

# ABOUT THE ART

---

Art from  
Europe and  
America,  
1850-1950

Gallery 14

ACKLAND

## **QUESTIONS?**

Contact us at [acklandlearn@unc.edu](mailto:acklandlearn@unc.edu)

## **ACKLAND ART MUSEUM**

The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
101 S. Columbia Street  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
Phone: 919-966-5736

## **MUSEUM HOURS**

Wed - Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday 1 - 5p.m.  
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.  
Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve,  
Christmas Day, & New Year's Day.



Auguste Rodin  
French, 1840 – 1917  
**Head of Balzac**, 1897  
bronze  
Ackland Fund, 63.27.1

---

## About the Art

- Nothing is subtle about this small head of the French author Honoré de Balzac. The profile view shows a protruding brow, nose, and mouth, and the hair falls in heavy masses.
- Auguste Rodin made this sculpture as part of a major commission for a monument to Balzac. He began working on the commission in 1891 and spent seven more years on it. Neither the head nor the body of Rodin's sculpture conformed to critical or public expectations for a commemorative monument, including a realistic portrait likeness. Consequently, another artist ultimately got the commission.

## About the Artist

1840: Born November 12 in Paris, France

1854: Began training as an artist

1871-76: Worked in Belgium

1876: Traveled to Italy

1880: Worked for the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory; received the commission for one of his most famous works, monumental bronze doors called *The Gates of Hell*

1882: Met sculptor Camille Claudel, who became Rodin's pupil, lover, and trusted studio assistant. Claudel is believed to have created whole and partial figures for *The Gates of Hell*

1896: His nude sculpture of the French author Victor Hugo created a scandal

1897: Made the Ackland's *Head of Balzac*

1898: Exhibited his monument to Balzac and created another scandal

1917: Died November 17 in Meudon, France



Edgar Degas  
French, 1834 – 1917  
**Spanish Dance**, c. 1885, cast 1921  
bronze  
Ackland Fund, 74.21.1

---

## About the Art

- The *Spanish Dance* retains the uneven surface of the wax model that Edgar Degas sculpted first, before the figure was cast in bronze. The surface absorbs and reflects light, suggesting the movements of the muscles in the dancer's limbs.
- Degas' body of work includes over 600 representations of dancing figures – paintings, drawings, and sculpted models. He made wax and mixed media statuettes of dancers as a way of studying their movement, often applying soft wax over a cork frame.
- During his career, Degas exhibited only one sculpture – *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen*. It was on view for less than one month and then remained in the artist's apartment until his death thirty-six years later. Art dealer Ambroise Vollard recalls the artist's hesitation to show his sculptures or have them cast in bronze: "It's a tremendous responsibility to leave anything behind in bronze – this medium is for eternity."

## About the Artist

1834: Born July 19 in Paris, France

1855-56: Attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris

1865: Exhibited at the official Salon in Paris

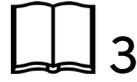
1870: Began taking an interest in dance and opera

1874: Participated in the First Impressionist Exhibition

1881: Showed *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen* at the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition

c. 1885: Modeled the Ackland's *Spanish Dance*

1917: Died September 26 in Paris



Gustave Courbet

French, 1819 – 1877

**Roe Deer in the Snow, 1868**

oil on canvas

Ackland Fund, 62.1.1

Conservation treatment for this painting, completed in 2008, was made possible by the generous support of Carol McNeel.

## About the Art

- Gustave Courbet was an avid hunter and painted works like this one for patrons who shared his interests. The vantage point is that of a hunter watching animals in the distance; only the female deer has noticed. Courbet described a similar scene in a letter from 1866: “a splendid landscape of profound solitude, done deep in the valleys of my part of the world.”
- This landscape was probably executed quickly, using methods that challenged the conventions of academic painting. Courbet used a palette knife (a spatula-like instrument usually used to mix paint) to apply thick paint directly to the canvas, simulating the rough texture of the landscape.
- Courbet came from a farming family in the Franche-Comté, a region on the Swiss border of France. He spent much of his time in Paris, but continued to portray rural scenes, offering Parisian viewers realistic and unidealized views of life in the provinces.

