

Gifts and Acquisitions

Thomas Moran, *The Juniata, Evening*

In the spring of 1871 Thomas Moran (1837–1926) traveled to the American West for the first time. Immediately upon his return, he began producing the paintings that would change the course of his career. A gifted colorist, Moran was the first artist whose technical expertise matched the wonders of Yellowstone. In 1872 Congress purchased Moran's enormous canvas *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* and installed it in the Capitol. Soon Moran began signing his paintings with a creatively configured monogram incorporating three letters (TYM), reflecting his new fame as Thomas “Yellowstone” Moran.

Moran's paintings of Yellowstone and later of the Grand Canyon and the Southwest were so revelatory in terms of wondrous geologic formations and astonishing color that they soon overshadowed all his previous work. Only recently have the remarkable eastern landscapes that Moran created before he journeyed west garnered the attention they deserve. One of the most beautiful and important of these works, *The Juniata, Evening*, has been acquired by the Gallery, thanks to the generosity of Max and Heidi Berry and Ann and Mark Kington/The Kington Foundation.

Born in Bolton, England, raised in Philadelphia, Moran returned to his homeland in 1862 to study works by the artist he revered above all others—J.M.W. Turner. For several months he retraced Turner's path through England and France sketching the landscapes that had inspired the English master. Steeped in the writings of John Ruskin, Turner's early champion, Moran

returned to Philadelphia and began producing a series of stunningly beautiful landscapes of the Pennsylvania countryside. Taking to heart Turner's example and Ruskin's advice (study nature carefully and reproduce her wonders accurately), Moran spent weeks sketching in the forests surrounding Philadelphia.

In the summer of 1864 he ventured farther, traveling to central Pennsylvania where the Juniata River, a major tributary of the Susquehanna, flows through lush meadows and steep sandstone cliffs. Moran's painting of the valley is filled with closely observed detail: grazing sheep, farm dwellings, distant smoke, a lone traveler, and most remarkably, a foreground vignette of an artist (possibly a self-portrait) with a painting on his easel duplicating the scene before the viewer.

Completed in September 1864, *The Juniata, Evening* was purchased—perhaps commissioned—by George Frederick Tyler, a Philadelphia banker and railroad executive. Moran signed and dated the painting in the lower left corner, placing the notation “Op 8” beneath his name. One year earlier he had begun numbering his studio paintings and recording key information about them on an “Opus List.” Several pages of Moran's list survive including his notation for “Opus 8” *The Juniata, Evening*. Thus the completion date and first owner of the painting are known as well as the original purchase price: \$200.

Privately owned since 1864, *The Juniata, Evening* is now on public view for the first time in the American galleries. • Nancy Anderson, *Curator and Head of American and British Paintings*



Thomas Moran, *The Juniata, Evening*, 1864,
oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Gift
of Max and Heidi Berry and Ann and Mark
Kington/The Kington Foundation

Nancy Graves, *Agualine*

Throughout her career, Nancy Graves (1940–1995) mined the world of natural science for her imagery, from meticulously constructed camels to detailed cartographic studies. Her dual interest in science and art started with childhood visits to the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where her father worked and which housed a combined collection of art and natural history. In the late 1970s, Graves became interested in archaeology. She was awarded a residency at the American Academy in Rome in 1979 and used the opportunity to tour ancient sites throughout the Mediterranean. The excavations she visited illustrated for Graves how cultures become layered over time, each new civilization consuming the previous one. The complex layering and fragmenting of color, form, line, and technique in *Agualine*, painted

in 1980 once she had returned to New York, speak to the palimpsest of history.

Agualine builds on a lexicon of images that Graves developed through the 1970s but pushes those literal references to the very edge of abstraction. Compositionally, *Agualine* is reminiscent of her painting *Scaux*, 1977, and her print *Paleolinea*, 1982, but begun in 1979, two works that reproduce the linear patterns from an Upper Paleolithic cave drawing in Altamira, Spain. In *Agualine*, the brown and black lines dancing across the canvas borrow from the same source but lack the fidelity of transcription. The band of thickly applied orange brushstrokes across the lower right corner of the canvas recalls a type of carved bone or horn found at Upper Paleolithic sites, although again it is less faithfully rendered in *Agualine* than in *Scaux* or *Paleolinea*. *Agualine* is also distinct from the gray *Scaux* in its high-keyed

Nancy Graves, *Agualine*, 1980, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Collection of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff



palette, signaling the brightly colored patinas Graves would use in her sculpture of the 1980s, including the National Gallery's *Spinner*, 1985, gift of Lila Acheson Wallace.

