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Jean-Paul Clarke – A Contribution to his Biography, Drawing and Portraits

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The author publishes nine unknown drawings by Jean-Paul Clark preserved in a private collection in Croatia and an overview of Clarke's signatures and monograms. By contacting the artist's son he obtained basic information on Clarke's life which enabled him to draw a biography of this almost completely forgotten artist. The author emphasized the high level of Clarke's drawing skills, especially evident on drawings produced during his captivity in Prussia during the Second World War.

A contribution to biography

Georges-Jean-Paul Clarke (Fig. 1 & 2) was born in Paris on February 6, 1913, where he also died, on June 20, 2004, in his flat in Saint-Germain des Prés. His mother was called Jeanne Breton, and she was a model for the well known couturier, bibliophile, art patron, collector of manuscripts and artworks Jacques Doucet.1 His father, George Thomas Clarke, was a British citizen.² Since the parents were not married when Jean-Paul was born, he was registered under his mother's name as Georges Breton. During World War I he lived in Burgundy with his uncle. He returned to Paris in 1923, to a flat that the family had inherited from a relative,3 at number 10, rue de Nesles, in which he was to live until his death. He met the amateur painter Maurice Trinquier⁴ when he was staying in Recloses,⁵ in the country house of his parents. From Trinquier, Clarke obtained his first lessons in painting and drawing. In Paris he got a job in a bank, where he met his future wife, Suzanne Levieux (1910–1994). They married in 1938. With her support, he started to attend the École des arts décoratifs de Paris and École des Beaux-arts in the workshops of André Devambez (1867–1943) and Charles Guérin (1875–1939), circa 1937 to 1939. He practised life drawing in the Grande Chaumière, while at the École de Médecine he learned artistic anatomy, a subject he mastered under the tuition of Paul Bellugue. 6 He visited libraries and studied the history of art. At that time he did many drawings, oils on canvas, gouaches, pastels and prints, on which he showed the landscapes around Fontainebleau, Barbizon and Larchant. He also drew and painted life studies. Here the outbreak of World War II found him. In June 1940 he was captured with the whole French army on the Maginot line. He had the rank of *brigadier-chef* in the heavy artillery.7 He was first interned in Greifswald, Stalag 2C, for enlisted men, and later in Torgelow, Pomerania. The Red Army liberated the French prisoners in 1945, and he walked back to Paris in August that year.

During his captivity he drew many portraits of his fellow inmates in ink and pen with white gouache highlights. On returning to France he took a teaching job to support his



1. Jean-Paul Clarke, Tursac, 1956 (Family Archive Frédéric Clarke) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Tursac, 1956. (obiteljski arhiv: Frédéric Clarke)



2. Jean-Paul Clarke, Ouessant, 1960 (Family Archive Frédéric Clarke) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Ouessant, 1960. (obiteljski arhiv: Frédéric Clarke)

family that after 1946 was enlarged by three children. He exhibited at the Montparnasse 80 gallery at the Salon of Liberated Artists. In 1946 he was appointed drawing teacher at Château-Thierry. In 1949 he had a new sentimental adventure, after getting to know Marcelle Nayraguet, a history teacher, which took him away from his family until 1979. Then he produced oil paintings with depictions of the environs of Essômes, Château-Thierry, Trilport, Chelles and the rivers Aisne and Marne. He returned to Paris in 1951. He spent less time painting, and painted on the whole during the school holidays in Bretagne, particularly in Ouessant. He sometimes went to Périgord, the home of his companion. Her death in 1979, and old age itself, led to his painting less, and devoting himself more to making plans of classical architecture. Jean-Paul Clarke made such plans all his life long, but as far as it is known, he never took part in any built plans. He also illustrated nature textbooks.8

