

Adopt an Artwork
from the Biggs Museum of
American Art
School Year 2019-2020

Adopt an Artwork

Summary Description

This year, we're reproducing works of art from our collection and putting them "up for adoption" by local schools. For the entirety of the 2019/2020 school year, schools will be able to have their framed work of art on display in the school and will use these works of art as tools for the development of curriculum throughout the year. In conjunction with the adoption, we're inviting teachers from these schools to attend training sessions where they will learn create lesson plans related to these objects and aligned to the new Delaware Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts. All hours at the sessions and hours spent working on the lessons will be eligible for clock hours. These lessons will be attributed to the author(s) and integrated into the museum's online library of resources available to the public and used in the museum's school tour program.

To supplement these lessons, the Biggs will also offer on-site field trips to schools free of charge or an "at school" field trip led by Biggs staff and volunteers. This program will be run with the support and assistance of the Delaware Department of Education

Outcomes

1. Develop standards aligned, teacher generated lesson plans based on the Biggs Museum's permanent collection
2. Provide an opportunity for teachers to integrate new standards into their curriculum
3. Expose students to object based learning and create a sense of ownership of the Biggs' collection
4. Offer an opportunity for teachers to receive professional development clock hours for re-licensure.
5. Generate sample student artifacts and artist statements for inclusion on the Delaware Department of Education art standards website
www.deartsstandards.org

Timeline

Spring/Summer of 2019

Over three months, the Biggs and the Department of Education will run three, two hour training sessions for teachers. During these session, teachers will receive an orientation to the Biggs' collection and instruction on planning and implementing the new arts standards into their school and district curriculum. Teachers will receive two clock hours per session, with an additional hours granted for work on their lessons. In total, this program has the potential to provide an individual teacher with 12 professional development clock hours.

During this time period, the Biggs and the Department of Education will also be encouraging support and commitment from schools to have the reproductions “adopted” for the 2019/2020 school year.

Fall 2019

All “adopted” reproductions will be installed in schools. Teachers will continue refining their lesson plans and pilot them in the classroom.

Schools may begin field trips or receiving “at school” field trips at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

Winter/Spring 2019-2020

Schools will continue to participate in field trips and teachers will continue to implement their lessons into their curriculum.

Early Summer 2020

Participating schools and teachers will be invited to a wrap up session at the Biggs to provide their feedback on the successes and difficulties of the program.

Contact: Curator of Community and Academic Programs,
Reggie Lynch at rlynch@biggsmuseum.org or 302-674-2111 ext. 110

How to Use this Guide

This guide presents all the objects that are proposed for adoption. Each entry includes a small statement about the piece. Many also include a description of where these objects can be found in our catalogue, which can be copied, borrowed, or purchased from the museum. A handful of entries also feature a QR code, which can be scanned on a smartphone and will link to a video about or related to the object.

Once you've determined which object you would like to adopt, contact the Curator of Community and Academic Programs at rlynch@biggsmuseum.org or 302-674-2111 ext. 110



Tea Table

"Big" Tom Burton

Long Neck, Sussex County, DE, 1860s-1900

Walnut, Swamp Root

According to family tradition, "Big Tom" Burton was an African American sharecropper who worked on the Burton Plantation in southern Sussex County, Delaware. Until the Emancipation Proclamation, the plantation's owner, Benjamin Burton (dates unknown), was the largest slaveholder in the state. This table, very likely a marriage between an eighteenth-century walnut tabletop and a swamp-root base, is an extremely rare example of a document piece of furniture created by an African American in Delaware.



Portrait of Anna Dorothea Finney
John Hesselius (1728/29-1778)
Oil on canvas
Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 215

Anna Dorothea Finney (1735–1817) was a wealthy resident of New Castle, Delaware, and this portrait of her may have commemorated an arranged marriage to her first cousin, John Finney. American-born artist John Hesselius, it appears, was heavily influenced by the fashionable portraiture trends of the preceding 50 years in England and France. These trends include the sitter’s “almond-shaped” eyes, a portrait convention that was popular during the reign of Queen Anne (1702–14). Miss Finney’s richly textured, silk-and-satin dress also speaks of the day’s fashion.