Despite these overt references to caves, the title *Agualine* has a distinctly nautical sound. A compound of the words "agua" (Spanish for water) and "line," this invented term may best be described as a poetic abstraction that calls to mind Roman aqueducts or perhaps the frenetic movement of underwater life. The fluidity of the paint handling and the variety of marks suggest the tracks of sea creatures moving across the ocean floor and recall her bathymetric paintings of the early 1970s. *Agualine*, with its gestural exuberance, loud color, and dispersed composition, can be seen as a contemporary successor to the National Gallery's great painting by Wassily Kandinsky, *Improvisation 31 (Sea Battle)*, 1913, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund. *Agualine* was generously donated by Robert E. Meyerhoff. It is the first painting by Graves to enter the collection and joins five sculptures, eleven drawings, and one print by the artist.

• Sydney Skelton Simon, *Curatorial Assistant, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art*

Robert Frank, *40 Fotos*

In 1946, just shortly before he immigrated to the United States, Robert Frank (b. 1924) constructed a handmade book of photographs, titled *40 Fotos*. Although he had been photographing for only five years, the book displays a remarkable mastery of a wide range of photographic styles and genres that were popular in his native Switzerland during World War II: from Bauhaus-inspired explorations of light and form to commercial studies of industrial objects and journalistic records of people on the streets. With its front cover of a photo-montage of an eye seen through an



Robert Frank, *40 Fotos*, 1946, 40 gelatin silver prints, National Gallery of Art, Gift of the artist

open camera lens and its back cover of a closed lens, the book also reveals Frank's careful study of the tenets of contemporary Swiss graphic design, while its first photograph—of an open telephone book—wittily signals the book's intent: to serve as a compendium to show Frank's many and varied talents to prospective employers.

But the most significant aspect of *40 Fotos* is the sophisticated understanding it reveals of the power of two photographs when paired together to elicit new meanings. Several page spreads join similar photographs—for example, two studies of animals in the zoo are placed on facing pages. But many more contrast similar objects seen in different situations—for example, a photograph of a flag on a street is paired with one of a flag on a mountaintop, while a photograph of two men in a boat in summer faces one of two men on a street in winter. Others contrast micro and macro views, as in a close-up study of a flower that is paired with a more distant view of mountains. Other spreads explore the Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein's ideas of montage—that is, abrupt shifts between dissimilar objects to call forth new ideas and emotions. For example, a photograph made looking up at three radio tubes is placed

opposite one looking up at a band on the street, while a photograph of a group of excited children faces one of an electrical component. Thus, not only do the pairings contrast changes in time—summer and winter—and sensation—hot and cold—but they address more complex ideas, such as the ways in which both sound and energy are communicated.

40 Fotos is, therefore, Frank's first exploration into the ways in which the juxtaposition of photographs or their sequence could convey meaning in a visual, nonverbal manner. He would continue to explore these ideas in other handmade books, such as *Peru*, 1948, *Black, White, and Things*, 1952, and, of course, his highly celebrated publication *The Americans*, 1958 and 1959.

A gift from the artist himself, *40 Fotos* now joins *Peru* and *Black, White, and Things*, which Frank also gave to the National Gallery in 1990 and 1996, and makes an already stellar collection of his work even more complete, significant, and remarkable.

• Sarah Greenough, *Senior Curator and Head of Photographs*



**Master MZ (Matthäus Zaisinger?),
*The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine***

During the crucial decade on both sides of 1500, South German art developed from the last flowering of the medieval to the beginning of the Renaissance. At this time the leading engraver in Nuremberg and central Germany was clearly Albrecht Dürer; along the upper Rhine, it was Martin Schongauer; and in Munich and Bavaria, it was the Master MZ. The latter shows characteristics not of a goldsmith but of a

**Master MZ (Matthäus Zaisinger?),
The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine,
c. 1500, engraving, National Gallery of
Art, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund**

painter. He is frequently identified with one of at least two recorded artists called Matthäus Zaisinger.