Although the scholarly literature has no information about Jean-Paul Clarke, there is a mention of him on the Web in the foreword to the catalogue Exposition et Conférence sur Les Peintres Célèbre de la Vallée de La Marne; Lhermitte, Corot, Pinal, Ladureau, Nillet, Tessier; du 23 au 30 Juin 2009 à l'hôtel Ibis de Château-Thierry written by Noël Coret, president of the Salon d'Automne de Paris. He bestowed the following two sentences on Clarke: "They were joined after 19309 by Jean-Paul Clarke, a young teacher of drawing who had come from Paris and got a post in the Jean de La Fontaine Lycée. He did a considerable number of gouaches that showed his new place of residence with incomparable freshness." Writing of

the picture *Harp and Piano* by the painter Lucien Fournet (1902–1975), Coret wrote: "After World War II, Lucien Fournet, the sculptress Françoise Salmon, Augustin Mémin and Luc Lepetit founded a little colony of artists who lived in Essômes-sur-Marne ... Other artists joined them after 1945, like Jean-Paul Clarke, a virtuoso in gouache, drawing teacher at the Jean de La Fontaine Lycée." ¹⁰

Drawings

In a Croatian private collection two drawings by Jean-Paul Clarke were kept. One is sanguine-drawn *Fragment de vase Borghese / Louvre*¹¹ (Fig. 3, Cat. 1)¹² and the pencil drawing *Frédéric / Mars 1954* (Fig. 4, Cat. 8). Both drawings were bought at an auction in France in 2009. At this auction, several other Clarke drawings were sold, all signed with the author's full signature and monogram.¹³

The drawing *Fragment de Vase Borghèse / Louvre* (Fig. 3, Cat. 1) was done in the technique of sanguine with traces of black chalk on paper. This is of irregular shape and was clearly cut out of a large sheet of paper. Its maximum sizes are 219 × 138 mm. It shows a naked faun from behind, playing a double flute, the lower part of the body almost entirely *en face*, while the upper part is turned in a three-quarters right profile, and his head is shown in profile. In each hand he is holding one pipe of the flute. From his left shoulder, a cloak is hanging down to the calf of his left leg. In the centre of the bottom of the back, above the gluteus, a short tail is





3. Jean-Paul Clarke, Fragment de vase Borghèse / Louvre (photo: Goran Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Fragment de vase Borghèse / Louvre (foto: Goran Vranić)

drawn. The drawing is signed in pencil in the bottom left hand corner with the monogram *JPC*.

Before Clarke, Hubert Robert (1733–1808),¹⁴ Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863)¹⁵ and, I am sure, a few more artists, also drew the faun from this vase.

The drawing Fr'ed'eric / Mars 1954 (Fig. 4, Cat. 8) shows a small child, a baby, with wide open eyes, gazing intently at the observer. It was created in pencil on paper. It is sized 108×55 mm. Bottom right, Fr'ed'eric / Mars 1954 is written in Clarke's handwriting, and to the right one can hardly see the pencilled yet erased name Freddy-.

The captivity portraits

The said collection, at the beginning of 2010, was enlarged by seven more Clarke drawings, showing 11 portraits.¹⁶

As we had already established, during the time of his captivity in Germany, he did many portraits of the fellow countrymen who were interned with him.

The first among them, Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze, three quarters left profile (Fig. 5, Cat. 2) is dated 1941. It is drawn in pencil on paper, size 175×133 mm. It shows a fairly young but mature man with a little moustache and short hair parted on the left. He has light eyes with large pupils that give the concentrated gaze a piercing appearance. He breathes resolution, orderliness and cleanliness, and if I did not know the circumstances in which it was made, I would never have said the drawing represented a POW. Clearly the morale of this prisoner was at a very high level. On it, bottom right, the author signed himself in pencil, GJeanPaulClarke, 17 adding the year, 1941, and above the bottom right corner also signed with a monogram composed of the initials JP and C. The same signature and monogram (the year was given as 1940) were used in the drawing Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze, left profile (Fig. 6), done in pencil, a year earlier, current whereabouts and size unknown.¹⁸ In the right hand corner, below the chin, a piece of paper in the form of a regular rectangle is missing. Irrespective of the dating to different years, because of the way they are both drawn, I would think that the two drawings were created in a very short period of time, just a few months apart.

