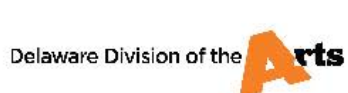


Adopt an Artwork
from the
Biggs Museum
of American **Art**
2020 – 2021 School Year

Sponsored in part by a generous donation from:



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 2020/2021 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 to 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, free of charge, the Biggs will offer participating schools either an on-site field trip to the museum 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 2020

Over three months, the Biggs and the Department of Education will run three, two-hour training sessions for teachers. During these sessions, teachers will receive an orientation to the Biggs' collection and instructions on planning and implementing the new arts standards into their school and district curriculum. Teachers will receive two clock hours per session, with additional hours granted for work on their lessons. In total, this program has the potential to provide an individual teacher with twelve 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 2020/2021 school year.

Fall 2020

All "adopted" reproductions will be installed in schools. Teachers will continue refining their lesson plans as they pilot them in the classroom.

Schools begin on-site or "at school" field trips in the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Winter/Spring 2020-2021

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

Early Summer 2021

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,
Kristen Matulewicz at kmalewicz@biggsmuseum.org or 302-674-2111 ext. 104

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 entries 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 related to the object.

Once you've determined which object you would like to adopt, contact the Curator of Community and Academic Programs, Kristen Matulewicz at kmatalewicz@biggsmuseum.org or 302-674-2111 ext. 104

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 18th 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.



The Misty Rocky Mountains

Late 1860s[?]

William Louis Sonntag (1822 -1900)

Oil on Canvas

Biggs Catalogue, Vol. II, no. 290



William Sonntag was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at the Cincinnati Academy of Fine Arts and by 1850 established himself as one of the city's leading landscape artists. He lived in Europe from 1853-1856. Upon returning to the States, Sonntag settled in New York City and began exhibiting at the National Academy of Design, where he was elected a full academician in 1861.

The panoramic, detailed treatment of this mountain landscape indicates that Sonntag painted it at the height of his mature style, which was representative of the second generation of the Hudson River School. It is difficult to identify the subject because little is known of his activities in the late 1860's. The unorthodox diagonal axis of the carefully balanced composition results in a dramatic contrast between the mountainside in the foreground and the misty, mysterious background. The two predatory birds and the mountain lion reinforce the aura of wild, remote nature.

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.



Concert at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Alice Barber Stephens (1858–1932)

1891

Oil on Academy Board

Biggs Museum Catalogue, Vol. II. 321



Illustrated for "A Quaker City Institution," *Harper's Weekly* 35, no. 1787 (March 21, 1891): 208; Captioned "Thursday Afternoon with the Germania Orchestra at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts."

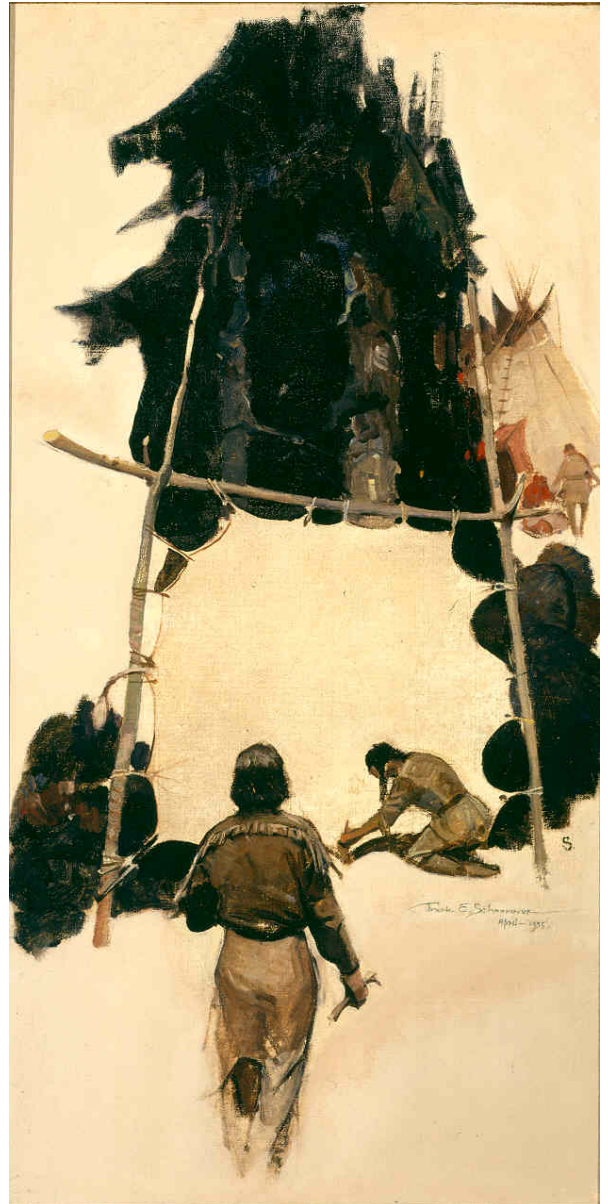
Probably the most prominent of the early American women professional illustrators, Stephens worked for *Harper's* and other magazines as well as producing pictures for books, such as the 1900 deluxe edition of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, which won her the bronze medal at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris. Stephens studied at the Philadelphia College of Design for Women and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and later instructed the first life class for women. She also studied in Paris in 1886-87. Stephens had contracts with *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Life*, *McCall's*, and *Country Gentleman* magazines.