## About the Artist

1819: Born June 10 in Ornans, France

1839: Moved to Paris, France

1849: Exhibited for the first time at the Salon in Paris

1855: Independently exhibited work that was rejected from the World’s Fair in Paris

1868: Painted the Ackland’s *Roe Deer in the Snow*

1871: Named curator of Fine Arts under the revolutionary government, the Paris Commune

1871: Charged with the destruction of the Vendôme column in Paris and jailed

1873: Retried and ordered to pay for the cost of re-erecting the Column; moved to Switzerland to live in exile

1877: Died December 31 at La Tour-de-Peilz, near Vevey, Switzerland



Camille Pissarro  
French, 1830 – 1903  
**The Banks of the Oise, Near  
Pontoise, 1876**  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 65.28.1

---

## About the Art

- Camille Pissarro painted with a technique commonly used by Impressionist artists. If you look closely at the sky, for example, you can see that he placed brush strokes of unmixed colors side by side rather than blending them together into a unified tone.
- This landscape is related to an 1876 series that Pissarro painted of the Oise River near his home in Pontoise, France. The Oise was open to traffic and industry, as is evident in the imagery in this painting. Masts of sailing barges and the smokestack of a steam-powered tug echo the tall chimney of the factory in the distance.
- Industrial development along the Oise began in the 1870s. Here, Pissarro balances urban and rural subject matter, showing industry as part of a peaceful summer landscape.

## About the Artist

1830: Born July 10 in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Danish Virgin Islands

1856: Attended private classes at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France

1859: Attended the Académie Suisse, an art school in Paris

1874: Helped organize the first Impressionist Exhibition

1875–86: Exhibited at all eight of the Impressionist exhibitions

1876: Painted the Ackland's *Banks of the Oise*

1903: Died November 13 in Paris



Émile Bernard  
French, 1868 – 1941  
**The Wave**, 1892  
oil on pulpwod board,  
mounted on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 71.29.1  
Conservation treatment for this  
painting, completed in 1993,  
was made possible by the  
William Hayes Ackland Trust.

---

## About the Art

- Émile Bernard used similar colors to associate the woman's face with the clouds, her head covering with the sky, and her clothing with the sea. He contrasted this color scheme with the reds, green, and browns of the land between the woman and the sea. She is wearing a traditional French Celtic headdress called a coiffe, which would have been specific to her village.
- In a bill of sale dated 1901 Bernard noted this painting's date and title and a description indicating that he painted it in the coastal village of Raguénez, in Brittany, on the rugged western coast of France. It depicts: "the sea, a heap of kelp, some oak trees, the head of a peasant woman in the foreground."
- Kelp was harvested in some areas for use as fertilizer, fuel, and even fodder for animals.

## About the Artist

1868: Born April 28 in Lille, France

1886: Visited Normandy and Brittany, France; met fellow artists Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh

1888: Worked in Pont-Aven in Brittany

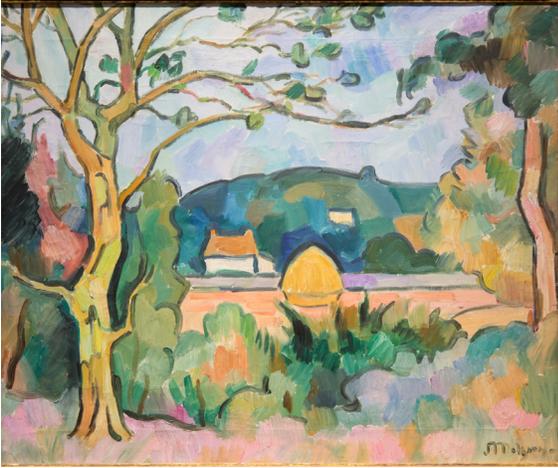
1889: Exhibited paintings at the World's Fair in Paris, France

1892: Painted the Ackland's *The Wave*; organized the first French retrospective of the work of Van Gogh

1893: Travelled to Italy and then to Egypt, where he lived until 1903

1904: Returned to France

1941: Died April 15 in Paris



Jean Metzinger  
French, 1883 – 1956  
**Landscape**, 1904  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 60.26.1

