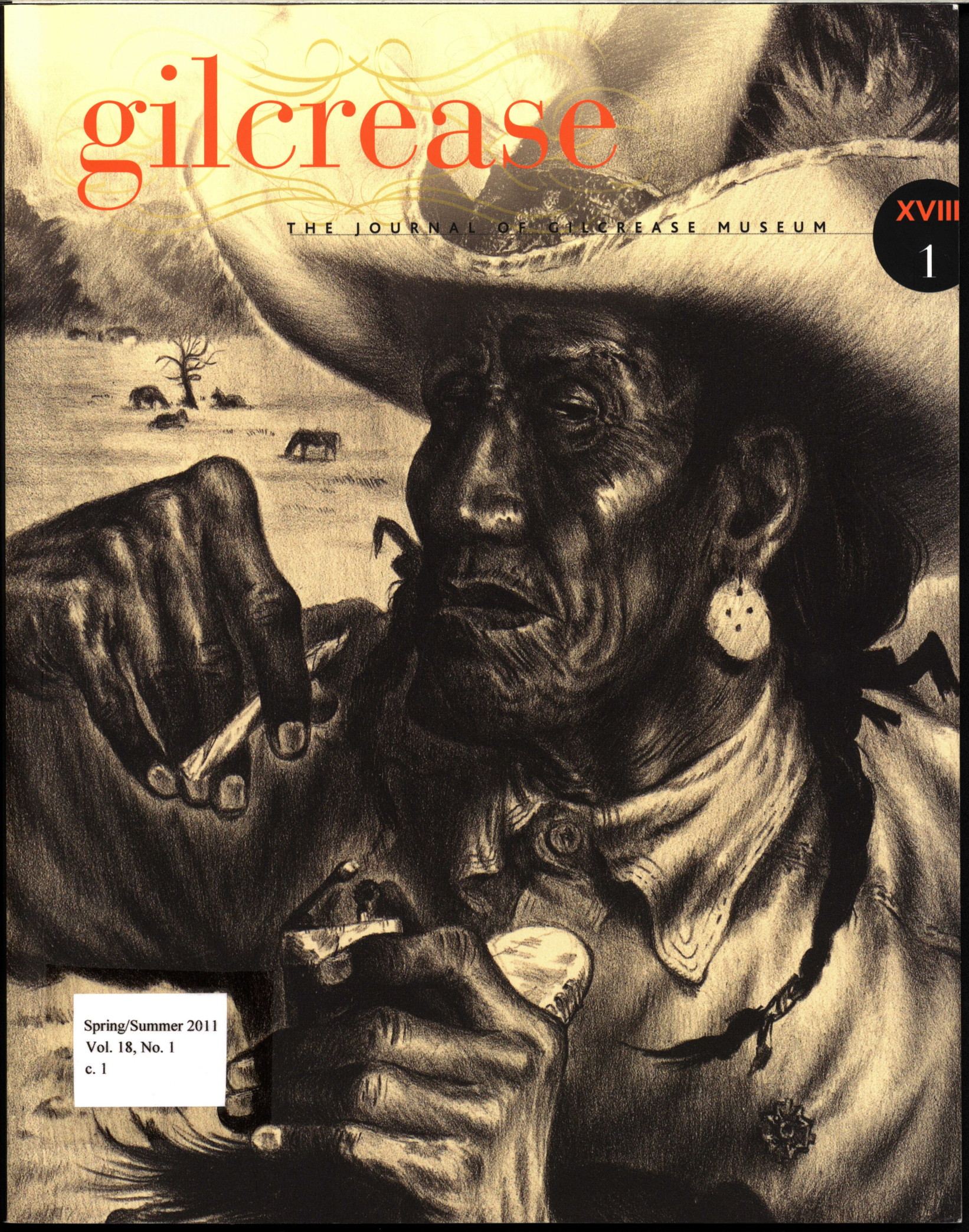
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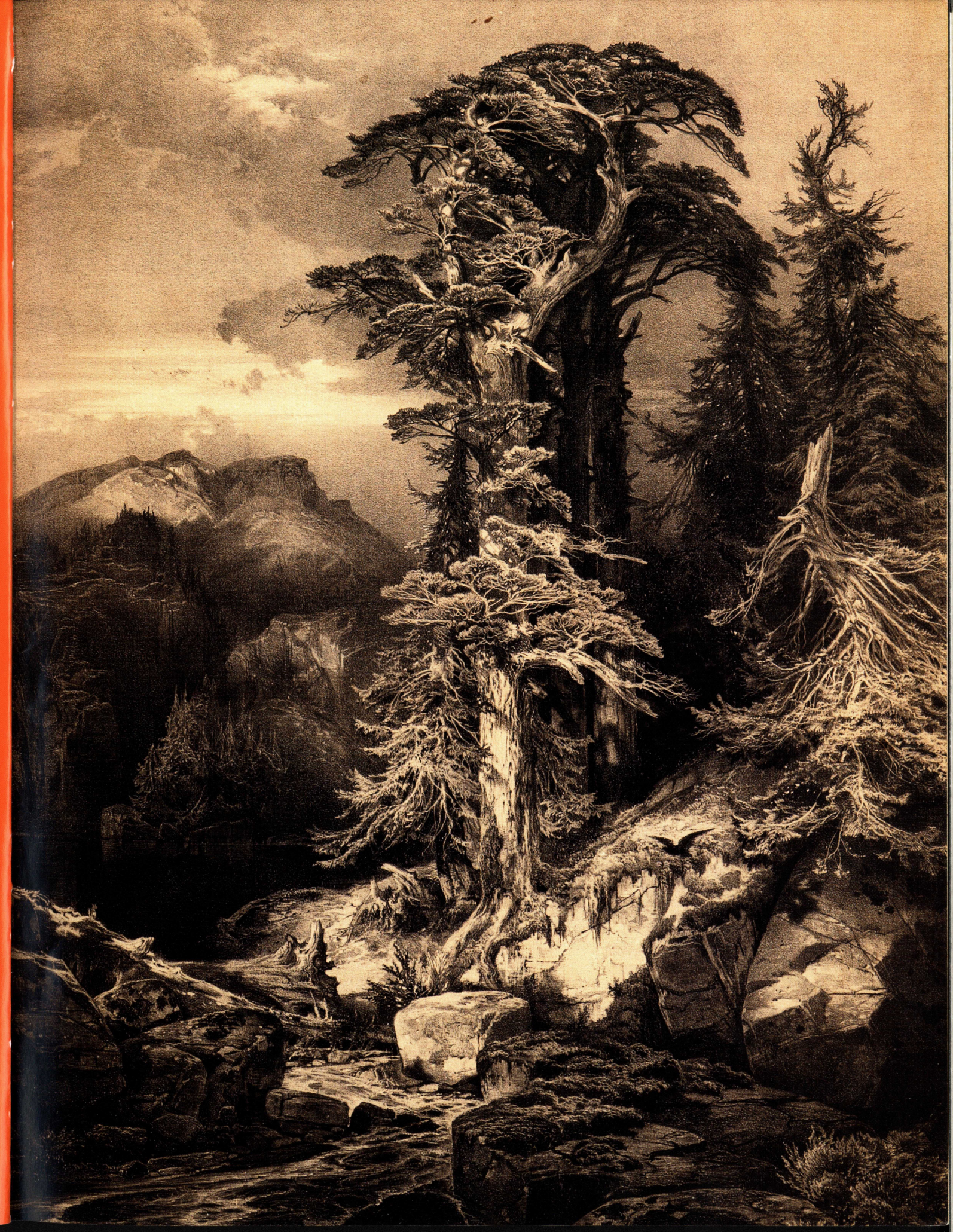
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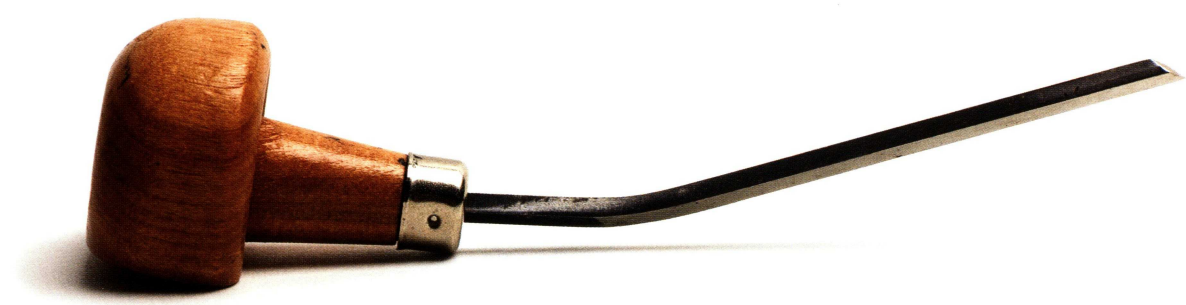
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Gillie Library

GAYLORD F



THE POPULAR PRINT



AMANDA LETT

"ELEGANT AND SALABLE PICTURES"[1]

IN 1868, an enterprising salesman promoting his line of chromolithographs claimed that his images not only decorated the home but provided art education. "How shall a democracy be educated in art?" he asked. Why, "By art." He continued, explaining that due to the small number of art galleries, academies, and painters, public access to art was limited. Accordingly, "the only substitute for them [galleries and academies], the only efficient educator of the people, is Chromo[lithographs]."[2]

From crude woodcuts and commercial posters to carefully crafted lithographs made by trained artists, prints in America have served many functions, informing and inspiring viewers since the country's inception. As a commercial endeavor, they were historically cheap, disposable images destined for quick impact and a short life span. Colonial prints in America, influenced by their British counterparts, often highlighted political issues—becoming more divisive as the colonies moved away from England. For much of the nineteenth century, commercial prints of artistic and morally uplifting subjects were an affordable middle-class staple, adorning many well-appointed homes. Ladies' magazines and some art critics promoted inexpensive reproductions as the way to develop national taste, while others argued that they devalued the art they were intended to celebrate.[3] Printmaking as a large industry waned after photography became more commonplace in the late 1800s, yet its flexibility and ease of reproduction made the medium appealing to many academically trained artists.

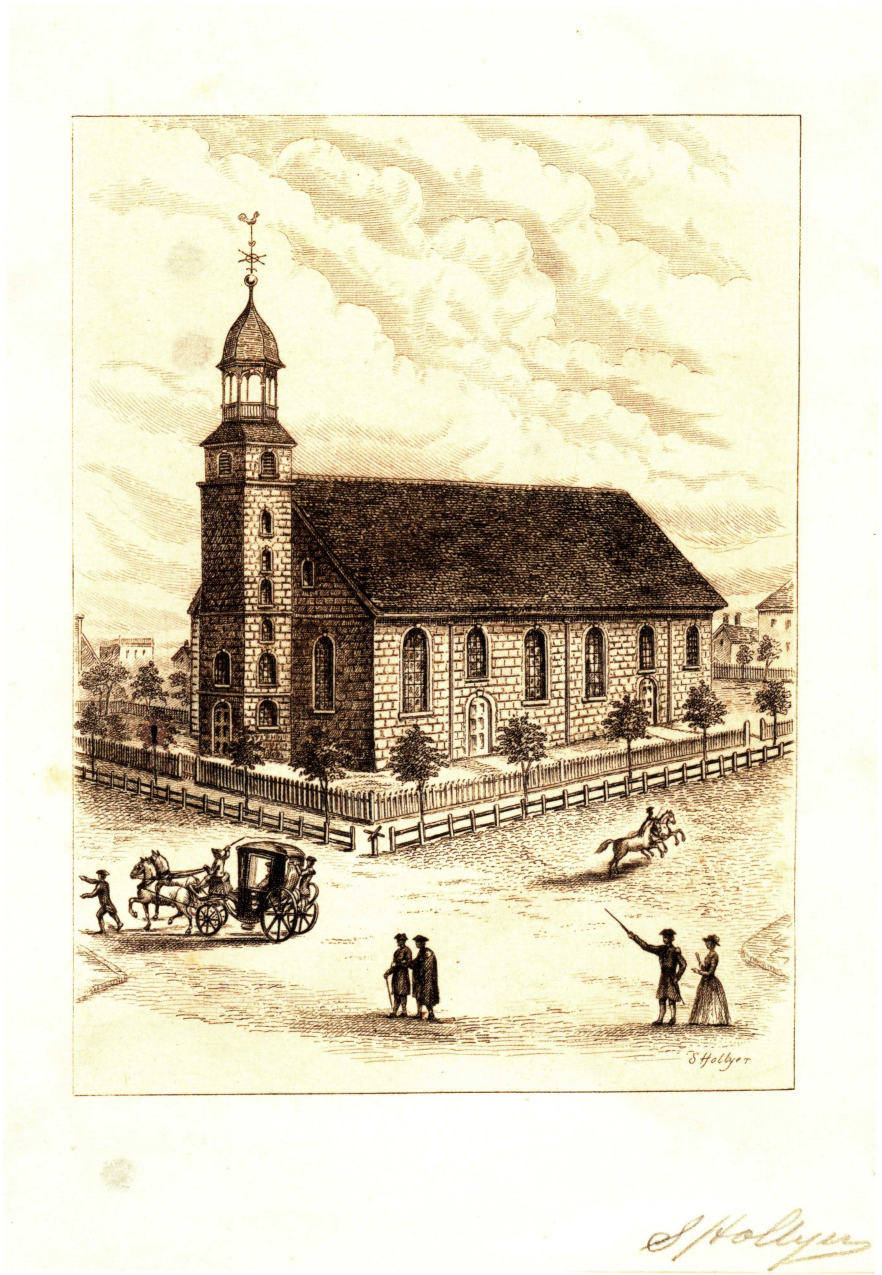
By the late nineteenth century, printmaking gained ground among artists as a medium for expression, reaching mainstream acceptance with the Pop artists of the 1960s and still offering challenges to contemporary artists today with its limitations and rewards. Commercial prints, available to a broad audience, gave the country a visual vocabulary that

Snowy Egret. John James Audubon, American, born Saint-Domingue, now Haiti (1785-1851). Lithograph. GM 1747.42.2.

First published in 1826 and based on fourteen years of field research, John James Audubon's *Birds of America* became a success with the Europeans, who were fascinated with the depictions of the wildlife in America. Although the original aquatints were painstakingly hand-colored, later editions, of which this print is one, were lithographs, making them much easier to reproduce. This "octavo" edition, published in 1839, was sold throughout the United States. Audubon discovered and documented several new species and inspired nature conservation movements in the United States.

would help define its morals and aspirations. Previous generations were well versed in the language of symbols—symbols reflected in their popular culture. By reading these images today, we gain insight into our shared past.

The term *printmaking* encompasses a variety of techniques involving images applied to a surface that in turn conveys them to paper, vellum, or other materials. The more durable the surface the image is applied to, the more prints from that surface can be made. Commercial prints, as opposed to small editions produced by artists, can be reproduced by the thousands, making the labor-intensive process more economical for the consumer.[4] Throughout the eighteenth century, prints available for sale in the American colonies were primarily produced by the intaglio process. (See page 28 for a discussion of this method of printmaking.)



Rip Van Dam Church. Samuel Hollyer, American (1826-1919). Engraving. GM 1426.650.

This print, a later version of a scene originally entitled *The New Dutch Church, New York,* depicts the earliest street scene in American printmaking. The small details in the print capture day-to-day living in New York at the time. The driver and coach seen on the left belong to Rip Van Dam, the president of His Majesty's Council for the Province of New York. The turnstile at the corner of the sidewalk kept livestock off the path and out of the way of pedestrians. Church services were held in the building until 1844, when it became a post office, then a series of stores. The building was torn down in the 1890s.



In 1798, Alois Senefelder, a music publisher from Munich, developed a new form of printing called lithography which spread slowly across the European continent. Eventually it would find favor with French artists like Théodore Géricault and Eugène Delacroix.[5] By the 1840s, color lithography (chromolithography) had spread to the United States, and lithography studios became big business. In the lithographic process, an image is drawn on a smooth stone with a grease-based crayon. Ink applied to the stone is attracted to the drawing and repelled by the dampened negative area. The stone and the paper are then run through a press, and the drawing is transferred to the paper.[6] Relatively easy and cheap to produce, lithographs, especially "chromos," became the art of choice for scores of Americans.

