

ABOUT THE ART

Art from
Europe and
America,
1850-1950

Gallery 14

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.
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

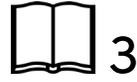
1870: Began taking an interest in dance and opera

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 pulpwood 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*, the style of 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. The prominent placement of the kelp in the painting almost makes it seem like the subject.

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

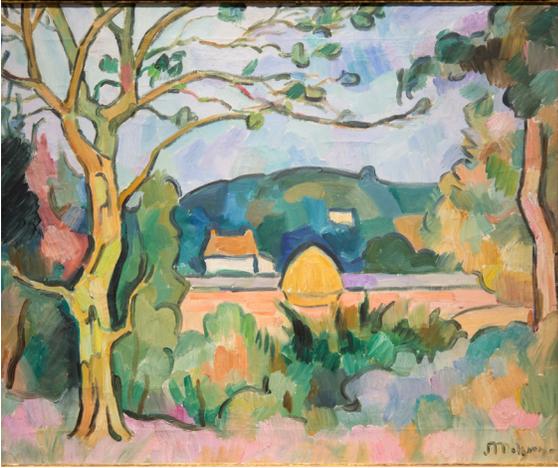
1889: Exhibited paintings at the World's Fair in Paris, France

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



Max Weber

American, 1881 – 1961

My Studio in Paris, 1907

oil on canvas, 23 3/4 x 28 3/4 in.

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, L2022.21.1.

Photography by Dwight Primiano.

About the Art

- The artist has painted a scene that is more like a domestic interior than a working studio.
- The artist and his easel can be discerned in the mirror towards the center of the composition.
- The painting's formal structure is an architectonic network of nested and contrasting rectangles, enlivened by the diagonally placed stool and table, by the casualness of the discarded coat and shoes, and by the vigorous brushwork in vivid colors.
- This painting reflects the influence of the art of the French post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne, which Weber encountered in 1906, at the beginning of his three-year stay in Paris, and described as "the turning point in my life."

About the Artist

1881: Born Bialystok, Russia (now Poland)

1891: Emigrated to the United States and settled with his parents in Brooklyn, New York

1897: Studied at Pratt Institute in New York, under Arthur Wesley Dow

1905: Traveled to Paris and studied at the Académie Julian. Met Henri Rousseau, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and other artists

1909: Returned to the United States

1913: Solo exhibition at the Newark Museum in New Jersey

1914: Published *Cubist Poems*, a book of verse

1919: Began to depict spiritual and religious themes in an expressionist style

1926: Published the work *Primitives*, with poems and eleven woodcuts

1930: Solo exhibition at Museum of Modern Art, New York

1961: Died in Great Neck, New York



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 of 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 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 more realistic.
- *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 Black people 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 loved ones, 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 scene, then, is depicted from the woman’s vantage point (whether that woman is the painter or an imagined viewer) as she 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 to access the playlist.



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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

- Amédée Ozenfant stripped away details, transforming Sisteron into the essence of a town in the south of France rather than portraying the specific place. 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.
- Between 1918 and 1928, the artist made a number of paintings of Sisteron, town with pre-Roman origins, 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

Harper Pennington
American, 1854 - 1920
Caricature of Whistler, 1880
pen and ink on paper
Gift of W. P. Jacocks, 58.2.939

About the Art

- This caricature of James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) shows the slim figure of the artist in profile holding an etching plate and his walking stick, his characteristic monocle just visible over his right eye.
- Harper Pennington produced the drawing while both artists were working in Venice. As an accomplished painter and printmaker, Whistler's company and artistic advice were sought out by younger American artists visiting the city in the late nineteenth century. Pennington continued his association with Whistler later, when both of them were in London.
- Pennington had already been a great admirer of Whistler's art prior to their meeting. In 1876, he saw Whistler's famous painting *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* in the Academy Charity Exhibition held in Baltimore. Of the experience, he later wrote, "The shock of wonder and of joy with which JW's pictures burst upon me was — indescribable."

About the Artist

1854: Born October 9 in Baltimore, Maryland

1870s: Studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, under Jean-Léon Gérôme

1880: Visited Munich and joined a group of American painters led by Frank Duveneck

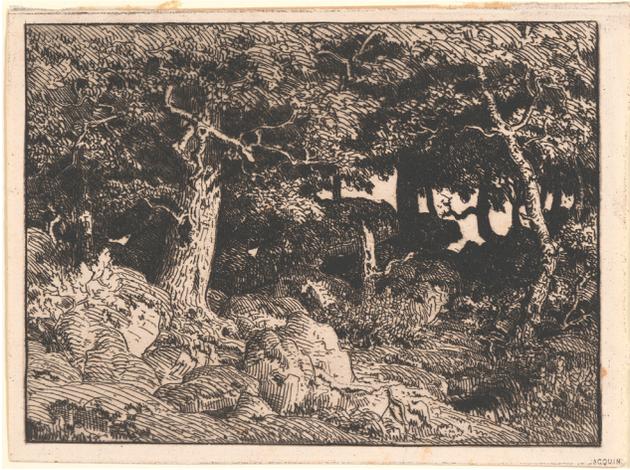
1880: Traveled to Florence and Venice, Italy

1880: Created the Ackland's drawing

1884: Painted a full-length portrait of Oscar Wilde while on an extended stay in London

1908: Traveled to Paris

1920: Died March 15 in Baltimore, Maryland



Theodore Rousseau
French, 1812 - 1867
Oak Trees Growing Among Rocks,
1861
etching
Ackland Fund, 84.20.1