---

## About the Art

- Certain landscape features in this painting by Jean Metzinger are readily recognizable, like trees, a field, a haystack, a building, and mountains. But they look less like an illusionistic view of receding space and more like a two-dimensional pattern of colors and lines. For example, Metzinger repeated the arc of a tree branch extending across the sky with the curve of the mountain.
- In an interview from about 1908, Metzinger stated, “instead of copying Nature we create a milieu of our own, wherein our sentiment can work itself out through a juxtaposition of colors.”
- In the same year he painted this landscape, Metzinger and the well-known post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne exhibited works in the same exhibition. Metzinger’s painting shows some similarities with Cézanne’s style, for example, in patches of color juxtaposed rather than blended, and in the use of dark outlines.

## About the Artist

1883: Born June 24 in Nantes, France

1900: Studied at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Nantes

1903: Sent three pictures to be exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, France; moved to Paris

1904: Painted the Ackland’s *Landscape*

1906: Elected to a post on the hanging committee of the Salon des Indépendants

1912: Co-wrote a book about Cubism with the painter Albert Gleizes

1915–16: Served as a stretcher-bearer in World War I

1956: Died November 3 in Paris, France



John Marin  
American, 1870 – 1953  
**Weehawken Sequence, No. 20**, c. 1916  
oil on canvas-covered board  
Ackland Fund, 60.4.2

## About the Art

- This work is part of a series of about 100 oil sketches John Marin made between 1910 and 1916, called the Weehawken Sequence. The works focus on imagery of industrial New Jersey, with grain elevators and railroad tracks, the Palisades, and the Hudson River with the New York City skyline beyond.
- Marin painted this series of works outdoors. The strokes and scratched lines give the impression of an artist trying to get down the general impressions of buildings and boat traffic. The fragmented, expressive scene conveys the frenetic pace and congestion of life in a major industrial waterfront.
- Marin enhances the illusion of depth in this scene by painting the background lightly, so that the weave of the canvas is readily visible, and with lighter colors. In the foreground, he used heavier, overlapping strokes and patches of paint in darker colors.

## About the Artist

1870: Born December 23 in Rutherford, New Jersey

1899–1901: Studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

1901–03: Studied at the Art Students League, New York, New York

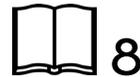
1909: Began to show work at the influential photographer and gallery owner Alfred Stieglitz' 291 Gallery in New York

1913: Exhibited ten paintings at the International Exhibition of Modern Art, known as the Armory Show, in New York

c. 1916: Painted the Ackland's *Weehawken Sequence, No. 20*

1936: Became one of the first American artists given a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York

1953: Died October 1 in Cape Split, Maine



Jack B. Yeats  
British (Irish), 1871 – 1957  
**Canal Bridge**, 1932  
oil on panel  
Bequest of Charles and  
Isabel Eaton, 2009.31.123

---

## About the Art

- Jack Butler Yeats began his artistic career as an illustrator for magazines and books. He first painted in watercolors and then transitioned to oil painting several years later. In the 1920s, Yeats began to develop a style characterized by thick, loose brushwork — as seen here — and expressive handling of paint.
- In representing the murky water under the bridge, Yeats painted a base of thin, parallel strokes, interrupted with perpendicular strokes and small dabs of paint that suggest the reflection of the bridge.
- Yeats believed that painters should be connected to the land they paint. His paintings, like *Canal Bridge*, depicted the places, people, and events that he encountered living in Dublin, while his writing tended to focus on the more rural areas of his childhood, like Sligo.

## About the Artist

1871: Born August 29 in London, England, into a family of prominent artists and writers, including his brother, the poet William Butler Yeats.