Printmaking was associated with urban areas throughout much of its history. Engravers, woodcutters, and other printmakers needed the products—ink, paper, accompanying text, and access to presses—available in large cities.[7] Cities also contained the largest audience for prints. An interest in popular culture and a high rate of literacy—both verbal and visual—created avid consumers for the print illustrations that hung on the walls of taverns and homes.[8] If prolific, however, prints were also perishable. Those that survive today fell into the hands of dedicated collectors who preserved them, perhaps for their artistic appeal or historical importance, leaving a few key pieces to speak for the many more that disappeared over time.

Boston Common. M. Osborne. Engraving, 1840. GM 1526.1011.

THE

Royal *American* Magazine,



OR UNIVERSAL

Repoſitory of *Inſtruction* and *Amuſement*.

For JULY, 1774.

CONTAINING

The Barbarity of the Spaniards.	Page 235	A Proceſs for ſeparating Gold and Silver from Lace without burning it.	260
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A Queſtion.	252	The Governor's Proclamation for the encouragement of Piety, Virtue, &c. &c.	ibid.
Maxims of State.	253	Meteorological Obſervations on the Weather.	272
Paradox.	254	Governor Hutchinſon's Hiſtory, &c.	
Of the Perſecutions in the Reign of Queen Mary.	255		
An Allegory.	257		

With the following EMBELEISHMENT, viz.
SPANISH Treatment at CARTHAGENA Elegantly engraved.

AMERICA:

BOSTON, Printed and Sold at GREENLEAF's Printing-Office in Hanover-ſtreet, near the ORANGE-TREE, where Subſcriptions continue to be taken in.



A NEW HUMOROUS SONG,

ON THE

CHEROKEE CHIEFS.

Inſcribed to the LADIES of GREAT BRITAIN.

By H. HOWARD.

To the Tune of, *Cæſar and Pompey were both of them Horned.*

I.

WHAT a Piece of Work's here, and a d—d Botheration!
Of Three famous Chiefs from the *Cherokee* Nation;
Who the Duce wou'd ha' thought, that a People polite, Sir,
Wou'd ha' ſtir'd out o' Doors to ha' ſeen ſuch a Sight, Sir?
Are M——rs ſo rare in the *Britiſh* Dominions,
That we thus ſhou'd run crazy for *Canada Indians*.
Are M——rs ſo rare, &c.

II.

How eager the Folks at *Vauxhall*, or elſewhere, Sir,
With high Expectation and Rapture repair, Sir;
Tho' not one of them all can produce the leaſt Reaſon,
Save that M——rs of all Sorts are always in Seaſon.
If ſo, let the Chiefs here awhile have their Station,
And ſend for the whole of the *Cherokee* Nation.
If ſo, let the Chiefs, &c.

III.

The Ladies, dear Creatures, ſo ſqueamiſh and dainty,
Surround the great *Canada* Warriors in plenty;
Wives, *Widows* and *Matrons*, and pert little *Miſſes*,
Are preſſing and ſqueezing for *Cherokee* Kiſſes.
Each grave looking Prude, and each ſmart looking Belle, Sir,
Declaring, no *Engliſhman* e'er kiſs'd ſo well, Sir.

IV.

That *Cherokee* Lips are much ſofter and ſweeter,
Their Touch more refin'd, and their Kiſſes repleter;
The fair ones agree——nay, I mean not to flatter,
For who like the Ladies can judge of the Matter?
Ye Nymphs then, who like 'm, indulge your odd Paſſion,
Be ſw——d by the Chiefs of the *Cherokee* Nation.
Ye Nymphs then, &c.

V.

Ye Females of *Britain*, ſo wanton and witty,
Who love even Monkies, and ſwear they are pretty;
The *Cherokee Indians*, and ſtranger *Shimpanzeys*,
By Turns, pretty Creatures, have tickl'd your Fancies;
Which proves, that the Ladies ſo fond are of Billing,
They'd kiſs even M——rs, were M——rs as willing.
Which proves, that, &c.

VI.

No more then theſe Chiefs, with their ſcalping Knives dread, Sir,
Shall ſtrip down the Skin from the *Engliſhman*'s Head, Sir;
Let the Caſe be revers'd, and the Ladies prevail, Sir,
And inſtead of the Head, ſkin the *Cherokee* T—l, Sir.
Ye bold Female *Scalpers*, courageous and hearty,
Collect all your Force for a *grand Scalping Party*.

A New Humourous Song on the Cherokee Chiefs. Engraving, ca. 1762. GM 3576.274.

FACING: *The Royal American Magazine.* Paul Revere, American, born England (1735-1818). Woodcut, July 1774, GM TL2009.35.142.

Although famous for his midnight ride, Paul Revere was a silversmith by trade, noted for casting and engraving. His most famous work as an engraver is a depiction of the Boston Massacre that helped focus the anti-British sentiment among the Massachusetts colony.

As Revere became more involved with the Sons of Liberty during the Revolutionary War, he turned the smithing business over to his son and began supplying the *Royal American Magazine* with engravings, providing a visual component for the news of the day.

America Guided by Wisdom. Benjamin Tanner, American (1775-1848), after John Barralett, English (1747-1815). Engraving, 1816. GM 1526.274.

For the early Republic, imagery both inspired the nation and helped it define its goals and aspirations. The neoclassical style, popular in Europe throughout the 18th century, imparted a message of stability, reason, and enlightenment through allusions to antiquity and highly controlled form. References to Minerva, as in this example, reassured viewers that the American Revolution was not an impulsive move, but the result of Enlightenment thinking led metaphorically by the Roman goddess of wisdom.

"General Scott's Entrance into Mexico" in George Wilkins Kendall, *The War Between the United States and Mexico.* Carl Nebel, German (1805-1855). Chromolithograph, 1862. GM 2526.3008.

A gentlemanly pursuit for many colonists, collecting prints allowed those in America to stay connected with the culture overseas and to share art with their neighbors. Clergymen like John Prince and William Bentley were avid collectors, as were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who acquired prints as well as books and natural history specimens.[9] Print shops operated by artists such as the London-trained Peter Pelham, based in Boston, found steady work engraving the city's notables, including the Puritan minister Cotton Mather.[10] Indeed, prints became so ubiquitous in the colonial era that a traveler writing in 1755 remarked that "a tavern on the Rappahannock River was adorned with so many prints" he felt as though he were "in an elegant London print shop."[11] Due to their relatively small size and the ease with which they could travel, prints became the most economical way to import continental taste to the colonies. As the eighteenth century wore on, the appetite for British and American reproductions led to a burgeoning printmaking movement in the colonies.

For colonial viewers, prints were a direct link to the culture of the mother country. England, especially in the eighteenth century, had a booming trade in prints. Artists like William Hogarth often worked exclusively in prints, publishing his satirical accounts of London's various classes.

Prints accompanying songs were also popular, and many of these illustrated ballads survive today. The broadside entitled "A New Humourous Song on the Cherokee Chiefs" by H. Howard, for example, recounts the 1762 Cherokee delegation's journey to Great Britain and their meeting with King George II. At the top of the broadside, a hand-colored image of the three Cherokee leaders informs the viewer about the subject matter. The reference below the title, "Caesar and Pompey Were Both of the Horned," indicates the tune for the sometimes bawdy lyrics. Although atypical in subject matter—visits to England by Native American delegations were rare events—"A New Humourous Song" apparently appealed to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. The breadth of its popularity can be attested by the numbers of this particular broadside still in existence in various libraries and museums.

Landscape and city scenes also proved popular, as bustling communities like New York and Boston grew into their roles as centers for trade. As relations with England turned sour, however, many of the colonial prints featured allusions to classical figures. Just as it had in England, the neoclassical style became a favorite with print artists who wanted to align the newly formed United States with the stability and rationalitiy that the style implied. Historian Caroline Winterer suggests the classical allusions present in popular engravings like *America Guided by Wisdom* "located the icons of republican revolution in the older visual context in which educated colonists would have viewed them."[12] For savvy viewers, figures like Minerva reassured revolutionaries of their role as nation builders and that their revolution had its roots in reason, guided by the Roman goddess of Republican wisdom rather than the tyrannies of monarchy. As the war began, prints documented battles and skirmishes, a role they would play until the middle of the nineteenth century.

In times of war, printmakers often turned their talent toward recording the action for news-starved citizens in cities throughout the nation. Prints became the visual record for the Revolutionary War and the wars to follow, illustrating the triumphs and tactics of the Mexican War and the Civil War, and capturing the moment for a breathless public at home. While newspapers printed first-hand accounts of battles, the images inspired by those reports shaped public opinion. For far-flung wars, like the Mexican War in 1847, prints









The Battle of Lexington. M. Swelt Invt. Hand-colored lithograph. GM 1526.123.

provided many Americans with their first glimpse of that country. Interestingly, while these types of prints proved influential for the duration of the war, their popularity faded along with memories of the conflict. Their sanitized version of events, often omitting gore in favor of military triumphs, put such representations at odds with the personal experiences of the soldiers who came home.[13] For many at the time, these images had provided the only visual record of the fighting their men had seen. Yet, almost as soon as the war was over, consumers turned their attention to prints of a different sort.

The battles of the Revolution occurred near the centers of colonial life—artists who documented the war needed only to step outside their doors to gather information. For the Mexican War, many of the major lithography houses simply illustrated battles as described in newspapers; a few others sent correspondents to draw the battles as they saw them.[14] Carl Nebel, for example, accompanied George Wilkins Kendall during the war and collaborated with him for his book *War Between the United States and Mexico,* published in 1851. His illustrations, the basis for the hand-colored lithographic plates in the book, were touted by the *New York Herald* as "drawn on the spot" and "colored in the highest style of art."[15] Kendall, however, recognized that some would question the accuracy of the images accompanying his detailed history. In a preventative move, the author wrote in the preface that while the illustrations could be trusted in "general configuration of the ground, fidelity of the landscape, and correctness of the works and buildings introduced," Kendall reminded the reader that the artist "must choose what he deemed the more interesting as well as exciting points of each combat."[16] For the Revolutionary War and the Mexican War, in particular, lithographs became the visual record of the conflict, and informed biographers and historians well into the twentieth century.[17]

The American appetite for commercial prints in the mid-nineteenth century gives modern viewers insight into the values and the popular culture of everyday life. Firms such as Currier & Ives and Louis Prang began printing in the 1840s—by the late 1870s, there were nearly five hundred firms dealing in chromolithographs.[18] As illustrated magazines such as *Godey's Ladies Book* increased their circulation, especially among the middle classes, the reader's ability to discern the quality of prints also increased.[19] Women, influenced by ladies' magazines and domestic mavens such as Catherine Beecher and her more famous sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, felt that certain prints—by reputable companies like Louis Prang—were as vital to the proper upbringing of their families as the presence of a Bible in the home.

Within just a few short years of the introduction of chromolithography in the United States, the demand for prints in various subject matters was growing steadily. Over the life of the company, Currier & Ives, for example, offered nearly seven thousand different prints for sale, each reproduced in large quantities.[20] As historian Lori E. Rotskoff notes, "from 1840 to 1900, chromolithographies sold by the millions."[21]

Prints served as both a tool to train young minds about proper aesthetic appreciation, and to instill in young people proper moral feeling. Offering what the *London Art-Journal* described as "the means of repeating the work of the artist in the artist's own best style," lithography allowed the public the ability to purchase quality art at a reasonable price.[22] Luminaries like Louisa May Alcott also threw their support behind "chromos," and the Louis Prang Company in particular. A catalog published by Louis Prang quoted Alcott, who praised the company's mission of "cultivating a love of art by placing copies of good

"The Little Sportsman" from *Godey's Lady's Book.* Unknown artist. Lithograph. GM 1527.1112.

First published in 1830 by Louis A. Godey, *Godey's Lady's Book* became one of the most popular monthly magazines in the United States, counting nearly 150,000 subscribers at its peak in 1860. Edited by Sarah Hale, the magazine included poems, short stories, articles on fashion and popular culture, as well as engravings of "uplifting" scenes like this one, all intended to shape national tastes. In 1850, a reproduction of an engraving of Queen Victoria and her family decorating a tree at Christmas sparked a new trend among American households. By the end of the decade, the Christmas tree became a traditional part of the celebration.





and great pictures within the reach of all."[23] In addition to "cultivating a love of art," Harriet Beecher Stowe and others felt that the proper imagery could inculcate the values of moderation, pride in the family, and a sense of "homeyness," as opposed to more worldly sensibilities.[24] These scenes, which ranged from pastoral depictions of the farm, the idealized home, or still life representations of fruit, were meant to influence viewers and remind them of the simple pleasures in life.

Although critics claimed that "chromos" devalued real art and threatened to propel the reproduction to the status of an original, for average Americans these prints allowed access to the world of art on their terms—reinforcing their values and their status in society. While the subject matter may seem quaint to contemporary eyes, scenes of farming, sport, and home reinforced the qualities such citizens prized and opened a window into their world.

Yet as popular as chromolithographs were at their height, by the turn of the twentieth century the medium was out of fashion, replaced by photography. Demand for mass-produced lithographs waned, while the demand for photographs of people and places grew. At this time, many artists began to employ printmaking techniques, creating detailed works of art that could be reproduced on a very limited scale. Artists like Thomas Moran experimented with various printmaking techniques including engravings, lithographs, and monotypes.

In the case of Moran, the resulting prints express great skill in handling minute details. Although a lithograph, Moran's piece from 1869 entitled *Solitude* reflects the artist's almost painterly handling of his materials. The dark lake and forest at the foot of the mountain in the background recedes against the lighter areas of trees and rocks in the foreground, while the piece as a whole recalls the work of Caspar David Friedrich and the German Romantic painters. The enormity of nature, a subject Moran dealt with throughout his career, presents itself in the precise details of this print. It is Moran's attention to these small details that separates this art piece from simple commercial prints.

Other artists, including George Caleb Bingham, Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, and Fitz Hugh Lane, attempted to work with the commercial lithography houses to produce prints of high quality for a mass audience. Bingham found limited success by submitting pieces to the American Art-Union—a short-lived group whose efforts to influence national tastes and support American art appealed to many artists. But the Union's ultimate financial and political woes prevented it from influencing the art scene after 1852.[25] Tait and Lane each found success working with Currier & Ives, and the artists provided many works that were then recreated as chromolithographs. These partnerships proved fruitful for both the artist and the lithographers, as long as the artists provided materials that created what art historian Sarah Burns describes as "the most highly idealized fantasy world, the very incarnation of the middle-class heaven."[26] As Moran and many other artists discovered, the market for original prints by artists was limited.[27] Artists pursuing printmaking for their own creative ends, like Moran, gained little in the way of commissions from their experiments in the new medium. Interest in lithography and printmaking would fade until enterprising artists looking for new ways to engage the public returned to the process in the 1930s.

The Great Depression saw the rebirth of the print as a viable commercial and artistic endeavor. As a part of the Works Progress Administration, or WPA, artists working in all media were recruited by the government to apply their talents to posters, murals, arts

American Frontier Life. Currier and Ives, American (1834-1907), after Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, American, born England (1819-1905). Chromolithograph, 1862. GM 1526.567.

Inspired by George Catlin and William Tylee Ranney, Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait created scenes that reflected the West of hunters and trappers. Shortly after his arrival in New York, Tait began to work with lithographic firms, including Currier and Ives, to provide sporting and wildlife scenes for a mass audience. Lithographic firms turned to artists when they could to boost the integrity of their product and attract more buyers with higher quality prints. Tait's wilderness scenes proved popular, and his income from these prints allowed him to work on larger scale oil paintings.

Hiawatha's Wedding. Currier and Ives, American (1834-1907). Chromolithograph, 1868. GM 1526.31.

Published in 1855, Henry Wasdworth Longfellow's "The Song of Hiawatha" became a cultural touchstone, memorized by schoolchildren, recited by actors, and given a visual life by printmakers. Currier and Ives produced seven scenes based on the poem, including this one, which was reissued four times. It became one of the company's most successful prints of a literary subject.