The Granite Rock, Appledore
Childe Hassam (1859–1935)
1908
Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 354

Childe Hassam was born in Massachusetts, where he began his artistic career as a printmaker and watercolorist. After several trips to study in Paris, the artist began to apply French Impressionism, and later Post-Impressionism, to his depictions of American cities. When he relocated to New York, Hassam spent summers in New England along the coastlines of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, as well as in the renowned Impressionist artist colony of Old Lyme, Connecticut



Far View (The Old Beach)

Ethel Pennewill Brown Leach (1878–1959)

Pre-1926

Oil on canvas

Biggs Museum Catalogue, Vol. II nos. 339-342

Described as the “dean of Delaware painters,” Ethel Leach was a founding member of the Rehoboth Art League, the center of the artist colony in Southern Delaware. Leach was a life-long resident of Frederica, Delaware, which she depicted often in her work. She studied illustration with Howard Pyle (1853–1911) and at the Académie Moderne in Paris, and kept a cottage at Rehoboth Beach with her husband, fellow painter William Leach. There they painted pictures for tourists and local patrons, depicting the pine forest, dunes, shipwrecks, and Henlopen Lighthouse before it fell into the sea in 1926.



Portrait of Vincent Loockerman
John Hesselius (1728/29–1778)
1750s
Oil on canvas

Descended from Dutch colonists in New York, Vincent Loockerman (1722–1785) was a wealthy merchant and landowner who built his home in Dover, Delaware, where it remains in his family's possession to this day. Today, many of the house's important eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Delaware and Philadelphia furnishings are on view in the Biggs Museum. These objects' well-recorded history over many years helps tell that of Delaware.



Storm Passing over the Juniata

Isaac L. Williams (1817-1895)

1866

Oil on canvas/board

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 281-286

Isaac L. Williams was formally educated in his hometown of Philadelphia, but spent much of his time in Noxontown, Delaware. The artist began his career by studying with John Rowson Smith (1810–1864) and John Neagle (1796–1865), and later instructed art in private institutions, as well as his studio. He was a member of the Artist’s Fund Society—eventually becoming its president—and the Art Union of Philadelphia, exhibiting his works widely in galleries and institutions from Philadelphia.



Commodore Jacob Jones, USN
Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860)
ca. 1813-14
Oil on canvas
Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 229

Commodore Jacob Jones, a native of Smyrna, Delaware, was a widely heralded hero of the War of 1812. The work follows closely in line with Rembrandt Peale's other representations of American war heroes, which often featured evocative clouds in the background and dashing windswept hair styles. The work provides an example of the ways in which American citizens and American painters integrated Napoleonic fashions and European Romantic artistic styles into their lives, in keeping with their French sympathies during this era.

For Further Thinking:

What aspects of the painting do you think suggest Commodore Jones' heroism?

How is this portrayal similar or different to how we portray war heroes and heroic people today?



Hollyhocks
John Ross Key (1832-1920)
Oil on canvas
Biggs Catalogue, no. 308

John Ross Key was born in Hagerstown Maryland and raised by his grandfather, Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner." He was a friend and peer of James McNeil Whistler and may have studied at the National Academy of Design. Key largely specialized in landscapes, but in the late 1870s, he spent much of his time focusing on representations of intensely colored flowers. His flower paintings were said to capture "the very soul of the flowers."



Pendant

Portrait by unknown artist

Mount by General James Wolf (1779-1858)

Probably Wilmington, first half of the 19th century

Silver

Partial gift from Col. Kenneth P. and Regina I. Brown; 2005.416

Biggs Silver Catalogue, page 296-312

This pendant of an unknown woman was set into a silver mount that is marked by Wilmington silversmith General James Wolf. A similar pendant marked by Wolf is known with a portrait of a young man also dressed in the clothing of first decades of the 19th century. This work was almost certainly made by two different artists: a silversmith and a painter. Pendants like this were created for a variety of reasons including marriage, engagement, and even death. In the latter case, they were often memorials to loved ones and sometimes even featured a spot to preserve a lock of their hair.



