

Winter Salon: Landscapes
19th & 20th Century American & European Drawings and Watercolors

Opening January 15 and continuing through March 13, 2005, The Drawing Room is pleased to present an exhibition of American and European landscape drawings and watercolors made in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This exhibition offers viewers insight into the concerns and techniques of period, as well as the historical context for contemporary artists who continue to draw inspiration from the landscape and the sea. Most of the works are sketchbook size and were made *en plein air*. The European works take us from Mediterranean beaches, to Venetian canals, to Brittany, to French valleys and Algeria, offering both striking contrasts and surprising parallels to the regional American drawings all of which were created on Long Island between 1879 and 1916.

The American works tell a story about the attraction Eastern Long Island held for American artists beginning at the end of the 19th century when the newly constructed Long Island Railroad increased their access to the region. In 1878, The Tile Club - a group of notable New York painters, sculptors, and architects who did much to popularize plein air painting and the Impressionist style - journeyed to East Hampton. The influence of the Club is pronounced in the selection of ten Long Island subjects presented here in watercolor, pastel, and pencil.

One of the highlights of the American drawings is a colored pencil and graphite sketch of a pastoral view of East Hampton by Samuel Colman (1832-1920), one of the first artists to come to Long Island after the Tile Club's initial visit. Colman's drawing, *The Village Street of East Hampton, LI*, 1879, evokes the artist's clear appreciation for the pre-industrial past and nostalgia for what even then seemed to be a vanishing rural scene.

Another prominent artist of his time who spent summers in East Hampton from 1881-1890 was Walter Clark (1848-1917). A student of George Inness and close friend of fellow American Impressionist John H. Twachtman, Clark's beautifully executed pastel of a single boat is atmospheric and reveals the influence of European Impressionists.

Two spare pencil studies by Reynolds Beal (1867-1951) depict Sag Harbor and Greenport harbor scenes at the heyday of these nautical centers. A great yachtsman, many of Beal's paintings and sketches were executed as the artist sailed along the Long Island coastline. Along with his brother, Gifford Beal, Reynolds studied under William Merritt Chase at The Shinnecock Summer School. The loose style and execution of a 1908 watercolor of fields in Huntington, Long Island, by Oscar Bluemner (1867-1938) compares with the European watercolor landscape sketches and serves as a reminder of the American artists' roots in European traditions.

The European works in the show offer a rare overview of the extraordinary range of materials and techniques used by (mostly) French artists working during the dynamic period spanning Impressionism, Fauvism, Japonism and Cubism. Still looking to nature in the late 1800s, these

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intimate works on paper reveal, in many styles, an exploration of color, and an expressionistic use of each medium - pastel, charcoal, watercolor or ink wash - soon to become the subject and agent for abstraction.

Along with early 19th century anonymous works (artists rarely signed studies or sketches), the European artists presented include Alphonse Mandevare (1759-1829), Lucien Ott (1870-1927), Maurice Asselin (1882-1947), Felix Louis Jean Ollivier (1863-1945?), Henri Louis Foreau (1866-1938), Carolus Lemeunier (1881–1918), Leon Carré (1878-1942) and Edmund Calzaroni (1885-1964). Well known painters and teachers at the Academies in France, most of these artists showed at the Paris Salon des Artistes Français around 1900, the Salon des Artistes Indépendants later, and were members of the distinguished Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the Salon d'Automne. Their inclusion in these juried salons reflects their position as significant figures in the art of the period.

The earliest of the European works include a series of five breathtaking drawings by a French miniaturist who used ink and wash on burnished, gesso cards to depict gothic landscapes that resemble drawings on ivory. In the same room, a nine part series of dramatic tree studies in black chalk by noted teacher Alphonse Mandevare creates a dynamic dialogue on scale. One of the great drawing instructors in Paris, Mandevare published a highly influential book in 1804: *Principes Raisonnés du Paysage à l'usage des écoles des Départements de L'Empire Français*. Created during the period when the picturesque dominated landscape design, Mandevare's book of exercises deconstructed the important subjects of landscape painting into life drawing techniques of observation of subjects such as trees, bridges and fences. The Mandevare tree studies in this exhibition are dramatic examples of his drawing method: intense gesture drawings of the life force, they appear modern to the contemporary viewer.

The exhibition is rich in pastels and watercolors and first among the pastel artists is the Post-Impressionist painter Lucien Ott who was drawn to Brittany in 1889. There the canals and riverbanks inspired these pastel drawings in which the artist's use of vigorous line is reminiscent of Van Gogh and the other artists of the Pont Aven School. Maurice Asselin, on the other hand, was a painter from Orleans whose wash of a beach scene practically disappears as we discern countless, tiny beachcombers spread across his spare watercolor.

The collection of drawings and paintings on paper from Europe reveal the strength and variety of the landscape tradition in the 19th century when artists focused on nature as she appears, without providing the stage for classical or historical subjects. Particularly in France, where many of these works were made, the love of the tree and the moodiness of the open countryside was clearly a favorite subject. Planned for the winter months when our own landscape is bare, this exhibition invites viewers to see nature through work the 19th century American and European artist made for himself.

Winter Gallery hours: Friday-Sunday, 11 to 5, and by appointment.

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