1879–86: Lived with his grandparents at Sligo, Ireland

1887: Returned to London and attended art classes

1897: First solo exhibition, in London at Clifford Gallery

1910: Moved back to Ireland

1913: Participated in the International Exhibition of Modern Art (the Armory Show) in New York, New York

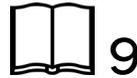
1917: Moved to Dublin, Ireland

1930: Published his most famous novel, *Sligo*

1932: Painted the Ackland's *Canal Bridge*

1939: Appointed as a governor of the National Gallery of Ireland

1957: Died March 28 in Dublin



Arthur Garfield Dove  
American, 1880 – 1946  
**Tree Forms**, 1932  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 65.25.1

---

## About the Art

- In *Tree Forms* Arthur Dove transforms tree trunks and leaves into swelling, biomorphic curves and jagged lines that vibrate with energy. Through compositional cropping and a close-up angle – two techniques popular in photography of the time – Dove challenged the conventions of traditional landscape painting.
- Inside the serrated boundaries of the leaf-like forms, Dove applied delicate, feathery brush marks that surround bands of green and brown hues. The combination of the colors with their irregular edges creates an effect of reverberation.
- Dove was part of Alfred Stieglitz's pioneering circle of modern American artists. Between 1912 and 1946, he had annual one-man exhibitions at Stieglitz's galleries in New York City. *Tree Forms* does not appear in any records for those shows, but an inscription on the back of the painting in Stieglitz's hand reads: "Tree Forms – 1932/ Arthur G. Dove." This painting is still in the original frame that the artist selected for it.

## About the Artist

1880: Born August 2 in Canandaigua, New York

1903: Moved to New York, New York to work as a freelance illustrator

1907–09: Lived in France

1912: Participated in first of 34 annual one-man exhibitions at Alfred Stieglitz's 291 gallery in New York

1924: Married painter Helen Torr

1932: Painted the Ackland's *Tree Forms*

1933: Moved back to his childhood farm in Geneva, New York

1938: Returned to Long Island, New York, settling in an abandoned post office

1946: Died November 23 in Huntington, New York



Hale Aspacio Woodruff  
American, 1900 – 1980  
**Landscape (Mississippi, Soil  
Erosion)**, c. 1944  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2013.6

## About the Art

- In July 1943, Hale Woodruff received a fellowship of \$2,400 from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation “to pursue individual creativity in art.” He traveled through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi documenting social and environmental issues in the rural South, such as the landscape with eroded soil seen here.
- In addition to showing soil erosion, Woodruff shows decaying vegetation. He paints some trees with leaves, such as those on the painting’s right side, a bare trunk in the back, and a fallen tree at the bottom of the canvas, blending in with the color of the earth around it.
- Two other works of art by Woodruff depict similar landscapes: one of those is a pastel in the collection of the North Carolina Central University Art Museum in Durham, North Carolina, and the other is a painting in the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson.

## About the Artist

1900: Born August 26 in Cairo, Illinois

1931: In Paris, France, worked with American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner

1931–45: Taught at Atlanta University in Georgia

1936: In Mexico City, Mexico, studied with Diego Rivera

1943: Received a Julius Rosenwald Foundation fellowship

c. 1944: Painted the Ackland’s *Landscape*

1945–68: Taught at the Harlem Community Art Center, directed by sculptor Augusts Savage, and at New York University in New York, New York

1980: Died September 6 in New York

Chat with this work of art using ARTBOT. Instructions available in the Museum lobby.



Raymond Jonson  
American, 1891 – 1982  
**Cosmic Theme No. Three**, 1937  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 2014.3

---

## About the Art

- Diaphanous circles and curvilinear shapes appear to move and float, overlapping and comingling in an imaginary, otherworldly environment. Although various forms are shaded, indicating mass and weight, the color of each changes as they intersect, obscuring the progression of space and creating a mutable illusion of depth.
- Nearly twenty years after he painted this work, Raymond Jonson wrote about it in a letter: “I believe one might interpret certain items as symbolic, such as the interplay between the many circles or transparent spheres, and the curvilinear. Do they not suggest ethereal material in space in the act of becoming formed into matter?”
- This work belongs to Jonson’s *Cosmic Theme* series, which consisted of seven paintings created from 1936 to 1941 that explored Jonson’s interests in astronomy.