Tenth Street Studio of William Merritt Chase

Reynolds Beal (1867–1951)

1894

Oil on canvas

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 323

Reynolds Beal met William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) in 1891 while studying at the Art Students League. Soon after, the budding artist enrolled in Chase's Shinnecock Summer School of Art to study plein-air painting techniques. By 1894, Beal was one of Chase's rare private pupils within his famous studio on West Tenth Street in New York City.



Miniature Chest of Drawers

William Baker (dates unknown)

Frederica, Delaware, 1841

Walnut, tulip poplar, yellow pine

Museum purchase; 2011.10

A handwritten letter was found beneath the lid of this miniature chest. It describes, in the most poetic language of the nineteenth century, that William Baker, cabinetmaker of Frederica, made this object as a gift for his friend Robert Y. Townsend. To date we know little more about this Delaware furniture maker.



Fourth of July

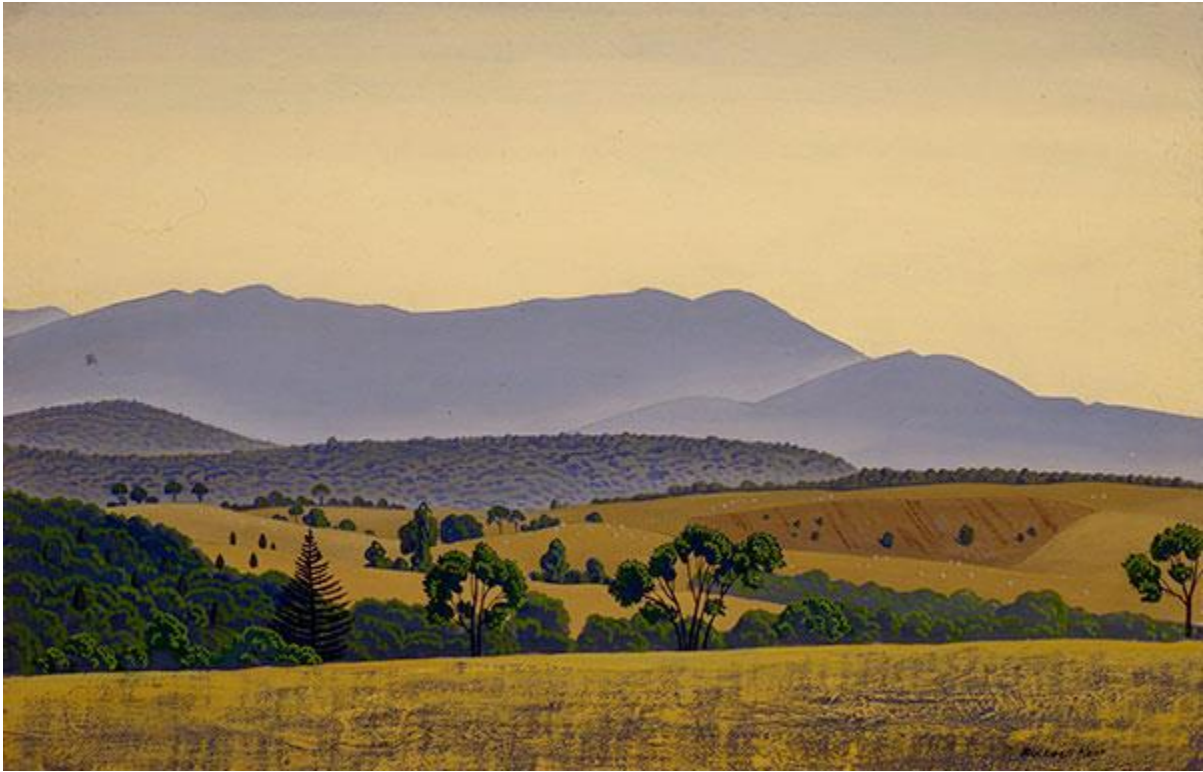
Francis Luis Mora (1874–1940)

1913

Oil on canvas

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 363

Francis Luis Mora was born in Uruguay and immigrated to the United States when he was six. He began his artistic training with his father, the well-known South American sculptor Domingo Mora (1840-1911), and continued with Boston impressionists, such as Edmund Tarbell (1862–1938). In 1910, Mora became vice president of the Art Students League in New York City, and he later taught at William Merritt Chase's New York Art Academy and the Grand Central School of Art. *Fourth of July* is a study for a mural that Mora painted at the Perth Amboy Yacht Club in around 1915.