The Master MZ treated religious, secular, and contemporary historical subjects with a distinctive artistic personality. He continued the medieval lack of concern with relative sizes in perspective, so his larger compositions sometimes seem like collages of separate units incorporating different parts of a story. His major figures, however, show the new Renaissance concern for three-dimensional realism, with forms robustly rounded or modeled through light and shadow. Besides distinctive details like elongated bodies with small heads and voluminous drapery cascading into numerous soft folds, he manifested special sensitivity to landscape, particularly its atmospheric qualities and the individual life of sprightly trees, reeds, and plants. All those characteristics influenced Albrecht Altdorfer, Wolf Huber, and other early painters and sculptors of the Danube School, which developed along that river in the Regensburg-Passau-Linz area. As opposed to Dürer's beautiful but rationally structured landscapes, those of the Master MZ are more tender and intimate, and more emotionally expressive, exactly the features developed further by Altdorfer and Huber in their most distinctive art.

Of twenty-two engraved subjects by the Master MZ, the Gallery owns fourteen. His largest engraving, and by far his most popular, was this *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine*, with his most extensive landscape background. In 1945 Lessing Rosenwald gave the Gallery an impression of this engraving, and in 1976 the Gallery acquired a second, better impression. With the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund, the Gallery has now acquired this third impression, which is superb and the finest example in America.

The quality of this impression adds enormously to its artistic effect, espe-



cially in the general clarity of image, the subtlety of facial expressions, the modeling of figures with light and shade, the recession in the landscape, the shimmering reflections on the water, plus the soft atmosphere and interaction between the reeds, plants, and trees around the lakeshore.

The National Gallery has built the finest collection outside Europe of Danube School prints and drawings, including uniquely important works by both Altdorfer and Huber. This outstanding impression of the Master MZ's most important engraving provides an excellent beginning for that development in Bavaria. • Andrew Robison, *Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings*

Jean-François de Troy, *The Abduction of Europa*

This delightful painting by Jean-François de Troy (1679–1752), one of the leading painters in Paris in the first half of the eighteenth century, portrays the climactic moment from Ovid's story in *Metamorphoses*—the Abduction of Europa. Jupiter has transformed himself into a handsome bull to lure the lovely princess Europa onto his back and carry her away to Crete where she would bear him three sons. From Rembrandt to Claude Lorrain to Paul Gauguin, this seminal story captured the imagination of European artists for centuries.

Painted in rich colors with the light, refined brush characteristic of the works

Jean François de Troy, *The Abduction of Europa (midtreatment)*, c. 1716, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Fund

of de Troy's fellow members of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, Antoine Watteau and François Boucher, this painting offers a classical mythological subject in a rococo style that gracefully complements the National Gallery's collection. De Troy studied with his father, François de Troy, professor and then director of the Académie. In 1699, he traveled to Italy, spending most of his time in Rome copying the masterpieces of antiquity and Italian art. He returned to Paris in 1706, and two years later became a full-fledged member

of the Académie. A prodigiously talented painter, he completed ambitious decorations in churches, palaces, and public buildings in Paris, Versailles, Fontainebleau, and Marseilles. In 1738, he was granted the prestigious post of director of the Académie de France in Rome, a position he retained until his death. Although he was officially a history painter, he worked successfully across genres, inventing what are known as *tableaux de modes* to rival and succeed Watteau's more mysterious and ambiguous *fêtes galantes*.

The present painting may have been inspired by what is perhaps the most famous iteration of the theme, Titian's *Europa*, 1560–1562, (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston). The latter work was given by Philip V, king of Spain, to the French ambassador, the duc de Gramont, in 1704. Titian's painting subsequently passed into the possession of the duc d'Orléans, with whose collection, on permanent display at the Palais Royal in Paris, de Troy was thoroughly conversant. Smaller in scale and less tragic in tone, de Troy's painting illustrates the same moment in the story and displays a similarly lush palette and dramatic drapery. The probable pendant to *The Abduction of Europa*, a representation of *Cupid and Psyche*, is signed and dated 1716, thus placing our picture within a period early in the artist's career during which he specialized in cabinet-sized pictures of erotically charged mythological subjects. • Mary G. Morton, *Curator and Head of French Paintings*

Al Taylor, *The Peabody Group #32*

The National Gallery recently acquired three works by the American artist Al Taylor (1948–1999). Two drawings, which were purchased with Collectors Committee funds, are still lifes of a sort: one a virtuoso rendering of tin cans suspended from wires; the other a close-up depiction of commercially produced floats, the type used by fishermen to keep their nets from sinking. A pair of recurring themes emerges: humble objects and their suspension in space.

