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## Constantin Guys (1802-1892)

Born in Holland in 1802, Constantin Guys' interest in travel was initially sparked by his father's employment as chief commissioner in the French Navy. As a young man, Guys joined Lord Byron's expedition to fight in the Greek War for independence in 1823 before pursuing a military career with the French army from 1824 to 1830, before. After retiring from the army, from 1842 to 1848 Guys tutored the grandchildren of British watercolourist Thomas Girtin, initially teaching French though he later taught drawing. Guys' talent as a draftsman became apparent during these years and he was hired as an illustrator by the *Illustrated London News*. Despite these successes, Guys had never received formal training as an artist. It may have been through the Girtin family that Guys came into contact with the *Illustrated London News*. In 1848 Guys travelled in the capacity as *Illustrated London News* special artist to Paris and covered the events of the Revolution of 1848 and the rise to power of Napoleon III. In 1854, he covered the English, French and Turkish troops in the Crimea. His illustrations were marked by his shorthand style and he developed his own idiosyncratic technique. Initially, Guys would sketch in pencil before building up the composition with ink and watercolour washes, before he enhanced the outlines in ink. Guys particularly experimented with pencil techniques, and with coloured papers to suggest particular atmospheric effects. In 1856, Guys returned to France and thenceforth divided his time between Paris and London as he continued illustrating for the *Illustrated London News* and contributing to French publications. Guys moved in the circles of other renowned artists, writers and the intelligentsia, and famously inspired his friend Charles Baudelaire to write *Le Peintre de la vie modern*. He also befriended Théophile Gautier, Champfleury, Edouard Manet, and Emile Zola. Guys continued to sketch Parisian life, however he was crippled by a street accident at age 85 and was institutionalised as a result. Guys died in 1892.

## References

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