About the Art

- Sunlight entering from the right of the composition illuminates the foreground trees and rocks while creating patterns of shadows within the dense foliage and underbrush beyond. The twisting and broken limbs of the trees, accentuated by the artist's animated line work, and the skeletal silhouettes of trunks and limbs in the distance, create a restless image of an untamed forest.
- Rousseau belonged to a group of painters active in the Forest of Fontainebleau and the nearby Barbizon village, located some forty miles southeast of Paris. Called the Barbizon school, they created their compositions directly from nature, often painting *en plein air*, or out of doors. Art historians consider their work a precursor of Impressionism.
- Rousseau "heard the voices of the trees" and told his biographer Alfred Sensier "The surprises of their movements, their variety of forms, and their singular attraction toward the light suddenly revealed to me the language of the forest."
- Artists were attracted to the Forest of Fontainebleau for its distinctive terrain, old-growth trees, verdant foliage, and striking rock formations. Once a royal hunting ground, the site was used by the kings of France from the medieval period to the nineteenth century and was a source of national pride. In 1837, Rousseau and other artists founded the Society of Friends of the Forest of Fontainebleau to protect portions of the forest from industrial exploitation.

About the Artist

1812: Born April 15 in Paris, France

1831: Exhibited at the Paris Salon for the first time

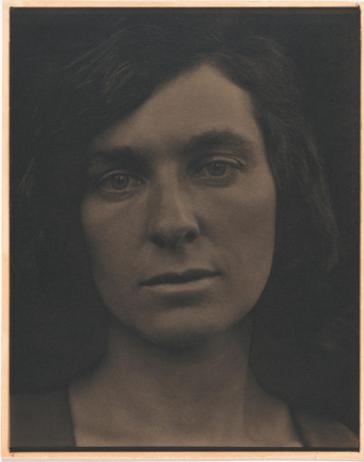
1833: Visited the Forest of Fontainebleau, France

1847: Stayed for extended periods in Barbizon, France to paint

1849: Won a first-class medal at the Paris Salon

1861: Created the Ackland's etching

1867: Died December 22 in Barbizon, France



Paul Strand
American, 1890 - 1976
Rebecca, New York, 1920
platinum print
Ackland Fund, 79.15.1

About the Art

- With head slightly tilted, a woman looks directly at the viewer, her expression confident, yet vulnerable. With no setting or spatial depth, the tightly framed frontal depiction of the figure's head and neck creates a sense of intimacy, immediacy, and intensity.
- Strand created over one hundred negatives of Rebecca Salsbury Strand James (1891-1968), his first wife, between 1920 and 1932. Never published, the series represents a dialogue between the photographer and sitter, illuminating the psychological complexity of her character over an extended period.
- In a 1920 letter to Strand, Rebecca James asked "Someday, will you give me one of each of the prints you made of me . . . ? I truly feel that they will be a source of health, strength, and beauty other times." In a subsequent letter to the artist of the same year, she said, "Perhaps I will learn some new secrets from them."
- Paul Strand is considered a forerunner of modern American photography, helping establish the medium as an art form in the twentieth century.

About the Artist

1890: Born October 16 in New York City

1902: Received his first camera from his father at age 12

1916: Had his first one-person show at Alfred Stieglitz's 291 Gallery in New York City

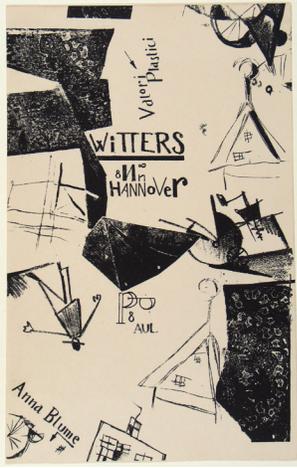
1920: Created the Ackland's photograph

1922: Married Rebecca Salsbury

1936: Helped establish the Photo League, a group of photographers interested in urban life and social issues

1945: Had a one-person show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York

1976: Died March 31 near Paris



22

Kurt Schwitters

German, 1887 - 1948

Untitled, no. 8 in Die Kathedrale: 8 lithos von Kurt Schwitters, 1920

lithograph

Ackland Fund, 67.5.7

About the Art

- Interspersed with words in various lettering, both geometric and representational forms are depicted in this lithograph's composition. Recognizable elements include wheels, roofs, a man turned upside down, and the words *Valori Plastici* (meaning "plastic values" in Italian); "Witters," a portion of the artist's last name; "Hannover," the German city; and "Anna Blume," a reference to Schwitters' popular poem written in 1919.
- Best known for his collages and relief sculptures, Schwitters was a proponent of the Dada movement in art, begun in 1916 by French and German artists and poets in reaction to World War I. The movement rejected reason and logic and embraced nonsense, political anarchy, irrationality, and the destruction of traditional aesthetic values.
- This lithograph belongs to one of Schwitters' Dadaist publications called *Die Kathedrale* (The Cathedral), published in 1920, which contained eight lithographs. The imagery combines collage and stamps, found elements, and drawings.

About the Artist

1887: Born June 20 in Hanover, Germany

1909-1914: Studied at the Kunstakademie in Dresden

1919: Published the popular poem *An Anna Blume* in *Der Sturm*

1920: Created the Ackland's print

1924: Established an advertising and design agency called Merz-Werbezentrale

1937: Moved to Norway

1940: Interned in a World War II camp on the Isle of Man, England

1941: Released from the internment camp and moved to London

1948: Died January 8 in Kendal, England



 25

William E. Artis,
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 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