The third work, *The Peabody Group #32*, a gift from the artist's widow, relates to a very different genre—that of the urban street scene. But instead of the bustle of automobiles and passersby, Taylor took a more literal approach, directing his attention to the pavement stained with dog urine. Random arrangements of stains inspired a series of drawings and three-dimensional works between 1989 and 1992, including *Pet Stain Removal Device*, *Hanging Puddles*, and *The Peabody Group*. Improvising from stains on pavement—forms that are both natural and random, yet also partly determined—evokes a lofty historical precedent. None other than Leonardo da Vinci suggested an almost identical tactic in his treatise on painting, where he offered advice to the young artist on how to conjure up new pictorial ideas: “I have seen clouds and stains on walls which have given rise to beautiful inventions of various things.” Taylor expressed his own interest in such chance operations in a more postmodern way: “trying to let things make themselves.”

He aestheticized the stains by imbuing them with color. And he mimicked their appearance by lifting and turning the paper so that his media (mostly watercolor, gouache, and ink) flowed according to the dictates of gravity.

The Peabody Group #32 calls to mind the stain paintings of color field artists such as Helen Frankenthaler and

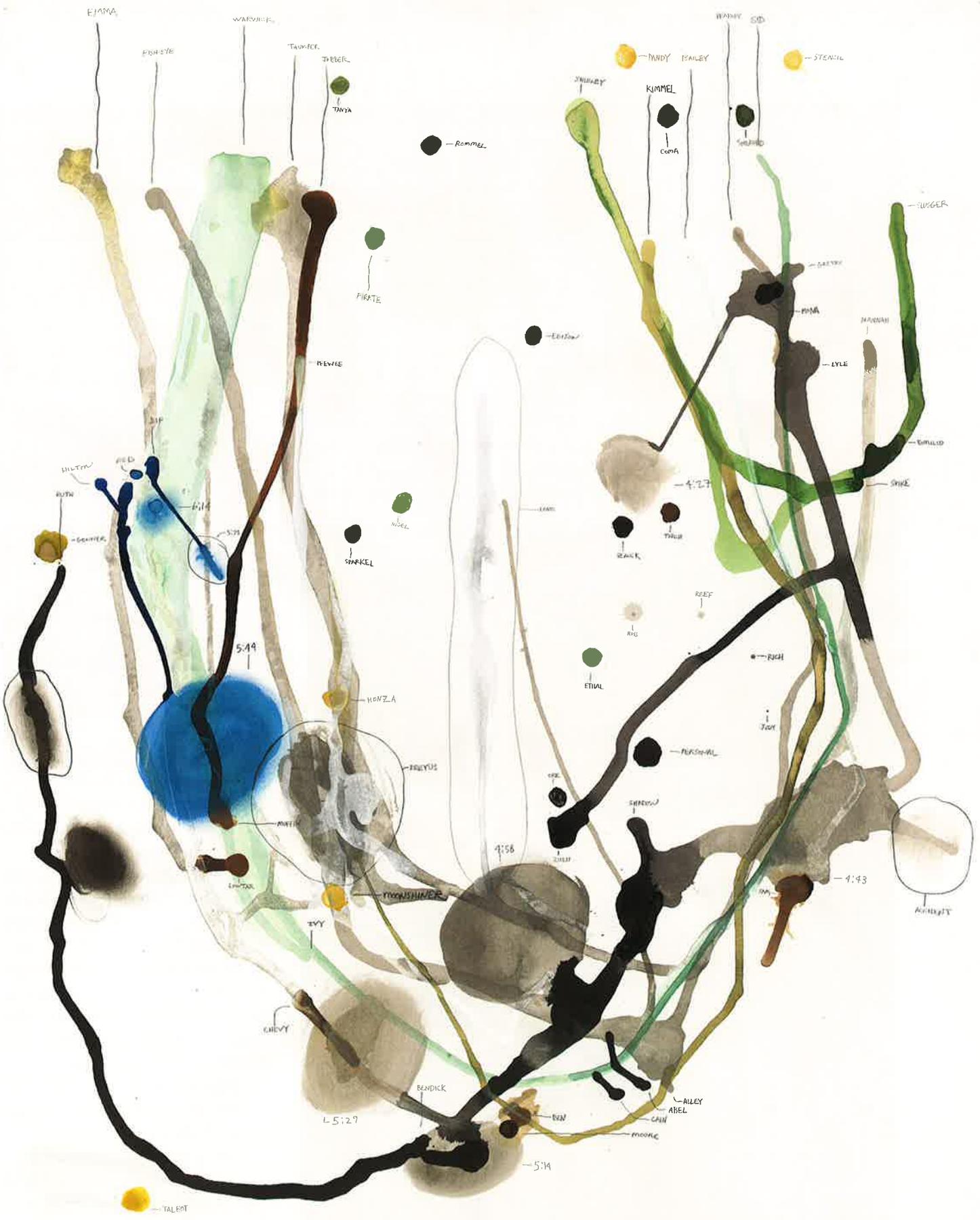
Al Taylor, *The Peabody Group #32*, 1992, graphite, watercolor, gouache, ink, and coffee on paper, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Debbie Taylor

