ABOUT THE ART

Art from Europe and America, 1850-1950

Gallery 17
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ACKLAND ART MUSEUM
The University of North Carolina
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Christmas Day, & New Year’s Day.
Eugène Fromentin
French, 1820 – 1876
Five Standing Arabs, 1874
oil on panel
Ackland Fund, 76.38.1
Conservation for this painting, completed in 2000, was made possible by the William Hayes Ackland Trust.

About the Art

• In this painting Eugène Fromentin focuses on the men’s clothing, poses, and bearing, only roughly sketching in the background. He appears to be studying both profile and three-quarters views of the men.

• In 1874 Fromentin exhibited paintings with North African subjects, so this study may be related to his work on one of them.

• Both a painter and a writer, Fromentin was particularly interested in depicting the landscape and people of North Africa, parts of which had been conquered by France in the 1830s.

About the Artist

1820: Born October 24 in La Rochelle
1845: Published art criticism on the official Salon exhibition
1846: Visited Algeria in secret
1847: Exhibited for the first time in the official Salon
1847-53: Made two more trips to Algeria
1857-59: Published two travel books on North Africa
1874: Painted Five Standing Arabs; exhibited two paintings of Algerian themes at the official Salon
1876: Died August 27 in Saint-Maurice

About the Art

- The artist sets two lovers in a verdant setting framed with palm trees and filled with blossoms that echo the blue in the woman’s sash and the orange in the man’s tunic, feathers, and earring.

- This painting illustrates a scene from the novel *Atala*, published by the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand in 1801. Set in the American wilderness, the novel tells the story of a Christian girl who falls in love with Chactas, a young Natchez man who is taken prisoner by her people.

- Very little is known about the painter Anna de l’Epinais, who signed and dated this painting at the lower edge of the canvas. It seems clear that she was familiar with Chateaubriand’s text, but uncertain what other sources she may have consulted in composing the painting.
Léon Bonnat  
French, 1833 – 1922  
**Head of a Model**, c. 1857  
oil on paper, mounted on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 77.47.1  
Conservation treatment for this painting, completed in 2008, was made possible by the generous support of the Ackland Art Museum Guild.

**About the Art**

- With the brilliant red tones of the shirt, Léon Bonnat models the man’s left shoulder so it appears to project forcefully from the dark background toward the viewer; the colors of the man’s hair blend in with the background, seeming to recede away from us. Together these effects create the illusion that the man is leaning away from us.

- This is probably a study that Bonnat could incorporate into a larger painting in which he wanted to include a figure of a black man seen from behind looking to the left. This study has not been definitively connected with another painting by Bonnat.

- As a teacher, Bonnat encouraged strong contrast of light and shadow and heavy modeling. Bonnat’s best-known students included Thomas Eakins, Gustave Caillebotte, Raoul Dufy, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

**About the Artist**

1833: Born June 20 in Bayonne  
1846-53: Lived in Madrid  
1854: Moved to Paris  
1857: Painted the Ackland’s study; Won second prize at the Salon in Paris for his painting *The Resurrection of Lazarus*  
1865: Opened his own studio  
1900: Received the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor  
1905: Became Director of the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris  
1922: Died September 8 in Monchy-Saint-Eloi
Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, French, 1814 – 1879 (designer)
Placide-Benoît-Marie Poussielgue-Rusand, French, 1824 – 1889 (manufacturer)
**Ciborium, 1852**
vermeil, with gilded bronze foot and semi-precious stones (including jasper, chrysoprase, moonstone, agate, opal, garnet, citrine, amethyst, and turquoise)
The Elisabeth Holmes Lee Fund, 2017.33ab

**About the Art**

- A ciborium is a vessel used to hold the bread for celebrating the Eucharist in Christian churches. The beautiful form and materials of this object indicate its importance in religious practice. The twelve semiprecious stones on its stem symbolize the twelve apostles of Jesus.

- Creating this ciborium was a collaboration between Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, an architect who wanted to design church furnishings in keeping with his architectural ideals. Viollet-le-Duc designed the ciborium in 1852. This example shows slight variations from the original design and was probably manufactured in the 1880s.