4. Jean-Paul Clarke, Frédéric / Mars 1954 (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Frédéric / Mars 1954 (foto: G. Vranić)



5. Jean-Paul Clarke, *Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze, three quarters left profile* (photo: G. Vranić) / *Jean-Paul Clarke,* Portret muškarca prodornog pogleda, tročetvrtinski profil ulijevo (*foto: G. Vranić*)

The drawing *Portrait of a man, right profile* (Fig. 7, Cat. 3) was done in pen and ink with white gouache highlights, ¹⁹ and is sized 94×73 mm. Bottom left, the picture is signed with the monogram, as were the two previous portraits. This drawing is a bit sketchier than the previous two, and the figure is shown in something of a caricature. This does not reduce the intensity of the depiction of the interior life of the model. Unlike the previous two drawings in which the likenesses of a powerful soul were shown, which only with difficulty can be thought to portray a prisoner of war, the view of this man shows his concern. His face is relaxed and seems to have come to some spiritual loss. Clearly the years in the prison have taken their toll, or perhaps it was only a momentary sinking of morale. This drawing is signed with a monogram similar to those on the previous two drawings. In the right hand corner of the paper an irregular piece is missing.

The next drawing, *Portrait of a man, left profile* (Fig. 8, Cat. 4) was done in pen and brown ink on paper. It is 137 × 105 mm in size, and is signed, bottom right, in pencil, *GJeanPaul Clarke* and dated with the year 1943. Over it is the monogram JPC, different from the previous versions, and framed with a square frame which is interrupted at

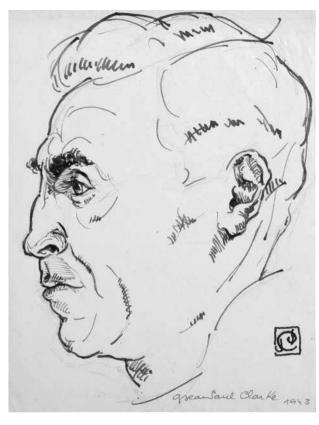


6. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze, left profile / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret muškarca prodomog pogleda, profil ulijevo

the bottom of the left vertical near the letter J. The figure is shown fairly sketchily, as is the figure in the next drawing, *Portrait of a man with lowered gaze, left profile* (Fig. 9, Cat. 5), done in the same technique, sized 108×98 mm. The drawing is not dated, but since it was painted with a monogram almost the same as in the picture of Fig. 8, Cat. 4, it is possible that it was created more or less at the same time.²⁰ Both of the portraits reveal a certain resignation and a slight weariness. If the men portrayed had been captured in 1940,



7. Jean-Paul Clarke, *Portrait of a man, right profile* (photo: G. Vranić) / *Jean-Paul Clarke*, Portret muškarca, profil udesno (foto: G. Vranić)



8. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of a man, left profile (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret muškarca, profil ulijevo (foto: G. Vranić)



9. Jean-Paul Clarke, *Portrait of a man with lowered gaze, left profile* (photo: G. Vranić) / *Jean-Paul Clarke*, Portret muškarca spuštena pogleda, lijevi profil (*foto: G. Vranić*)

like Clarke, then it means they were already in their third year in the camp in Prussia.

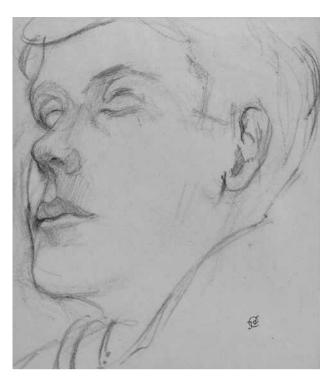
Looking at these portraits, I wonder if they do not show one and the same man. This might be suggested by the full lips, the strong nose with elongated nostrils, the little moustache, the shaggy eyebrows, the chin, the shape of the head and the hair, which is shown with deviations in length and manner of combing, in line with certain spans of time within which it was drawn. Since the author's style can be a cause of error and sometimes we see similarities where we want to, I would not like to insist on this.