Morris Louis. Indeed it would be easy to view the work as an abstraction were it not for the fact that Taylor took us back to the action of the street. With immense wit, he literalized the circumstances, annotating each stain with the name of its creator and, occasionally, a time of execution. Thus we are asked to believe that Emma, Fish-Eye, Warwick, Thumper, and Jobber's outflow spills down from the upper left, and that the two adjacent puddles were produced by Tanya and Rommel. Are further allusions at play? Near the cluster of stains at the top right, one of the graphite lines descends from the name Peabody, an obvious reference to the series' title but also to its subject matter, while the overall trickles and punctuating splatters tempt us to wonder whether Taylor was likewise recalling the master of the “drip” technique, Jackson Pollock.

• Judith Brodie, *Curator and Head of Modern Prints and Drawings*

Charles Clifford, *Puerta de Santa Cruz, Toledo*

The Welsh photographer Charles Clifford (1819–1863) began taking photographs in 1850 and spent most of his photographic career in Madrid, becoming the official photographer to Queen Isabel II in 1858. Although his early death cut short his career, he produced a remarkable body of work, primarily photographing Spain's medieval and modern architecture, including building projects undertaken during the queen's reign. His favored photographic process was the albumen print made from a collodion negative, though he also made prints from paper negatives.



Puerta de Santa Cruz, Toledo shows the entrance doorway to the sixteenth-century Hospital of Santa Cruz, which is now a museum. The mount is blind-stamped “C Clifford, Photo of H M” [Her Majesty], suggesting that it was taken some time after 1858. Though his architectural views encompassed a wide range, Clifford favored close-up views of intricately decorated doorways such as this example. The rich print subtly captures the tonal variations between light and dark on the façade, successfully imparting a sense of three-dimensionality to the sculptural decoration. The placement of the camera gives energy to the composition by position-

Charles Clifford, *Puerta de Santa Cruz, Toledo*, c. 1860, albumen print, National Gallery of Art, New Century Fund