**About the Artist**

1814: Born January 27 in Paris
1838: Began working in the French government office overseeing restoration of major monuments
1852: Became connected with Emperor Napoleon III’s court; designed the Ackland’s Ciborium
1863-72: Published works on architecture
1879: Died September 17 in Lausanne
Emile Gallé
French, 1846 – 1904 (company active 1874 – 1931)

Vase with Japanese-Style Decoration, c. 1885
glass with applied elements and enamel
Gift of Dorothy and S. K. Heninger, Jr., 2001.30.2

About the Art

- This vase is covered with many decorations, requiring considerable attention to see them all. They include flowers, insects, and boldly patterned shapes in enamel, delicately brushed vines in gold, and purple-tinged glass forms that appear to ooze downward from the rim.

- Emile Gallé was associated with the Art Nouveau style, which emphasized the kind of natural forms, graceful lines, and asymmetrical compositions seen here. Some of those same aesthetic qualities were associated with Japanese art and design, which French artists were just becoming familiar with in the late nineteenth century.

About the Artist

1846: Born May 4 in Nancy
1862-66: Studied philosophy, botany, and mineralogy in Weimar, Germany
1866-67: Employed by the Burgun, Schwerer & Cie glassworks in Meisenthal
1871: Represented the family firm at the World’s Fair in London
1874: Assumed management of the family business after his father’s retirement
1885: Made the Ackland’s vase
1889: Exhibited at the World’s Fair in Paris
1900: Presented a retrospective at the World’s Fair in Paris
1904: Died September 23 in Nancy
Emma Sandys  
British, 1843 – 1877  
Mary Emma Jones, 1874  
oil on board  
Gift of Lauren M. Sanford in honor of Professor Mary D. Sheriff, 2018.41

**About the Art**

- Mary Emma Jones was the artist’s sister-in-law. She was the model for many paintings by Emma Sandys’ older brother, the artist Frederick Sandys.

- Seated in a shallow and narrow space that cuts off her hands, Jones wears a pale and elegant dress set against a flourishing laurel branch. Just as the space she occupies seems constrained, so too is her luxuriant red hair tightly bound in three headbands. Yet the turn of her head, her sparkling eyes and parted lips suggest the inner movement of her mind.

- The artist’s monogram at upper left is stylized and almost Asian-looking.

- The painting has been recently donated to the Ackland in honor of one of the University’s most distinguished professors. Mary Sheriff (1950–2016) was a pioneering and inspiring scholar of European art by and about women (and also had red hair).

**About the Artist**

1843: Born in Norwich  
1863: Made her earliest known, dated painting  
1867–74: Exhibited paintings in London and Norwich  
1874: Painted Mary Emma Jones  
1877: Died in Norwich
About the Art

- William Bell Scott combined vivid secondary colors (purple, green, and orange) with carefully delineated pebbles, seaweed, and rivulets of water on the beach.

- Northumberland is a region on the east coast of Great Britain. Since Scott was interested in accuracy, we can deduce that *Incoming Tide* shows the sunrise as the morning tide comes in.

- Since this landscape was painted in 1861, it is likely that it relates to Scott’s studies for his murals for Wallington House in Northumberland in England. The murals showed the history of the region, beginning with the building of the Roman wall and ending with men at work in a railway engine factory.

About the Artist

1811: Born September 12 in Edinburgh
1834: Exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy
1838: Published first volume of poetry
1853–4: Published *Poems of a Painter*
1856–61: Murals at Wallington House, Northumberland
1861: Painted the Ackland’s landscape
1865–68: Murals at Penkill Castle
1870: Wrote a book about the German printmaker Albrecht Dürer
1890: Died November 22 in Penkill Castle, Strathclyde, Scotland
About the Art

- During his career, Murphy worked to capture the local character of rural communities that were quickly disappearing. The fields here show the beginning stages of cultivation, suggesting that the wilderness is being made habitable.

- A review from the year Murphy made this painting noted his:

  increased fondness for vapor, shadow and mystery qualities which in a picture stimulate the imagination and make the canvas perpetually attractive when presented in moderation.

- This humble scene separates Murphy from the grandiose painters of the Hudson River School – it is a receding view of low-lying country. There is a clump of willow trees to the left, behind a woman in a red shirt. Tall reeds fringe the pond in the foreground, contrasting hues of pink with bright overlapping tints of green.