Summer Afternoon. Currier and Ives, American (1834-1907), after Louis Maurer, American, born Germany (1832-1932). Chromolithograph. GM 1526.34.

The County Election. George Caleb Bingham, American (1811-1879). Lithograph, ca. 1852. GM 1526.569.

education, and various other projects under the organization of the Federal Art Project. The artist program provided the country with art, while keeping artists employed, many of whom may not have been able to support themselves otherwise. Artists working for the Federal Art Project gained experience with new techniques, such as screenprinting, and developed a sense of community among themselves.

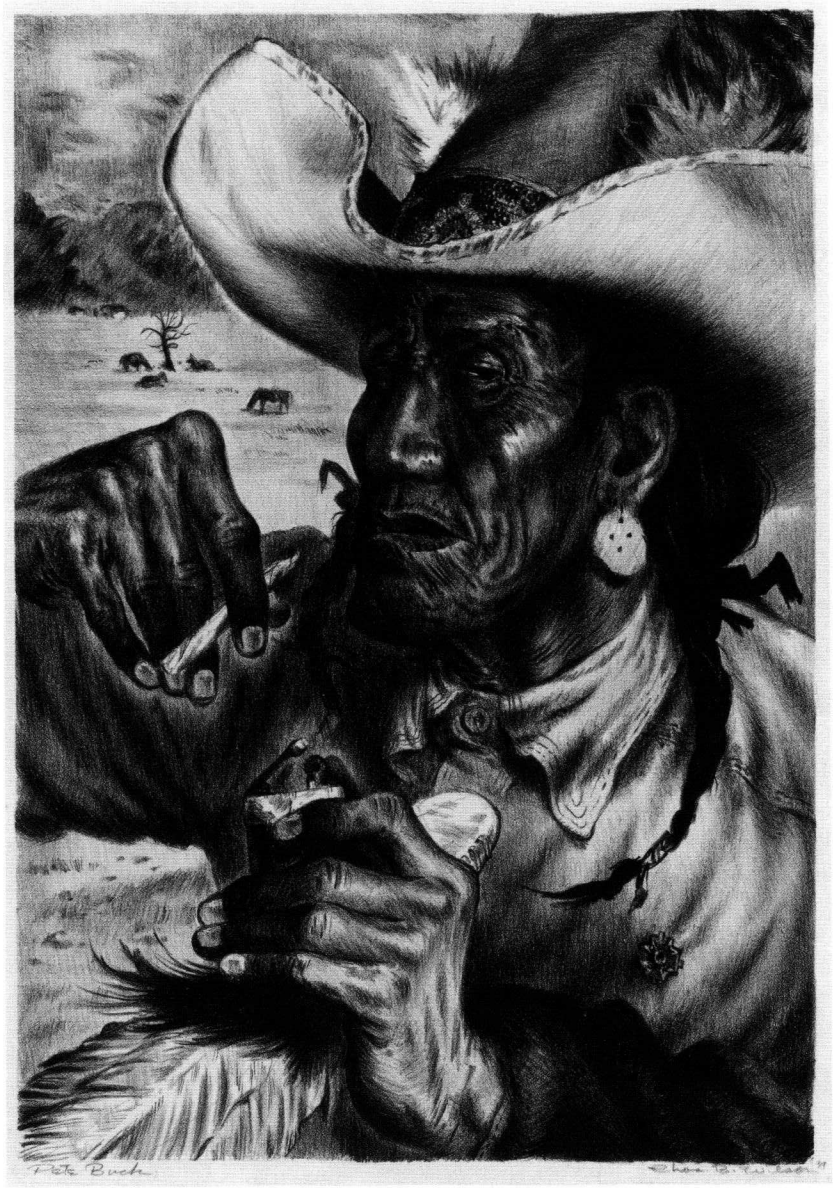
As art historian Jonathan Fineberg writes, "The project produced hundreds of thousands of works, and by 1936 it employed around 6,000 artists. Although the stipend provided only enough to get by on (around $23 a week), government patronage offered artists dignity, a sense of value, and a place in American Society. It also formed a real community of artists for the first time."[28]

The print division, while attracting less attention than the fine arts division, still won over many critics with its artists' eye for design and attention to detail. Writing about the New York City poster artists in a trade paper, curator and critic Sydney Kellner extolled "the amazing design quality invested in [their] posters" and the "community value" that lay in "the enthusiastic comments of professional artists."[29] Artists working in the print division created posters for branches of the United States military, the national parks, state tourism boards, local theater and musical performances, and a multitude of other organizations and events. Using bold graphic design, these posters reminded viewers during World War II that "loose lips sink ships," that vital supplies should be rationed, or that community arts events were happening, all in an effort to revitalize the nation through proactive and positive imagery.[30] Poster slogans, generally simple and to the point, also encouraged positive behaviors—civility, pride in work and community, and civic duty—which were, in turn, illustrated with easily read imagery. Direct messages, coupled



Solitude. Thomas Moran, American, born England (1837-1926). Lithograph, 1869. GM 1426.635.

Pete Buck. Charles Banks Wilson, American (b. 1918). Lithograph, 1939. GM 1427.717.



Whether depicting early scenes of New York, the bloody battles of the Mexican War, or nostalgic vignettes of rural life, whether calling us to action or simply offering a visual experience created for its own sake, the print in America communicates in the most accessible of ways—assuming our ability to understand it and the social cues it represents. Each print displays a set of shared values from its time through coded symbols and culturally understood meanings. Previous generations familiar with the motifs and ideas present in their prints absorbed these meanings without question—much as we, as contemporary viewers, relate to the common symbols that make up our everyday lives. Learning to read these images allows us to understand the morals, values, and worldview of our shared past.

NOTES

1 Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009, p. 404. The quote is from a letter the Currier & Ives company sent to its salesmen in the 1870s extolling the virtues of its chromolithographs.

2 Peter C. Marzio, "The Democratic Art of Chromolithography in America: An Overview," in Jonathan Fairbanks, *Art and Commerce: American Prints of the Nineteenth Century,* University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 1978, p. 98. Marizo offers an excellent overview of the positive and negative views on printmaking, and chromolithography in particular, during the nineteenth century.

3 Peter C. Marzio, "The Democratic Art of Chromolithography in America," p. 77.

4 Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, p. 31. Griffiths' books offer an excellent overview of the different types of printmaking, using fine art examples to illustrate each style.

5 *Ibid.,* p. 104.

6 *Ibid.,* p. 100.

7 Sheila O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England,* British Museum Press, London, 1999, p. 11.

8 *Ibid.,* p. 18.

9 Helena E. Wright, *Prints at the Smithsonian: Origins of a National Collection,* National Museum of American History, Washington D.C., 1996, p. 14.

10 Burns, "Peter Pelham Scrapes a Mezzotint," in *American Art to 1900,* p. 25. Pelham was also the stepfather of colonial portraitist John Singleton Copley, whom he instructed in art.

11 *Ibid.,* p. 14.

12 Caroline Winterer, "From Royal to Republican: The Classical Image in Early America," p. 1264–1290, in *The Journal of American History,* Vol. 91, No. 4, March, 2005, p. 1266.

13 Ronnie C. Tyler, "The Mexican War: A Lithographic Record," p. 1–84, in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* Vol. 77, No. 1, July 1973, p. 2.

14 *Ibid.,* p. 11.

15 Tyler, p. 19. The author explains in detail the three-year process required for the manuscript to arrive at its final, publishable state.

16 Tyler, "The Mexican War," p. 20.

17 *Ibid.,* p.12-16. Tyler discusses the usefulness of these prints as primary source material and refers to their problematic nature as a faithful representation of fact.

18 Marzio, "The Democratic Art of Chromolithography in America," p. 97.

19 Wright, *Prints at the Smithsonian,* p. 16.

20 Wright, *Prints at the Smithsonian,* p. 16.

21 Lori E. Rotskoff, "Decorating the Dining-Room: Still-life Chromolithographs and Domestic Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America," p. 19–42, in *Journal of American Studies,* Vo. 31, No. 1, April, 1997, p. 20.

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UNIQUE IMPRESSIONS

CAROLE KLEIN

> THE ACT OF PRINTING HAS ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE A MIRACLE TO ME. . . . ONE DRAWING IS SOWN ON THE STONE OR THE ETCHING PLATE, AND A HARVEST IS REAPED FROM IT.
>
> Vincent Van Gogh

THE PRINTING OF SYMBOLS OR IMAGES has a long history. Rudimentary forms included carved seals pressed into clay or wax, stone rubbings, and designs cut in wood then printed on fabric. After the invention of paper and the printing press, printed images continued to serve primarily utilitarian purposes.They might, for example, extend or illustrate the text of books. Gradually, in the hands of creative artists who began to explore the various methods of printmaking, a new art form was born. Linking their visions to the mechanics of process and technique, artists were seduced by the magic of multiples.

Each method of fine art printmaking requires specific materials, tools, and techniques, and produces prints with characteristic qualities. Each process blends the artist's concept with skill in manipulating physical properties. The surfaces and tools chosen reflect a great range of expressive styles.

Prints are considered *original* when the artist alone works directly on a surface—metal, stone, or wood—to create an image. The surface, called the *matrix,* is the origin, or mother, of the subsequently printed image. When paper meets matrix under pressure, ink is transferred in the form of the image onto the paper. This can be done repeatedly an indefinite numbers of times so long as the surface of the matrix remains intact. Some surfaces break down more quickly than others, limiting the number of quality prints obtainable from a plate or block. The group of prints made from a single matrix is called an *edition* and is numbered to reflect the number of prints made and the serial position of the particular print. 1/30 indicates the first print pulled in an edition of thirty. Artists do not always number their prints, however. Some write only the total number printed in an edition, as in "Ed. 30." Others only sign each print with their name and the title of the work, leaving open the number that might be printed.

Each impression is not a mere duplicate. With every print pulled from a plate, stone, or block, the variations in ink application, plate wiping, and pressure applied during printing result in each impression being unique.

Prints from the Gilcrease Museum collection featured here were created by American printmakers working in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Fragments of a larger American story, these images reveal landscape, people, animals, and regional scenes of the northeastern United States, the Southwest, and the Midwest. Most are monochromatic in black or brown ink, either by choice or because they were created before artists involved themselves with the technical challenges of printing color. Each impression speaks of an artist's unique experience expressed within a mechanical process. The works present only a facet of American printmaking but collectively they provide a memorable visual experience.

Understanding printmaking processes ensures a better appreciation of the original print as an art form. *Relief, intaglio,* and *planographic* are terms that describe three methods of printmaking identified by the surface or matrix from which the print is generated and how the image is applied to it.



RELIEF METHOD STARTS WITH A BLOCK OF MATERIAL AS THE MATRIX. WHAT IS NOT TO BE PRINTED IS CUT AWAY, LEAVING ONLY THE RAISED AREAS TO RECEIVE THE INK. EXAMPLES INCLUDE WOODCUTS, WOOD ENGRAVINGS, AND LINOCUTS (LINOLEUM BLOCK PRINTS).

RELIEF PRINTING IS THE OLDEST FORM OF PRINTMAKING. IT HAS EXISTED FOR OVER A THOUSAND YEARS.

woodcuts

A drawing is made on the plank-grain surface of a wood block. Different types of wood can be used; their selection is based on hardness, softness, and the desired end result. Some woods such as cherry or pear are chosen for smooth, tight grain which gives crisp results. Other woods may be chosen for their ease of cutting or for pronounced grain if texture is desired. The artist cuts away areas that are to remain white with knives, gouges, and chisels. A brayer (roller) is used to apply a thin layer of ink to the remaining raised parts of the block. Paper is positioned on the block and pressure applied to make the print. A press can be used but is not required for relief printing. Instead, the back of the paper can be burnished by hand or with a barren or a wooden spoon to transfer the image onto the paper.

wood engravings

Wood engravings are prints that are cut on end-grain planks of wood, usually hardwoods such as maple or boxwood. Extremely fine detail is possible with the tighter end grain.

linocuts

A linocut is similar to a woodcut, but the surface utilized is linoleum. It is easier to cut, cheaper, and contains no cross grain. It does not produce the fine quality of a woodcut, however, because it is not as hard a material and is slightly granular, so the lines are not as clean and crisp. Nevertheless artists took advantage of linoleum because it lacks the greater resistance of wood, allowing for quick, more liberated strokes of the knife.

RELIEF PRINTS

woodcuts
wood engravings
linocuts



OSAGE DANCE. Woodcut. May Todd Aaron (1879-1967). GM 1427.196.

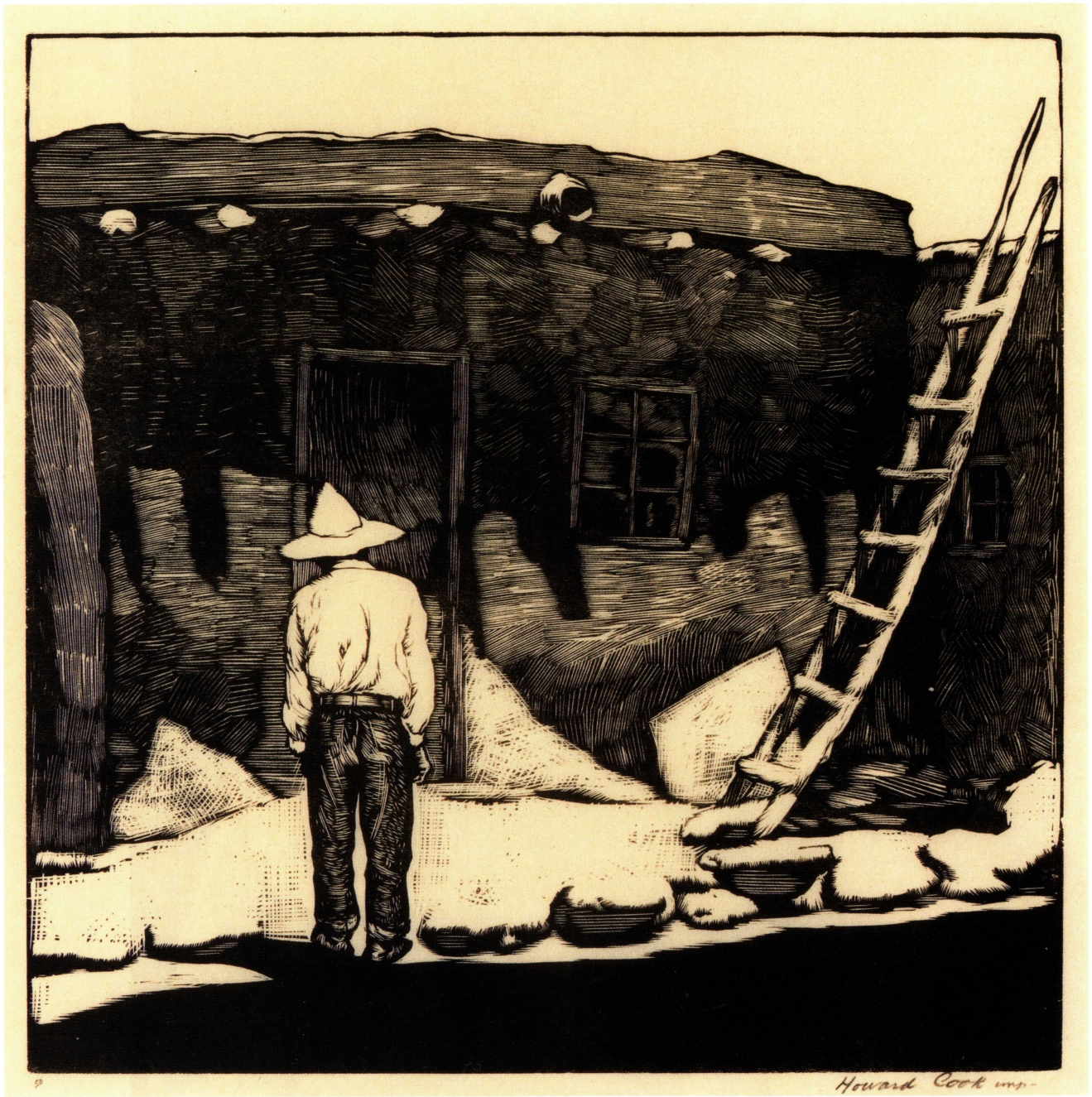
A prominent artist and longtime resident of Pawhuska, Oklahoma, Aaron created images of Native American genre subjects, especially related to the Osage tribe and Oklahoma landscapes. *Osage Dance* exhibits the charming characteristics of a woodcut with simple, blocky, rough-hewn shapes. The fragments of wood left in the space around the figures create a feeling of vitality and give a sense of movement to the dancers.