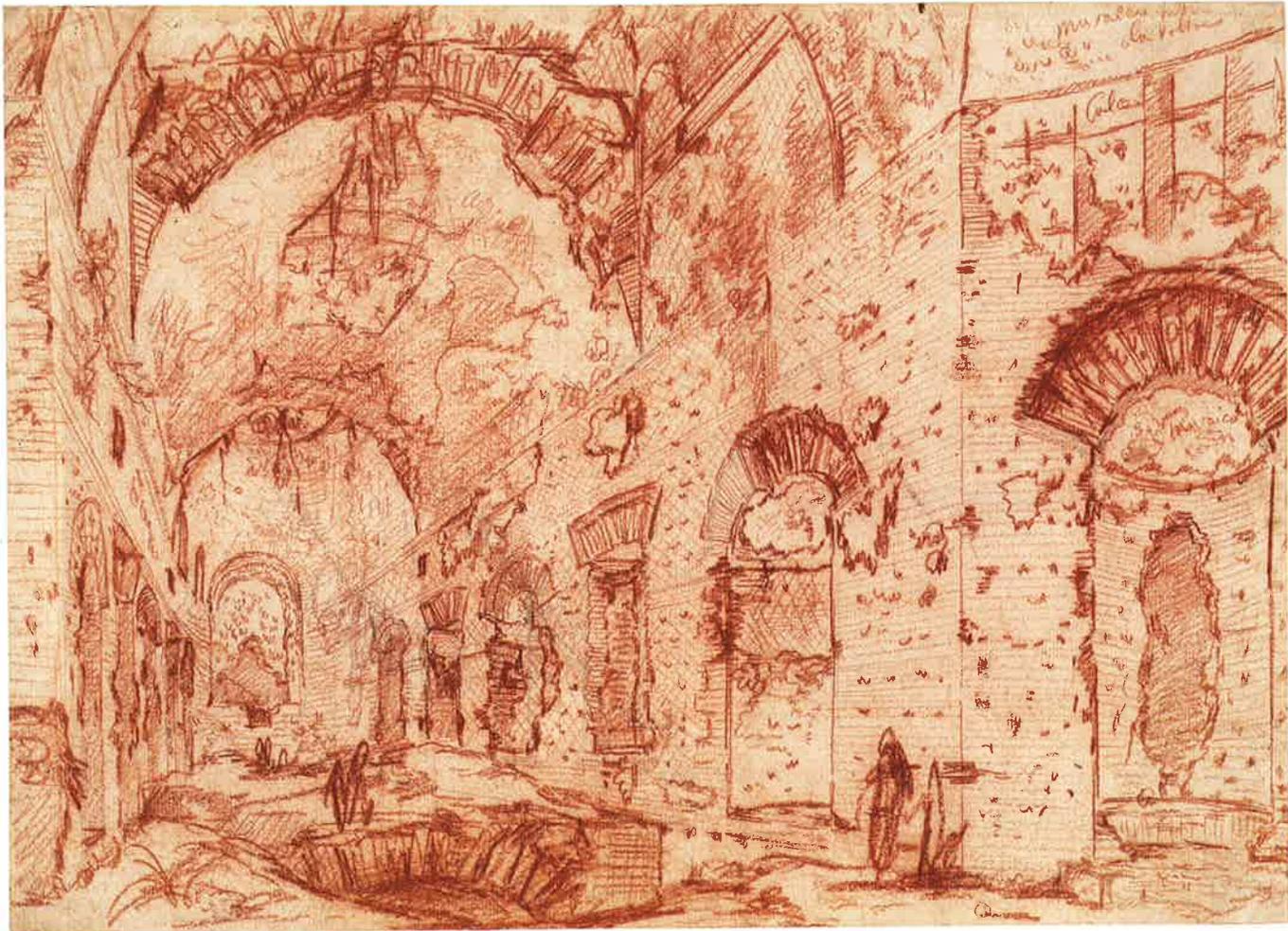
ing the façade at a slight angle rather than parallel to the lens. This photograph is the first by Clifford to enter the Gallery's collection. It joins a small group of nineteenth-century prints by French and British photographers working abroad. • Diane Waggoner, *Associate Curator, Department of Photographs*

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *The Canopus of the Villa Adriana at Tivoli*

Although he was not a painter, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) was the most influential Italian artist of the eighteenth century, both during his lifetime and for the two centuries since his death. Indeed, Piranesi's influence is all around us in the grandeur of the interpretation of classical architecture in Washington, especially Union Station and the National Gallery's West Building.

Twentieth-century writers have emphasized Piranesi's architectural fantasies, with their romantic freedom and intense emotion, but his views of Rome earned him the most fame in his lifetime and for the longest period after his death. For instance, Goethe found Rome disappointing to see in person after knowing Piranesi's views of it, which he thought much more impressive.

The Canopus of the Villa Adriana at Tivoli is one of Piranesi's largest, boldest, and finest drawn views of Rome. This very generous gift from Ladislaus and Beatrix von Hoffmann shows part of the ruins of Hadrian's villa, built AD 118–138. As early as the 1750s Piranesi visited Tivoli to study and sketch, sometimes taking the artists and architects Robert Adam or Charles Louis Clérissseau along. The Canopus was apparently designed to imitate the Sanctuary of Serapis at Alexandria and decorated in an Egyptian style. Thus, Piranesi's interest in this specific section



of the villa demonstrates his constant theme of the magnificence of ancient Rome (in which he so influenced neoclassicism); it also shows his remarkable ability to convey the grandeur of ruins surviving the onslaught of time and nature (in which he so influenced romanticism); and it reflects his prescience in recognizing and using Egyptian art as a source of motifs for architectural decoration.

As with so many of Piranesi's Roman views, this drawing is a fascinating amalgam of transformation and accuracy. Compared with the actual ruins, Piranesi's view enormously enhances the scale by the diminution of figures relative to the architecture, and creates a space that plunges much deeper by showing the building from an angle, a technique he learned from baroque stage designs. However, Piranesi is

quite accurate in the number and arrangement of architectural features, as well as in the character of surfaces—he annotated the drawing to remind himself where the stucco and mosaics are located.