Post-war

In the drawing *Élèves de 6<u>eme</u> du collège de Château-Thierry* (Fig. 10, Cat. 6) children attending the 6th grade²¹ in Château-



10. Jean-Paul Clarke, Élèves de 6eme du collège de Château-Thierry (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Učenici 6. razreda škole u Château-Thierryju (foto: G. Vranić)



11. Jean-Paul Clarke, Man with a blind look, three-quarters left profile (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Muškarac slijepog pogleda, tročetvrtinski profil ulijevo (foto: G. Vranić)



12. Jean-Paul Clarke, Male portrait, en face (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Muški portret, en face (foto: G. Vranić)

Thierry are shown. This we know from the inscription on the drawing: Élèves de 6eme du collège de Château-Thierry.22 It was down in pencil on paper, and its size is 473×276 mm; it is signed in the bottom left hand corner with the monogram JPC, and in the right with the signature G. JeanPaul Clarke 1947. Then there is the monogram JPC which because of the cutting of the paper has been halved and we can see only the left half. The looks of the children are serious, like adults. As if growing up in the wartime had left a trace on them. I think that Clarke started drawing in the upper part of the paper. Looking at these portraits along a zigzag line from top to bottom, we can see that Clarke's concentration faded. To some extent, the facture of these drawings corresponds to that from the drawing Man with a blind look, three-quarters left profile (Fig. 11, Cat. 7). It was done in pencil on paper, and the size is 208 × 182 mm. It is not dated, but bears a monogram like that of the previous drawing. The absence of eyes spiritualises the appearance of this figure. Perhaps it is a rendering of someone who really was blind.

These two drawings, mostly the first one, are similar to the highly animated *Male portrait*, *en face* (Fig. 12), created in pencil on paper, signed with a similar signature to that on *Four boys and one portrait of a little girl* (Fig. 10, Cat. 6). It is not dated, and the size is unknown; we do not know even where it is, which is similar to the case of the sketchy drawing *Portrait of a woman*, *three quarters left profile* (Fig.



13. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of a woman, three quarters left profile / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret žene, tročetvrtinski profil ulijevo

13). Since the monogram *JPC* with which it is signed is similar (not framed) to those in the drawings *Portrait of a man, left profile* (Fig. 8, Cat. 4) and *Portrait of a man with lowered gaze, left profile* (Fig. 9, Cat. 5), it was perhaps created at the same time. This drawing is known to me only from a poor reproduction.

As I have already mentioned, in Château-Thierry in 1949 Jean-Paul Clarke had a new event in his love life. Then a series of watercolours showing his girl-friend were created. The



14. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with green ear-rings (photo: G. Vranić) / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret Marcelle Nayraguet sa zelenim naušnicama (foto: G. Vranić)



15. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with blue earrings / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret Marcelle Nayraguet s plavim naušnicama

stylised portraits of her look like idealised figures in *Vogue* adverts. In spite of the stylisation, Clarke even in such simplified portraits was able to give very convincing expression to the changes in the model's moods. One of them, which is in a Croatian private collection, is *Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with green ear-rings* (Fig. 14, Cat. 9), dimensions 133 × 94 mm, and signed bottom left with the somewhat intricate monogram *JPC*. The drawings *Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with blue ear-rings* (Fig. 15) and *Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with no ear-rings* (Fig. 16) are signed with similar monograms; however, I do not know their sizes, since they are familiar only via reproductions.²³ These pictures must have been created between 1949, when Jean-Paul got to know her, and 1979, when Marcelle Nayraguet died. Since she seems fairly young in them, I assume that they were done in the 1950s.

