

Delacroix's Moroccan Sketchbooks

Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) is most often classified as an artist of the Romantic school, a style of art that emphasized personal emotions, dramatic actions, and exotic settings using literary and historical subject matter.

Delacroix began studying painting in 1815. In 1832 he took a trip to Spain and North Africa, where he was enthralled with the brilliant color and fascinating people of Morocco. He

wrote in his journal about his trip, “I am quite overwhelmed by what I have seen.” In Delacroix’s Moroccan sketchbooks, the eye travels in and out as it follows the curves and counter-curves of his figures, archways, and landscape details.

Delacroix valued and appreciated his sketches, writing in his journal, “A fine suggestion, a sketch with great feeling can be as expressive as the most finished productions.”



Fig. 1–33. **The first major painter in modern times to visit the Islamic world, Delacroix would eventually fill numerous sketchbooks with scenes of harem interiors, street scenes, and lion hunts.**

Eugène Delacroix, *Moroccan Sketchbook: Album of North Africa and Spain*, 1832.

Watercolor, brown ink, pen, 7 ½" x 5" (19.3 x 12.7 cm). Musée du Louvre. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.