ALFRED O. DESHONG COLLECTION

Widener University
Art Collection & Gallery
Chester, PA
The first page of a ledger belonging to John Odenheimer Deshong, Alfred Deshong's father, 1834
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Cover Illustration: The hall in the Deshong Mansion, 9th Street and Avenue of the States, Chester  Courtesy Delaware County Historical Society
Alfred Odenheimer Deshong was born in Chester, Pennsylvania, on September 30, 1837. He was educated in the public schools of Chester and at Bolmar Academy, West Chester. In 1862, Alfred and his cousin, Joshua P. Eyre (1836-1889), enlisted as privates in Company K, Tenth Regiment, Pennsylvania Militia, and served during the Antietam campaign under Captain Thatcher. In 1863, Alfred enlisted in Captain William Frick’s company, 37th Regiment, Emergency Corps, and served during the Gettysburg campaign. He was honorably discharged on August 4, 1863. For thirty years following the Civil War, Alfred and his brother, John, operated the Deshong stone quarries. The partnership ended with John’s death on November 1, 1895.

During his lifetime, Alfred Deshong was known for his philanthropy, particularly to Chester Hospital. He loved dogs and was an enthusiast for the newly invented automobile. His main interest, however, was art collecting. The following paragraph is taken from the History of the Delaware County National Bank written by Henry Graham Ashmead and published in 1914. (Alfred was a director of the bank from 1896-1913.)
“Alfred O. Deshong was distinguished as an art critic, and as such his opinion was sought by artists and art students in all sections of the country. In his residence on Edgmont Avenue, Chester, he gathered a collection of high grade paintings, ivory carving, and old Japan bronzes, etc., which was known far and near for the superior character of the articles it contained. Many of the most distinguished personages in the United States have received the hospitality of the mansion, hence to it can be applied the words of the poet, “The ornaments of a house are the guests that it contains.”

During the period in which Alfred Deshong was forming his collections, Japanese art and design had begun to have an enormous impact upon Western artists like Whistler, Degas, and Manet. Deshong was exhibiting a discerning and up-to-date taste when he acquired such items as the beautiful and intricate Oriental bronzes and carved ivories, which form the bulk of his collection and include a monumental bronze vase exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876. Among the many other objects in the collection are Chinese carved hardstone, including jade; Chinese cinnabar lacquer boxes; and extremely detailed Japanese cloisonné enameled vases.

His taste in paintings was more conventional. He preferred landscapes and genre scenes and the artists he favored were mostly Europeans, trained in the academies of Germany and Italy, their education often completed in Paris. Essentially conservative, the academies emphasized technical proficiency, skill in drawing and the story-telling aspects of painting. With the rise of Impressionism and of 20th century abstract art, the often sentimental artists collected by Mr. Deshong slipped into near obscurity. Although critics have overlooked such anecdotal paintings for much of the present century, they have recently begun to return to favor with collectors for the technical skill and meticulous attention to detail that also appealed to 19th century art lovers who, like Deshong, bought paintings they could understand.
Alfred O. Deshong was a lavish host, entertaining artists, musicians, and political figures in the family home, which he had filled with art objects. He never married, however, and toward the end of his life, for reasons which remain a mystery, he became reclusive, with his beloved dogs as his principal companions. His last art purchase was a pair of large Foo dogs cast in bronze. Once the guardians of a temple, the dogs were placed flanking the door of the Deshong Mansion. Deshong died on April 19, 1913.

*Bronze Bust of Alfred O. Deshong, 1916*
Samuel Murray (American 1869-1941)
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection
The Deshong Family

The Deshong family and its holding in and around Chester, play a recurring role in the history of Widener University. Not only is Alfred O. Deshong’s extraordinary art collection now part of the University’s collection, but one family home is now a women’s residence hall, Old Main is built on land that once belonged to the family, and part of the University’s physical education facilities stand on the site of one of the family businesses. The story begins generations before collector Alfred O. Deshong, in the middle of the eighteenth century....

Peter Deshong, grandfather of Alfred O. Deshong, was born in 1781 to a French immigrant and miller named Pierre deShaw and his wife, Susanna Gilman deShaw. During his 46 years of life, Peter not only anglicized the family name but also moved his household from Philadelphia to Chester. A tall, slender man with a very pale complexion and long, dark braided hair, Peter owned the Lapidea Grist Mill on Crum Creek until 1808. Toward the end of his short life, he was the owner of the packet sloop “Mary and Louise” (named for his wife and daughter) which plied the Delaware River twice each week, carrying cargo between Chester and Philadelphia.

Peter’s wife, Mary Odenheimer Deshong, from whom Alfred O. Deshong’s middle name was derived, was the daughter of a German who had settled in Philadelphia prior to 1750. Mary was raised on her father’s farm, “Ridley,” to which the family had moved after the devastating yellow fever epidemic of 1793.
That farm played the first significant role in the history of Widener University. Purchased by Mary’s father, John, in 1771 it was composed of 177 acres of land beginning roughly a mile from Chester along Ridley Creek. Twenty acres of the property became “the site of Col. Hyatt’s Military Academy” (now Widener University). And the stone quarry that we know to have been on Odenheimer’s farm is very likely the quarry in which the University’s Hansell Track and Field is set.

Peter and Mary Deshong were well known in Chester. Mary was the postmistress from 1824 to 1835 and remained in the city until her death in 1869 at the age of 90. Peter was one of the incorporators of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, where he served as a vestryman for 20 years, and a founder of the Delaware County National Bank, which he served as a director from 1815 to 1825.

The eldest of the three Deshong children, John successively operated a dry goods/grocery store and then a very successful lumberyard, both in Chester. In addition, he had inherited the Odenheimer quarry at “Ridley” and also owned a quarry on Crum Creek called “Island Field.” Wealthy and respected, John was director of the Delaware County National Bank for nearly 50 years and one of the largest stockholders in Chester Gas Company. He and his wife, Emmeline (nee Terrill), built and occupied a large home at the corner of Ninth St. and Edgmont Ave., Chester. Known as the Deshong Mansion, the house was home to John and Emmeline, the surviving five of their seven children, and John’s unmarried sister.

*Portrait of John Deshong*
Unknown Photographer
Widener University,
Alfred O. Deshong Collection
Alfred Odenheimer Deshong was born to John and Emmeline on September 30, 1837. Educated in the public schools of Chester and Bolmar Academy, West Chester, he maintained the Deshong Mansion as his residence throughout his life, living there after his parents’ death with his younger brother John. After service as a Union private at Antietam and Gettysburg during the Civil War, Alfred returned to Chester where he and young John operated the Deshong stone quarries. The partnership ended with John’s death in 1895 at the age of 54. Of Alfred’s other siblings who survived childhood – Howard (1839-1861), Louise (1848-1925) and Clarence (1849-1927) – only Louise and Clarence lived to old age.