Piranesi used this drawing to make an etched view of the same size that can be dated c. 1776. Comparing the two illustrates that his drawing was done in an amazingly spontaneous shorthand, while the print incorporates a plethora of detail. Contemporary artists such as Hubert Robert, who watched Piranesi at work drawing views, were astonished at the fiery swiftness of his draftsmanship in exactly such intense sheets as this splendid example. • Andrew Robison, *Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings*

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *The Canopus of the Villa Adriana at Tivoli*, c. 1776, red chalk over black chalk, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Ladislaus and Beatrix von Hoffmann



Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, *Favorite of the Emir*

Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant (1845–1902) was among the preeminent painters of orientalist subjects in France in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In 1859, he enrolled at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Toulouse where he remained until 1866 when a municipal scholarship allowed him to continue his artistic training in Paris. In 1871, Benjamin-Constant embarked upon an extended sojourn, spending the better part of two years abroad, traveling first through Moorish Spain before joining Charles Joseph Tissot, French plenipotentiary to Morocco. During the artist's sixteen-month stay he collected artifacts and made sketches and studies that would provide the basis for his numerous compositions in the years to come.

By the mid-1870s, Benjamin-Constant had established a reputation as painter of orientalist subjects, ranging from grim and occasionally violent genre scenes, to opulent and visually alluring harem scenes. *Favorite of the Emir*, painted in 1879, is typical of the latter category. Like many of his contemporaries, Benjamin-Constant was an admirer of Eugène Delacroix. Benjamin-Constant's first teacher, Jules Garipuy, had been a student of Delacroix. In this painting, Delacroix's influence is evident not only in the subject matter but also in the lush palette and painterly surface. Benjamin-Constant puts his own distinctive stamp upon the work, however. This is most notable in the spatial construction of the painting and the sharp contrast he established between the rich patterning of the fabrics displayed in

the foreground and the flat planes of vivid color in the background.

Benjamin-Constant took great delight in the juxtaposition of the richly embroidered fabric against the smooth pale flesh of the women's arms and chests and the subtle variations between the two women. On the right, the dark-haired woman gazes directly at the viewer while her companion is shown fully in repose, her body relaxed and her eyes closed as if lulled to sleep by the musician seated behind her. The paleness of her skin and her rich auburn hair suggest that she is not a native. Playing upon contemporary fantasies of European beauties who have been spirited away to lead the pampered, cloistered life of a courtesan in a harem—the inclusion of the man standing guard in the background at the far right of the composition serves as a reminder of the locale—Benjamin-Constant introduced an erotic charge into this exotic and visually seductive painting. This painting, the first by the artist to enter the Gallery's collection, is a gift of the United States Naval Academy Museum • Kimberly Jones, *Associate Curator of French Paintings*



Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, *Favorite of the Emir*, 1879, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Courtesy of the United States Naval Academy Museum



Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Four Seasons in One Head*, c. 1590, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Paul Mellon Fund

Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Four Seasons in One Head*

From his own time as court painter in Vienna and Prague, the late Renaissance master Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593) has been noted for his bizarre composite heads. Painted singly or in series, the heads combine plants, animals, and other objects appropriate to the themes Arcimboldo treated, such as the Four Seasons and the Four Elements (earth, air, fire, and water). The artist's *Four Seasons in One Head*, newly acquired by the Gallery, was publicly presented for the first time in the Arcimboldo retrospective held in Paris and Vienna in 2007. The exceptional importance of the picture was established in Sylvia Ferino-Pagden's exhibition catalogue entry, and its status as a late autograph masterpiece by the artist was recently confirmed by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann in his 2009 monograph. Kaufmann hails the painting as "one of the most startling discoveries of works by Arcimboldo in recent years."

The panel is signed "ARCIMBOLDUS F," where the bark has peeled away on the branch at the right. It is also the subject of a lengthy description in a literary dialogue entitled *Il Figino* written by Arcimboldo's friend Gregorio Comanini and published in 1591. Here the Milanese artist Ambrogio Figino is advised to have "Comanini show you Arcimboldo's playful treatment of the Four Seasons; you will see a lovely work." After accurately describing the painting, Figino is assured that "the work will please you wonderfully."

