



Charles Addams

Title

Masterpiece Theater

Medium

Pen and ink and ink wash on board, en grisaille

Date

1984

Dimensions

12 1/4 × 15 1/4 in. (31.1 × 38.7 cm)

Accession number

2001.8.2

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Credit Line

Purchased with funds given in memory of Henriette Wyeth Hurd, Alys Cort, and Mrs. E. Miles Valentine, 2001

Web Description

In *Masterpiece Theater*, a play on the popular PBS series of the same name, Charles Addams gathers a distinguished audience of well-known artistic masterpieces around a television set. Released from their frames and pedestals, Addams's imagined collection includes Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Hans Holbein's *Henry VIII*, Whistler's *mother*, Piero della Francesca's *Federico da Montefeltro*, and Rodin's *The Thinker* all tuning in for the broadcast. Beginning in 1932, Addams's longstanding relationship with *The New Yorker*—where this and the majority of his thousands of drawings were published—brought his quirky, strange, and at times macabre, style to a broad national audience. The beloved characters of his "Addams Family" persist in popular culture well after the television series featuring them went off the air in 1966. Images of Morticia, Gomez, Pugsley, and Wednesday Addams may even be more familiar to contemporary viewers than some of the art referenced in *Masterpiece Theater*.