This picture depicts a midweek afternoon concert. The audience consists of people with the leisure time to attend such an event. While the artist gives some individuality to those depicted in the foreground, they are not so sufficiently differentiated as to be considered portraits. The representation of the architectural space is believable, and the interior of the Academy is readily recognizable. Stephens executed this work in *grisaille* – black, white, and shades of grey.

Stretching the White Buffalo Skin
Frank E. Schoonover (1877–1972)
1935
Oil on Canvas

Illustration for James W. Schultz, "Beaver Woman's Vision," *American Boy-Youth's Companion* (July 1935); republished in James W. Schultz, *The White Buffalo Robe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936); captioned: "Apsi and I meantime made a frame and stretched the white buffalo skin upon it" daybook number:2082.

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.



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.



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 19th 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.

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.



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.

Storm on the Delaware

George Washington Nicholson (1832–1912)

1860s

Oil on Canvas



The number of subjects to which Nicholson turned his attentions seems limitless. He was well traveled and left work identified with each locale: England, the Bahamas, France, Venice, and Cairo. He seems also to have experimented with unusual subjects such as Robinson Crusoe and Friday, and monkeys. He fit no mold.

Storm on the Delaware exemplifies one aspect of his far-ranging enthusiasm. Nicholson recorded no title for this painting, and the one given here is one of convenience. It might as easily be entitled *The Salvagers* because the man, two boys, and their dog seem to have stumbled on the fruits of a storm just past: wrecked boat, barrel, piece of sail, bolt, and cloth. The man seems to be addressing the artist and us, perhaps with an explanation for his own presence at that of the wreck.

Nicholson could have explained his painting but the sad circumstances of his later years instead forced us to speculate. He moved to Hammonton, New Jersey, sometime in the early 1900's out of necessity. He lived with his parents and supposedly had few commissions, selling many of his paintings for food. Under such circumstances, any records he may have maintained are believed to have fallen victim to his poverty.

Moonlight Drive

John Figura (1952-)

Acquired by the Biggs Museum in 2014

Oil on Canvas



John Figura's work is considered postmodern in its approach due to its blend of abstraction-based color-fields and integration of modern-day contexts. Figura's use of large color-blocks in various shades of blue, white, and black lend a sense of hyper-flatness to *Moonlight Drive* while the careful placement of extreme highlights coming from the moon, stars, and headlights produces a visual depth to his work, ultimately creating a sense of unknown or anxiety in an otherwise peaceful and mundane scene. Adding to the uncertainty of this piece is Figura's noted use of symbolism as a driving force in his work.

Deep Dish (One of a Pair)
Three Bells Factory
Delft, Netherlands, 1740-90
Tin-glazed Earthenware



This deep dish decorated in strong blues with a yellow rim conforms to a decorative tradition evident in Chinese porcelains imported by the Dutch East India Company into the Netherlands during the 17th century. The so-called Wanli wares, named for the emperor of China who lived from 1573 to 1619, were actually non-Imperial, provincial porcelains, yet their quality still amazed avid European buyers. Imitation Wanli earthenware, such as this one, are known by borders divided into panels with motifs suggesting Chinese "clouds." That the border designs of late 18th century dishes are still recognizable as imitations of early 17th century wares and that the designs remained popular some 150 years after their introduction is remarkable. The center of this plate shows a stylized peacock's tail or fan above a two handled urn, a motif that appears on other late products of Delft. A hanging hole through the shallow foot ring underscores the role of this pair of plates as wall decoration in addition to food service.

Milk pot
ca. 1810
Thomas McConnell (1768-1825)



Silver marked by Thomas McConnell is plentiful in the Wilmington area. McConnell had friendly connections with other local silversmiths such as Ziba Ferris. Much of the silver with McConnell's marks so closely resemble work marked by other Delaware and Pennsylvania silversmiths that it is likely some of the silver and jewelry he advertised and sold was made in other shops. Thomas McConnell was active in Wilmington's civic and political affairs until he moved to Richmond, Virginia, shortly after his 1817 marriage to Hannah Green. There are no records of silver-smithing activities by McConnell after his move.

McConnell made this Milk Pot and a matching sugar bowl using a simplified version of a style that was very popular in the Philadelphia and Middle Atlantic region around 1810. McConnell seems to have been a talented silversmith who was perhaps restricted by his clientele to an infrequent use of the more expensive, tall, urn style employed more often by his Philadelphia colleagues.

Ralph School
"Little Creek Hundred," Laurel, Delaware,
1800-1830
Yellow Pine



This and similar corner cupboards define a distinctive furniture-making region in southern Delaware. These softwood cupboards, made in one piece, are decorated with a profusion of geometric ornament loosely based on classical architectural design. Multiple moldings and repetitive-pattern borders adorn their sides and tops in a manner that one author likens to decorative borders found around some printed book pages. Few of these cupboards survive with the original paint that emphasized further their elaborate surfaces.

The cupboards display seemingly endless variations of scalloping, punch work, triglyphs, pinwheels, simple geometric devices, and more complex elements such as the fylfot, or swastika. This last device, which is laid out with a compass, appears in nonurban furniture and decorative arts through the late 18th century America. Its use in wooden screens installed inside the glazed cupboard doors is commonly considered typical of the Ralph school based on a few examples reported to be original. Of particular note on this cupboard are the ribbed panels in the base and the stepped pediment composed of several moldings including a frieze of vertical ribbing. It crosses the pronounced graining of hard pine, which adds more texture.