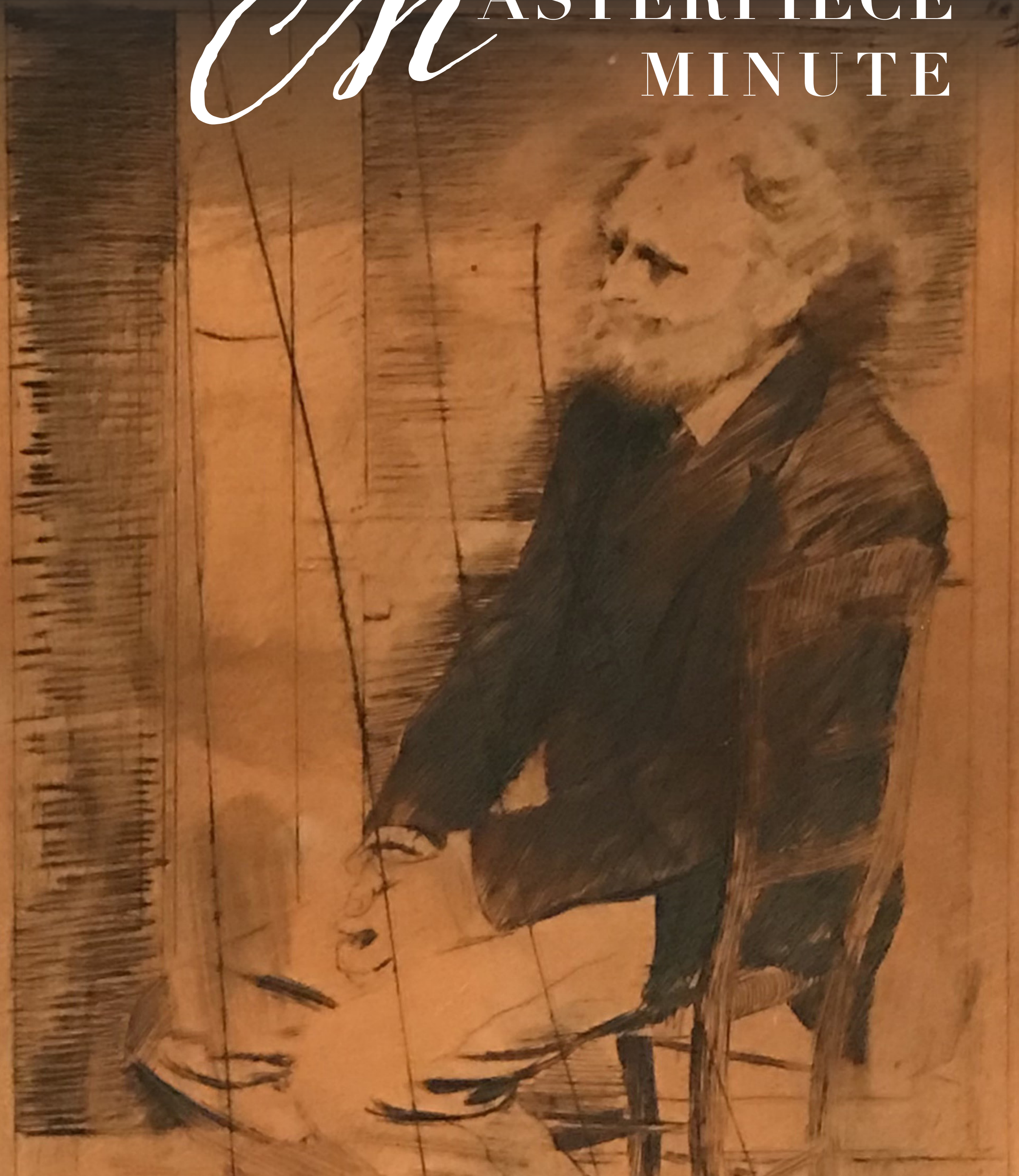




MASTERPIECE MINUTE



Edgar Degas began etching on copper plates in 1856 and employed the medium until 1891 when his eyesight declined. He also made lithographs, drawing his images on polished limestones from which impressions were taken. In all he created a total of sixty-four prints in these two mediums.

Manet Seated, Turned to the Right dates to 1864–65, and is one of three etched portraits he did of the artist. When this portrait was created, Degas and Édouard Manet were close friends. Both men came from affluent backgrounds and were close in age, Degas being about thirty and Manet, thirty-two. In this small copper etching plate, the size of a paperback novel, Manet casually sits sideways on a simple chair in a studio setting identified

by a canvas that has been turned to the wall. This etching would go through four different states, or stages, before Degas ceased working on it. At least forty lifetime impressions spanning the various states are known to exist in museums and private collections. As it remains, in this fourth and final state, Degas scraped portions of the face and background away with a burnishing tool. To deter unauthorized impressions of the plate, Degas added four prominent lines from top to bottom, canceling it.

Several years after this etching, Degas painted a portrait of Manet's wife playing the piano with Manet reclining on a couch. He then gave the canvas to the couple. For some reason Manet did not like the way his wife had been

portrayed, and cut the canvas, editing much of his wife's figure. On a later visit to Manet's apartment, Degas saw the damaged painting and took it away, even returning a small still life of plums that Manet had given him. Some years later, Degas added a blank canvas where the portrait had been cut. While this incident soured their friendship, Degas would go on to collect Manet's work in depth, including paintings, drawings and prints. Interestingly, there are no recorded portraits of Degas by Manet.

Around 1910, the Parisian art dealer, Ambrose Vollard purchased approximately twenty cancelled etching plates, including this one, from Degas. Following Vollard's death in 1939 these copper plates changed hands several

times before they were acquired by the Beverly Hills dealer, Frank Perls. Leslie Johnson who donated the plate to the Museum in 1972 likely acquired it from Perls. While SDMA does not own an early impression of this work, two modern impressions from the canceled plate are in the Museum's collection.

Featured: Edgar Degas. *Manet Seated, Turned to the Right*, 1864–65. Copper etching plate. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie L. Johnson. 1976.41.

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