Louise lived with her husband, Jonathan Edwards Woodbridge, in a large brick home at 14th and Potter Streets, about two blocks from University Center. The building is today a University residence hall known as the Manor House. The Gallery has a small collection of photographs showing interiors of the Manor House and of Alfred’s Deshong Mansion which are copies of originals taken by Louise, a pioneer among women photographers.
Jonathan Edwards Woodbridge, husband of Louise Deshong. Jonathan was from Virginia and received his education at Virginia Military Institute, beginning in January 1862. When he was a second classman he was cadet sergeant major, the highest ranking non-commissioned officer in the corps, and in that capacity served in the battle of New Market. He graduated in 1865.

In September 1865, he moved to Chester, PA. For more than forty years he was employed as a naval architect and mechanical engineer.

On May 23, 1876, he married Louise Deshong, the only daughter of John Odenheimer Deshong. He and Louise built the large brick home at the corner of 14th and Potter Streets. The building is today a university residence hall.

Jonathan Edwards Woodbridge as a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute. When Woodbridge died in 1935, the cadets from Pennsylvania Military College, now Widener University, served as the honor guard at his funeral.

*Courtesy Virginia Military Institute*
Louise Deshong Woodbridge (1848-1925)

*Chester River Looking East*, 1875
oil on canvas
Widener University Collection, Purchase 2007

Louise and her husband shared an avid interest in natural science, travel, history and art. Louise was also a photographer. It is believed that her photograph (*left*), which appears to be the same locale as the painting above, may have been used as an aid in painting *Chester River Looking East*.
The youngest brother, Clarence, became an authority in the breeding of horses and cattle and was well known as the breeder and owner of a number of famous trotting and saddle horses. Clarence lived on the southwest corner of Broad and Madison Streets, Chester, and owned about 100 acres called "Island Farm" in Crum Lynne, Middletown Township.

The story of the Deshong family and its recurring association with Widener does not end with Clarence’s death in 1927. Our efforts to reconstruct the family history, to gather Louise’s photographs and other family memorabilia were undertaken with the assistance of Mrs. Jane Deshong Felix, widow of Dr. Howard C. Deshong, and the Delaware County Historical Society.
Sorrow, c. 1910
Samuel Murray (American 1869-1941)

Bronze; Inscribed “Sketch for figure / of Sorrow in Rural Cemetery / Lot of A.O. Deshong, Esq. / Chester, Pa. / Samuel Murray Sculptor”

Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection
The Japanese eagle pictured in front of Alfred Deshong’s home can now be seen in front of Old Main, near the corner of 14th St. and Melrose Ave., on the Main Campus of Widener University.
The gallery (above) and the reception room (above right) in Alfred O. Deshong's home. *Courtesy Delaware County Historical Society*
RECEPTION ROOM

Selected Paintings
From the
Alfred O. Deshong Collection
Louis Émile Adan (French 1839-1937)

*Anxious Moments* (not dated)
oil on canvas

The following description of Adan’s *Anxious Moments* was written by John Getz, curator for Alfred O. Deshong, in the catalogue he prepared for Deshong’s collection: “Shows a Norman­dy Coast scene during a storm with watchers anxious for the fisherman’s return.”

Born in Paris in 1839, Louis Émile Adan began his artistic training at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was a participant in the annual Paris Salons beginning in 1863 until the year of his death in 1937. *Anxious Moments* was exhibited in the Salon of 1893.

Adan was a realist painter whose main subject was women, represented singly or in groups. His subjects were frequently placed in agrarian settings. The somber tone of *Anxious Moments* places it in a period of the artist’s work that dates from the late 1880s through the turn of the century. It was during this period that the artist found his voice.

Prior to this period, Adan had established his reputation on pleasing images of women in everyday life or elegant young women dressed in fashionable attire. However, toward the end of the 1880s, after some book illustrating projects, a significant change in his style occurred. He began a series of paintings, somber in tone, in which he rendered scenes of women enduring the rigors of rural life. He empathetically captured, not their physical beauty, but their dignity in toil and duress.
La Sortie de l’égîle de Ciboure (Leaving the Church of Ciboure) of 1887, heralded the change in his approach. In this painting, black-clad Basque parishioners walk across a stone placed outside a foreboding stone church. In 1889, he painted Le Soir (Evening) which depicts women and children laboring in the fields.

With Les Bruleurs d’herbe (Grass Burners) painted three years before Anxious Moments, Adan came to the attention of the American collector Charles Warren Cram and was introduced into the American art market where the paintings of this distinctive period were admired and purchased.

In Anxious Moments, fishermen’s wives ascend steep steps up a rocky cliff to eagerly view the distant boats in hopes that they husbands will return safely. The grey clouds move across the heavens, the wind sweeps the landscape so that one woman holds her head scarf. The women are looking eagerly out to sea, pointing or peering. One peers through what appears to be a telescope. A child kneels at the rail, his hands raised as if in prayer. At this high point there is a crucifix which faces out to sea, referring to the faith that undergirds these simple and strong families of fishermen. The setting closely resembles a cliff with a cross at Le Tréport, a small fishing port town in the Normandy region suggesting Adan may have based his narrative on an actual location.

Adan has empathetically created an epic drama based on the theme of survival at sea. His realistic treatment of the theme calls to mind the American painter Winslow Homer who painted such masterpieces as Summer Night (1890) at this time.

Following his depictions of women enduring hardships, Adan turned to images marked by tenderness and intimacy, believed to have perhaps stemmed from a personal change in his own life. Motherhood (1898) shows a gentle domestic interaction of a woman with her baby. Little is known about what he painted in his last years.
François Auguste Biard (French 1798/9-1882)
_The Artist's Den_ (not dated)
oil on canvas laid down on Masonite

_The Artist’s Den_ is a narrative based on François Auguste Biard’s own adventures in the Brazilian rain forest where he painted, illustrated, and engaged in his passion as an amateur naturalist. A native of France, he went on a self-financed expedition to Brazil from 1858 to 1860. The oil painting is undated, but may have been executed during his sojourn, using his atelier in Espírito Santo as the setting.

The tropical studio, similar to a large greenhouse, is filled with a palm tree, lush foliage, and a wide assortment of birds and animals including monkeys, a turtle, crocodiles, and a bear. Strong light pours in from the background. In a strategic compositional gesture, Biard partially hides himself behind a tree, not showing his face. Seated sideways, balancing his palette on his knee, he paints on an easel. Out of his direct line of vision, he reveals a fantasy or dream narrative which angles to the right of the picture. A young man sits in admiration at the feet of a voluptuous blond model dressed in native dress, asleep on a hammock. Meanwhile two surprised priests leading a cluster of people, unexpectedly discover the scene. One priest looks with scorn and the second one peeks over the foliage at the scene.