## About the Artist

1891: Born July 18 in Chariton, Iowa

1924: Moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico

1934: Began teaching at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque

1936: Began a series of paintings called *Cosmic Theme*

1937: Painted the Ackland’s *Cosmic Theme No. Three*

1938: Started to paint with a spray gun; co-founded the Transcendental Painting Group

1954: Retired from teaching at the University of New Mexico

1969: Met abstract painter Ilya Bolotowsky while Bolotowsky was a visiting professor at the University of New Mexico

1970: Curated an exhibition of Bolotowsky’s work

1982: Died May 10 in Albuquerque, New Mexico



Ilya Bolotowsky  
American, 1907 – 1981  
**Golden Diamond**, 1953  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Miriam E. Dixon, Judith D. Gooding and  
Susan R. Dixon in memory of John W. Dixon, Jr.  
and Vivian S. Dixon, 2009.19.1

---

## About the Art

- Vivid hues of orange, blue, and red contrast with the pale tones of lavender and white, the opposing shades held together by interludes of mustard green. Carefully arranged, the vertical and horizontal shapes meet at right angles to create a balanced and dynamic grid of rectangles, squares, and triangles.
- After seeing the structured, grid-based work of Dutch artist Piet Mondrian in 1933, Ilya Bolotowsky abandoned his use of biomorphic abstract forms in favor of Neoplasticism, a style conceived by Mondrian. Neoplasticism stressed completely abstract and nonobjective representation through the use right angles to create relationships that could be both tense and harmonious.
- In 1947 Bolotowsky altered the orientation of his canvases. According to him: “The edge of the canvas is very important...with...a diamond shape, the shapes truncated by these formats are inclined to continue and to complete themselves as regular shapes beyond the canvas...And so the active area of the diamond format canvas is larger psychologically than it is physically, which is something gained.”
- The American Abstract Artists Association, to which Bolotowsky belonged, encouraged the ideas and work of abstract artists through support and exhibition opportunities at a time when representational art was dominant in the United States.

## About the Artist

1907: Born July 1 in St. Petersburg, Russia

1923: Immigrated to New York, New York

1924–30: Studied at the National Academy of Design in New York

1936: Became a founding member of the American Abstract Artists Association

1946: Taught at Black Mountain College, North Carolina

1953: Painted the Ackland’s *Golden Diamond*

1974: Was celebrated in a retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York

1981: Died November 22 in New York



Louis Stone  
American, 1902 – 1984  
**Untitled**, 1950  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Lane  
Stokes, 91.33

---

### About the Art

- The vividly colored forms in Louis Stone's painting are distinguished from one another with contrasting colors, well-defined borders, and in several cases, patterns of dots, dashes, or lines.
- In 1950, the year that he painted this work, Stone and his wife took an extended trip to Guanajuato, Mexico, with their friend, the artist Bill Ney. Following their return, Stone began to use vibrant colors in controlled, spatially organized patterns.

### About the Artist

1902: Born in Findlay, Ohio

1919–20: Attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati in Ohio

1926–27: Studied at the Art Students League in New York, New York

1927–33: Lived in Europe, mostly Southern France

1935: Moved to Lambertville, New Jersey

1935–38: Worked for the federal program, the Works Progress Administration's Easel Division

1939: Exhibited in the United States Pavilion at the New York World's Fair

1950: Made the Ackland's painting

1984: Died in Lambertville, New Jersey



Rose Piper  
American, 1917 – 2005  
**Slow Down Freight Train**, 1946–47  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 91.8

## About the Art

- The male figure in Rose Piper’s painting combines elements of abstraction and realism. Although his proportions are exaggerated and his skin is several shades of green, Piper took care to make his fingers gripping the train car, his facial features, and the texture of his hair recognizable.
- *Slow Down Freight Train* is one of a series of fourteen paintings related to African American folk and blues music. Its inspiration is Trixie Smith’s recording of *Freight Train Blues*, a song about the Great Migration (1913–46), when many blacks moved from the rural South to the urban industrial North in search of economic opportunity and escape from the Jim Crow South. In Piper’s painting a man grieves, perhaps for his wife or girlfriend, his community or a way of life left behind.
- In a 1990 letter to former Ackland director Charles Millard, Piper said that her painting is: “a woman’s plea for the train to slow down so that she might go along with her man.” The woman, from the vantage point of both the painter and the viewer, watches the man climb aboard the train.