PUEBLO INDIAN – FAT JOHN OF TAOS. Woodcut, 1928. Howard Cook (1901-1980). GM 1437.314.

One of the best known of the second generation of Taos artists, Howard Cook achieved national recognition as a painter, muralist, and printmaker. He created prints over five decades. He is known for his strong designs such as *Pueblo Indian – Fat John of Taos,* in which he created a striking *chiaroscuro* ("light-dark") portrait with strong tonal contrasts. Cook created the mid-tones with finely cut lines. The overall effect is powerful and dramatic.



HOPI HOUSE – WALPI, ARIZONA. Wood engraving, ca. 1927. Howard Cook (1901-1980). GM 1437.311.

Cook's prints of the Southwest are considered some of the finest ever created of the region. He drew from life directly onto his woodblocks. He cut fine, multi-directional lines to create the textures in *Hopi House – Walpi, Arizona,* as can be seen on the wall in the background. These details provide contrast and highlight the simpler treatment of the figure.



CHORE TIME. Linocut, ca.1932. Mae Allyn Christie (1895-1957). GM 1427.161.

Born in Moberly, Missouri, Mae Allyn Christie lived in Oklahoma and taught at Tulsa High School in the 1920s, as well as operating Mae Allyn Schupbach School of Art after her marriage. Christie's linocuts depict a simple rural way of life. She often filled the picture plane right to the edges with shapes, seen for example in the tight composition of *Chore Time.* She reduced detail to the briefest forms, such as the shapes of the chickens seen here—simple yet informative enough to clearly "say" chickens.

INTAGLIO PRINTS

etchings
aquatints
drypoint
engravings

INTAGLIO METHOD UTILIZES THE SURFACE OF METAL PLATES SUCH AS COPPER OR ZINC. THE INK GOES BENEATH THE ORIGINAL SURFACE OF THE MATRIX AND INTO LINES THAT HAVE BEEN INSCRIBED OR ETCHED. THE PLATE IS INKED AND WIPED, LEAVING THE INK IN THE RECESSED GROOVES. EXAMPLES OF THIS METHOD INCLUDE ETCHINGS, AQUATINT, AND THE NON-ETCHED, STRICTLY MECHANICAL, DRYPOINT AND ENGRAVING. INTAGLIO PRINTING REQUIRES GREAT PRESSURE FROM A PRESS TO EXTRACT THE INK FROM THE LINES AND ONTO PAPER. INTAGLIO HAS BEEN AROUND FOR FIVE CENTURIES.

etchings

The word *etching* is derived from the Dutch *etzen* meaning "to eat." A metal plate, usually copper, is coated with acid-resistant material or ground. Etching needles are used to draw through the coating to expose the metal. After the drawing is complete, the plate is immersed in an acid bath. The acid "bites" into the exposed lines, deepening them. The artist can take the plate out at intervals, add more ground to protect some lines from biting deeper when placed in additional baths, while allowing other lines not protected to deepen and widen. Some lines remain light and delicate while others print heavier and blacker. After the ground is removed the plate is cleaned, inked, wiped, and printed with a press.

aquatints

Aquatint is a form of etching that produces soft graduated tones. Fine grains of rosin are applied to the plate. The acid bites around the grains, creating a rough surface that holds ink. When printed, the result is similar to the wash effect of watercolor.

drypoint

Drypoint is an intaglio method, but unlike etching, requires no chemicals. The artist uses a sharp needle to scratch lines into the copper plate, which is then inked and printed. The drypoint line is slightly blurry due to the displaced metal, called burr, which is pushed up by the tool and also holds ink, creating a soft fuzzy appearance on the sides of the incised line.

engravings

Another type of intaglio printmaking that is also a mechanical technique is engraving. Burins with shaped tips are used to incise an assortment of marks into the plate. The excess metal material is cut away and discarded rather than pushed up as in drypoint. Engravings were used less often by creative artists because of its physical difficulty, so examples are not represented here. Engraving specialists became important as this method became a popular way to create reproductive prints of paintings by other artists.





OCTOBER AFTERNOON. Etching.
Jackson L. Nesbitt (1913-2008). GM 1427.301.

Born in McAlester, Oklahoma, Jackson Nesbitt lived much of his life in the Midwest active as an etcher and illustrator. He was known for depicting rural life with realism during the Great Depression. In *October Afternoon* Nesbitt illustrates the activities of a sorghum mill. The intricate organic forms and rich tonal variety reveal skillful manipulation of the etching medium.



ZUNI GIRL. Etching. William R. Leigh (1866-1955).
GM 1427.134a.

William R. Leigh studied at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore, and subsequently at the Royal Academy in Munich, Germany, where he mastered the academic style that he would later adapt to all his work. He became an established illustrator, providing images for *Scribner's* and *Collier's* magazines. In his forties he went west and made hundreds of oil sketches of landscapes, clouds, animals. His subjects were often the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Apache, Sioux, and Blackfeet Indians with whom he associated. *Zuni Girl* is shown here with the etched copper plate. Leigh's impressionistic style and dramatic treatment of light and dark, so familiar in his paintings, comes through also in his etchings.



M. Nimmo Moran

SUMMER – EAST HAMPTON. Etching, 1883.
Mary Nimmo Moran (1842-1899). GM 1427.91c.

Mary Nimmo Moran was the most prominent of the American women etchers in the late nineteenth century. As a child she moved with her family to Crescentville, Pennsylvania. She met neighbor Thomas Moran, an English immigrant, and they eventually married, moved to Newark, New Jersey, and later built a home on Long Island in 1884. Thomas introduced Mary to etching and the Long Island landscape became the subject of many of her works.

Summer, East Hampton presents a familiar view from the couple's front yard. Moran's treatment of the dark foreground of broken limbs, foliage, grasses, and the towering trees at the sides creates a frame for the delicate scene of the pond and windmill, suggesting depth and great distance. The mill depicted here is one of the historic structures in East Hampton built with the best American craftsmanship of their time. Several are still standing.



PASTORAL SCENE WITH COWS. Etching.
Peter Moran (1841-1914). GM 1426.459.

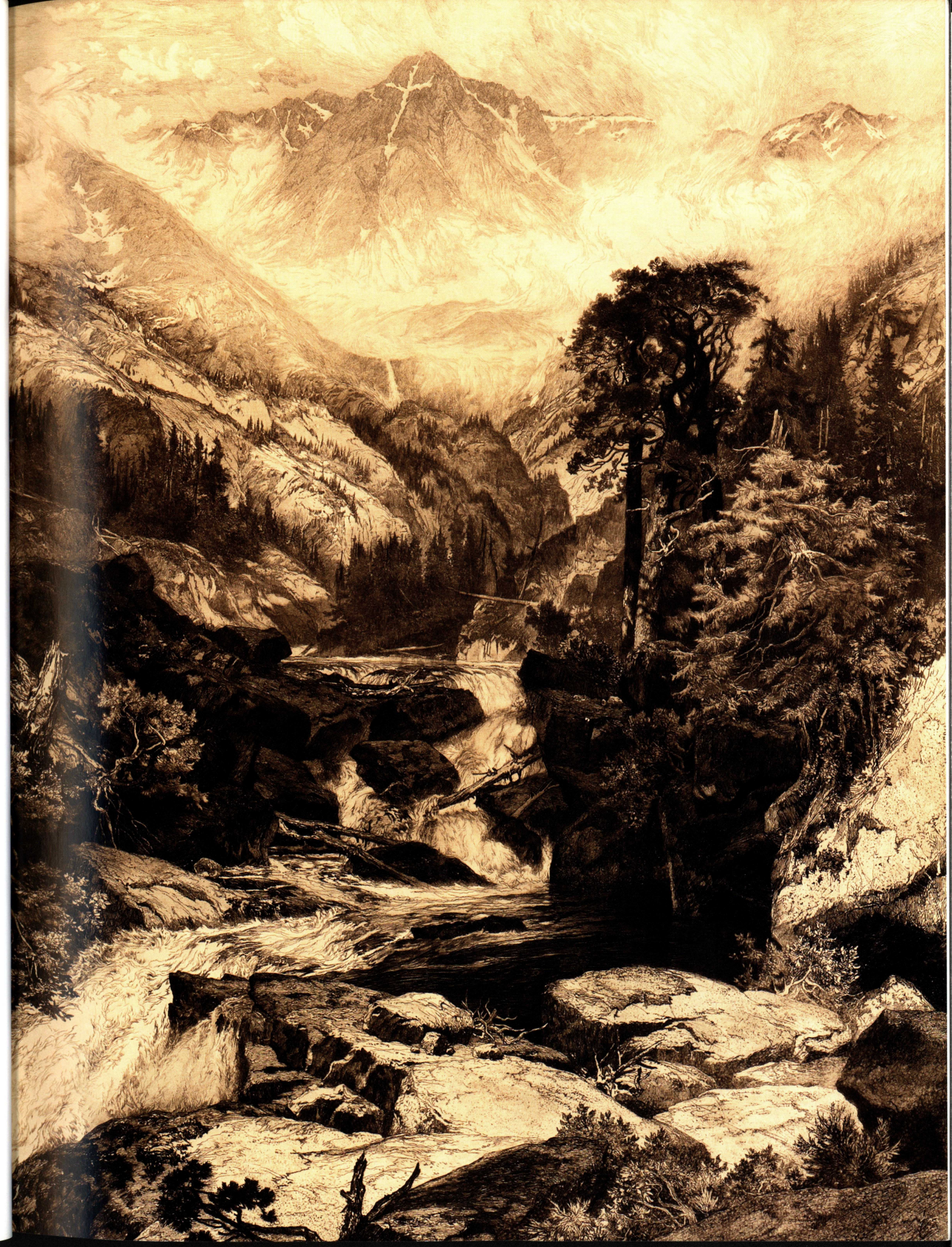
As a teenager Peter Moran was apprenticed to a lithographic printing firm in Philadelphia. He also studied under his older brothers, Edward and Thomas. He became a prolific etcher and was a master of animal studies, influenced by such animal painters as Rosa Bonheur and Edwin Landseer. This sensitive pastoral scene is typical of his ability to render animals in their natural grace within their environment.



MORNING. Etching, 1886. Thomas Moran (1837-1926). GM 1426.449c.

Painter, illustrator, and master printmaker Thomas Moran produced a remarkably varied body of work. Born in Bolton, England, Moran settled in Pennsylvania, beginning his artistic career as an apprentice to a wood engraving firm in Philadelphia. Known for his accomplished landscape paintings of the United States, Mexico, and Europe, Moran was the last of the great Romantic landscape artists.

The etching *Morning* is a scene from a point overlooking Hook Pond at East Hampton, New York, the Atlantic Ocean seen in the horizon. Moran depicted many atmospheric and weather-related conditions. Here the sun is seen rising between delicate lines that form the clouds and atmosphere.



MOUNTAIN OF THE HOLY CROSS (detail). Etching, 1888. Thomas Moran (1837-1926). GM 1426.825.

Mountain of the Holy Cross is a virtual feast of etching techniques. Within the beauty of its craftsmanship Thomas Moran has fully explored line, tone, and texture. The 14,000-foot mountain peak in the Sawatch Range of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado was named for the cross shape on its northeast face.

Moran idealized a scene rather than adhering to strict topography. He moved objects to create a pleasing composition, yet retained the character and spirit of a location. Equally adept at rendering rock, tree, sky, or water in a masterful composition, he always captured the essence of a place.







TAOS IN WINTER.
Aquatint and drypoint, 1934.
Gene Kloss (1903-1996). GM 1400.866.

Gene Kloss became known as one of the major printmakers of the twentieth century, producing over 600 copperplate etchings. She settled in Taos with her husband Phillips Kloss, a poet and composer. She is known for her sensitive interpretation of the Pueblo Indians and for her beautiful landscapes of the region.

Taos in Winter was done almost exclusively with the technique of aquatint. The contrasting tonal values alone inform the shapes with a subtle beauty that is almost devoid of line.

HERE COME THE SINGERS.
Etching, drypoint, aquatint.
Gene Kloss (1903-1996). GM 1427.297.

Kloss used a combination of etching, drypoint, and aquatint in this work. The linear treatment of the figures complements the smooth range of tonal values Kloss created in other areas. This artist is recognized for her artful arrangement of figures within visually appealing, intricate compositions.
It is interesting to note that at one time it was permissible to sketch kivas. This has since been prohibited by Pueblo tribes in order to protect their sacred customs and ceremonies.

SHOOTING FROM A BLIND.
Drypoint, etching.
Hans Kleibur (1887-1967). GM 1437.274.

Born in Cologne, Germany, Hans Kleibur was a painter known more for his success as a printmaker. He recorded the landscape, frontier life, and animals in the Big Horn Mountains where he lived much of his life. Working as a forest ranger, he was concerned about the preservation of the natural landscape.

Largely self-trained in printmaking, Kleibur used drypoint in combination with the etched line. *Shooting from a Blind* exhibits areas of soft, dense blacks achieved with the blurry lines of drypoint.

PLANOGRAPHIC METHOD MAKES USE OF A SURFACE THAT REMAINS FLAT, BUT PARTS OF IT ARE TREATED SO THAT ONLY THE SELECTED AREAS RECEIVE THE INK. THE BEST KNOWN TYPE IS LITHOGRAPHY (FROM THE GREEK FOR STONE + WRITING), IN WHICH A GREASE PENCIL IS USED TO DRAW ON A SLAB OF STONE. PLANOGRAPHIC PRINTING IS SEVERAL CENTURIES OLD.

PLANOGRAPHIC PRINTS

lithographs

lithographs

This type of printmaking uses the principle of the repulsion between oil and water. An image is drawn with a black grease crayon on a thick slab of polished limestone and fixed on the stone with a mixture of gum and nitric acid. The stone is dampened with water before the oily ink is applied. The ink does not stick to the wet stone but does adhere to the greasy crayon marks. The artist uses a press to transfer the image to dampened paper.

RAINY DAY. Lithograph. Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975). GM 1427.287.

Thomas Hart Benton was born in Neosho, Missouri, in the heart of the Midwest. He is counted among the Regionalists, along with John Steuart Curry of Kansas and Grant Wood of Iowa. They became recognized for their romantic views of country life that captured the essence of rural Midwestern America. Benton is known for strong rhythmic compositions in which he distorted perspective in the interest of design.

In *Rainy Day* Benton used stark contrast to create a strong theatrical effect, the focal point at center stage. The modulations of light to dark carry out this effect with multiple tonal values. Benton's use of the scratch-out technique can be seen in the sky at the horizon and in the white lines of the fence at left. Scratch-out is done with a sharp pointed needle that removes the dark black litho crayon from the stone, creating a white line effect.

