

EXHIBITION OF WATERCOLORS
BY AMERICAN ARTISTS

DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART
JANUARY 1st TO FEBRUARY 12th , 1919

HOURS:

The Museum is open daily from 9:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m.; Sundays from 2:00 p. m. to 6:00 p. m.; holidays from 2:00 p. m. to 5:00 p. m. Admission is always free.

FOREWORD

PAINTING IN WATERCOLOR on paper had its origin in the drawings of the Renaissance, in the employment of transparent sepia washes by the old masters to give tone to their sketches. This flat tinted monochrome, used as the auxiliary of line, was gradually supplemented by a sense of modeling, and as a convenience in indicating to his artisans or a prospective customer the colors to be employed in a given scheme, the draughtsman soon after began to use tints merely as memoranda to suggest the effect of full coloring.

The Dutch and Flemish artists of the seventeenth century seemed to anticipate the possibilities of modern water color. There are landscape sketches in full color by Rubens in which this is shown. It was not until the eighteenth century, however, that the tinted drawings gave way to a developed and distinct technical method, by the immediate predecessors of Turner, and this great master in England, on the threshold of the nineteenth century, was among the first to bring it to its fullest expression. The National Gallery preserves ample evidence of the skill and resourcefulness of Turner in the employment of the medium to record his observations of wide stretches of nature, seen under the caressing atmosphere of his native land. Water color painting has flourished in England continuously since the days of Turner with ardent and serious devotees of the calibre of Sir Alfred East, Frank Brangwyn, Arthur Rackham, and others.

In other countries, however, its progress has been hampered by the prejudice that it was the plaything of the dilettante or the holiday medium of great painters who turned to it in a spirit of relaxation. In America this prejudice was partially overcome when Winslow Homer, with decisive mastery of its resources, showed the full power and brilliant significance of watercolor in a way worthy of emulation.

Watercolor painting is of two kinds: transparent watercolor, founded upon the principle that the light is to come from the paper, and opaque, founded upon the principle that the light is to come from body white mixed with the hues. These principles are at opposite poles, and admit of a number of variations. The average watercolor exhibition comprising everything from wash drawings to pastels is therefore confusing to the public. Opaque watercolor is amenable to any painter versed in the use of oil-colors, and has the same right to existence. Transparent watercolor dependent upon the wash and the paper for its effect of light and color is much more difficult of accomplishment. It requires more skill and dexterity to handle the liquid color, and to know its resources and limitations. Contrary to popular belief, it is the most difficult of any method of painting. It requires thorough knowledge and mastery of nature's forms, and a sureness of hand for its immediate rendering, which can only be acquired by long practice. Transparent watercolor paintings, as practiced by Winslow Homer and by those represented in this exhibition, has an added charm in the fact that their summary passages bring us close to the creative artist. His work is a living thing. In it one may see his eagerness of attack, his mental attitude, his virtuosity of hand. Something of the excitement which he experienced is fixed with his impression to the paper.

The present exhibition, selected by Messrs. Childe Hassam, Gifford Beal and Paul Dougherty, well-known American artists and superior craftsmen in watercolor will present the single phase of transparent watercolor, with the aim of showing the importance and superiority of this medium in the hands of artists who have acquired a sense of right use of their material, and a mastery of its resources.

C. H. B.

CATALOGUE

GIFFORD BEAL:

1. Mango Trees
2. Spring
3. Porto Rican Pastoral
4. Arabesque
5. Windy Day, Hudson River
6. Evening, New York
7. Across the Valley
8. Spanish Bridge
9. New York Freight Yards
10. Fir Trees, Winter
11. Summer Landscape
12. Central Park

PAUL DOUGHERTY:

13. Carmel Bay
14. Sunlight and Waves
15. Sunset, Morse's Neck
16. Montauban, Manila
17. Temple Trees, Nikko
18. Porto Rican Study
19. Misty Afternoon, Pt. Sobas
20. The Palm, Porto Rico
21. Village Street, Japan
22. Rocks at Monterey

23. Old City Gate, Manila
24. Over the Rooftops, Hong Kong

CHILDE HASSAM:

25. The Mirror, Cos Cob
26. The Boboli Gardens, Cos Cob
27. At Sunset Above Newburgh
28. Portsmouth Stoop
29. Boston from Beacon Hill
30. Back of the Old House
31. Fishkill Landing
32. Storm King
33. Doorway of the Warner House
34. Sunset from Fishkill Landing
35. The Lieutenant River, Old Lyme
36. Scarface

HAYLEY LEVER:

37. At Marblehead
38. A Windy Day
39. Landscape
40. Autumn
41. The Bathers
42. Rocks at Gloucester
43. The Beach
44. Boats at Gloucester
45. The Harbor

46. The Boats
47. The Beach at Bass Rocks
48. Five Master Gloucester

J. ALDEN WEIR:

49. Old Dock, near New London, Conn.
50. Landscape

MAHONRI YOUNG:

51. Sheep Spring Canon
52. Doing His Bit
53. Under the Apple Trees
54. Blue Roan
55. Navajo Land
56. In the Sun
57. In the Apple Tree
58. Landscape
59. On the Beach

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