The subject most likely reflects the artist’s biography as he contrasts the views of a young man with those of the priests as they scornfully confront the voluptuous model. Biard himself originally intended to become a priest, but chose a career in painting instead.
Biard wrote and illustrated a travel account of his trip to Brazil which was published by Hachette (Paris, 1862). The book includes over 180 wood engravings, drawn by Édouard Riou from Biard’s original sketches and engraved by French artists. The book records Biard’s activities collecting and classifying insects, birds, shells, plants and orchids. This interest vied with his time sketching plants and Indians, painting panoramas of the rain forest and experimenting with photography. Biard sought to entertain his reader by creating images showing his conflicts with his Indian models.

Before his Brazil sojourn, he travelled to Greece and the Middle East, England, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland. He participated in a scientific mission to Scandinavia, Lapland and the Artic island of Spitsbergen. He was commissioned to decorate the vestibule of the Galerie de Minéralogie at the Musée d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

The specimens in *The Artist’s Den* suggest his Brazilian atelier may have functioned similarly to Biard’s chic Paris Salon at 8 Place Vendome. In Paris, he displayed a small museum or “cabinet of curiosities” of exotic objects, weapons, vases, cooking implements, musical instruments, tools, tents and tools from his travels. He viewed the museum as extending the boundaries of knowledge and thus rendering a service to mankind.

Biard’s unique approach in which he combined an explorer-naturalist’s realism with artistic fantasy and drama, distinguished his paintings which he submitted to the Paris Salons (1861 and 1865) for exhibition. He was celebrated during the reign of King Louis Philippe as one of France’s leading genre painters.

Engraved portrait of August Biard after a photograph by Louis Sauvager, published in “Le Monde Illustre”, 1882
A peasant family gathered in a rustic kitchen, cheers for the anticipated pudding which has just been pulled from the fire and is now dumped onto their table by the mother. The story of rustic 19th century Italian farm life unfolds before our eyes.

Mother is satisfied with producing her culinary treat. One boy licks the spoon, another boy throws his arms into the air, and still another waves his plate and fork. A crouched daughter gazes upward in awe. The father lovingly supports the arms of the baby so he too can express his delight. Still another young woman, perhaps a helper, sits to the side of the fire, looking on while keeping one eye on the fire. On the left, a figure, perhaps a grandmother draws near as she hears the excitement.

Born in Reggio-Emilia, Italy, Chierici began his formal training at Academies of Reggio and Bologna. In 1858 he moved to Florence, where he enrolled at the Academy.
Despite his more classical training at the Academy, by the 1860s, Chierici broke from the canons of academic painting which advocated for historical subjects to embrace genre scenes characterized by a pictorial realism. He became part of a broader European current which sought to depict everyday life, and one of the most celebrated Italian genre painters of the 19th century. During his lifetime, he went on to exhibit outside of Italy at the Royal Academy in London from 1877 to 1881 as well as in Boston and Washington.

In keeping with the broader European current toward realism, he looked at scenes familiar to lower classes, ones that may reflect his own childhood or early years as an artist. In many of his paintings, the hearth is the focal point of family activities. He promotes the family values of the peasants, showing them not in their struggle, but depicting them as cheerful, healthy, and delighting in a humble life.

Chierici shows startling attention to detail. The life-like poses, the fleeting facial expressions, and the tattered clothing show his skillful sophistication. His use of light and shade throughout the composition is also masterful. The print of the crucifix on the wall, the dusty feet of one of the boys, the fur and feathers of the animals, the pile of plates, even the cracks in the stone floor are painted with exactitude and exquisite textures. However, Chierici’s abilities as a pictorial realist are matched by the playful and amusing tone he brings to his narrative.

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Gaetano Chierici
Self-Portrait
Collection of the Uffizi, Florence, Italy
A century after Napoleon’s famous campaign in Egypt, Parisian painter, Georges-Jules-Victor Clairin (1843-1919) headed to Egypt, captivated by tales of his country’s glorious historic past. Of his Egyptian sojourn, he recalled in this memoir that he searched for evidence of Napoleon’s troops but found none: "Throughout my travels in Egypt, I was haunted by the memory of Bonaparte's expedition. I thought to find here and there, signs remaining." and then he regrets, "...the great adventures of history may disappear without a trace behind them, such as by a traveler on the sand in Africa, cleared by a gale."

He arrived by ship in Alexandria. He then traveled to Cairo where he visited the pyramids and met the renowned archeologist Jacques de Morgan. De Morgan invited Clairin to travel by boat down the Nile to visit the famous temple of Amen-Re in Karnak. Clairin’s *The Great Temple at Karnak* is not dated but it was executed either on site at Karnak in 1895 or soon after his return home to Paris. An engraving which he made of this painting is dated 1897.

Clairin stayed at Karnak for two months, working with an archeologist named George Legrain who oversaw 300 men to restore the temple. “I remember those days of my life with a kind of wonder. Never have I spent hours calmer, quieter, better.” Then he goes on to say, “The temple was mine. I made it my studio.”
In *The Great Temple at Karnak*, Clairin recreates history. He imagines Napoleon’s soldiers as they toured Karnak, probably after the Battle of Pyramids, around 1798. He places the officer with his soldiers and their Arab guide in front of the ancient ruin showing a wall of colossal figures of kings to which he gives facial definition and color, as if they are alive. He wrote in his memoir that the “figures of kings and gods on the walls and columns” are “extravagant emblems of the divine” and they “seem to move...it looks like silent secret meetings take place between these supernatural people.” His writing also includes descriptions of the special quality of Egyptian light as hot, vibrant and red.

Clairin described himself as a “wanderer by nature.” He travelled and painted in Brittany and Spain and took two trips to Morocco. He was particularly drawn to Islamic cultures, their customs and dress. He was one of the last successful practitioners of Orientalist painting. These Western European painters, throughout the 19th century, found new interest in the Near and Middle East, following the conquest of Egypt by Napoleon. The subject of this painting directly reflects these Orientalist motivations.

