

Art Acquisitions

September 2011

Purchases

1. George Harvey (American, born England, 1799-1880), *Scene of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia*, ca. 1837-1840, oil on panel, 18¼ x 24". Floyd D. and Anne C. Gottwald Fund.



For one of the earliest American landscapes to picture a railroad, George Harvey painted a scenic view of Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). Massive rock bluffs loom above the meeting of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. In the foreground Harvey portrays the bustling activity of this port town, where both Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had each recently established a terminus. The passenger train that hugs the distant river bank features the latest vertical-boiler locomotive. Before returning to his native England in late life, Harvey made his home in the Hudson River Valley of New York. In addition to painting atmospheric landscapes, he also pursued an interest in architecture. The painter assisted Washington Irving in the redesign of Sunnyside, the celebrated writer's picturesque residence in Tarrytown.

Dr. Elizabeth L. O'Leary
Associate Curator of American Art

2. Alexander Gardner, Photographer (American, born Scotland, 1821-1882), Mathew Brady, Publisher (American, 1822-1896), *The President, General McClellan and Suite on Battle-field of Antietam*, October 3, 1862, albumen photograph, 7-1/16 x 9-1/16". Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund.



This rare image appeared in the original 1865 edition of Gardner's *Photographic Sketch Book*, the first published collection of Civil War photographs. Working under Union general George McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, Alexander Gardner documented nearly the entire campaign of the unit. Most famously, he became the first photographer to represent the ruins of war, arriving at Antietam, Maryland, two days after the bloody conflict of September 17, 1862, to capture the body-strewn battlefield.

Gardner returned to Antietam in early October to document the meeting between President Lincoln and McClellan, at which time he produced this image. The president, after reviewing the recent battle, complained that the general and his army should have pursued the Confederates into Virginia. The notable tension of the scene, with the two men in a somewhat confrontational pose, seems to go beyond the inherently static characteristic of the medium. One month later, Lincoln relieved McClellan of his command.

Dr. Sylvia Yount
 Chief Curator and Louise B. and J. Harwood
 Cochrane Curator of American Art

3. Sèvres, *Cream Jug (Head of a Cow)* (Pot à Crème, Tête de Vache), 1816, hard-paste porcelain, 16.6 x 10.2 x 17 cm. John F. Alexander Fund.



This bold and imaginative cream pot in the shape of a rhyton with a cow head terminus is testament to the amazing ability of Sèvres porcelains always to be at the forefront of taste and fashion - in this case, Neoclassicism. Richly gilded and superbly modeled, it is probably based on a Greek rhyton in the collection of Sir William Hamilton. The cream pot was the creation of Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard. The son of the painter Jean Honoré, Alexandre-Evariste was himself an eminent painter who practiced a multitude of manners including the neo-medieval Troubadour style. It was commissioned Alexandre Brongniart, the Neo-Classical architect (whose Paris Bourse is perhaps his best known building) then Director of the Sèvres Manufactory, who aimed to

bring back the factory to the eminence it enjoyed before the ravages of the French Revolution. The shape is rare - only about 12 were made. This example was made in 1816 (incised sz stands for seize). It was one of the first three made, described as “richement dorés”, entering the Sèvres shop on December 27th 1816, at a production cost of 75 francs and a sales price of 90 francs. The only other one known to survive is a damaged example with a missing handle. It relates to the *pot à crème tête de bélier* (cream jug with ram's head) produced at the factory from 1813, as part of a tea service with varied shapes, such as a teapot formed as an ostrich egg and a sugar bowl as a pineapple – that somewhat more ornate cream jug is now in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum.

Dr. Mitchell Merling

Paul Mellon Curator/Head of the Department of European Art

4. Max Klinger (German, 1857-1920), *Intermezzi (Radierung Opus IV)*, 1881, folio of 12 etchings with aquatint on chine collé, 628 x 446 mm. Purchased with European deaccessioning funds.

Théodore Géricault (French, 1791-1824), five lithographs: *Chevaux Flamands*, 1822; *Cheval que l'on Ferra*, 1823; *Chevaux de Ferme*, 1823; *Hangar de Maréchal-ferrant*, 1823; *Les Boueux*, 1823. Frank Raysor Fund.

Charles Meryon (French, 1821-1868), *Native Buildings at Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula*, 1865, etching

David Young Cameron (Scottish, 1865-1945), *Ben Lomond*, 1923, etching

Mary Nimmo Moran (American, 1843-1899), *Scrub Oaks, Amagansett, Long Island, N.Y.*, 1881, etching and drypoint

Charles Jacque (French, 1813-1894), *The Tow Path*, ca. 1864, etching

Funds provided by the Frank Raysor Fund.

Master B of the Die (Italian, fl. c. 1530s-ca. 1560s), *St. Roch*, engraving, 205 x 143 mm. Funds provided by Alice and Lewis Nelson, Roanoke.



The museum added a group of 22 European and American prints purchased using funds donated by Frank Raysor, Alice and Lewis Nelson and through deaccessioning funds. Artists represented in the group include the 15th century artist Master B of the Die who was an important artist whose identity has been lost to us today who worked in the style of Raphael; the German Symbolist artist Max Klinger, whose *Intermezzi* presents a fantastical vision of grand themes and myths; five lithographs by Theodore Gericault which come from the artist's major series *Etudes de chevaux* and *Quatre sujets divers* and which join the VMFA's significant collection of the artist compiled through both donation and purchase; and four prints from artists associated with the etching revival in France, Scotland and the United States including Charles Meryon, Charles Jacque, David Young Cameron and Mary Nimmo Moran. These important additions to the collection serve to more fully develop the museum's print holdings in coordination with the gift of the Frank Raysor Collection as VMFA moves towards becoming a major center for the study of works on paper.



Dr. Mitchell Merling
Paul Mellon Curator/Head of the Department of
European Art

5. Korean, Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), *Garment Box with Phoenix Design*, mid-19th century, black lacquered on wood with mother-of-pearl inlay, 7 ½ x 26 ½ x 17 in. (67 x 19 x 43 cm). Gift and purchase made with East Asian Deaccessioning Funds



This rectangular box is lavishly decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay depicting phoenix birds, the character of long life among floral spray, and fruit bunches, bordered by a band of floral scrolls. Layers of black lacquer were first applied on the wood core, and then the design was carved into the lacquer. Finally, finely carved and polished mother-of-pearl (abalone shell) were inlaid in the grooves. The large size of the box and its animated design suggest it was produced for holding clothes during the mid-19th century in Seoul, one of the lacquer-making centers of the Joseon dynasty.

Li Jian
E. Rhoads and Leona B. Carpenter
Foundation Curator of East Asian Art

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is a state agency and a model public/private partnership. All works of art are purchased with private funds from dedicated endowments. After the board of trustees accepts the acquisitions, the art becomes the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia to protect, preserve and interpret. The Acquisitions committee meets quarterly.

With a collection of art that spans the globe and more than 5,000 years, plus a wide array of special exhibitions, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is recognized as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. The museum's permanent collection encompasses more than 23,000 works of art, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside Russia and one of the nation's finest collections of American art, Art Nouveau and Art Deco. VMFA is home to acclaimed collections of English Silver and Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British Sporting and Modern & Contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened its doors to the public after a transformative expansion, the largest in its 75-year history. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus fun after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. General admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

###

Press Contact:

Suzanne Hall, suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2704

Pryor Green, pryor.green@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2701

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007