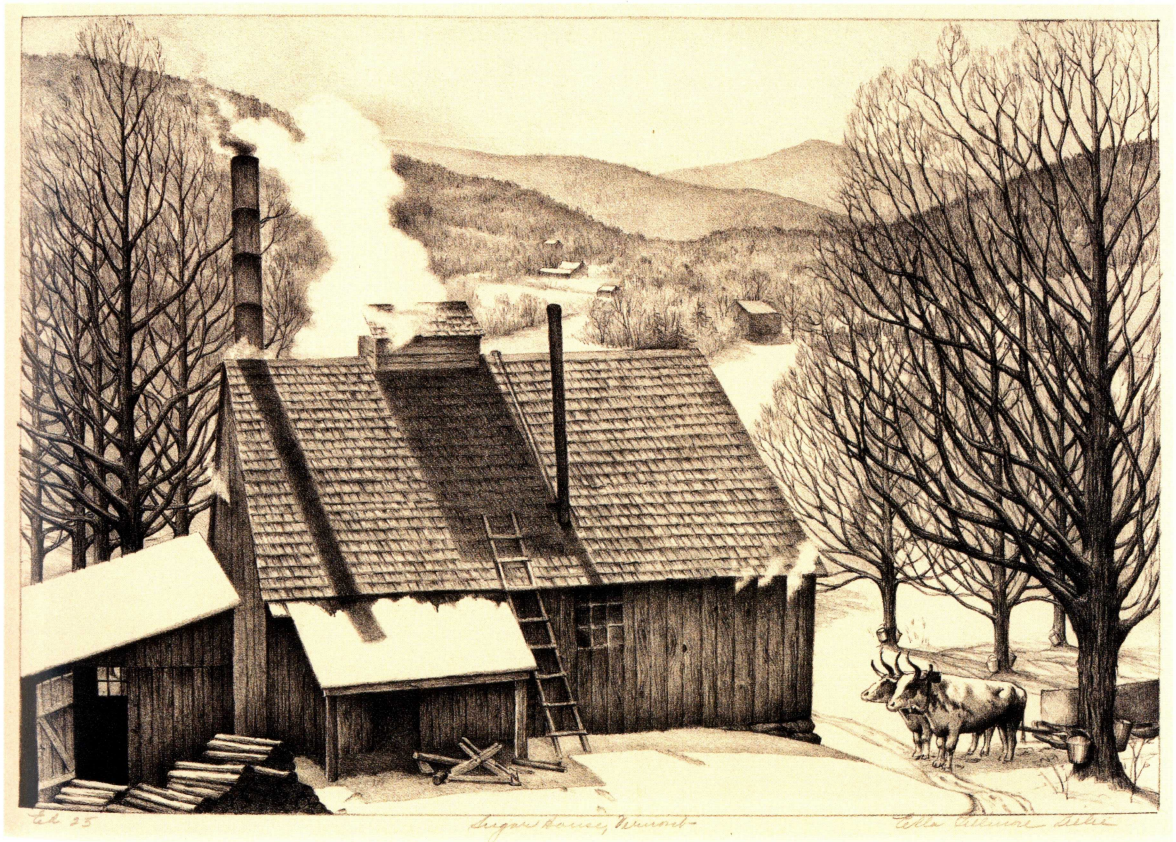
SUGAR HOUSE. Lithograph. Ella Fillmore Lillie (1884-1972). GM 1427.289.

Ella Fillmore Lillie was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was active in Vermont and Florida as a painter and printmaker. She studied at the Minneapolis School of Fine Art and the Art Institute of Chicago and traveled the United States and Latin America painting genre and coastal scenes.

Lillie's *Sugar House* illustrates a nostalgic scene from the past. Tapping the maple trees was an important early spring activity in the northeastern part of the United States. The farmer drilled and inserted a hollow spike and then hung a bucket to collect the sap which was taken to the sugar house to be boiled down into syrup.

The effect of the faint, delicately modeled hills in the background are a good example of what can be done with a lighter touch of the litho crayon. Silvery tones are characteristic of Lillie's lithographs.

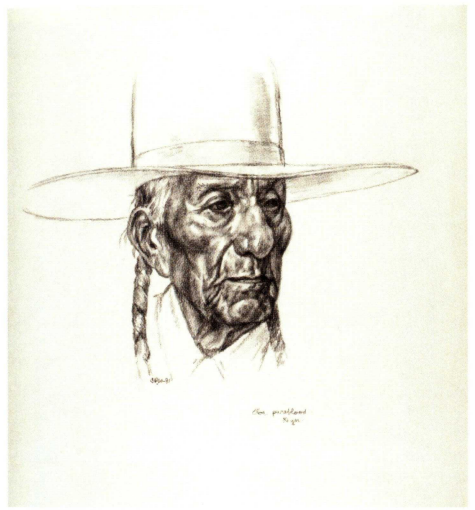












TRIBAL ELDER. Lithograph, 1981. Charles Banks Wilson (b.1918). GM 1427.672d.

OTOE PUREBLOOD. Pencil on paper, 1981. Charles Banks Wilson (b.1918). GM 1327.2095.

Wilson worked from live sittings to capture the heart of his subjects' individuality and a glimpse into their lives. The lithograph *Tribal Elder* evolved from an original pencil portrait of an aged pureblood Otoe man, part of Wilson's series "Search for the Purebloods." The elder did not feel like posing but Wilson convinced him that it was important to record him for future generations. The man died a few days later.

Seen here is the original drawing and the evolution of an idea into a lithograph. The pencil drawing, stone, and the subsequent print lithograph illustrate how Wilson adapted his paintings or drawings into prints. His words express his love of lithography: "The stone's natural grain, its feel as my pencil or crayon passes over it, is almost sensual. It inspires me as I draw."

DANCERS DRESSING. Lithograph. Charles Banks Wilson (b. 1918). GM 1427.260.

Wilson achieved notoriety as a painter, illustrator, muralist, and lithographer. He trained at the Art Institute of Chicago in the 1930s. He went to New York for a time, but ultimately returned home to Miami, Oklahoma, and devoted his life and work to portraying the state, its history, people, and culture.

Dancers Dressing was published in *Collier's* in 1942 and later exhibited at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. "It was inspired by the shape of a bentwood chair that someone had left out in a hotel hallway. As I fiddled with a composition using the chair, I added figures, which soon dominated the picture." Wilson achieved deep, dense blacks in his lithographs. In *Dancers Dressing,* these add depth and a three-dimensional quality to the figures.



SEEDTIME AND HARVEST. Lithograph, 1937. Grant Wood (1891-1942). GM 14--.854.

Born in Iowa, Grant Wood was known as an artist of the American rural scene and a member of the Regionalist school. In *Seedtime and Harvest,* the farmer is selecting the best ears of corn for seed. Wood had an affinity for decorative patterns and used the element of repetition in the three precise rows of corn over the doorway and in the strict spacing of the rows in the background. The gathered shocks disappearing into infinity suggest nature's abundance, a message often seen in Wood's work.



WALT WHITMAN. Lithograph.
Samuel Woolf (1880-1948). GM 14--.151.

Painter, lithographer, and illustrator Samuel Woolf served as a frontline artist-correspondent for *Time* magazine in Europe with the army during World War I. He also developed a reputation as a portraitist producing works for *Collier's,* the *New York Times,* and *Time* magazine.

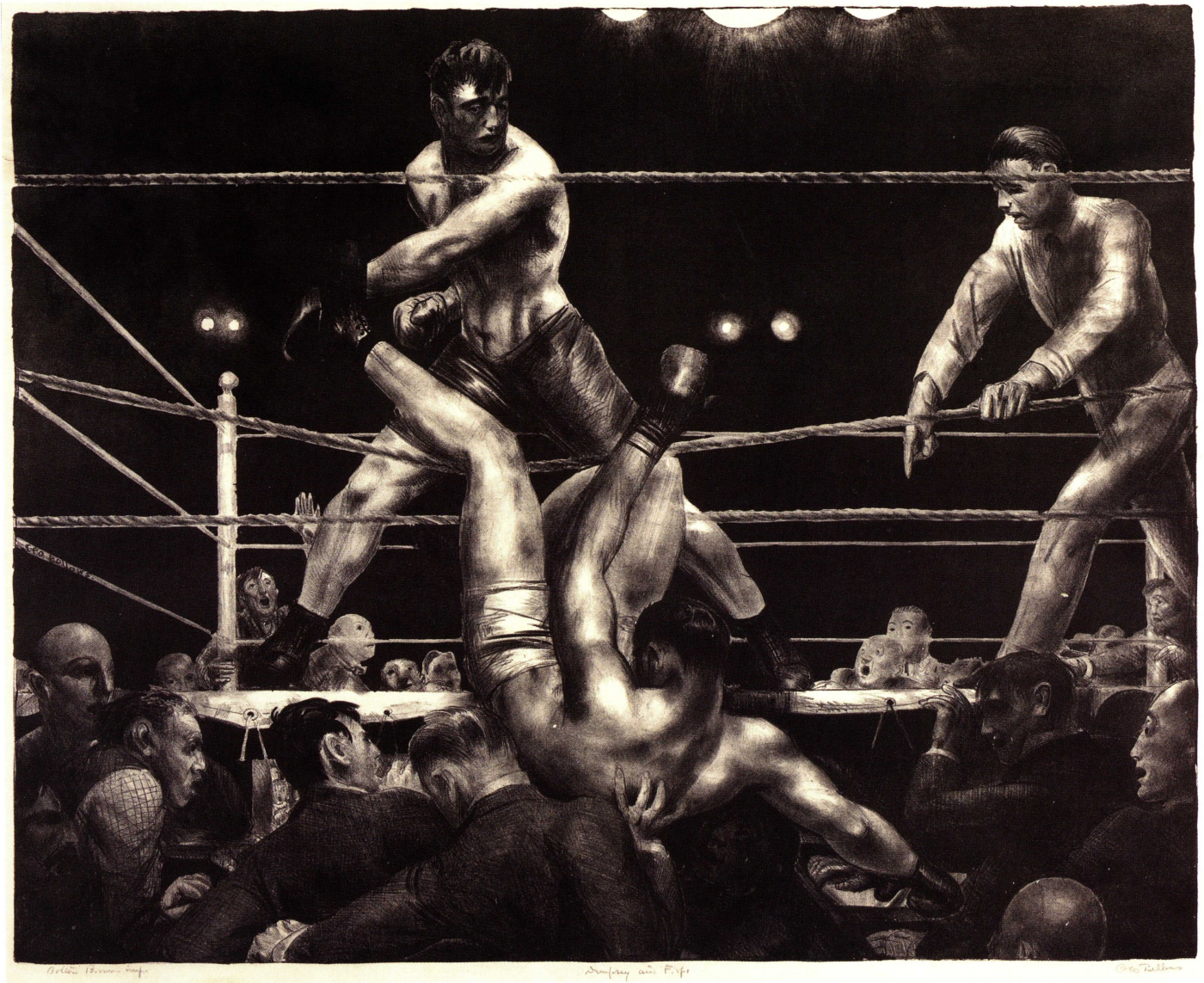
Woolfe's portrayal of Walt Whitman shows the sensitivity of the lithograph crayon as it responds to the variable pressure of the artist's hand. The results are very similar to the charcoal drawing techniques for which this artist is also known. Bold, thick lines shift to delicate lines and then finally to a smoothly finished tone in the face. A lithograph can retain the character of a great variety of strokes.

MOONLIGHT. Lithograph, 1934. Alexandre Hogue (1898-1994). GM 1427.291.

Alexandre Hogue was born in Missouri and grew up on a farm in Texas. He became internationally renowned as a Regionalist painter, muralist, illustrator, and printmaker. He was recognized for his landscapes relating to soil erosion, having himself witnessed the devastation of the land in the Dust Bowl. Hogue was also a well-respected teacher. He led the art department at the University of Tulsa from 1945 to 1968.

Hogue's connection to the land and the forces of nature became the focus of his work. His contact with the indigenous people in Taos who had a strong bond to the land reinforced his beliefs. His profound feeling for nature is reflected in the beauty and balance of his semi-abstract forms in *Moonlight.*





DEMPSEY AND FIRPO. Lithograph, 1924. George Bellows (1882-1925).
GM 1427.466.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, George Bellows was a painter and commercial illustrator who also became one of America's best printmakers. He was a student of Robert Henri, American painter, teacher, and leading member of the Ashcan school. The group, including Bellows, became known for portraying everyday life with social realism.

Bellows made significant contributions to lithography and helped to further the medium as a fine art. He employed the services of master lithographic printer Bolton Brown with whom he worked closely to achieve the delicate tones seen in *Dempsey and Firpo.* On September 14, 1923, in New York City, Luis Ángel Firpo challenged Jack Dempsey for the world heavyweight title. Though Dempsey floored his challenger seven times, the image captures a moment when Firpo sent Dempsey through the ropes. Dempsey won the historic fight, however, which lasted only three minutes and fifty-seven seconds.



HORSES RUNNING BEFORE A STORM. Lithograph, 1931.
John Steuart Curry (1897-1946).
GM 1400.843.

John Steuart Curry, painter, muralist, illustrator, and printmaker, was raised on the family farm in Northeast Kansas. Considered a Regionalist, he glorified rural life of the Midwest and had a particular fascination for animals. The lithograph *Horses Running Before a Storm* reveals the raw animal energy of horses in nervous excitement before an approaching storm.

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JAPONISME AND THE WEST



ROBERT B. PICKERING

"Living only for the moment, turning our full attention to the pleasures of the moon, the snow, the cherry blossoms and the maple, singing songs, drinking wine, and diverting ourselves just in floating, caring not a whit for the poverty staring us in the face, refusing to be disheartened, like a gourd floating along with the river current; this is what we call ukiyo-e."

—ASAI RYOI, 16TH CENTURY. Quoted in Lionel Lambourne's *Japonisme: Cultural Crossings between Japan and the West,* 2005

AMERICAN ART, AND ART OF THE AMERICAN WEST in particular, has been influenced and formed by many artists and styles over the last 200 years. Certainly, the landscape artists and portrait painters of Europe had significant roles. European-born artists, including Peter Rindisbacher, Karl Bodmer, and Albert Bierstadt, and later the immigrant artists Nicolai Fechin and E. I. Couse, came to the American West to be inspired by its beauty and left behind indelible marks for future generations.

The exploration of America—artistically, scientifically and culturally—was part of a worldwide trend in the nineteenth century. During the same period, Europeans explored the world for trade, riches, and empire. Along the way, explorers and traders encountered new art traditions from Africa, Asia, and the Pacific that excited and sometimes appalled audiences at home. Regardless of whether the first impression was positive or negative, exotic art, art of the "other," engaged and influenced artists of the time.

Morning Sun. Gustave Baumann, 1950.
Adkins L2007.00857
© 2010 The Eugene B. Adkins Collection at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, and the Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Japanese Arts

As the young American republic expanded its foreign interests, Americans also encountered exotic peoples and their arts. Clipper ship captains and crews visited Asian open ports. They observed new and strange customs, tried different foods, and marveled at the architecture and wealth of other nations. Very quickly, an active trade between East Asia, primarily China, and the U.S. developed. However, the opening of Japan by Commodore Mathew C. Perry's flotilla of black-hulled steamships not only initiated a new trade boom, it launched an interchange of art and ideas that continues today.

Though it was not considered high art, one of the most popular Japanese graphic arts in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was *ukiyo-e,* translated as "images of the floating world." *Ukiyo-e* and kabuki both were very popular art forms among the samurai and merchant classes of Japan. Librettos of kabuki were printed with covers designed in the *ukiyo-e* style, and *ukiyo-e* subjects included actors and scenes of kabuki plays. The courtesans of Yoshiwara, the entertainment district of Edo, were also frequent subjects. Later in this period, Japanese artists observed the strange clothing and habits of Europeans in the port city of Nagasaki as well as the Japanese who adopted some of these strange ways. Using traditional techniques, Japanese *ukiyo-e* artists began creating *Kamigata-e,* "Osaka prints" which depicted images of the "other" to the Japanese.

Traditionally, *ukiyo-e* required many highly skilled hands in the printmaking process. The artist created the drawings. A master block maker transferred the artist's vision to a series of individual wood blocks needed to make the actual print. The master block outlined the main design, but separate blocks were needed for each individual color. In the nineteenth century, blocks for adding texture to the print, usually to embellish articles of clothing or areas of cloud, also were carved. Hand-made rice paper was created by yet another skilled artisan. Ink was applied to the block. The printer burnished the paper placed against the block to transfer the ink to the paper. Each block, in turn, added to the image and built the color palette and design complexity. To create a single print, eight or more different blocks might be required. Some extraordinary *ukiyo-e* used more than thirty different blocks and colors. An edition of 100 prints, for example, would require each step of the process to be repeated for each individual print—it was all highly skilled and time-consuming handwork.

Over centuries, *ukiyo-e* artists worked together to master their crafts and collaborate in concert. As European art entered Japan, local artists observed. Yamamoto Kanae, a traditional *ukiyo-e* artist, learned that European printmakers did all their own work, even selling. This was a new concept in Japan. Yamamoto broke with his own tradition and began to perform all of the steps in the process. *Sosaku hanga*—creative prints—were the result. Yamamoto's work marked a clear departure in traditional Japanese art and influenced new generations of Japanese modernists. Their images were rather less refined than traditional prints. One person's efforts could not compete with the talents of an entire group of artisans, but then, the artist's involvement in every part of the process to present his vision was the point, not refinement.