At Karnak, Clairin met up with the French composer Camille Saint-Saens. Known as an agreeable and witty man, on his travels and in Paris, Clairin kept company with figures in theatrical, literary and artistic circles including the painter Henri Regnault and Sarah Bernhardt. Charles Garnier asked him to paint decorations for the Paris Opera House, the first of many public commissions. In 1866, he began exhibiting at the Salon des Artistes Français. He was one of the pillars of the French Salon des Peintures Orientalistes Français. He also exhibited at the Société Coloniale des Artistes Français and the Salon des Artistes Algériens et Orientalistes. (Material noted in text is from Clairin’s memoir, *Les souvenirs d’un peintre* by André Beaunier, Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1906)
Rudolf Epp (German 1834-1910)

*A School Boys' Quarrel*, 1872
oil on canvas laid down on Masonite

*A School Boys’ Quarrel* demonstrates Rudolf Epp’s skills as a storyteller. In this entertaining vignette from everyday life in a rural German village during winter, there’s been a snowball fight among some village boys after school. A mother, standing at her doorway, has sought to defend her son from two boys, shoeing them away down the path with a broom. Her son wipes his eyes from tears and is sheltered in the protection of the family. His sister sweetly cleans the snow off his left which is resting on a sled. A younger brother stoops down to reassemble a broken blackboard, and pick up his book and hat.

The broad gestures of the figures communicate the drama. The mother’s arms signify her warning to the departing boys, no doubt cautioning them of the consequences of their actions. Her gesture is echoed by one of her young children standing at her side. The crying son wipes his eye.

Epp’s palette choices create a moist snowy atmosphere at the end of the day. Greys, browns and blacks contrast with the white snow on the roof, trees and rock as well as the path that winds its way through the village. Touches of red in the sister’s scarf and the hat of a village woman in distance .... Epp was a strong observer of the landscape, here painting a genre scene set in the out of doors.
Epp was born in 1834 in Bavaria and began to paint landscape paintings at a young age. He studied landscape painting for the first time under Charles Louise Seeger. He then studied under Johann Wilhelm Schirmer and attended the Art Academy of Düsseldorf. Due to his talent, Rudolf Epp was on leave from military service by Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden. A Grand Ducal order and additional financial resources enabled Epp a study trip to the Black Forest where he produced numerous landscape studies.

In 1863 Rudolf Epp moved to Munich where he was influenced by Karl von Piloty, a teacher at the Royal Academy and its director in 1874. A center for art, The Munich School is characterized by a naturalistic style and dark chiaroscuro. In Munich, Epp began to focus on genre painting.

With his choice of genre subjects and his realism, Epp revived the tradition of 17th Century Dutch genre painting. Using working class subjects and peasants to tell stories of everyday life, his work is recalls that of such Dutch painters as Jan Steen and Jan Van Goyen. Furthermore, scenes of snowball fighting even figured as a popular subject in 17th Century Holland.

Humor and his ability to capture life in the late 19th century Germany made him a popular painter in his own day. His works found an audience in America, selling a number of pictures to American collectors during his lifetime. A School Boys’ Quarrel is one of three paintings acquired by Alfred O. Deshong for his collection.

Rudolf Epp, Self-Portrait
Rudolf Epp Forum, Heidelberg, Germany

Postcard of School Boys Quarrel mailed in 1912.
Courtesy of Peter Schmelzle, Webmaster, Rudolf Epp Forum, Heidelberg, Germany
Interior view of Alfred O. Deshong's home

*Courtesy Delaware County Historical Society*
Gerolamo Induno (Italian 1825-1890)

*The Avalanche, 1886*

oil on canvas

A disconsolate woman and her children have been rescued from an avalanche, their overturned coach in the snow-covered mountain behind them. In the foreground, it's principally two other women who care for them and lead them to safety. The male rescuers, shown as figures in the distance, carry pitchforks, and several trudge through waist-deep drifts to the scene of the accident. Another male carries a child over his shoulder. The shrine to left tells us death has occurred at this site before.

Induno painted this picture in 1886, four years before he died. Throughout his life, Induno produced many paintings based on his “bozzetto” or sketches created from known experiences as a soldier participating in the momentous affairs of Italian unification known as the Risorgimento. The Risorgimento gave birth to modern Italy as a definable political entity after a long period of regional fragmentation and foreign domination.

Induno received many official commissions for military paintings of Italian patriotic themes and for portraits of important figures of the Risorgimento. His anecdotal genre pieces were also popular. His genre paintings had patriotic themes, showing the drama of being separated from one’s loved ones. He is known for giving the epic events of the period a concrete and human face. Most of his paintings of women and children left behind by the soldiers are set in domestic interiors. Here however, Induno places his women and children in a dramatic landscape setting.

Induno was born in Milan. With his older brother Dominic who was also a painter, he left his studies at Brera Academy to fight against Austrian rule. He also fought and was wounded in the defense of Rome, travelled with troops to the Crimea, and then joined Garibaldi's army in 1859 as an officer in the special military corps called Cacciatori delle Alpi (Hunters of the Alps). The campaign in the Alps provided material for numerous works inspired by epic events in the struggle for unification. This snowy mountain scene possibly was inspired by events he witnessed while on duty in the Alps.
A young woman is chatting with a cobbler while he repairs her shoe. She thrusts her shoeless foot forward while balancing herself with her right hand on the bench to support her stance on her other foot. With an animated facial expression, the cobbler converses with his customer whose presence has brightened his workshop.

The cobbler, a common laborer, is dressed in a rumpled shirt and dirty apron. The tools of his trade are placed next to him on the bench. A stark room with unadorned walls is the setting of the cobbler’s shop. One small open window lets the light into the space.

José Jiménez y Aranda, born in Seville in 1837, entered Seville’s Fine Art School at the age of fourteen. During his early years, he studied Goya and Velasquez at the Prado and he concentrated on lithography and portraiture.
By 1869, at the time he opened a painting studio in Seville, his work centered on genre scenes. In 1871 he met the influential Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny y Carbo (1838-1874) and moved to Rome where he joined a circle of Spanish artists around him.

*At the Cobblers* shows the influence of Fortuny. Like other artists in Fortuny's circle who painted entertaining depictions of everyday life, his painting displays broken transitory effects of color through textured and fluid handling of paint. Fortuny's *Beggars by a Door* of 1870 (Cleveland Museum of Art) shows a similar use of a simple architectural setting. Both artists often set their genre scenes in the previous 18th century, but both *At the Cobblers* and Fortuny's *Beggars by a Door* reveal more social consciousness.

In 1878 he won a prize at the Paris World Exhibition and made his debut at the Salon in 1879. Due to his success in Paris, his dealers persuaded him to move there in 1881. He exhibited regularly at the Salons until 1889. During this time his work was shown and awarded prizes constantly throughout all the major European cities.

In 1890 he moved to Madrid, painting scenes of local everyday life, mannerisms, and customs, set in the Spain of his own time. In 1892, he returned to Seville for the rest of his life. There he was appointed a member of the Academy of Fine Arts, where he became a teacher, a position he held until his death in 1903. His paintings are in the collections of the Prado Museum in Madrid, the Carmen Thyssen Museum of Malaga and the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.
Barend Cornelis Koekkoek (Dutch 1803-62)
*Early Morning in Thuringia*
Oil on canvas

This panoramic view of a serene landscape, bathed in a luminous morning light, celebrates the pastoral beauties of Thuringia, a state located in central Germany known for its natural wonders. Koekkoek established his reputation as the primary Dutch Romantic landscape painter of the early 19th century with scenes which blend minute detail with atmospheric mood. This scene, based on travels, is not topographical but rather evokes an idyllic countryside filled with luminosity, intensity of detail, and nostalgia for a past era.