## About the Artist

1917: Born in the Bronx, New York

1940: BA from Hunter College with an art major and geometry minor

1943–46: Studied at the Art Students League, New York, New York

1946–47: Painted the Ackland’s *Slow Down, Freight Train*; won two consecutive fellowships from the Rosenwald Foundation

1947: First one-woman show, in New York at the Roko Gallery

1948: Won first prize in Atlanta University’s Annual Exhibition for Contemporary Negro Artists

1989: Solo show in New York, at the Phelps Stokes Fund

2005: Died in Connecticut

Listen to music related to this artwork with the [Look & Listen Gallery Soundtrack](#).  
Visit [www.ackland.org/listen](http://www.ackland.org/listen) to access the playlist.



## 15

Albert Gleizes  
French, 1881 – 1953

**Composition**, 1921  
oil on panel

Ackland Fund, 69.27.1

Conservation treatment for this painting, completed in 1991, was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

---

### About the Art

- In *Composition*, Albert Gleizes portrays a seated figure by layering a series of geometric, interlocking shapes to suggest a face, hair, and arms. This layering, together with the arrangement of verticals, horizontals, and diagonals, conveys an impression of the figure moving in space.
- The wood surface on which Gleizes painted *Composition* is plywood and over time it warped. Since attempting to flatten the panel would have damaged the painted surface, the Museum instead had a cradle built to support the curved surface.
- Gleizes came from an artistic family. His father Sylvan Gleizes was a successful fabric designer and amateur painter. His maternal uncle, Léon Commerre, was painter who had won the French artists' academy's Rome Prize in 1875. Another uncle, Robert Gleizes, was an art collector and dealer.

### About the Artist

1881: Born December 8 in Paris, France

1902: First exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris

1903: First exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in Paris

1911: Exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris

1912: Co-wrote *Du Cubisme* with Jean Metzinger

1921: Painted the Ackland's *Composition*

1939: Moved to St. Remy-de-Provence, France

1953: Died June 23 in Avignon, France



Amédée Ozenfant  
French, 1886 – 1966

**Sisteron**, between 1919 and 1928  
oil on canvas

The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund, 72.29.1

---

## About the Art

- Flat geometric planes, painted using tints and shades of burnt sienna and set against a muted blue sky, emphasize the mass of the architectural forms. Amédée Ozenfant stripped away details, transforming Sisteron into the essence of a town in the south of France rather than portraying the specific place.
- Between 1918 and 1928, the artist made a number of paintings of Sisteron, a pre-Roman town in France constructed in a narrow gap between two mountain ranges. Scholars have found it difficult to place these paintings in chronological order, hence the exact date of the Ackland's painting is not known.

## About the Artist

1886: Born April 15 in Saint-Quentin, Aisne, in northern France

1905: Travelled to Paris, France, and studied at the Académie de la Palette

1910–13: Lived in Russia, where he married artist Zina de Klingberg

1913: Returned to Paris; worked at the propaganda department during World War I

1919–28: Painted the Ackland's *Sisteron*

1920–25: With Le Corbusier, became director and owner of a journal, *L'Esprit nouveau*

1939: Moved to New York, New York and became the head of the Ozenfant School of Fine Arts

1944: Became an American citizen

1953: Renaturalized as a French citizen

1966: Died May 4 in Cannes, France



Niles Spencer  
American, 1893 – 1952  
**Farm Buildings**, 1922–26  
oil on canvas  
Burton Emmett Collection, 58.1.244  
Conservation treatment for this painting, completed in 1997, was made possible by a grant from the Pforzheimer Foundation.

---

## About the Art

- To create a rough texture in the grass at the bottom of the picture and in the trees, Niles Spencer glued sand to the canvas.
- During a trip to Paris, Spencer became interested in Cubism, but after a while he returned to painting New England landscapes. *Farm Buildings* shows his new style, in which he portrayed recognizable subjects, with flattened, geometric shapes. He wanted to reveal the beauty of rural and urban structures – grime, noise, harshness and all – without nostalgia or sentimentality.
- A stamp on the back of the canvas suggests that Spencer bought it while he was in Paris and brought it back to the United States, where he painted *Farm Buildings*.

