

# THE DANISH COLLECTOR

## DELACROIX TO GAUGUIN

DIRECTED BY DAVID BICKERSTAFF

### From the Director

*The Danish Collector: Delacroix to Gauguin* was a 'lock-down' project for me and the EOS team, which brought with it lots of challenges. Under strict COVID rules, the Royal Academy was very generous in allowing us to film its exhibition 'Gauguin and the Impressionists', which was built around Wilhelm Hansen's stunning collection of 19th-century French art amassed during the dark days of World War One.

The collection resides at Ordrupgaard, Hansen's beautiful manor house and galleries, built on the outskirts of Copenhagen. From realism to post-impressionism, this amazing collection is full of exquisite paintings by superstar artists. Most of these works I had only seen in books before. The entire property and collection was left to the Danish State in the 1950s and has been carefully preserved. Although there were challenging circumstances, we managed to film at Ordrupgaard and interview its curators – and a leading Danish artist- who offer the film invaluable insights into Hansen's dynamic life and the collection's historic presence.

The holy grail for most artists is to be represented by a gallery or have their work appreciated and purchased by individuals or institutions. Ever since I left art school – and before I started film-making – there were many collectors along the way that one would converse with and, sometimes, one would hope they would acquire your work. The relationship between artists and collectors-dealers is so essential to what we now think of as the history of art. This made working on *The Danish Collector* such an interesting and illuminating film for me. Who are these people and with what intention did they assemble large bodies of work which, in so many cases, end up being offered to the State? Other Exhibition on Screen films have crossed paths with the giants of the collecting world like Barnes, Courtauld and Getty, who – whatever one thinks of their extraordinary wealth – have certainly been hugely influential in our understanding of art. This film gave us an opportunity to look at perhaps a lesser-known personality, but one who created a collection that encapsulated a passion for acquiring art and leaving it to future generations.

**David Bickerstaff**

Filmed at Royal Academy of Arts, London  
and Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen



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