

# ABOUT THE ART

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Art from  
Europe and  
America,  
1850-1950

Gallery 17

ACKLAND

## **QUESTIONS?**

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## **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.  
Sun 1 - 5 p.m.  
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.  
Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve,  
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.

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## 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, France

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, France



Anna de l'Épinais  
French, 19th century  
**Atala and Chactas**, 1828  
oil on canvas  
Ackland Fund, 67.10.1

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## 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 Louisiana wilderness, the novel tells the story of a young, mixed-race Christian woman who takes a vow of celibacy and then falls in love with Chactas, a young Natchez man who is taken prisoner by her father's tribe.
- Very little is known about the painter Anna de l'Épinais, 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 it is 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.

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## About the Art

- With the brilliant red tones of the shirt, Léon Bonnat models the man's left shoulder so it appears to project 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's head is leaning slightly 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, perhaps in one of the Orientalist scenes he produced. 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, France

1846-53: Lived in Madrid, Spain

1854: Moved to Paris, France

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, France



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

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## 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 its manufacturer and 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, France

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, Switzerland



Honesdale Decorating Company (American, 1901-1932)  
**Vase**, c. 1901-1910  
Cameo glass, acid cut  
Gift of Dorothy and S. K. Heninger, Jr. and the William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund, 93.14.4

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### About the Art

- Graceful, interlaced arabesque lines move upward from the base of this glass vase to form flame-like botanical shapes in tones of amber and green, culminating at the scalloped gold rim at the top. Gilded outlines and carefully placed dots provide structure to the design, which is set against a frosted ground.
- In 1901, the well-known glass manufacturing company C. Dorflinger & Sons, established the Honesdale Decorating Company in the Pennsylvania town of that name. This art glass factory provided etched, engraved, and gilded designs in various patterns for Dorflinger, which included vases and tableware, among other products.
- The organic foliate forms, sinuous lines, and “whiplash” curves of this design are characteristic of Art Nouveau, a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century decorative style that originated in Europe in the late 1880s and reached the peak of its popularity around 1900.
- The founder of C. Dorflinger & Sons, Christian Dorflinger, was born in Alsace, France, in 1828 and was apprenticed to a glassmaker in eastern France before immigrating to the United States in 1846. He established several glasshouses in New York and Pennsylvania, which employed hundreds of people. Among his famous clients were US presidents Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885), Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901), and Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924).



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

- Seated in a shallow and narrow space that cuts off her hands, Jones wears a pale and elegant renaissance-style dress with puff-and-slash sleeves set against a flourishing laurel branch. Just as the space she occupies seems constrained, so too is her luxuriant red hair tightly bound – in a style reminiscent of classical antiquity – in three headbands. Yet the turn of her head, her sparkling eyes and parted lips suggest the inner movement of her mind.
- Mary Emma Jones was the artist's sister-in-law. She was also the model for many paintings by Emma Sandys' older brother, the artist Frederick Sandys. Very little is known about Emma Sandys in comparison to her more famous brother.
- 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, England

1863: Made her earliest known, dated painting

1867–74: Exhibited paintings in London, England, and Norwich

1874: Painted *Mary Emma Jones*

1877: Died in November in Norwich



Thomas Doughty  
American, 1793 – 1856  
**Fishing by a River**, c. 1840s  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hirschl,  
conservation treatment for this painting,  
completed in 2021, was made possible  
by the generous support of Jane Bultman  
Dalldorf and an anonymous donor, 68.47.1

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## About the Art

- Framed by large trees with gnarled branches, a fisherman stands along a river's edge, his line cast in the water and his companion seated at the left. In the middle distance, others tend to the livestock surrounding the large, sunlit farmhouse, which is set before distant, low mountains.
- This painting underwent conservation treatment in the Spring of 2021. The painting's previously yellowed varnish obscured Doughty's underdrawing, visible as squiggly pen lines in the trees. It also flattened the spatial depth of the painting and muted the artist's luminous atmospheric effects.
- Rather than a faithful portrait of a specific place, Doughty's composition presents a romantic, pastoral interpretation of the landscape. The artist's work represents an important precursor to the paintings of Hudson River School artists like Thomas Cole (1801-1848), which sought to convey the natural grandeur of America in a more dramatic fashion.