## About the Artist

1893: Born May 16 in Pawtucket, Rhode Island

1913–15: Studied at the Rhode Island School of Design

1915–17: Studied at the Ferrer School in New York, New York

1921: Traveled abroad, visiting Paris, the northern coast of France, and England

1922–26: Painted the Ackland's *Farm Buildings*

1923–30: Painted at the artists' colony in Provincetown, Massachusetts

1937: Won a National Mural Competition for the Post Office in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania

1952: Died May 15 in Dingmans Ferry, Pennsylvania



## 18

attributed to the Teague Family  
American, North Carolina, Randolph and Moore  
Counties, 20th century

**Grave Marker for James R. Teague, 1938**

salt-glazed stoneware

Gift of Charles G. Zug, III, 84.42.1

---

### About the Art

- To make salt glazes, potters throw salt into a kiln that has reached a very high temperature. The heat changes the solid salt into a gas that surrounds the stoneware pots. The sodium from the salt melts the silica (glass) in the clay body to make a pebbly surface and sometimes drips along the sides of a vessel. The surface may be shades of gray, green, or brown.
- The inscription on the top of this grave marker lists the name of the person buried (James R. Teague), his birth and death dates, and his exact age when he died: 54 years, 5 months, and 24 days. It was originally placed in the cemetery of the Union Grove Church in Randolph County, North Carolina.
- Durable, inexpensive stoneware grave markers were once common in certain regions of the Southeast. Over time, however, they were bound to suffer from accidental damage or vandalism, and few survive today. This one was stolen from its original site and eventually turned up with an art dealer. When the donor (a specialist in North Carolina pottery) found it, he immediately offered it to the Union Grove Church, but the church declined to take it back.



## 19

John Taylor Arms

American, 1887-1953

**Palazzo dell' Angelo, Venice, 1931**

etching

The Robert Myers Collection, 2015.10.7

### About the Art

- A moored gondola sits empty on a canal before a Venetian residence, its Renaissance façade weathered by time. Sculpted lions frame the entryway, while figural sculptures are visible in the foyer just beyond. The artist depicted the shape and surface of every form in intricate detail, placing particular emphasis on the patterns of light and shadow on old stone and calm water.
- This etching is one of twenty-six that were produced as part of Arms' *Italian Series*. Following in the footsteps of nineteenth-century etchers like James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), Arms found the architecture and atmosphere of Venice inspiring.
- In a 1937 exhibition catalogue essay Arms wrote: "Convinced that I could not possibly create anything more beautiful than what I saw, I have tried to recreate it in my prints, that those who saw them might see it too—with me."
- Arms used drawings he made from life as the basis for his prints. They could take between ten days to two weeks to complete, after which he began working on the copper plate for the etching.

### About the Artist

1887: Born in Washington, DC

1907: Studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1912: Became an office draftsman for the firm Carrere and Hastings in New York

1916: Joined the Navy as a navigation officer before the US joined WWI

1931: Created the Ackland's etching

1934: Published a *Handbook of Print Making and Print Makers* in 1934

1940: Appeared on an NBC television program to demonstrate printmaking

1953: Died in New York, NY of cancer at the age of sixty-six



Niles Spencer  
American, 1893-1952  
**White Factory**, 1928  
lithograph  
Burton Emmett Collection, 58.1.296

### About the Art

- Viewed from a roofline in the foreground, overlapping solid and flat geometric shapes of varying shades of white, black, and gray combine to form a stark urban landscape. Apart from the overcast sky, two bare trees at the left represent the only organic elements in the composition.
- Spencer was only interested in the printmaking technique of lithography for a brief period. This print relates directly to a painting of the same subject completed the same year, now in the Chrysler Museum of Art in Virginia.
- The artist's interest in austere, hard-edged flat shapes and patterns, as well as modern architecture and industrialization, places his work firmly within the Precisionism movement, a style which emerged among American artists after World War I.