Clarke's drawings from the said Croatian private collection prompted me to write this article. I wanted to try to extricate Jean-Paul Clarke from almost total oblivion. It seems to me that these previously unpublished portraits had the level that made them worthwhile attending to. I am sure that there are many other Clarke works extant. I would very much like to see the "virtuoso gouaches" referred to by Noel Coret, and also the oil paintings with representations of the landscapes of Ile-de-France, Picardy, Brittany and Aquitaine. Clarke drew and painted a large number of nudes, many of which I think must also be in existence. I hope that this



16. Jean-Paul Clarke, Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with no earrings / Jean-Paul Clarke, Portret Marcelle Nayraguet bez naušnica

essay will encourage research into the oeuvre of this artist with an interesting family history, who grew to manhood in tempestuous times, the moments of which he recorded with the hand of a sophisticated draughtsman.

Catalogue of drawings

1. Jean-Paul Clarke

"Fragment de vase Borghèse / Louvre"²⁴ sanguine and traces of black chalk on paper 219 × 138 mm

bottom centre in pencil: Fragment de vase Borghèse / Louvre

bottom right in pencil: monogram *JPC* inv. no. JPC.2009.1

2. Jean-Paul Clarke

Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze, three quarters left profile pencil on paper 175 × 133 mm

1941

bottom right: monogram *JPC / GJeanPaul Clarke / 1941* inv. no. JPC.2010.2

3. Jean-Paul Clarke

Portrait of a man, right profile pen and ink with white gouache highlights on greyish paper $94 \times 73 \text{ mm}$ 1940-1945 (?)

bottom left in pencil: monogram *JPC* inv. no. JPC.2010.3

4. Jean-Paul Clarke

Portrait of a man, left profile
pencil, ink and brown ink on paper
137 × 105 mm
1943
bottom right in ink: monogram JPC/ in pencil: GJean-Paul Clarke / 1943

5. Jean-Paul Clarke

inv. no. JPC.2010.4

Portrait of a man with lowered gaze, left profile pencil and pen and brown ink on paper 108 × 98 mm 1943 (?) bottom right in ink: monogram JPC

6. Jean-Paul Clarke

inv. no. JPC.2010.5

"Élèves de 6<u>eme</u> du collège de Château-Thierry" pencil on paper 473 × 276 mm 1947 bottom left in pencil: monogram *JPC* bottom right in pencil: élèves de 6eme du collège de Château-Thierry / G. <u>JeanPaul Clarke</u> 1947 and the left half of the monogram *JPC* inv. no. JPC.2010.6

7. Jean-Paul Clarke

Man with a blind gaze, three quarters left profile pencil on paper 208 × 182 mm
Late 1940s (?)
bottom right in pencil: monogram JPC inv. no. IPC 2010 7

inv. no. JPC.2010.7

8. Jean-Paul Clarke
"Frédéric / Mars 1954"
pencil on paper
108 × 85 mm
1954
bottom right in pencil: Freddy- / /

bottom right in pencil: Freddy- / Frédéric / Mars 1954 inv. no. JPC.2009.2

9. Jean-Paul Clarke

Portrait of Marcelle Nayraguet with green ear-rings traces of pencil, gouache on paper 133 × 94 mm 1950s (?) bottom left in pencil: monogram JPC inv. no. JPC.2010.8

Translation: Graham McMaster

NOTES

1 (1853–1929). KLAUS GERHARD SAUR, Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon, vol. 29, München-Leipzig, 2001, 186–187.

2 His mother (Jean-Paul Clarke's grandmother) was called Clémence Félicité Clarke (June 14, 1860–1923) and was born and died in Paris, in which she lived all the time, from 1902, when she became a widow, at the address 10, rue de Nesles, in Saint-Germain des Prés. In 1885 she married a British citizen. She was governess to the children of the Italian poet Gabriele d'Annunzio. For twenty years she handled the business of Prince Maffeo Barberini Collona di Sciarra. She helped him in the sale of a collection of pictures, some of which ended up in the Louvre, the Metropolitan, the National Gallery in Washington, the Rothschild and Thyssen-Bornemisza collections and elsewhere.