Carved Japanese woodblocks. Field Museum, A114847d–004 and 012. Photos by John Weinstein.



Kabuki Actors. Toyokuni II. Original woodblock print, ca. 1850. Private collection.

Japanese Arts

As the young American republic expanded its foreign interests, Americans also encountered exotic peoples and their arts. Clipper ship captains and crews visited Asian open ports. They observed new and strange customs, tried different foods, and marveled at the architecture and wealth of other nations. Very quickly, an active trade between East Asia, primarily China, and the U.S. developed. However, the opening of Japan by Commodore Mathew C. Perry's flotilla of black-hulled steamships not only initiated a new trade boom, it launched an interchange of art and ideas that continues today.

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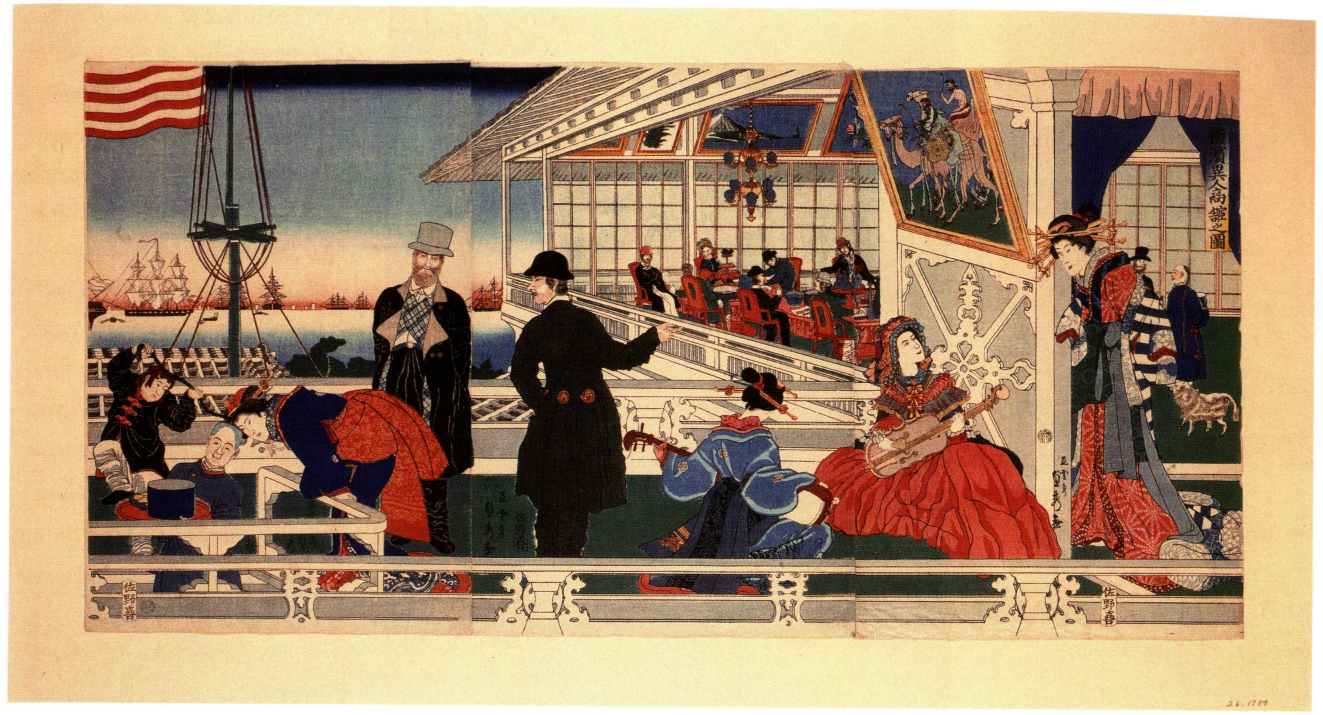
Japonisme

THE OPENING OF JAPAN TO THE WEST initiated an intense examination of everything Japanese. The language was difficult for European tongues; *kanji* characters for writing were not easily transformed into the alphabet familiar to Americans and Europeans. The customs, foods, everything seemed strange. Yet, the world quickly became fascinated with the artistic traditions. Traditional Japanese furniture offered simple lines and a celebration of wood grain and textures. At the same time, furniture and decorative arts made for the great lords and the Tokugawa shoguns were intricately ornate and evidenced extraordinary refinement of detail, design, and manufacture. The arms of Japan, including swords, armor, pole arms, and horse equipment, revealed a unique synthesis of high aesthetic principles with deadly functionality.

Scroll and screen paintings, originally borrowed from the Chinese, provided a strong contrast to western traditions. Something as simple as a pleated fan, made to create a breeze in the humid heat of a nineteenth-century palace garden, was embellished with delicate images and poetry. Japanese clothing, especially women's long, elegant silk kimonos, were admired in the West. Kimonos themselves were adopted as fashion wear while the image of the kimono in paintings evoked an aura of exoticism and elegance. The sometimes simple, sometimes over-the-top combination of color and design inspired an immediate and sustained passion in those who were expanding artistic horizons in the West. The elegance and very low prices attracted European artists and salon society. The influence of *ukiyo-e,* more than any other Japanese art, transformed European and American artistic thinking.



Kabuki libretto cover for *Jiraiya Gouketsu Monogatari,* a tale featuring "Jiraiya", the main character, a strong and brave samurai ("Gouketsu") who defeats villains and monsters. Woodblock print, ca. 1860. Private collection.



An American Mercantile Building in Yokohama (Yokohama ijin shôkan no zu). Hashimoto Sadahide, Japanese, (1808-c. 1878). Color woodblock print, 1861. Oban triptych. Gift of Mrs. Emily Crane Chadbourne, 1926.1784. The Art Institute of Chicago.

UKIYO-E, COLORFUL AND INEXPENSIVE, found a ready market among European, especially French, artists. While centuries of artistic training in Europe had developed and refined realism through perspective, subtle colors, and fine detail, Japanese wood block prints took a different approach. Prints were not intended to create the illusion of depth. The juxtaposition of figures sometimes seemed jumbled, at other times arbitrarily truncated. By cutting off images at the edges of prints, *ukiyo-e* focused attention on the central subjects. In some ways, the perspective is analogous to one looking at a scene through a window that drastically restricts the view, yet focuses attention. Even the sizes and shapes of Japanese prints surprised and inspired European artists. *Hashira-e,* also known as pillar or poster prints, utilized a narrow, vertical format designed to be hung in formal alcoves. While the blocks were delicately carved, the resulting prints used colors that were bold, even shocking, in comparison to earlier more subtle *ukiyo-e* prints. (The new colors were aniline dyes imported from Germany.) Foregrounds could be shortened drastically. Facial expressions, especially on actors, emphasized emotion rather than accurate detail.

In many ways, European and Japanese artists were responding to growing desires for increased personal freedom and expression. The Tokugawa shogunate ended the disastrous battling between competing daimyos but at the cost of a stifling and burdensome control over virtually all aspects of Japanese life. In Europe, both king and church imposed strict codes of behavior and severely sanctioned those who rebelled. In both cases, growing political and religious turmoil propelled individual artists to search for freedom of expression in art. The painters who became known as the Impressionists challenged traditional ideas of painting, of perceiving, of the nature of light itself.



Jane Avril. 1899 poster.

RIGHT: *La Japonaise.* Reproduction of the print by Claude Monet.

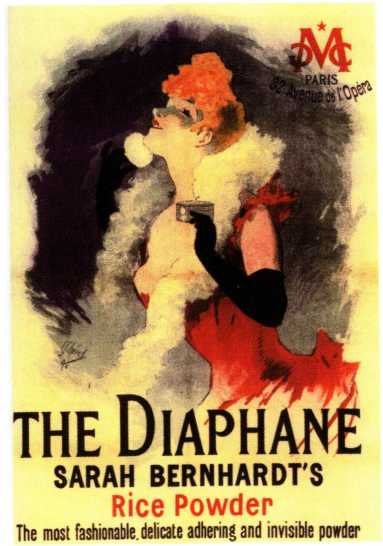
INSET: *La Diaphane.* 19th-century poster.



The influx of exotic, colorful prints from Japan offered new ways of thinking about and seeing the world. Hedonistic and genre scenes depicted in Japanese prints also resonated with the denizens of the Moulin Rouge and the Montmartre district of Paris. In the works of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and his enthusiastic adoption of the poster as an art form, the influence of *ukiyo-e* is clear. *Jane Avril, Divan Japonais,* and *Debauchery* are three striking examples. *Debauchery* mimics the erotic traditions of *shunga* prints by Moronobu and Shunsho. The similarity between the free-spirited existence or decadence of the Yoshiwara and Montmartre were not lost on Toulouse-Lautrec and his compatriots.

Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh were attracted to the genre scenes and portraits of *ukiyo-e.* Monet's *La Japonaise* and *Haystacks* are good examples as are Van Gogh's *Portrait of a Mousemé* and *Portrait of Père Tanguy.* In *La Japonaise,* Monet replicates a courtesan print with his model wearing a colorful kimono in a room with Japanese fans covering the back wall and strewn on the floor. Fin de siècle French painters borrowed many Japanese art forms, including clothing and decorative objects, in addition to *ukiyo-e* as part of the Japonisme popular trend. In the Père Tanguy portrait, three Japanese images, one an *ukiyo-e,* have been painted by Van Gogh as background. His brilliant colors and flatness are reminiscent of the Japanese style. Although not an Impressionist, Aubrey Beardsley also was influenced by the form and style of *ukiyo-e,* if not the colors.

The work of renowned poster artist Jules Chéret evidences the new Japanese sensibilities as seen in *La Diaphane.* Like Toulouse-Lautrec, he was influenced by the shape, design and color palette of Japanese prints. One of the ideas also adopted from the Japanese is that prints should be inexpensively made so that they could be sold cheaply to the masses. Poster art which promoted shows at the Moulin Rouge and other Parisian night spots was seen and appreciated by large numbers of people. Chéret and Toulouse-Lautrec revolutionized the idea of poster art and created a new and exciting art form.



BEFORE THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, aspiring American artists traveled to Europe, especially Paris, to study art and be immersed in the exciting new ideas that were swirling around the continent. Mary Cassatt, well known for her sensitive images of mothers and children, was captivated by Japanese style. Her *Young Woman Bathing* is similar in style and use of brilliant colors to Utamaro's *Sankatsu and Hanich* with their baby or Hokusai's *Women at Public Bath.* Cassatt's *The Letter,* in fact, is a similar composition to Utamaro's *The Courtesan Hinazuru at the Keizetsuru.* The bold colors of *The Boating Party* by Cassatt are reminders of the vivid colors and truncated scenes of *ukiyo-e.*





Kitchen Chores. Japanese woodblock print.

The Child's Bath. Mary Cassatt, American, (1844-1926). Oil on canvas, 1893. The Art Institute of Chicago, Robert A. Waller Fund, 1910.2.



Mourning Her Brave. George de Forrest Brush. Oil on panel, 1883. GM 0126.1189.

George De Forrest Brush's *Mourning Her Brave*, although an oil, uses stark flat planes of color and the vertical format of *ukiyo-e* to create a haunting image. Indeed, the theme of this painting and the personal desolation it portrays has parallels in the ghost story images of Hokusai and Yoshitoshi. Brush's oil painting *Out of the Silence* presents cranes or egrets (perhaps a Japanese reference in itself?) on a sky of patterned clouds that is reminiscent of kimono fabric. Brush lived in Paris for some years before 1880. Upon his return, he explored Wyoming and observed life among the Shoshones, Crows, and Arapahoes. His talent and authentic experience in the West brought him to the attention of *Harper's* and *Century Magazine* editors who commissioned his work.

James McNeil Whistler, best known today for his sedate *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Artist's Mother,* also influenced the Realist painters. In his formative years, he explored the colors, organization, and themes of Japanese art. Particularly fine examples include *Rose and Silver: The Princess from the Land of Porcelain, Symphony in White No. 2; The Little White Girl, Caprice in Purple and Gold - No. 2 - the Golden Screen;* and *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: the Balcony. "Caprice,"* in particular, uses the subjects, colors, and organization represented by *ukiyo-e* scenes of everyday life while other paintings incorporate Japonisme elements in more subtle ways.

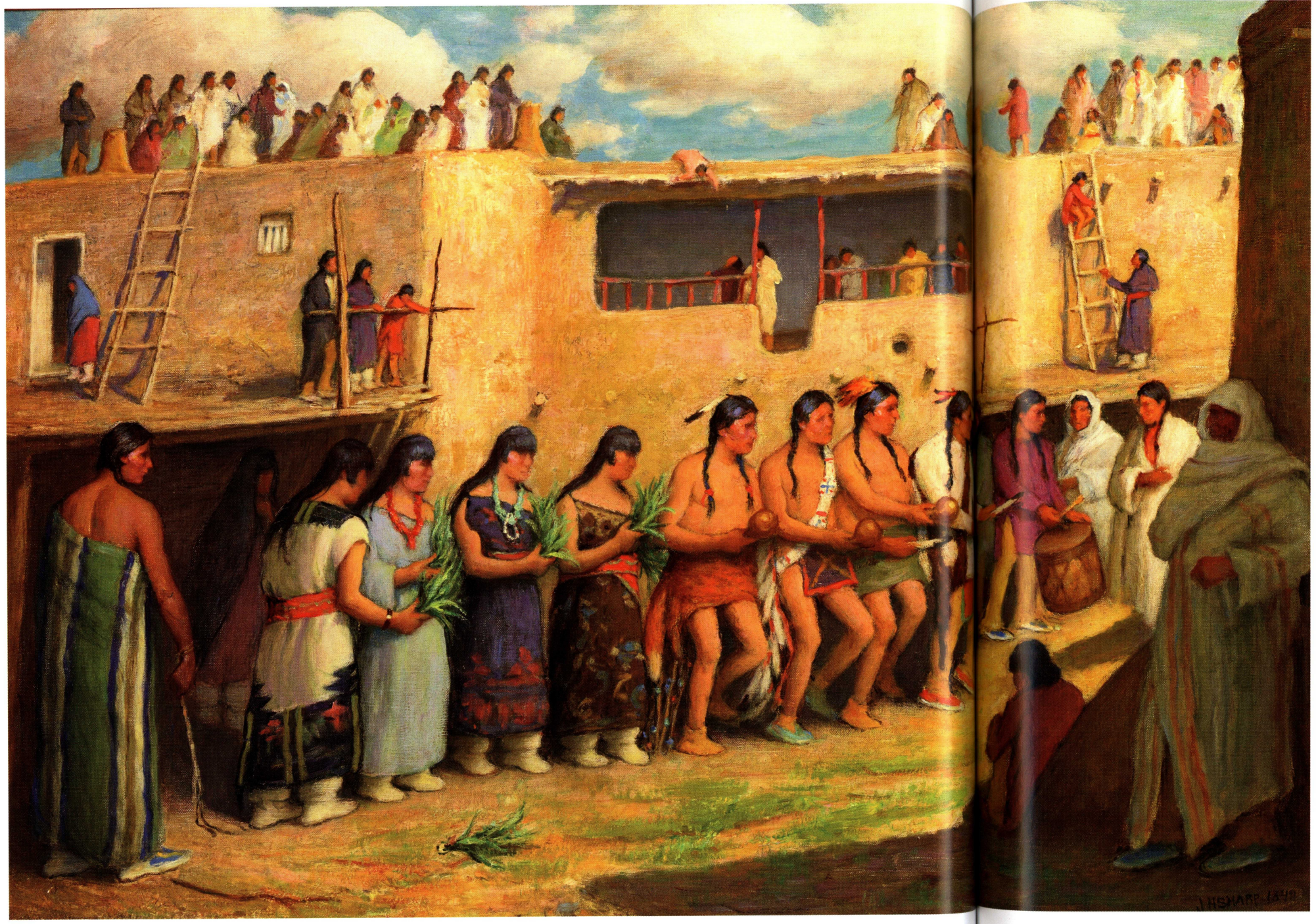
Paris at the end of the nineteenth century was exciting and dynamic. The very definition of art and its goals were hotly discussed and radically evolving. A few Americans were actually present in the great city, but many more—entire new generations of artists—learned and benefited from the changes. Very quickly, Impressionism and other new styles of art influenced American artists at home and spawned new artistic traditions.