### About the Artist

1893: Born May 16 in Pawtucket, Rhode Island

1915: Graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design

1915: Studied at the Ferrer School in New York, NY until 1917

1928: Created the Ackland's lithograph

1930: Earned an honorable mention at the Carnegie International

1937: Won a National Mural Competition for the Post Office in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania

1942: Won a Purchase Prize in the *Artists for Victory* show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

1952: Died May 15 in Dingman's Ferry, Pennsylvania



Charles White  
American, 1918–1979  
**Bearded Man**, c. 1949  
linoleum cut  
Gift of the Charles White Estate, 90.20

### About the Art

- Employing the entire sheet of paper, the artist shaped this figure's head and facial features using bold, stylized black lines. His strong physical presence, however, contrasts with the slight vulnerability of his inner state, expressed through the figure's direct gaze toward the viewer.
- White's artwork focused on the life, history, and culture of African Americans and how art can shape conversations about equality, labor, and politics. His work as an artist and as a teacher had an extraordinary impact on future artists, including Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955) and David Hammons (b. 1943).
- The artist expressed the universality of his work in a 1978 interview, stating: "I deal with love, hope, courage, freedom, dignity—the full gamut of the human spirit." But he also noted that "The one thing that ties my work together, I think, is my basic concern with black subject matter. My thematic focus comes out of the black experience."

### About the Artist

1918: Born April 2 in Chicago, Illinois

1939: Employed by the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration

1943: Taught at the George Washington Carver School in New York until 1945

1945: Was artist-in-residence at Howard University in Washington, DC

1947: Traveled to Mexico

c. 1949: Created the Ackland's print

1956: Moved to Los Angeles, California

1965: Taught at the Otis Art Institute (now the Otis College of Art and Design) in Los Angeles

1979: Died October 3 in Los Angeles



Jan Toorop  
Dutch, 1858–1928  
**The Sower**, 1895  
Lithograph  
Ackland Fund, 2005.10.1

---

### About the Art

- Two women, one shown frontally and the other in profile, look left at something beyond the picture plane. Beneath three stars in the upper left, a haloed figure sows seeds as birds fly toward him. Two swans swim in opposite directions at the right, their reflections clearly visible on the water. Landscape elements are stacked, rather than recede into space, and the monochrome umber tone of the print gives the scene an otherworldly atmosphere.
- While the artist made no attempt to convey the meaning of this print, it is infused with a mood of mingled hope and anxiety, which is appropriate for the planting of any seed, literal or symbolic.
- Toorop was born in Java in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), and spent his early childhood there. The flattened space and elongated figures of images like this one may derive from the aesthetics of Javanese shadow puppets.
- As a Symbolist artist, Toorop sought to evoke subjects, rather than describe them, and to suggest and conjure ideas using symbols and visual reverie.

### About the Artist

1858: Born December 20 in Purworedjo, Java, Indonesia

1872: Moved to the Netherlands

1880: Studied at the Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam for two years

1884: Was a founding member of Les XX

1885: Began using a pointillist technique in his work; joined artist group Les Vingt

1895: Created the Ackland's print

1906: Joined a Catholic society of artists known as De Violier (The Gillyflower)

1928: Died March 3 in The Hague, Netherlands



 25

William E. Artis, American,  
American, 1914-1977

**Head of a Boy**, c. 1935

low-fired clay

Charles and Isabel Eaton Trust

2019.32

---

## About the Art

- Mostly known for more stylized, sleeker portrait heads produced later in his career, the artist here has given the surface of the sensitively rendered head an expressive, obviously hand-worked treatment. The edge of a modeling tool has been used to incise the eyebrows and the hairline.
- The noted art historian and critic David Driskell wrote that William Artis “has not attempted to solve problems with his art but has seen beyond those obstacles often binding the human spirit. He has encountered through his art the meaning of a universal world” (1971).
- The base of this sculpture was probably made by the artist himself.

## About the Artist

1914: Born Washington, North Carolina

1914: Born February 2 in Washington, North Carolina

1927: Moved to New York, New York

1930s: Studied privately with Augusta Savage and at the Art Students League with Robert Laurent, both major sculptors in the Harlem Renaissance

c. 1935: Made the Ackland's *Head of a Boy*

1947: Awarded a Rosenwald fellowship to study with Ivan Mestrovic at Syracuse University in New York

1954-1965: Taught at Nebraska state Teachers College

1966-1975: Taught at Mankato State College, Minnesota

1971: Retrospective exhibition at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee

1977: Died April 3 in Northport, New York