Landscape

Rockwell Kent (1882–1971)

post-1920

Oil on panel

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 369

Although Rockwell Kent studied with leading American impressionist William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) and leading American realist Robert Henri (1865–1929), the artist's modern artistic departure simplified the objects in his landscapes into geometric shapes. Kent's modernist aesthetic composed these abstracted forms into overlapping layers of flattened vignettes. These vignettes expressed his transcendental spiritual belief that glorified humanity's place within the vastness of nature



The Pirate

Frank E. Schoonover (1877–1972)

1911

Oil on canvas

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 335

A contemporary of N. C. Wyeth (1882–1945) and a student of Howard Pyle (1853–1911), Frank Schoonover was among the nation's most prolific illustration artists. Like Pyle, Schoonover established a studio in Delaware and taught art. Schoonover also followed Pyle's advice and travelled extensively to record first-hand the subjects of his well-known illustrations of pirates, indigenous populations, and colonial personalities.



Strong Box
Germany, 1600s
Iron

According to its donor's family tradition, this iron chest was discovered partially buried along the shore of the Appoquinimink River, outside of Middletown, Delaware. While unverified, this history of the chest alludes to Delaware's wealthy colonial past of plantation owners, maritime merchants, and pirates.



Portrait of Alison Kendall

Henryette Stadelman Whiteside (1891–1973)

1925

Oil on canvas

Museum purchase; 2005.447

Henryette Whiteside studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with Thomas Anshutz (1851–1912), William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), and Cecelia Beaux (1855–1942). She also studied with Charles W. Hawthorne (1872–1930) in Rhode Island. The sitter of this portrait is the daughter of another of Whiteside's instructors, William Sergeant Kendall (1869–1938). Whiteside exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy, the National Academy of Design, and the Art Institute of Chicago. An important advocate for art education in Delaware, she founded the Wilmington Academy of Art in 1928, which merged with the newly founded Delaware Art Center (now the Delaware Art Museum) in 1938.



Storm at Sea

Francis De Haes Janvier (1774-1824)

1789

Watercolor on paper

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 220

This work is a rare example of painting by Francis De Haes Janvier, who was the second son of the notable Delaware cabinet maker, John Janvier. Francis was trained as a cabinetmaker, but made more of a name for himself as portrait and coach painter. This work is most likely a study done from a European engraving. Its basis on a European work offers an interesting example of the exchanges that occurred between European and American artists through the easily transportable media of engravings and prints.

For Further Thinking: The engraving this painting is based on was popular enough that it made its way to audiences in the United States. What do you think made it so popular?



Still Life with Broken Watermelon

James Peale (1749–1831)

1825

Oil on panel

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 236

In addition to artists who painted portraits, a growing group of U.S. painters were eager to start an American school of art and explore new methods of painting. James Peale and his nephew Raphael Peale (1784–1825) established the first school of still-life paintings in the United States. Although considered one of the lowest forms of painting in the European tradition, still life became a new means of artistic expression in America.



Eagle

Carver unknown

England or United States, ca. 1820–50

Elm

Ever since Congress adopted the bald eagle as the country's national symbol in 1782, eagle decorations and sculptures (pictured) have been carved in America and Europe for American consumers. Measuring 47 inches wide, this large sculpture may have been part of a matching pair and was probably carved to decorate a civic building.



The Bride of Abydos

Thomas Crawford (1813/14–1857)

Modeled 1841; carved 1842

Marble

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, 256

Thomas Crawford was among the first wave of American sculptors to study classical sculptural traditions in Rome in 1835. His work exemplifies the clean, minimalism of classical traditions, while often depicting modern subjects. He was well known and highly sought after in the states and abroad. The subject of this artwork comes from a poem of the same title by Lord Byron.



Untitled (sand art), 1884
 Andrew Clemens (1852 or 1857-1894)
 McGregor, Iowa
 Sand, glass

Samuel Clemens was a deaf artist who supported himself by selling bottled sand compositions to the tourists of the Mississippi River. He sifted the sand by hand from unique sandstone deposits on the banks of the river. His compositions are layered by hand, using tools he fashioned from hickory wood, and retain their fragile designs without any glue. Clemens is now considered one of the finest folk artists of this unique medium in the country.