About the Artist

1853: Born December 11 in Oswego, New York
1868: Moved with his family to Chicago
1873: Was made an Associate at the Chicago Academy of Design
1875: Moved to New York City
1881: Painted the Ackland’s Landscape
1882: First major exhibition of his work at a Boston gallery, Doll and Richards
1885: Won the Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design for best painting done by an American under 35
1902: Awarded Carnegie Prize by Society of American Artists
1921: Died January 21 in New York City
About the Art

- Although gathering cranberries was a commercial enterprise by the late nineteenth century, the manner of picking them – on hands and knees or doubled over combing out the berries with one’s fingers – had not been mechanized. The standing figures Eastman Johnson places among those that are bent over accentuate the difference between the two postures and suggest the difficulty of the work.

- There are at least thirteen other related studies and paintings by Johnson of cranberry picking. The final work, *The Cranberry Harvest, Island of Nantucket* is at the Timken Museum of art in San Diego.

- By the 1880s, critics began to identify Johnson as a genre painter of a rural American way of life that was quickly disappearing due to industrialization and urbanization. In his letters, Johnson contrasted the timeless agrarian ritual of cranberry picking to the industrial center that he left behind in New York.

About the Artist

1824: Born July 29 in Lovell, Maine
1849: Moved to Düsseldorf to study art
1859: Elected as an associate of the National Academy of Design
1870: Helped found the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
1870: Began to summer on Nantucket
c. 1875–80: Painted the Ackland’s study for the *Cranberry Harvest*
1906: Died April 5 in New York City

Chat with this work of art using ARTBOT. Instructions available at the Visitor Services desk.
Jasper Francis Cropsey
American, 1823 – 1900
Landscape with Mountains at Sunset, c. 1850
oil on paper
Ackland Fund, 85.19.1

About the Art

- Although this painting is small, Jasper Cropsey constructed a scene of deep space, including the cliff at the front of the painting, the water, the far shore, a mountain range, and finally the sunset sky. To underscore the vast scale of his landscape, he places tiny human figures on the cliff and in the boat.

- The round format suggests a type of landscape painting that artists made using an optical device called a Claude glass (named after the seventeenth-century French landscapist Claude Lorrain). Artists turned away from the view they wanted to depict and instead represented its reflection as it appeared in the tinted convex mirror of the Claude glass. The reflection was thought to transform an ordinary scene into one that adhered to conventions of a picturesque landscape.

- There are different suggestions about why Cropsey made this painting. One is that it was part of an album presented to the famous Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind during her American tour. Another is that it was part of a set of the four seasons, depicting autumn on the Hudson River. Cropsey painted at least six sets of the seasons, two of which are circular.

About the Artist

1823: Born February 18 in Rossville, Staten Island, New York
1843: Had an independent practice in New York as an architect and a landscape painter
c. 1850: Painted the Ackland’s landscape
1851: Became a full member at the National Academy of Design in New York
1856–63: Lived in England
1867: Began to build a Hudson River villa in Warwick, New York
1900: Died June 22 at his home in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

Listen to music related to this artwork with the Look & Listen Gallery Soundtrack. Visit www.ackland.org/listen to access the playlist.
Charles François Daubigny
French, 1817 – 1878
Pond at Corbigny (L’Etang de Corbigny),
c. 1858
oil on canvas
Bequest of Charles and Isabel Eaton, 2009.31.36

About the Art

• The three water birds (two on the shore at right and one in the sky) have evidently been still long enough to allow the pond’s surface to become still, reflecting the clouds above.

• Charles Daubigny often painted landscape scenes with ponds or rivers, such as this view in the town of Corbigny in central France. Critics at the time admired many features of his landscapes, but found his brushwork too loose for their tastes.

• His practice of working *en plein air* (or outdoors) had a significant impact not only on Daubigny’s own art but also on the art of younger generations of landscape painters, notably the Impressionists. Throughout his career he painted water scenes from a studio on a boat. That may account for the vantage point we see in this landscape, with water extending all the way across the lower margin, as though we are seeing it from a boat.

• When this painting was cleaned recently, it transformed a somewhat gloomy, overcast scene into one bathed in dappled sunlight. A photograph taken before cleaning is reproduced here.

About the Artist

1817: Born February 15 in Paris
1835: Traveled to Italy
1836: Returned to Paris and worked in the painting restoration department at the Louvre
1838: First exhibited at the official Salon in Paris
1843: Began painting landscapes in the Forest of Fontainebleau
c. 1858: Painted the Ackland’s landscape
1870: Went to London during the Franco-Prussian War
1878: Died February 19 in Paris