Born in Middleburg, Holland, Koekkoek was the best-known member of a family of Dutch painters. The flat Dutch countryside however, could not satisfy Koekkoek’s romantic soul. He wrote, ‘Surely, Our fatherland boasts no rocks, waterfalls, high mountains or romantic valleys. Proud, sublime nature is not to be found in our land’. He travelled in Belgium and Germany and in 1834 moved to the city of Cleves, Germany where he would spend the rest of his life.

The sunlight is located at the horizon line, to the left, so that the turreted building and the trees in the middle ground appear almost as silhouettes. The exquisite detail of back lighted leaves on the tree to the left shows the intensity of vision. The patterns of rosy light and shadow extend from the path across the land. The expansive sky and clouds also capture the beginning of the day. A contented boy, accompanied by his dog, is seated on a rock watching a maiden in
her native dress follow sheep and cows down the path. They are small in this majestic countryside surrounded by the greatness of creation.

Medieval castles dot the land or rise on the rocky promontory, rooftops of distant villages also can be seen and there is a church in the valley. These medieval structures imbue the scene with an evocation of past experience enhanced by memory.

Koekkoek received his earliest instruction from his father Johannes Koekkoek (1778-1851), a renowned marine painter. His two brothers, Hermanus Koekkoek (1815–1882) and Marinus Adrianus Koekkoek (1807–1868) were both successful artists, the first as a painter of marine subjects and river scenes, the second as a landscapist. Barend Cornelis Koekkoek enrolled at the Drawing Academy of Middelburg, moving on to Amsterdam where he studied at the Amsterdam Academy. A two-year stay in an artists’ colony of Hilversum strengthened his decision to become a landscape painter.

After settling permanently in Germany, Koekkoek published a book of lessons for students, Herinneringen en Mededeelingen van eenen Landschapsschilder (Recollections and Communications of a Landscape Painter), and in the same year, by popular demand from young artists eager to receive his instruction, he founded his own drawing academy.

During his own lifetime, he came to be known as the “Prince of Landscape Painting.” The recipient of endless awards and decorations, he counted among his clients King Friedrich-Wilhelm IV of Prussia, Tsar Alexander II, and King Willem II of the Netherlands. He regularly exhibited in Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam between 1826 - 1862; he also showed work at the Paris Salon where he won medals in 1840 and 1845. He was a member of the Amsterdam and St Petersburg Academies and was awarded the Netherlands Order of the Lion and the Belgian Order of Leopold. Koekkoek’s work is represented in many museums including the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam and the Stadtisches Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Today, his home in Cleves is a museum, Haus Koekkoek, dedicated to his oeuvre.

Engraving, c. 1844, by Willem Steelink Sr. of a Koekkoek self-portrait.
In *Auctioneering a Nationalist’s Treasures*, men and women have crowded into a house of a deceased naturalist to examine the possessions that his widow must now auction. Soon she will also have to relinquish her house as at the time she would not be able to hold property. The widow, dressed in black, and a female companion are placed off to the left of the picture, addressing a visitor. The widow is depicted as pretty, young and sweet.

Paint is peeling on the walls of this working class home. The main action is in the center of the painting where an auctioneer with a mallet sits at a table. People are crowded around, examining the objects. A potential buyer examines a ring with a magnifying glass. A man holds up a ripped quilt for view.

Clearly, the items for sale are not priceless possessions. Other objects that will be auctioned include the books that are stacked on the floor. Bottles of specimens, undoubtedly the work of the naturalist, will also be available to the curious. There’s a clutter of rugs, knives, and dishes. A man to the far right has found his treasure. He has a statue tucked under his arm.
Adolf Lüben skillfully tells a story and captures the character of the figures, their facial expressions, clothing and body language. He portrays the widow sympathetically. His people are good folks despite the eagerness of some of them to acquire material objects. One can imagine the conversation of the three fellows in the corner as they enjoy their time chatting with one another.

Born in St. Petersburg to German parents, Lüben studied at the Berlin and Antwerp Academies. He settled in Munich in 1876 and developed a reputation for genre paintings of peasants or working class people painted realistically and treated sympathetically.

According to a notation which accompanies the artist’s signature on the canvas, this painting was executed in Munich. *Auctioneering a Naturalist’s Treasures* may be the painting listed under the title *Auction* in *Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings, Volume III*, published by Charles Scribner’s Sons thus helping to suggest a date for its execution as before 1885.
Departure for the Hunt of 1899, displays Vladimir Makovsky’s mature talents as an acclaimed realist in Russia in the years leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution. His paintings of everyday life reveal a pronounced awareness of social inequalities which ran against the grain of tsarist Russia with its imperial powers at the turn of the century.

Vladimir Makovsky was primarily a genre painter. His work began in the 1870s with light hearted images of common people, either in groups or interacting with the aristocracy. During the next 3 decades however, his work became increasingly socially conscious and political. Sometimes in paintings based on real life events, he expressed his populist convictions, often portrayed the deepest emotional tragedies such as the oppression of the poor by the Tsarist police. For example, The Sacrifices on the Khodyn Field (c. 1905) depicts the coronation ceremony of Tsar Nicholas II during which a thousand people lost their lives. Revolutionaries were also the subject of some of Makovsky’s portraits.

In Departure for the Hunt animated men on a horse-drawn cart prepare to leave for a hunting trip outside a dacha, a country estate which was a favorite summer retreat for the Russian aristocracy. One man is dressed in military uniform of a white tunic and cap with a scarf and the other is dressed in the brown outfit and hat of an urbanite. A maid places a basket of food on the horse drawn cart.
The scene is framed by the white-bearded peasant holding a gun and a noble in a blue-green tunic, also with a gun, standing directly across from him. A third figure, dressed in the uniform of the gendamerie, the tsar’s secret police, looks out from the shadows of the porch. Not appearing to be taking part in the hunting party, they cast an ominous tone over this occasion.

Twelve years earlier, Makovsky painted another hunting scene, *Hunters at Rest* (1887). Here are the familiar hunters in white costume and headgear, but they are resting in a field, enjoying their picnic in the sun. It seems that Widener’s painting reflects the tense undercurrents of social and political conditions in Russia at the turn of the century.

Vladimir Makovsky came from an artistic family. His two brothers, his sister and his son were all established painters. His father was a collector and founder of the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where Vladimir studied from 1861 to 1866. He was one of the founding members of the Society of Travelling Art Exhibitions, the Peredvizhniki group or “The Wanderers” and his involvement in the group shaped his career. The Peredvizhniki challenged the attempts of the Russian Academy to promote idealized history and mythological subjects and they eventually reformed it.

