

American Tonalism

A Symposium in New York

Saturday, November 12, 2005

This day-long program features leading scholars offering fresh perspectives and interdisciplinary explorations on the Tonalist Movement and the re-emerging interest in it. Tonalism manifested itself across all media. It was viewed as an expression of a cultural mind set, broadly impacting the aesthetics of its day. It had affinities with other artistic developments in areas such as photography, evident in the American expression of soft focus camera work created by such masters as Stieglitz and Steichen; the Arts and Crafts Movement as exemplified by the ceramics produced at Byrdcliffe and Rookwood; and poetry written by such as Adelaide Crapsey.



Courtesy, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Informed by spirituality, Tonalism emerged in the early 1880s, and subsequently was widely collected in the United States. Tonalist painting was epitomized by quiet, and subtly graduated color value and subdued harmonies mostly expressed in landscape painting. It was of poetic character and predominantly concerned with emotion, mood, and the reality beyond appearances, rather than the literal transcription of nature. The style of the expatriate James McNeill Whistler's work is regarded as an important source of Tonalist inspiration and the art of George Inness is viewed as a starting point of the Movement, important for its ideas and stylistic modes.

We will consider Tonalism within its rightful context of major cultural and artistic movements of the period, exploring its links to the Arts and Crafts Movement and its emphasis on craftsmanship, handwork, and the expression of the artist to the Aesthetic Movement and to Impressionism. These and other aspects of Tonalism are considered in conjunction with the Spanierman Gallery, LLC's exhibition and publication of *The Poetic Vision: American Tonalism* which attests and contributes to the resurgent interest and relevance of this complex multi-faceted artistic Movement.



Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Saturday, November 12, 2005

The day's formal sessions will take place at the Dahesh Museum of Art located at 580 Madison Avenue (between 56th and 57th Streets).

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast.**
- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. **Introduction.** Lisa Koenigsberg.
- 9:15 – 9:30 a.m. **Reflections on Defining Tonalism.** William H. Gerdts.
- 9:35 – 10:15 a.m. **Whistler's Influence on American Art.** Linda Merrill.
- 10:20 – 11:00 a.m. **The Champions of Color Harmonies: The Collectors of Tonalist Painting.** Jack Becker.
- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. Break.
- 11:15 – 11:55 a.m. **George Inness and Tonalist Uncertainty.** Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr.
- 12:00 – 12:30 p.m. **In the Context of Tonalism: Consideration of Some John Twachtman Works.** Lisa N. Peters.
- 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. **Lunch** (On your own).
- 2:00 – 2:30 p.m. **Nocturnal Missions: Remembering Old California in the Work of Charles Rollo Peters and Will Sparks — a Case Study.** Marshall Price.
- 2:35 – 3:05 p.m. **Pictorialism as Tonalism: The Emergence of American Art Photography.** Diane P. Fischer.
- 3:05 – 3:20 p.m. Break.
- 3:20 – 3:50 p.m. **Tonalism at the Byrdcliffe Arts and Crafts Colony.** Tom Wolf.
- 3:55 – 4:30 p.m. **American Tonalism and Rookwood Pottery.** Anita J. Ellis.
- 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. **Panel discussion followed by Question-and-Answer Period.** William H. Gerdts, moderator; Jack Becker, Max N. Berry, Gary Breitweiser, Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., Linda Merrill, Ralph Sessions, and Tom Wolf, panelists.
- 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. **Exhibition Viewing and Reception**
Spanierman Gallery, LLC
45 East 58th Street.
Remarks. Ira Spanierman.



Image © Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Courtesy, Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York.

Presenters

Lisa Koenigsberg, conference director; she launched the series of annual NYU conferences on American art, and is the founder of Initiatives in Art and Culture, and adjunct professor of arts, NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) where she serves as advisor to the dean for arts initiatives. Former positions include: director, Programs in the Arts, NYU/SCPS, assistant director for project funding, Museum of the City of New York, and guest curator, Worcester Art Museum and Yale University Art Gallery. Her writings have appeared in books and journals, among them *The Gilded Edge: The Art of the Frame* (2000), the *Archives of American Art Journal*, and *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, and the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*.