3 The art bookbinder Émile Carayon (1843–1909). At the International Book Fair in Paris in 1894 he won a gold medal, and a silver in Brussels. I.e., in the flat in which his grandmother had lived. – http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/search/index?filters%5Bname%5D=Carayon%2C+Emile+(1843-1909)&filters%5Bpublisher%5D%5B%5D=Bibliophiles+ind%C3%A9pendants&keywords=Carayon%2C+Emile.

4 (1873–1935), engineer and amateur painter. He had a house close to Barbizon. He was a pupil of Charles Moreau-Vauthier (1857–1924), painter, art critic and writer who in 1907 founded the Petit Musée in Bourron-Marlotte. – http://www.sunsitemag.com/communique/liste_v2. php?id=9385 (March 22, 2010); http://bourronmarlotte.free.fr/administration/Images/CMV.pdf (March 22, 2010). Trinquier inherited the

Moreau-Vauthier library, which was in 1939 taken over from him by Jean-Paul Clarke

- 5 Recloses is 11.5 km from Barbizon, 8.1 from Fontainebleau, and 4.4 from Bourron-Marlotte (as the crow flies).
- 6 Professor of anatomy and morphology at École des beaux-arts de Paris from 1936 to 1955. Draughtsman, author of the books *Introduction À L'étude De La Forme Humaine Anatomie Plastique Et Mécanique*, Paris, 1962 and *À Propos D'art, De Forme Et De Mouvement*, Paris, 1967. http://www.idref.fr/058558829 and https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Bellugue (June 1, 2015).
- 7 An NCO, equivalent to a corporal.
- 8 I would like to thank on this occasion to Mr Frédéric Clarke, the artist's son who very kindly wrote a short biography of his father. It is the source of data for the first part of this article. It seemed likely that the *Frédéric* the baby from one of the drawings from Croatian private collection (Fig. 4, Cat. 8) could well be the artist's son. The assumption turned out to be true, and thus I got in touch with Mr Frédéric Clarke.
- 9 The 1930 is clearly a mistake. Frédéric Clarke says that Jean-Paul was appointed a teacher in Château-Thierry in 1946, and Coret himself later says that he arrived after 1945.
- 10 "Ils furent rejoints après 1930 par le peintre Jean-Paul Clarke, jeune professeur de dessin venu de Paris et nommé au Lycée Jean de La Fontaine. Il réalisera un nombre considérable de gouaches dont la fraîcheur incomparable illustrait sa région d'accueil." http://sites.google.com/site/lhermittecorotjuin09chthierry/Home/preface (March 18, 2010). "Après la Seconde Guerre, Lucien Fournet, la sculptrice Françoise Salmon, les peintres Augustin Mémin et Luc Lepetit formaient la petite colonie d'artistes vivant à Essômes-sur-Marne. (...) D'autres artistes se joignèrent à eux après 1945, comme Jean-Paul Clarke, virtuose de la gouache, professeur de dessin au Lycée Jean de La Fontaine..." http://sites.google.com/site/lhermittecorotjuin09chthierry/Home/l-exposition-les-oeuvres-les-peintres (March 18, 2010).
- 11 The Borghese Vase, a Hellenistic krater, of Pentelic marble, decorated with a relief depiction of a Dionysian procession. It was discovered in Rome in the 16th century, in the area of Sallust's gardens, and is kept today in the Louvre, inv. no. MR 985 (usual no. Ma 86).
- 12 Illustrations bearing catalogue number belong to the specified Croatian collection. The others were copied from the Web and kept for the documentation. Unfortunately, they were very soon removed from the Web so I was not able to record the Web address.