Artists from the eastern United States and from Europe gravitated to the American Southwest in the last years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The quality of the light, the incredible vistas, and the exotic local Indian and Hispanic cultures (from their perspective) offered new opportunities at a time when "new" was a much sought-after commodity.

Joseph Henry Sharp taught art in Ohio during this period. In 1893, he visited Taos Pueblo and began a lifelong obsession with the West. By 1902, he was visiting Montana to paint scenes on the Crow Reservation. He built a log cabin, known as Absorokee Hut, as his studio and home. Although his Montana work was important, Sharp settled in Taos, New Mexico, where he became the inspirational if not actual founder of the Taos Society of Artists. Sharp's work is not particularly reflective of Japanese ideals or media, but some of the artists attracted to Taos and Santa Fe by Sharp were notable in this regard. However, in paintings such as *The War Chief's Story, The Great Mystery – Moonlight*, or *Prayer to the Spirit of the Buffalo,* Sharp tightly crops his images, sometimes truncating people or objects important to the scene, in a manner similar to *ukiyo-e.* The viewer's attention is drawn to the center of the painting.



The Great Mystery—Moonlight. Joseph Henry Sharp. Oil on canvas. GM 0137.325.



Green Corn Dance. Joseph Henry Sharp. Oil on canvas, 1949. GM 0137.303.



Zuni Olla Girls. Velino S. Herrera. Tempera. GM 0237.586.



Designs of Spring Greenery.
Isoda Koryusai (1735–1790).
Woodblock print, ca. 1779.
Denver Art Museum 1960.18.
Gift of Mrs. Frederic H. Douglas.

Contrasting with Joseph Henry Sharp's closely cropped images are many of his Crow and Pueblo Indian scenes that show a more expansive view, for example *Green Corn Dance*.

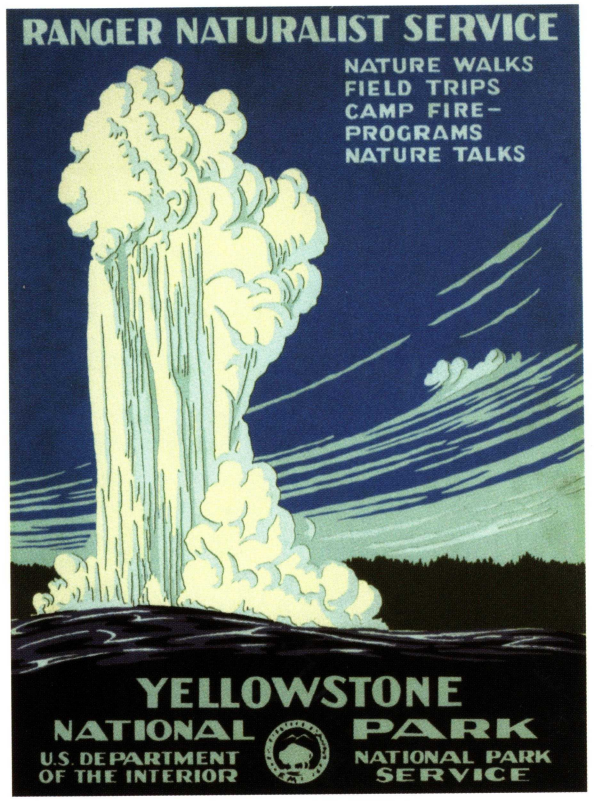
Sharp's *Green Corn Dance* and Velino Herrera's *Zuni Olla Girls*, with their colorful clothing, rhythmic repeated elements, and detailed personal accoutrement, bring to mind a traditional *ukiyo-e* print of strolling geishas.



Hunger. Walter Ufer.
Oil on canvas.
GM 0137.2196.



Old Faithful, Yellowstone. Oscar Berninghaus. Oil on canvas, 18.3125 x 42.125. Gift of August A. Busch Jr., St. Louis Art Museum 267:1997. ©1914.



Yellowstone National Park poster.

Other Santa Fe and Taos artists, including Ernest L. Blumenschein, Victor Higgins, E. Martin Hennings, and Walter Ufer, were influenced by Japonisme to greater or lesser degrees. O.E. Berninghaus's poster *Old Faithful, Yellowstone* is a fine example of both Japonisme and the European poster tradition advanced by Chéret and Toulouse-Lautrec. Indeed, in the early part of the nineteenth century, large dramatic posters, styled on the Japanese and European traditions were in vogue. Ludwig Hohlwein's Yellowstone Park poster *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone from Hayden Point* and Edward Brewer's *Yellowstone Park* are excellent examples.

Walter Ufer's *Hunger* is a closely cropped scene, foreshortened, and alive with vivid bright colors. Ernest Blumenshein's *Superstition* juxtaposes brightly colored, complex, and disparate designs around a lone central figure. The similarity to actor prints and their flamboyant costumes is evident.



Superstition. Ernest Blumenshein. Oil on canvas. GM 0137.531.

E. Martin Hennings's *Taos Pueblo at Night* is reminiscent of the darker architectural images of *ukiyo-e* of the last half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. His *In New Mexico* crops the central scene, revels in vibrant colors, but lacks the depth perception characteristic of his landscape works. One of the clearest examples of the tribute to Japonisme is Walter Mruk's *Homage to Mabel Dodge*. Mabel Dodge (Luhan) epitomized the wealthy Bohemian's search for new meanings in old places.



Homage to Mabel Dodge. Walter Mruk (1895–1942). Oil on canvas, 1919. Courtesy of Gerald Peters and the Caldwell Gallery.



Taos Pueblo at Night. E. Martin Hennings. Courtesy of Gerald Peters Gallery.



Church, Rancho de Taos. Gustave Baumann. Adkins L2007.00372 © 2010. The Eugene B. Adkins Collection at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, and the Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

When looking for examples of Japonisme in American West art, the extraordinary prints of Gustave Baumann are the most obvious. Baumann became a master of the medium and utilized many of the design concepts and colors of his Japanese counterparts. However, as Anne Morand notes, "…specifically related to prints, the greatest influence in America came in the resurgence of original printmaking in the 1930s and 1940s, and many of the artists who were working in the southwest engaged in a modernist version of Japonisme. Following the seventeenth- to nineteenth-century *ukiyo-e,* the twentieth-century styles in Japan included *shin hanga* and *sa saku hanga*." (Personal communication with the author.)

The printmaking tradition that encompassed colorful works as well as stark black and white images achieved great popularity among artists and patrons in the first half of the twentieth century. At that time, many young Indian artists were achieving national prominence, partially through the support of Thomas Gilcrease. It is tempting to see the reflection of *ukiyo-e* in the flat style art of Indian artists such as Acee Blue Eagle, Woody Crumbo, Alan Houser, Fred Kabotie, Harrison Begay, and others. Vibrant colors, lack of depth, genre scenes, focus on a single or few individuals, are commonalities featured by both. Velino S. Herrera's *Going for Water* and *The Zuni Olla Girls* both use repetitious similar images of women on colorful but sparse backgrounds. The effect is similar to prints of strolling geishas or courtesans. However, the preponderance of evidence suggests that flat style art evolved from ledger art and earlier pre-European forms such as hide paintings. The styles appear to converge but they have different roots.

However, later in the century, Indian artists definitely were influenced by Japanese art. T.C. Cannon was introduced to woodblock through the work of Kentaro Maeda (block carver) and Matashiro Uchikawa (printer), with whom he collaborated in the 1970s. *His Hair Flows Like a River,* 1978 and *Woman in Window* are outstanding examples. Although done in casein medium rather than as a print, Paul Pahsetopah's *After the Powwow* appears to be designed much like a Japanese print.







Woman in Window. T. C. Cannon. Woodcut on paper. GM 14.878.

After the Powwow. Paul Pahsetopah. Casein, 24.125 x 22. GM 0227.1809.

His Hair Flows Like a River. T. C. Cannon. Mid-1970s. Shown courtesy of Joyce Cannon Yi.



Ribbon Dance. Ruthe Blalock Jones. Oil on canvas. GM 0127.2504.01-02.

Works by Ruthe Blalock Jones (Shawnee-Delaware-Peoria) exemplify the convergence of traditional flat style and *ukiyo-e* in the second half of the twentieth century. As a student at Bacone College in the late 1960s, she was well schooled in traditional Indian arts and the influence of Woody Crumbo. She studied with Charles Banks Wilson. Jones has come full circle and is now director emeritus and associate professor of art at Bacone. She works in many media, including painting, drawing, linoleum block, woodcut and serigraph. In an interview with the author, Ms. Jones agreed that some of her works evoke a Japanese influence. She is attracted by the detail and the use of flat planes of brilliant color. She used the vertical dyptich style of *ukiyo-e* in *Ribbon Dance*.

To paraphrase Anne Morand, the impact of Japonisme had a broad, general effect on Western art that went beyond creating woodblock prints themselves. The *ukiyo-e* artists' use of space and perspective allowed artists from de Forrest Brush to Remington and Russell to explore different perspectives, to include the viewer at the edge of the scene, and to create distortions of perspective. Brush's *Mourning Her Brave* and Russell's *Meat's Not Meat 'Til It's In the Pan* are both good examples of this with their limitless space, dropoffs, and uptilted foregrounds. Brush would have encountered these ideas in French academic training. Russell would have seen examples in New York and in the way other artists in the U.S. and Europe were incorporating the Japanese aesthetic.

Art of the American West, that most American of arts, often has been defined by content more than style and all too often dismissed as a genre. Yet, it is clear that the artists who painted in the West were active experimenters with new forms. They pursued new ideas and adapted new techniques just as the American West, itself, was new to the world. Far from derivative, artists in the West strove to portray the stark beauty, the quality of light, and the exotiscm they found with a broad range of perspectives and approaches that can be attributed, in part, to Japonisme. At the same time, European and American art was having influence of similar scale on Japanese art.

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to Anne Morand (National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum), Joan Troccoli and Ron Otsuka (Denver Art Museum), and Marguerite House (Buffalo Bill Historical Center), who reviewed versions of this manuscript and provided insights and corrections. Any errors in the article, however, are entirely my own.

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BRITISH IMPRESSIONS



KIMBERLY ROBLIN

THE MORANS IN THE BRITISH ISLES, 1882

BOASTING ROUGHLY 1,294,000 PEOPLE within its comparatively small city limits in 1882, New York was an urban epicenter of concentrated and confined energy that radiated movements and trends. Rapid and unprecedented advances in science and industry were reshaping the world, and New York strode at the forefront of this modernization. Cranes and cables criss-crossed the city as construction crews issued the unmistakable sounds of progress. With a main span of almost 1,600 feet, the Brooklyn Bridge was rising above the East River to connect Brooklyn and Manhattan. Mass transit was developing, workers chiseled and dynamited the Lincoln Tunnel, and Edison's new electric light illuminated the streets after dark.

Technology, however, was not the only field experiencing transition, and as a cultural center New York paid particular attention to the resurgence of etching, once lapsed into decline but now regaining popularity for its ability to convey great detail. Etching societies sprang up across the eastern seaboard, and among the early members of New York's Etching Club was a middle-aged, English-born artist, Thomas Moran, who lived with his wife Mary Nimmo Moran and their three children across the river from New York in Newark, New Jersey.

Conway Castle. Thomas Moran after Joseph William Turner. Etching on paper, 1879. GM 1426.391a.

Moran completed this etching in 1879 after an original painting by Turner. The famed artist and critic John Ruskin said of it, "Your etching is very powerful and interesting…and the picture must be good."





Thomas Moran. Photogravure by Napoleon Sarony. GM 4326.6126. Mary Nimmo Moran. Photogravure by Napoleon Sarony. GM 4326.5578.

According to his 1866 passport application, Thomas Moran was five-foot-nine with blue-grey eyes, brown hair, and a light complexion. This photograph was taken roughly twenty years later and shows a husband, father of three, and successful artist.



Mary Nimmo Moran. Hamilton Hamilton. Oil on canvas, 1883. GM 0126.1191.

Done by Hamilton Hamilton, an accomplished etcher and painter, this portrait was completed the year after the family's return from Britain. According to the New York Etching Club's minutes of December 1884, Thomas Moran nominated Hamilton for membership, and he was elected to active membership the following meeting.

Born in Scotland, Mary Nimmo Moran immigrated at a young age with her family. A talented artist, she excelled at etching and produced over sixty prints in her career.



"Craigmillar Castle Near Edinburgh" from *Tales of a Grandfather* by Sir Walter Scott. Joseph William Turner, 1842. Engraving. GM 1576.479.

Landscape etchings were popular with artists and buyers alike, and while art critics argued over the value of the medium, Moran and others supplied the steadily increasing public demand. From 1882 to 1883 alone, etchings increased from representing 34 percent of total art sales to 74 percent.

Joseph William Turner was one of the most popular artists of his time, noted for his use of color and the dreamy quality of his compositions. Like Moran and so many other artists, he had also often worked as an illustrator as seen in this frontispiece. This etching was part of Thomas Moran's personal collection.





Neighbor Eldred's Barn. James David Smillie. Etching on laid paper, 1883. GM 1426.617.

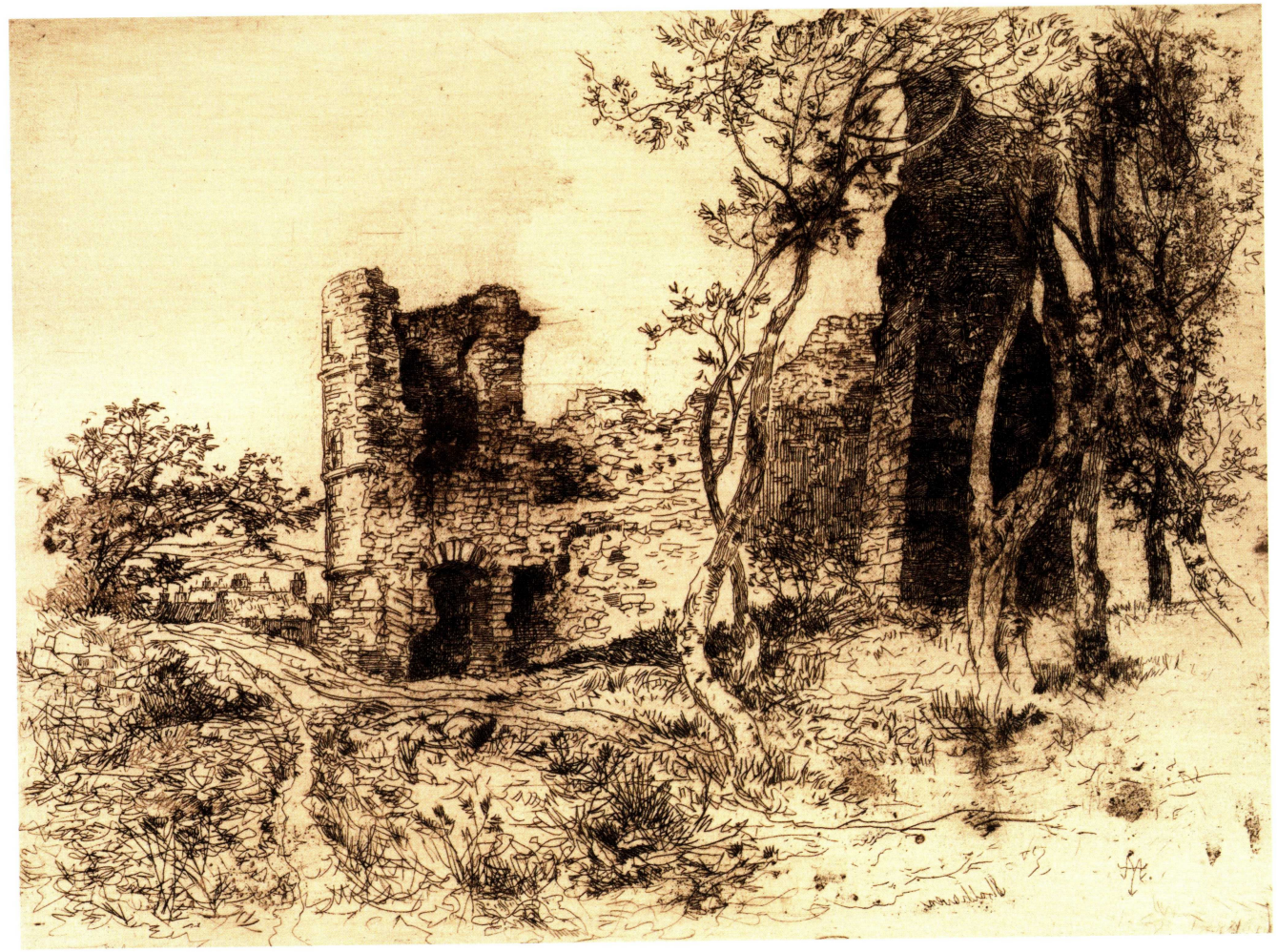
Farmhouse. Hendrik-Durse Kruseman Van Elten. Etching on laid paper. GM 1426.465.