In 1878, Makovsky was granted the title of Academician. From 1882 to 1893, he taught at the Moscow School and then from 1894 to 1918, he was professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg, becoming Director in 1895. At the time of the October Revolution of 1917, Makovsky was in his declining years. In 1918, he left the Academy of Fine Arts. He died on February 21, 1920. After his death, Soviet critics recast the Peredvizhniki as politically progressive, hailing them as precursors to Socialist Realism.
A cluster of eight men on flying horses skirmish in a desert, kicking up the dust under a blue sky. Pasini’s masterful brushwork captures the flickering movement of this drama in hot bright light. The riders in turbans or tall caps carry swords, bows and spears. One horseman charging from the left fires a gun. Another stretches his arms into the air as if prayerfully pleading. Accents of turquoise and red in the costume and sashes provide bright bursts of color. The riders are mostly turned away from the viewer in a faceless, impersonal battle.

This painting was completed between 1855 and 1870, during the period of Pasini’s travels to the East. His experiences in the East were the determining factor in establishing the strength of his career. Over these years, he would bring back to his studios in Turin, Italy or in Paris, numerous studies and drawings done on the spot which provided material for studio-finished paintings. *Spirited Conflict* was most likely created after his 1867-68 visit to Constantinople, where he drew material from the Turkish army, and Arabian horses.

Pasini came to specialize in exotic paintings of Arabian horses as well as oriental architecture of bazaars, palaces and mosques. Arabian horses were prized by Europeans in Pasini’s day and they were imported by them for breeding. Hallmarks of the breed include its exquisite wedge-shaped head, curling nostrils, and short back. They ranged in color from chestnut to black with a rare albino as well. They were tough, hardy and fast.
After his early training at the academy of Parma in Italy, Pasini moved to Paris in 1851 where he sought success as a lithographic illustrator. In Paris, he was swept up by Orientalism, the century’s craze for depictions of the Near East which was fueled by colonial expansion. While in Paris, he also developed an interest in plein air painting and became acquainted with some of the Barbizon artists. His first trip to the East came in 1855 when he was appointed official draughtsman to the ambassadorial mission sent to Persia by Napoleon III in hopes of preventing the Shah from entering the Crimean War on the side of Russia. From Persia, he travelled to Syria, Arabia and Egypt as well as Turkey where he would return later, in 1867.

After 1870, Pasini travelled less, dividing his time between his studio in Paris and his villa in Cavoretto near Turin. His attention turned increasingly to oriental structures such as bazaars, Ottoman palaces, and mosques.

Pasini exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon. He was the best known Orientalist of foreign origin in France. He was a Chevalier of the Order of Légion d'Honneur as well as other awards. His enormous popularity extended to the American visitors to the Parisian Salons. Excellent examples of his work have found their way into American and Canadian museums.

Portrait of Alberto Pasini, c. 1870, from the book *Le strade di Parma* by Tiziano Marcheselli.
In May 1878, this painting, titled *Kindergarten in Weimar* was seen at Rudolf Lepke’s, a Berlin auction house, by Adolph Menzel, the esteemed German printmaker and painter. Menzel wrote Piltz, “I appreciate (from my own attempts) what it means to follow children closely with the eye of a painter…” Menzel praises what he calls the “busy mingling and bustling of such a large number of children of everyday parents.” He notes particularly the light and the way it is handled in the second nursery room to the back of the main room.

Otto Piltz had recently completed *Kindergarten in Weimar*, in the years between attending school in Weimar (1866 to 1871) and his 1882 appointment as Professor at the Weimar art school. His ability to capture the idyllic world of children quickly placed him at the forefront of this genre, helping to establish his reputation.

He began contributing work to the annual Berlin Academy shows as early as 1870. In 1870, one of his paintings of children was purchased by the Prussian King, Wilhelm I. His paintings on this theme continued to be fashionable through the 1880s. In the late eighties, he moved to Berlin and then, in 1889, to Munich where he died in 1910.
In this school room, Piltz’s ability to render closely observed children can be seen in the veritable catalogue of facial expressions and behaviors. For example, in the group to the right, a boy sticks his tongue out and another responds by making a face at him. In the window, to the left, a teasing boy raises his hands so high a little girl can’t reach the bread and apple he is holding. The face of a little blonde boy in the foreground is covered with jam. In contrast to the mayhem, in the center of the painting a teacher comforts a crying child.

The painting sparkles with incident and humor as these healthy pink-cheeked children crowded at tables and seated on the floor, eat their apples, jam and bread, and play pranks. It is an innocent world of games and joy where children are being themselves.

White dabs of paint lighten the earthen tones of the room. Light enters through the window and Piltz opens the space up to show a classroom in the back, flooded with light. These tones as well as his subject matter from everyday life characterize the realist movement that emerged in the second half of the 19th century.

A wood engraving by H. Gedan from a self portrait by Otto Piltz; published in the magazine “Home” 1887.
A section of a vine which is plump with ripe and succulent grapes is resting on a tree trunk. Two sparrows are in the process of pecking open the grapes, revealing their juicy interiors, as they discover the remains of a forest picnic. A third sparrow looks on, about to join in the feast. Walnuts, one half-opened, along with pears, appear at the foot of the tree.

Behind the fruit and birds, in the shadows of a clearing, is a statue of a putto holding a trident and standing aloft of a dolphin’s head in a fountain. Images of cupids with tridents and dolphins had appeared in art for centuries, especially in Italian sculptures and paintings, and they frequently referenced mythological romantic entanglements. In one of the most notable examples, Raphael painted this subject in his frescoes of the love story of Cupid and Psyche for the Villa Farnesia in Rome.

Preyer casts the deserted picnic in the light of a love tryst with this reference. The fruit, beautiful and ripe on the one hand, has been abandoned and is quickly vanishing at the beaks of the birds. The grape leaves are starting to turn brown on the edges. Preyer’s approach recalls the
17th century Northern European tradition of vanitas still life painting that refers to the notion of life’s brevity or the passing of time and more specifically here, to the transience of love.

This painting exemplifies Preyer’s precise drawing, scrupulous detail, and fascination with close, natural observation. It glows with an enamel-like finish enhanced by glazes. This jewel-like surface exemplifies the kind of exquisite craftsmanship that established Preyer as the foremost technician of the Düsseldorf School.

The Düsseldorf School was a group of painters who taught or studied at the Düsseldorf Academy when it was directed by the painter Wilhelm von Schadow. Preyer studied at the Düsseldorf Academy from 1822 to 1831 at first under Peter von Cornelius and later under Wilhelm von Schadow until 1931. The work of the Düsseldorf School is characterized by finely detailed yet still fanciful landscapes, often with religious or allegorical stories set in the landscapes.