- 13 From the monogram alone on the drawing *Fragment de Vase Borghèse / Louvre* it would not have been possible to gather which artist was involved.
- $14~\textit{Le dessinateur du vase Borghese}, red chalk, <math display="inline">365 \times 290~\text{mm},$ Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valence.
- 15 Faune jouant de l'aulus double, pencil, 101 × 143 mm, inv. no. RF 9151, 38, Département des Arts graphiques, Louvre. http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/joconde_fr?ACTION=RETROUVER &FIELD_98=TOUT&VALUE_98=vase%20borghese&NUMBER=5 &GRP=0&REQ=%28%28vase%20borghese%29%20%3aTOUT%20 %29&USRNAME=nobody&USRPWD=4%24%2534P&SPEC=5&SYN =1&IMLY=&MAX1=1&MAX2=1&MAX3=100&DOM=All (March 15, 2010).
- 16 In parallel with them I shall mention some drawings of Jean-Paul Clarke that I have seen only in reproductions, and of which all details are wanting. See note 12.
- 17 The initial G is for Georges.
- 18 I have seen only a reproduction of this drawing on the Web. See note 12.
- 19 Frédéric Clarke paid special attention to this technique writing in the biography of his father of the captivity portraits.
- 20 The edges of the paper in the drawings *Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze* (Fig. 5, Cat. 4), *Portrait of a man with a piercing gaze*, *left profile* (Fig. 6) and *Portrait of a man with a lowered gaze*, *left profile* (Fig. 9, Cat. 5) are darker from the glue that, from the sticky tape that they were once pasted with, has been absorbed into the paper. How many times we have seen the immense damage done to books and drawings with adhesive tape.
- 21 About 12-13 years old.
- 22 Pupils of the sixth grade of the school in Château-Thierry.
- 23 See note 12.
- 24 Titles taken from Clarke's notes on drawings are in quotation marks.

REFERENCES

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Sažetak

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Jean-Paul Clarke – prilog za biografiju, crteži i portreti

Georges-Paul-Jean Clarke rođen je u Parizu 6. veljače 1913. gdje je i umro 20. lipnja 2004. godine. Od slikara amatera Mauricea Trinquiera (1873.–1935.) dobio je prvu pouku iz slikanja i crtanja. Oženio se Suzanneom Levieux (1910.–1994.) 1938. godine. Uz njezinu podršku počeo je pohađati École des arts décoratifs de Paris i École des Beaux-arts i to radionice Andréa Devambeza (1867.–1943.) i Charlesa Guérina (1875.–1939.), približno od 1937. do 1939. godine. Crtanje akta vježbao je u Grande Chaumière, a u École de Médecine umjetničku anatomiju, predmet koji je savladao kod profesora Paula Belluguea. U lipnju 1940. bio je zarobljen zajedno s cjelokupnom francuskom vojskom bojišnice Maginot. Najprije je bio interniran u Greifswaldu, a poslije u Torgelowu, u Pomeraniji. Francuske je zarobljenike 1945. godine oslobodila Crvena armija, a u Pariz se vratio pješice u kolovozu iste godine. U uzništvu je nastao niz crteža zarobljenika, visoke razine u tehnici pera i tuša s istacima bijelim gvašom. Po povratku u Francusku odlučio se posvetiti

profesorskom poslu kako bi mogao uzdržavati peteročlanu obitelj. Izlagao je u galeriji Montparnasse 80, na Salonu umjetnika-oslobođenika. Godine 1946. imenovan je profesorom crtanja u Château-Thierryju gdje nastaju crteži olovkom njegovih učenika i portreti M. N. u tehnici gvaša. Tada nastaju i ulja na platnu s prikazima okolice Essômesa, Château-Thierryja, Trilporta, Chellesa i rijeka Aisne i Marne. Noël Coret, predsjednik Salon d'Automne de Paris, smatra ga virtuozom gvaša i spominje značajan broj gvaševa nastalih u Château-Thierryju i okolici. Clarke se potpisivao na razne načine i ovdje su prvi put objavljeni njegovi potpisi i monogrami, te crteži iz privatne zbirke u Hrvatskoj.