Max N. Berry, collector with his wife Heidi; chairperson, Program Committee, Bryant Fellows, and member, The Visiting Committee, Department of American Paintings and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; former chairperson, Smithsonian National Board of Trustees, Smithsonian Institution; current co-chair, Smithsonian Institution Alumni Board of Trustees; former Trustee, The Phillips Collection; member, Collectors Committee, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Member, Board of Trustees, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; past president and current Board member, Archives of American Art; member, Board of Trustees, Fred Jones, Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma; founder, past chairperson, current Board member, The Friends of the Nantucket Historical Association; President, The Georgetown (Washington, D.C.) Arts Commission.

Jack Becker, president/CEO Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art in Nashville, Tennessee and formerly curator, Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut; he is the author of "The American Artist in New England," in *Envisioning New England: Treasures from Community Art Museums* (2004); *The California Impressionists at Laguna* (2000); *Henry Ward Ranger and the Humanized Landscape* (1999); *American Garden Literature in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (1785-1900)*, (with J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1998); and *Encouraging American Art: The Lotus Club, 1870-1920* (1997).

Gary Breitweiser, collector and dealer; following a career in technology during which he developed the Dektak recording instrument, in the 1970s, he opened "Studio 2" to pursue antique dealing. One of the earliest dealers to specialize in plein air paintings, he focuses on California painters, sculptors, and printmakers from 1850 through the 1970s; he frequently lends to major museums. He has sold items to major collectors and institutions among them the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the DeYoung Museum, the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, and the Frederick Remington Museum. He is a past president of the Santa Barbara chapter of the American Society of Appraisers, a charter member of the American Association of Independent Appraisers, and serves on the ethics committee of the Bustamante Enterprises antique shows.

Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., retired senior curator, American and British painting, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; among his many publications are *Winslow Homer* (1993); *George Inness* (1992); *Raphaelle Peale Still Lifes* (1992); *Winslow Homer Watercolors* (1991); exhibition catalogues, including *Winslow Homer* (with F. Kelly, 1995); *William Merritt Chase: Summers at Shinnecock, 1891-1902* (with D. Scott Atkinson, 1988); *George Inness* (with M. Quick, 1985); and *Sanford Robinson Gifford, 1823-1880* (1970); and contributions to exhibition catalogues, including *James McNeill Whistler* (1994); *William M. Harnett* (1993); and *John Singer Sargent's El Jaleo* (1992).

Anita J. Ellis, director of curatorial affairs and curator of decorative arts, Cincinnati Art Museum; she is an authority on Cincinnati decorative arts, especially ceramics. Her numerous publications include *Rookwood Pottery: The Glorious Gamble* (1992); *Rookwood Pottery: The Glaze Lines* (1995); and *The Ceramic Career of M. Louise McLaughlin* (2003). Ms. Ellis originated and was the Project Director for "The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in Cincinnati," a permanent cross-media display in a renovated wing in the Cincinnati Art Museum; the project received Luce Foundation, NEA, and NEH planning and implementation grants.

Diane P. Fischer, independent scholar and consultant, formerly associate curator, Montclair Art Museum; she has taught at Montclair State University, Seton Hall University, and Pratt Institute; her publications include *Paris 1900: The 'American School' at the Universal Exposition* (editor and primary



Courtesy, Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York.

author, 1999; French edition, 2001); *Primal Visions: Albert Bierstadt 'Discovers' America* (2001); *American Tonalism: Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Montclair Art Museum* (with K. J. Avery, 1999); and *The Montclair Art Colony: Past and Present* (with G. Stavitsky, 1997).

William H. Gerdtz, professor emeritus of art history, Graduate School of the City University of New York; among his numerous articles and books are: *The Golden Age of American Impressionism* (with C. Lowrey, 2003); *Joseph Raphael (1869-1950): An Artistic Journey* (2003); *California Impressionism* (with W. South, 1998); *Impressionist New York* (1994); *William Glackens* (with J. H. Santis, 1996); *Monet's Giverny: An Impressionist Colony* (1993); *Art Across America* (1990); *American Impressionism* (1984); *Painters of the Humble Truth: Masterpieces of American Still-Life, 1801-1939* (1981); *Grand Illusions: History Painting in America* (with M. Thistlewaite, 1988); and *Down Garden Paths: The Floral Environment in American Art* (1983).