While still studying at the Düsseldorf Academy, Preyer was recognized as a master of genre and flower painting. He showed paintings at Berlin Academy exhibitions beginning in 1830. He went to the Netherlands in 1835 where he studied Dutch Masters at The Hague and in Amsterdam. He continued training in Munich in 1837 and gradually began to expand his paintings of small-scale landscapes in the manner of Jan Breughel the elder, by adding still-life. From Munich, Preyer and two friends travelled frequently to Italy and Switzerland.

In 1848 Preyer founded the "Malkasten" Artists’ Association in Düsseldorf, where he painted for the rest of his life. By the mid-1840s, Preyer had settled on painting small-scale, pure still-lifes, usually of fruit. While Sparrow’s Good Breakfast was created during Preyer’s later Düsseldorf years, it reflects some of his earlier practice of painting still-life set in landscape. The use of the putto with trident and dolphin reflect his academic training. The sparrows in Widener University’s painting are an unusual inclusion in his work.

Johann Peter Hasenclever
Portrait of Johann Wilhelm Preyer
Lilly Martin Spencer (American 1822-1902)
Raspberries on a Leaf, 1858
oil on panel

Lilly Martin Spencer's sensitively rendered still life focuses on red raspberries cupped by a green cabbage leaf. In the background, a cucumber curls up from the shadows. From the white-veined cabbage leaf with slightly browned edges to the freshly picked raspberries and the nubby skin of the cucumber, textures are convincingly rendered. The variation in light and dark tones contributes to the verisimilitude of the painting. For example, Spencer's talents are seen in the highlights on the top of the leaf to the back lighting on its underside and then to the dark shadow it casts on a stone ledge.

Born in 1822 near Marietta, Ohio, by the time she was 18 Spencer committed herself to a career as a painter. At a time when women were not given societal support to sustain a career in the field, she established herself as a genre painter, obtaining recognition for her paintings of family and domestic life. She was also known for her still life paintings. Indeed, some of her genre paintings contain meticulously painted still life elements. Many of her paintings were printed as hand-colored lithographs.

From rural Ohio she moved to Cincinnati to study art with James Henry Beard. In Cincinnati, she met and married her husband, a cloth merchant and tailor. The competitive art world of New York soon attracted her. Raspberries on a Leaf was painted at the end of a ten-year period in New York where the European art she saw in galleries made an impression on her. At the Düsseldorf Gallery she saw realism espoused by German painters. While in New York, she was admitted to the National Academy of Design.
At the end of ten years, she moved her family to Newark, New Jersey to find less expensive living. She was the breadwinner for her family of 13 children, 7 of which lived into adulthood. Her husband early supported his wife’s talents, leaving his career to take on the responsibilities of child care and housework. Eventually, he served as her agent.

Domestic and family subjects were in vogue, and her choice of them reflects her need to earn money. These subjects were also easily available to her. She and her husband frequently were models for her paintings. Still life subjects were also at hand. Small still life paintings such as *Raspberries on a Leaf* were particularly saleable.

The subjects she chose reflect the prevailing view at that time that home is the province of women and by extension, a woman’s place is to support a man’s world. At the time, this view was actively supported by middle class women whether or not the facts of their lives allowed them to practically uphold this point of view. Such was the case with Spencer, who by embracing these subjects nevertheless earned a living and sustained the career of her choice throughout her lifetime. She created a large body of accomplished work and cemented a place for herself in the history of American art.

*Lilly Martin Spencer self-portrait*
A carriage with wealthy women in flowered bonnets and a man wearing a top hat, speeds down the road toward Pompeii, carrying these tourists to the famed volcano seen spewing smoke in the distance. The driver whips the horses causing the carriage to move at a fast clip and kick up a dusty haze that blends with the soft atmospheric light of a pink and blue sky.

The speed of the carriage has forced the poor man on a donkey to move to the left side of the road. To the right, there is an old beggar man accepting a coin from a child, and a pretty dark-skinned woman in exotic dress holding her baby.

This painting underscores Franz Richard Unterberger’s approach which was to show daily life in the context of a large magnificent vista. In keeping with his credo to present “il puro vero” or “the pure truth,” in this painting he draws a contrast between the classes of people within a setting.

In the late 1860s, Unterberger was captivated by scenes in Italy for which he is best known. He travelled there frequently until the end of his life. He specialized in painting panoramic landscapes and cityscapes, including the daily activities of the people in southern Italy and Venice. His views were suffused with a warm Mediterranean light and a shimmering silvery tone.
The oldest son of an art dealer, Unterberger was born in Innsbruck, Austria. He studied at several leading European academies including the Academy of Munich, the Academy of Weimar, and the Academy of Dusseldorf. Unterberger felt that the market might be more lucrative in Belgium, and therefore moved to Brussels in 1864, a place he would return to throughout his life.

As international tourism grew during this period, Unterberger's works such as En Route to Pompeii depicted many of the popular European and Scandinavian destinations and they found a ready market among the burgeoning middle classes. He developed a large international following and by the late 1870s had exhibited throughout Europe as well as in Philadelphia and Boston. Throughout his career, he was repeatedly awarded with medals.
Wouter Verschuur, Sr. (Dutch 1812-74)

_Plow Horses_ (not dated)

oil on panel

Four horses are being prepared to head out of the stable to begin a day of plowing and hauling. The strong musculature of these full-bodied work horses reflects their use in heavy labor. A worker pumps water into the trough while two horses watch as a farm dog enjoys a drink. A saddle is being hung on still another horse. A child carries a basket and a mug while another dog looks at a chicken. Morning light pours into the barn to reveal this barn yard vignette.

From the start of his career, Verschuur's paintings were recognized as demonstrations of his great talent to depict horses in their everyday environment. During his lifetime, he became known as the leading Dutch painter of horses. While the horse was a popular subject of painters throughout the 19th century, the latter half of the century saw the rise of a number of talented horse painters especially in continental Europe.

Verschuur specialized in what is broadly termed "horse genre," paintings in which a narrative element was introduced into paintings of horses later in the 19th century. He focused on images of the daily life of the animals not only in stables but in farmyards and in fields. As the
Industrial Revolution shifted attention from rural life to the city, animal painters were tempted to increase emotional content and enhance the picturesque characteristics of their images. Here, the hard working horses interacting with the people, dogs and chickens, appeal to the sympathy of the viewers.

