

ABOUT THE ART

Art from
Europe and
America,
1850-1950

Gallery 17

ACKLAND

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at 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.

Sun 1 – 5 p.m.

Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.

Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day, & New Year's Day.

About About the Art

The Ackland's *About the Art* guides offer information about every work of art from the Museum's collection that is on view in galleries 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. All of these galleries are marked on the Gallery Map available at the desk in the Lobby. In the bottom right corner of the label beside each object, there is an open book symbol with a number. You can find the same symbol and number on the top of the corresponding page in *About the Art*.

Within each entry, you can find the following information:

- At the top of the page, you'll see a thumbnail image, the title of the object, who made it and with what materials, and where and when it was made
- Next, you'll see bullet points with information or observations about the object (more or fewer, depending on how much we know about the object so far). There is no standard formula for what kinds of information appears, but you will often find comments on historical context, style, and materials.
- In keeping with the Ackland's tagline, "Look Close, Think Far," the first bullet point will often highlight something visible in the work of art itself.
- You will find names, phrases, and concepts that could be good internet search terms for those who want to learn more
- When specialized terms are used, you'll see a definition, helpful contextual information, or language suitable for an internet search.
- Whenever we know the artist's name, there will be some details about the artist's life, often under the heading "About the Artist," but sometimes as one of the bullet points.

For those visitors who want to engage further with an object, we also suggest other resources to investigate on our website: ackland.org/education/learning-resources.

The authors of *About the Art* include Ackland curators and educators who use a variety of sources. They consult museum records, art historical research, comments from outside specialists, and more.

About Gallery 17: Art from Europe and America, 1850-1950

Together with Gallery 14, this gallery displays a selection of art from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In keeping with the scale of this gallery, these works, by American, British, and French artists, are small paintings and objects. While most are finished works, designed to be small, others are preparatory studies for other, larger paintings. Some of the figural works and landscapes suggest romanticized European notions of their colonial engagement with other continents – North America, Asia, and Africa – while others focus on individual characteristics of people and ordinary places.



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, 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'Epinais
French, 19th century
Atala and Chactas, 1828
oil on canvas
Ackland Fund, 67.10.1

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'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 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.

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

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

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, Mary Emma 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 three headbands, in a style reminiscent of classical antiquity. Yet the turn of her head, her sparkling eyes and parted lips suggest the inner movement of her mind.
- 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 was 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

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



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

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



Winslow Homer
American, 1836 – 1910
Old Woman Gathering Brush, 1865
oil on canvas
The Peck Collection, 2022.17.1

About the Art

- A woman dressed in black wearing a white kerchief on her head stands in a densely wooded area and carries a large, broken tree bough. She appears to look toward the forest floor to gather additional branches for fuel, but few substantial pieces remain. The artist's use of a dark palette, in which brown and black predominate, contributes to the overall somber mood of the painting.
- During the Civil War, Winslow Homer traveled south with the Union Armies to serve as an artist and correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* magazine. From 1861 to 1865, he documented the war intermittently, creating illustrations of soldiers at rest and in recovery as well as civilians at work.
- Homer does not explicitly depict any military references in this painting, painted in the Civil War's final year, but implicitly evokes the hardships experienced by ordinary people as a result of the conflict.
- The gathering of wood by the rural poor and elderly was a popular subject among French Realist painters of the nineteenth century like Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) and Edouard Frère (1819–1886). In this work, Homer engaged directly with this European theme, but within the context of American life during a period of great struggle and discord.

About the Artist

1836: Born February 24 in Boston, Massachusetts

1859: Moved to New York and worked as an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly* magazine

1861: Served as an artist-correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* during the Civil War

1865: Created the Ackland's painting

1866: Traveled to Europe and remained in France for ten months

1877: Became a member of the American Society of Painters in Watercolors

1881: Travelled to England and stayed for twenty months in Cullercoats, a fishing village

1883: Settled in Prout's Neck, Maine along the Atlantic coast

1884: Began making etchings

1910: Died September 29 in Prout's Neck, Maine



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, 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