The flowers and fruit (apples, plums, grapes, and cherries) in the *Four Seasons* compare with the same or similar nature motifs in Arcimboldo's other works. In particular, the gnarled and rather menacing tree trunk and branches find exact parallels in the versions of *Winter* in the Louvre and

in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The *Four Seasons* has the additional interest of the more engaging three-quarter view, unlike the strict profile Arcimboldo adopted for the Seasons and the Elements. The *Four Seasons* stands out in other respects as well. By contrast to the whimsical character of much of Arcimboldo's work, the mood is darker and more somber. The *Four Seasons* is also the most closely related of all Arcimboldo's composite heads to the physiognomic studies of Leonardo da Vinci, Arcimboldo's predecessor in Milan. Painted around 1590, after Arcimboldo had returned to his native city, the *Four Seasons* is one of his last works. If not a self-portrait of the artist in the "winter" of his life, the painting is a summa of his career. • David Alan Brown, *Curator and Head of Italian and Spanish Paintings*

Martin Johnson Heade, *Sunlight and Shadow: The Newbury Marshes*, c. 1871/1875, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, John Wilmerding Collection

**Martin Johnson Heade,
*Sunlight and Shadow:
The Newbury Marshes***

The first pictures of marshlands by Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904) featured the environs of Newbury and Newburyport, Massachusetts, near the mouth of the Merrimack River. Perhaps attracted by John Greenleaf Whittier's poetry that celebrated the local landscape or more likely drawn there by his acquaintance with Bishop Thomas March Clark of Newburyport, Heade discovered the area sometime around 1859. By the end of his career he had executed more than one hundred marsh subjects, a body of work that accounts for almost one-fifth of his entire known oeuvre as a painter. Over the course of this series Heade captured the essential character of the wetlands environment. He depicted the tides, meteorological phenomena, and other natural forces that shaped the appearance of the swamp and showed how the land was used for hunting, fishing, and the



harvesting of naturally occurring salt hay. No other artist of the era explored and analyzed the unique qualities of the marshes in such a sustained and detailed way.

Sunlight and Shadow is a particularly masterful example of how Heade balanced many countervailing forces in his wetland compositions. The serpentine line of the tidal creek receding into the open plain on the right is offset by the visual weight of the haystack and apple tree on the left. The rhythm of the creek's movement is complemented by the undulating wave pattern that the treetops and clouds trace across the sky. The pink clouds are mirrored in the shallow pool of water at the lower center of the painting, and the form of the tree leaning left is echoed in the sweep of the high thin clouds placed in the upper right corner. Finally, the painting's primary motif, sunlight and shadow, seen, for instance, in its intricate cloud shadows and the subtle movement from light to dark across the body of the haystack, informs and unites all its visual elements.

Sunlight and Shadow: The Newbury Marshes is the latest gift to the Gallery from the John Wilmerding Collection. It joins other masterworks by Heade from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, *Cattleya Orchid and Three Hummingbirds*, and *The Circle, Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth*. The Gallery's permanent collection now includes a remarkable example of each of the three distinctive subjects that defined Heade's singular career—hummingbirds, flowers, and marshes.

• Charles Brock, *Associate Curator of American and British Paintings*

Vik Muniz, *Bowl*

Originally trained as a sculptor, Brazilian artist Vik Muniz (b. 1961) produces visually dynamic works that are both playful and provocative. Many of his projects involve recreating well-known images or artworks with unexpected materials, such as thread, dust, and chocolate syrup, which he then photographs. At once easily recognizable and yet puzzling, Muniz's virtuosic imitations are designed not to fool the eye but to question our normal viewing habits. In other words, the artist invites viewers to decipher his illusions, to recognize not only the images he reproduces but also the processes by which he reproduces them. Muniz, therefore, does more than simply appropriate imagery from popular culture and art history; he reveals new and compelling relationships between subject matter, material, and production.

From his *Pictures of Soil* series, *Bowl*, 1998, is a canny melding of sculpture, drawing, and photography. To create the work Muniz first placed common potting soil mixed with small rocks, twigs, and leaves on top of a light box—a backlit box with a translucent surface normally used by photographers to view negatives. Then, by carefully removing some of the dirt with a small vacuum and thereby revealing the illuminated surface of the light box, he expertly “carved” out the shape of a bowl. Although the bowl appears to be a three dimensional object, perhaps reminiscent of an archaeological find, it is in fact an illusion formed wholly by emitted light. Muniz completed the piece by photographing the composition. The final photographic print is not only a document of his ephemeral creation, but also an exquisite visual pun that challenges the mechanics of

perception. A gift of Heather and Tony Podesta, *Bowl* is the first photograph by Muniz to be acquired by the National Gallery and is an important addition to the growing collection of contemporary photography.

• Andrea Nelson, *Assistant Curator, Department of Photographs*

Vik Muniz, *Bowl*, 1998, gelatin silver print, National Gallery of Art, Gift of the Heather and Tony Podesta Collection