Verschuur started his career as a student of the Dutch cattle painter Pieter Gerardus van Os who guided him in the study and copying of the oeuvre of the celebrated 17th century horse painter Philips Wouwerman. At 19 years old, he established his reputation receiving an award of a Gold Medal by the Amsterdam art society Felix Meritis, an award he received again for a second time in the following year. In 1855 he sold one of his paintings to Napoleon III during the Exposition Universelle in Paris. From 1858 until 1868 he lived and worked in Haarlem, where he tutored Hague School painter Anton Mauve.
Francesco Vinea (Italian 1845-1902)

*To the Most Beautiful*, 1881

oil on canvas

*To the Most Beautiful* was recognized during Francesco Vinea’s lifetime as his outstanding achievement. Writing in 1889, eight years after the painting was completed, Angelo de Gubernatis stated in his book on Italian artists of his day (*Dizionario degli Artisti Italiani Vivendi*): “Among those who have recorded the best painting in the press, there is a bacchanal of soldiers and women in a cellar under the title of *To the Most Beautiful*, called such because there is the apotheosis of the most beautiful girl presented.”

A smiling red-haired maiden sits high on top of a wine keg. She looks down upon the rowdy soldiers who toast to her beauty. The revelers are dressed in showy capes and gold-striped shirts, costumes from the 17th century. In the foreground a man blows his horn to flirt with another maiden, but she shies away from him. Empty wine flasks litter the floor. On the right side of the painting, a soldier leans over with his pitcher to get wine from the keg. A rowdy group of men jostle, waving their hats and one lifts a drum.

The sparkling contrast of black with orange-red, adds to the liveliness of the depiction. Vinea also deftly paints details, contributing to the complexity of the bacchanal. Precision of treatment ranges from the flowers in the female’s hair to the fur of the dog.
Vinea’s theme was a popular one for European painters in the 19th century. For the first time, artists painted images in homage to feminine beauty in its own right. All classes of beautiful women became the subjects of artists. In this painting, Vinea praises a simple country girl who is presented as gentle, sweet, and somewhat coy.

Vinea studied first at the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence, but had to discontinue his studies due to his lack of finances. He worked for a photographer, also as a designer of illustrated magazines, but returned to Florence and studied under Enrico Pollastrini, for a year.

In his book, Gubematis described Vinea’s approach to subject matter. He wrote: “Nothing serious, nothing solid, no classical concepts, not robust, no lofty ideas, no deep thoughts. His canvases, like the genre paintings of Meissonier, are well-designed witticisms, smiling color, interiors full of life and of panache, costume scenes preening with grace and trivial levity: everything exudes the fashion of the past salons.”
Joseph Wopfner (Austrian 1843-1927)
*Holiday on Lake Chiem*, c. 1885
oil on canvas

The theme of the family fishing in a small boat close to shore is a familiar one in the work of the Austrian-born landscape painter Josef Wopfner. He established his reputation based on charming views of fishermen and farmers in Bavaria.

In this painting, a family enjoys a holiday fishing on Lake Chiem. Here the strong mother in the back of the boat steers with her paddle, while the father steadies the boat up front. An older daughter holds the net with the catch. One wooden box trap has been pulled up next to the boat, and another one is shown submerged in the water. Two smaller children ride in the boat, a little girl and a blond boy.

Wopfner trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich with Karl von Piloty and he befriended Wilhelm Leibl. In 1869, Wopfner met Courbet at the time of the Great International Art Exhibition in Munich. This contact, and a journey to France, introduced him to plein air painting.

After graduation in 1872, Wopfner discovered Lake Chiem. It was an almost untouched natural refuge which attracted many artists. Lake Chiem became his artistic homeland where he was to draw endless inspiration for most of his paintings each summer for many years.
Drawing from his precise studies of nature undertaken en plein air, he executed landscapes such as *Holiday on Lake Chiem* filled with fisherman or farmers, usually at work. Frequently, as in Widener Art Gallery's painting, he placed his figures in an atmosphere of soft luminous light and rippling reflections. An overall poetic stillness evokes the unique tone.

Painting at a time when landscape painting had gained popularity, artists such as Wopfner often blended the moods of romanticism with the naturalism characteristic of the growing preference for realism. In some of his landscape paintings, his brushstroke was used freely, at some points reaching the threshold of Impressionism.

Wopfner became a professor of the Munich Royal Academy in 1888 and an honorary member beginning in 1896. At the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1890, he was awarded a gold medal.
Jules Worms (French 1832-1924)
*A Double Game* (not dated)
oil on canvas laid down on panel

Jules Worms shows himself to be an accomplished storyteller in *A Double Game*. With drama and humor, he sets off the card players on the right with the couple on the left, suspending the viewer in two separate but parallel moments.

The figure to the far right is poised to slap his card down on the table, as if certain to have the determining move. However, his rival seems also certain of a good hand and seeks to display it proudly to a third figure who is eavesdropping on the couple. What will be the outcome of this game?

Connected by a ribbon of gestures and glances, the couple to the left is engaged in a similar tenuous moment, the outcome no less certain. The man is enraptured by the beautiful young woman who listens to his flirtations, but she has not fully succumbed in his effort at courtship. The viewer is only left to imagine the outcome of this game as well.
Worms developed his skill for drawing as an illustrator and lithographer for periodicals in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s. The comic tradition in the visual arts was evident during this period with such razor-edged political cartoons as those by Honoré Daumier published in the satirical newspaper “Le Charivari.”

Worms went on to study painting at the École des Beaux-Arts. He made his debut at the Paris Salon of 1859 with a humorous statement on contemporary romance in a painting titled Dragoon Making Love to a Maid on a Bench in the Place Royale. He returned to humorous renditions of romance frequently throughout his career.

Beginning in the early 1860s, Worms made the first of many trips to Spain which stimulated a life-long passion for Spanish culture and customs. In *A Double Game*, Worms stages his figures in a Spanish courtyard and they are dressed in colorful Spanish costumes. Stylistically, the realism of the Spanish tradition and its incorporation of everyday life were an essential factor in his approach.

A collection of Spanish paintings assembled by King Louis-Philippe at the Louvre in 1838 had served as a catalyst for many French artists, including Edouard Manet and Rosa Bonheur to study the works of Ribera, Velázquez and Zurbarán, and to travel to Spain.

In 1871, Worms lived in Grenada with the Catalan painter, Jose Marià Fortuny for six weeks. There he created sketchbooks filled with drawings of costumes, customs and local buildings which provided him with material for his paintings through the duration of his career. With this material, he proceeded to establish his reputation for paintings of everyday life of Spanish people, often commenting humorously on social foibles.

Worms exhibited his paintings regularly at the Paris Salon, and was awarded the Chevalier of the Légion d’Honneur in 1876. His painting found popularity not only in France but in the United States. He continued to paint at least up until World War I.
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Rebecca M. Warda, Collections Manager
November 2015
Alfred Deshong's parlor, c. 1885

*Courtesy Delaware County Historical Society*