Sword and scabbard, ca. 1812
General James Wolf (1779-1858)
Wilmington
Silver, steel, leather
Biggs Silver Catalogue, page 296

This presentation sword, one of five identical examples known to exist, was created as a result of the partnership between General James Wolf, Wilmington maker of the silver eagle handle, and Joseph Rose, Philadelphia maker of the steel blade.



Chairs

Myrna Bloom (1939–)

1970

Oil on canvas

Myrna Bloom studied fine art at Tyler School of Art and aesthetics at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. She began experimenting with op-art and naturalistic compositions that emphasized color relationships, the forms of domestic objects and smoothly painted surfaces. In later years, Bloom also created abstract sculptures with expressive movement. She has exhibited in a wide variety of solo and group exhibitions both regionally and nationally, and Bloom's work has been purchased by Temple University and the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts, as well as several corporate and private collections.



The Stolen Letter

Frederick Warren Freer (1849-1908)

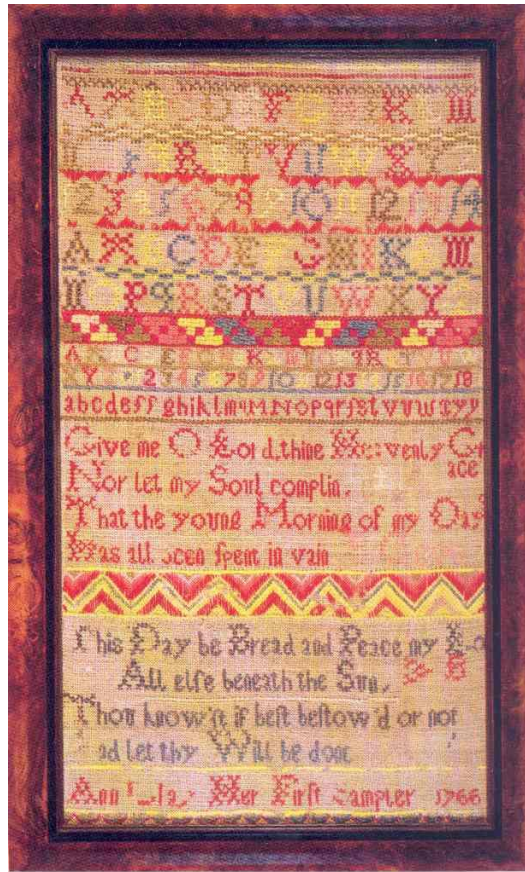
1886

Oil on canvas

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 314

This painting presents an interesting twist on the 19th century trope of depicting beautiful women engaged in solitary actions. Instead of focusing solely on her beauty and the aesthetics of the scene, Frederick Warren Freer infused a mysterious narrative into the work by including a letter featuring the phrase “do try” and the word “alone.” Freer’s inclusion of a cockatoo, which typically symbolized a wild nature, suggests that there may be more to this prim young lady than meets the eye.

For Further Thinking: What do you think was contained in the letter? Why might she be willing to allow her bird to destroy it?



Sampler

Ann Clay (1759–1846)

New Castle, Delaware, 1766

Worsted wool and silk on linen

To educate their daughters, prosperous families in colonial Delaware often followed the European tradition and instructed them in domestic and art-related topics. Instead of studying academic courses, girls learned such things as painting, music, and needlework. This example of childhood embroidery is a “sample” of the types of decorative embroidery techniques that girls learned at home or in schools for girls throughout the Delaware and Philadelphia regions



Pianoforte

Loud & Brothers (working ca. 1822–1833)

Philadelphia, 1830

Mahogany, rosewood, maple, white pine

American-made pianos represent the country's independence from England with the production of both luxury and household goods. At the same time, local production of such costly instruments indicates the growth of American leisure and overall financial health in the early 1800s. Well to do families would have had a pianoforte in their home, especially if there was a young woman in the house. The ability to play piano was considered a sign of good breeding and made a woman highly sought after in marriage.