## About the Artist

1793: Born July 19 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1820: Listed as "Doughty, Thomas, landscape painter" in the city directory of Philadelphia

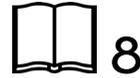
1824: Elected a member of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

1837: Traveled abroad to England

c. 1840s: Created the Ackland's painting

1845: Returned to Europe and visited England, Wales, and France

1856: Died July 22 in New York City



John Francis Murphy  
American, 1853 – 1921  
**Landscape**, 1881  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Katherine P. Arrington,  
by her niece Sylbert  
Pendleton, 70.13.4

## 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, Illinois

1873: Was made an Associate at the Chicago Academy of Design

1875: Moved to New York, New York

1881: Painted the Ackland's *Landscape*

1882: First major exhibition of his work at Doll and Richards, a gallery in Boston, Massachusetts

1885: Won the Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design in New York 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



Albert Bierstadt  
American, 1830 – 1902  
**Wind River, Nebraska Territory,**  
1861  
oil on board  
The Hugh A. McAllister, Jr., M.D.  
Collection, 2019.15.2

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## About the Art

- A solitary bird perches on a branch before a pristine lake as deer graze beneath a canopy of trees at the left. Majestic snow-capped mountains, kissed by the sun, provide the backdrop for this idyllic view of an American frontier wilderness.
- Bierstadt's romantic and meticulously detailed depictions of unfamiliar terrain captured the imagination of nineteenth-century Americans while simultaneously disregarding the terrible and lasting effects westward expansion had on indigenous cultures and the natural environment.
- The artist first encountered the Wind River range of the central Rocky Mountains while on a government-sponsored survey expedition through the Nebraska Territory in 1859, which once encompassed parts of Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, Colorado, and Montana. While traveling, Bierstadt created numerous field sketches that he later transformed into finished paintings in his New York studio.

## About the Artist

1830: Born January 7 in Solingen, Germany

1832: Arrived in New Bedford, Massachusetts with his family

1853: Studied painting in Düsseldorf, Germany

1859: Traveled to the American West with Frederick W. Lander's Honey Road Survey Party

1861: Created the Ackland's painting

1902: Died February 18 in New York, New York



Mark Fisher  
American, 1841 – 1923  
**Lane in Normandy**, 1879  
oil on canvas  
Bequest of Charles and  
Isabel Eaton, 2009.31.40

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## About the Art

- Four cows of different colors greet the viewer as they approach on a rural pathway that leads to farmhouses located in the middle distance. Much of the painting is dedicated to the bright, cloud-filled sky which filters dappled sunlight onto the trees and grass.
- In 1910, British art critic and journalist C. Lewis Hind described how Fisher created his paintings. “He just walks out, sees something, feels an irresistible desire to paint it, and proceeds to paint it in the open air.” Since the Ackland’s painting was executed on paper and later attached to a canvas support, Fisher may have created the Museum’s painting in the manner Hind described.
- Fisher was among the first artists active in England to work in an impressionist style. Although he achieved substantial professional success, Fisher’s historical significance has since been overshadowed by his French Impressionist contemporaries.

## About the Artist

1841: Born in Boston, Massachusetts

1861: Traveled to Paris to study painting with academic artist Charles Gleyre

1872: Settled in London, followed by Sussex, and began exhibiting work at the Royal Academy

1879: Created the Ackland’s painting

1919: Elected a full member of the Royal Academy in London

1889: Won a bronze medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle

1923: Died in Hatfield Heath, England



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

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## 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, France

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, France

c. 1858: Painted the Ackland's landscape

1870: Went to London, England, during the Franco-Prussian War

1878: Died February 19 in Paris