Among the members of the New York Etching Club were James David Smillie and Hendrik-Durse Kruseman Van Elten. Membership was by nomination and subsequent election only, and each year the club produced a catalog of recent works. Meetings were held every few months at a member's studio as minutes were dutifully recorded.

Established and successful, Thomas Moran had been involved in art for most of his forty-three years. His family had immigrated from Lancashire, England, to Pennsylvania when he was a child; at sixteen he apprenticed at a Philadelphia wood-engraving firm, where he honed skills critical to etching. After three years he left the firm, ending the only formal training of his career, and joined his brother Edward at Edward's studio, producing his first etching the same year. Even from this early point, he was heavily influenced by the work of Joseph William Turner, particularly drawn to the Englishman's colors, lines, and overall romantic manner. In the summer of 1862, Thomas and Edward traveled to England. Thomas spent months studying Turner's work at the National Gallery before attempting to trace the artist's footsteps across the countryside and coasts of England. When Moran's work as a serious etcher began to be noticed some nineteen years later, Turner's influence on him was still evident. *The New York Times* reported that Moran was finishing a very large etching of the Conway view by Turner.

To promote his work and in line with his own observation that American artists were prone to seek their subjects in foreign lands, Moran decided to spend the summer and early fall of 1882 in Britain. On May 12 he escorted his wife Mary, herself a talented artist, and the couple's three children aboard the S.S. *Ethiopia* for Glasgow. They would spend the next five months sketching and etching their way through England, Scotland, and Wales.

Strathaven, the birthplace of Mary Nimmo Moran, was among the first stops on the family's trip when they arrived in Scotland. An irregular old town, it was located in Lanarkshire on the banks of the Avon River with a castle that spoke of an old and violent past.



Strathaven Castle—Scotland. Thomas Moran. Etching on paper, 1882. GM 1426.393a.





Pass at Glencoe, Scotland. Thomas Moran. Watercolor on paper, 1882. GM 0226.1636.

Pass of Glencoe. Thomas Moran. Pencil, 1882. GM 1376.782.

After leaving Strathaven, the family traveled north into the rugged Highlands and stopped at Glencoe, site of the infamous 1692 massacre. There, on February 13, after spending nearly two weeks enjoying MacDonald hospitality, Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon and his soldiers followed the royal order to put every MacDonald under the sword. Attacking while their hosts slept, they killed thirty-eight men. Still not sated, they set fire to every home and forced women and children into the night, ultimately sending forty to their deaths from exposure. The Scottish Parliament ruled that Campbell and his men had committed murder, but no punishment was ever enforced and the massacre became an often romanticized and popular subject of art, poetry, and fiction.





Bridge in the Pass of Glencoe—Scotland. Thomas Moran. Etching, mezzotint on paper, 1888. GM 1426.396a.

FACING: *Bridge in the Pass of Glencoe—Scotland* (detail). Thomas Moran. Etching on wove paper, 1882. GM 14.923.

Moran sketched the Pass of Glencoe while he and his family visited, later painting a watercolor and an oil based on the drawing. For reasons unknown, he destroyed the oil in 1893, but a critic's description survived: "The Bridge of Three Waters, Pass of Glencoe, Scotland, where the massacre of the MacDonalds took place, is painted with the love and spirit of a Highlander, and one might fancy the artist had worked to the sound of the bagpipes. Mr. Moran possesses something of the feeling for color that made Turner immortal."

In addition to the watercolor and oil, Moran also completed etchings in 1882 and 1888. The later print bears a thistle remarque in the lower right-hand corner.

While Moran's trip to Great Britain inspired future works, its primary purpose was the promotion of his current works through exhibitions. After touring the Highlands, the family traveled south into England, stopping in Moran's birthplace of Bolton, Lancashire. There they stayed with the Tillotson family, art collectors and owners of two Bolton newspapers. While in town Moran arranged a very well received exhibition of his work, including 200 oils and 100 watercolors, at the Bromley Art Gallery in Bradshawgate. Afterwards the family continued south to London where they stayed for nearly three months, Moran again exhibiting his work to great success. While in London, they visited museums, sat in on a session of Parliament, and met two influential figures of the art world—art critic John Ruskin and fellow artist Francis Seymour Haden, who invited them to his country estate, Mayfair.

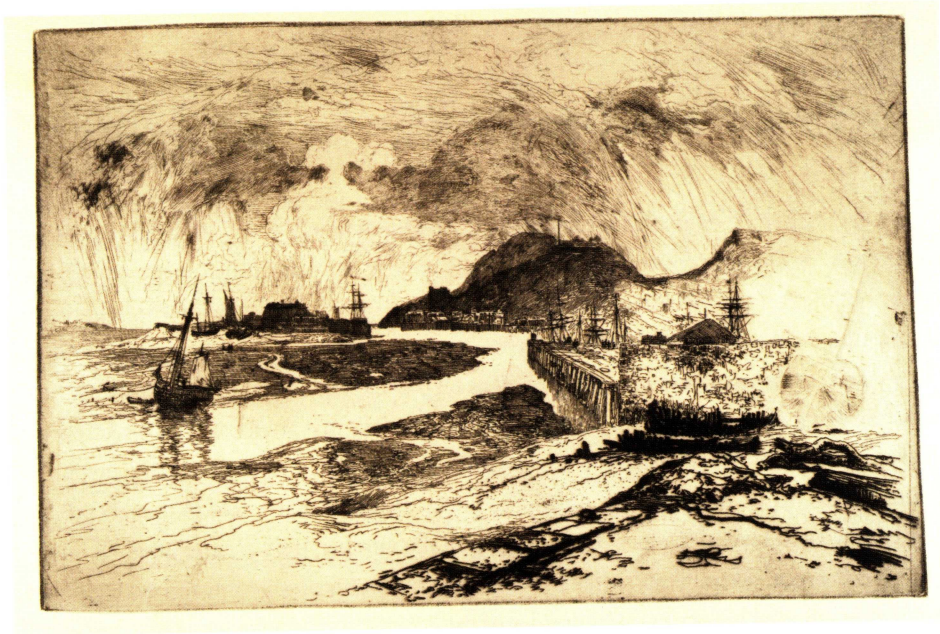
By August, the family was in southern England, where Moran sketched scenes for a future print titled *An English River* (page 78). Near Ringwood and New Forest in Hampshire, it was a pastoral scene, a popular subject for etchings and engravings.

The Morans were on the northern coast of Wales at Conwy, commonly known as Conway, by early September. Conway Castle was the particularly compelling subject of a famous work by Turner and of Moran's successful etching. On this visit, however, Mary Nimmo also produced an etching of the castle, working in the open air as she preferred. A very talented artist, she was a member of the New York Etching Club and Painter-Etcher's Society of London. Her subject here, Conway Castle, was built by King Edward I in 1284 in an effort to intimidate the lately suppressed Welsh uprising.

Conway, North Wales. Thomas Moran. Pencil, watercolor on wove paper, 1882-1883. GM 0276.803.

In Caernarfonshire in northern Wales, Moran made an image of Porthmadog, commonly known as Port Madoc, a busy shipping harbor. Unlike many nearby villages, Port Madoc did not have ancient origins, but was instead founded in the early nineteenth century by W.A. Maddocks. It became a primary port for export of slate from England, but by the turn of the century the market was waning, and by World War I, slate exports had all but ceased.

One of the Morans' final stops before returning to America was Harlech Castle on the northwest coast, only eleven miles from Port Madoc. Moran sketched the castle from his hotel window. Like Conway Castle, Harlech was built by King Edward I as a display of English strength and dominance. It played a significant role in the War of the Roses between the Houses of Lancaster and York. Yorkists could not establish support in northern Wales because Harlech Castle was a Lancastrian stronghold.



Port Madoc—Wales. Thomas Moran. Etching on paper, 1882-1883. GM 1426.404.

Harlech Castle—Wales. Thomas Moran. Etching on paper, 1882. GM 1426.406.



FACING: *A Glimpse of Conway.* Mary Nimmo Moran. Etching on paper, 1882. GM 1426.90a.



An English River. Thomas Moran. Etching on paper, 1882. GM 1426.405.

On October 11, after five months abroad, the Moran family and 1,100 other passengers aboard the S.S. *Devonia* docked in New York harbor. Moran wasted little time assuming his responsibilities on the executive committee of the New York Etching Club, recorded present at a meeting held only five days later in the studio of Henry Farrer. Over the coming year, his thirty-seven British sketches served him well as he painted and issued prints depicting the romantic ruins and a lonely glen. Countering the argument that artists did not directly create their prints, Moran worked closely with the printers of his plates, often producing up to twenty proofs before he was satisfied with the finished etching that would ultimately sell for between two and seventy dollars, depending upon the number, the size, and other factors.

For the next several years, Moran remained active in his production and evaluation of etchings, exhibiting his works on both sides of the Atlantic. In December of 1888, he even became a director of the newly incorporated Society of American Etchers, an organization created to advance and promote the art of etching and engraving. As a medium, however, etching began to decline in popularity as it had in the past, and by 1891 both Thomas and his wife Mary had resigned from the New York Etching Club. Thomas instead chose to dedicate his energy to the New York Art Guild, of which he had recently been elected president. More than fifteen years would pass, and Moran's career would be near its end, before etching again began to regain popularity.

Moran's contributions to the art world, however, remained constant. He continued to travel, visiting Mexico, Venice, and even returning to Great Britain in 1906 where he once again sketched the great castles of northern Wales. He made his final trip abroad four years later, again to Great Britain. This time, however, he strayed from his familiar haunts and visited new areas in Scotland, including the Trossachs and Loch Katrine.

By the end of his career, Moran had produced over eighty etchings in total and thousands of sketches, watercolors, and oils, even painting a stage curtain for a New York theater. When he died in 1926 at the age of eighty-nine, newspapers across the world noted the passing of one of America's great artists. They talked of his paintings of Yellowstone and the other natural wonders of the West, his work illustrating exotic places. But his contributions to printmaking were also noted, particularly by the home newspaper of the city where he had been so active. On September 19, the *New York Times* ran the headline "American Etching Indebted to Moran." The article discussed his career, from apprentice to master, from etcher to painter, and in one line summarized a vital element of both the man and the intrinsic appeal of his printed work: *Thomas Moran represented a particularly enticing period in American etching. . . . In his plates and those of his fellow etchers one may find something of the enthusiasm of discovery.*

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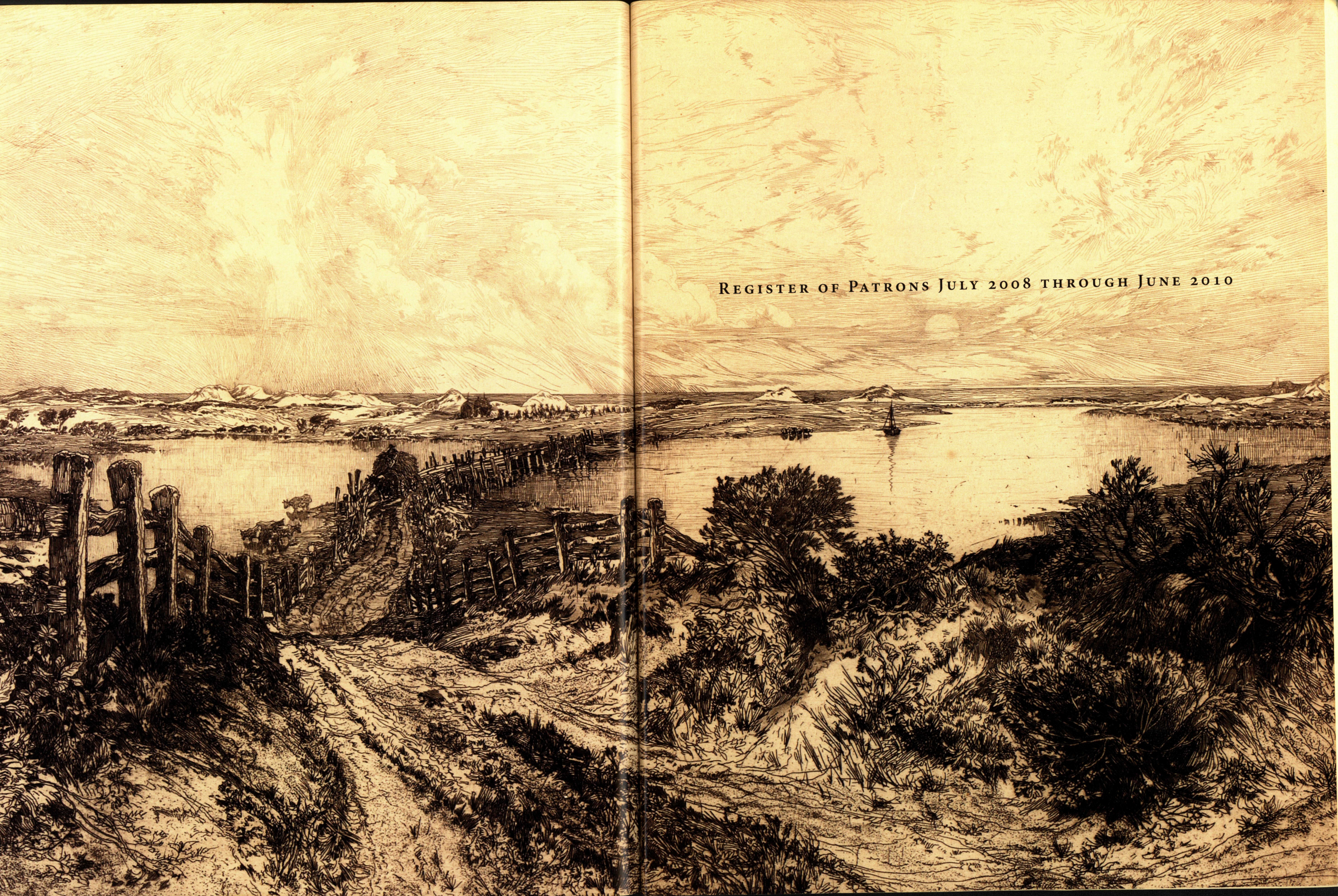
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Since the partnership began, the museum has been visited more than 185,000 times, which represents a high-water mark for attendance. In its new role as steward of the museum and collection, TU is leveraging its nationally recognized academic expertise in western American history, art history, anthropology and archaeology propelling Gilcrease into its new era.

Gilcrease has integrated with the TU curricula and other university activities, with 45 active linkages existing between the Gilcrease Museum and the university's academic departments. Additionally, TU launched a new master's program in Museum Science and Management during the spring 2010 academic semester. The degree program was developed in consultation with Gilcrease Museum staff to provide a rigorous, inter-disciplinary program combining topics including conservation, education, business management, fundraising, law, and ethics.

We have you, our generous partners, to thank for our early success and the resulting momentum. This listing includes total gifts received from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010. As the museum moves forward into an ever brighter future, we recognize that we do so upon a strong foundation.

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