Linda Merrill, independent scholar; she was formerly curator of American art at the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C., and the High Museum, Atlanta; author of *The Peacock Room: A Cultural Biography* (1998); *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (with T. Lawton, 1993); *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (1992); and *An Ideal Country: Paintings by Dwight William Tryon in the Freer Gallery of Art* (1990); and editor of *After Whistler: The Artist and His Influence on American Painting* (2003) and *With Kindest Regards: The Correspondence of Charles Lang Freer and James McNeill Whistler* (1995).

Lisa N. Peters, director of research and publications, and co-author, John Twachtman Catalogue Raisonné, Spanierman Gallery, LLC; among her publications are an article on The American Artists' Colony in Polling, Bavaria, 1872 - 1881 for the *American Art Journal* (2000), "John H. Twachtman: American Impressionist" (1999) which accompanied an exhibition of the same title; "Visions of Home: American Impressionist Images of Suburban Leisure and Country Comfort" (1997), and "A Personal Gathering: Paintings and Sculpture from the Collection of William I. Koch" (1996), which accompanied museum exhibitions she curated, and "James McNeill Whistler" (1996).

Marshall Price, assistant curator, National Academy Museum; until 2002, he was Assistant Curator at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and has held positions at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the Walters Art Museum. He has organized numerous exhibitions and written on a variety of topics including American, California, and European 19th-century art. A specialist in 1930s abstraction in America, he is currently completing his Ph.D. at The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Ralph Sessions, director of drawings at Spanierman Gallery; he was formerly chief curator of the American Folk Art Museum, director of the Abigail Adams Smith Museum in New York City, and director of the Historical Society of Rockland County, New York; among his publications are *The Shipcarvers' Art: Figureheads and Cigar Store Figures in Nineteenth-Century America* (2005); the sculpture catalog for Stacey C. Hollander, et al., *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum* (2001); and the catalog for Tom Geismar and Harvey Kahn, *Spiritually Moving: A Collection of American Folk Sculpture* (1998).

Tom Wolf, a professor of art history at Bard College who has published widely in the area of 20th century American art and co-curated the exhibition, "Byrdcliffe: An American Arts and Crafts Colony" (with Nancy E. Green, 2004) and contributed to the accompanying publication.



Courtesy, Cincinnati Art Museum.

Captions: All images appear in *The Poetic Vision: American Tonalism* (New York: Spanierman Gallery, LLC, 2005).

Cover: Birge Harrison, *Late Winter Afternoon*, ca. 1903 - 10, Oil on canvas, 22 x 32 inches. Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York; Charles Warren Eaton, *Snowy Landscape at Dusk*, 1890, Oil on canvas, 12 1/8" x 22", Spanierman Gallery, LLC. **Text panel:** Henry Ward Ranger, *Spring Woods*, ca. 1900, Oil on canvas, 28 1/4" x 36". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George A. Hearn, 1906; Alfred Stieglitz, *Reflections Night (New York)*, 1896, Gelatin silver print, 3 3/8" x 4 5/8". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Miss George O'Keefe. Photograph Museum of Fine Arts Boston. **Agenda:** James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862, Oil on canvas, 83 7/8" x 42 1/2". National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Harris Whittemore Collection Image, Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington; Manuel Valencia, *Monterey Customs House (California)*, ca. 1910, Oil on canvas, 20" x 30". Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York. **Presenters panel:** J. Francis Murphy, *The Willows*, ca. 1910, Oil on canvas, 19" x 26". Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York; Rookwood Pottery, painted by Lorinda Epply, Plaque, *Edge of the Forest*, 1913, 4 1/2" x 8 1/4". Cincinnati Art Museum, Jane Herschede Memorial Fund. **Registration panel:** Dwight Tryon, *Twilight*, 1913, Pastel on board, 8" x 12". Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York. **Mail panel:** George Inness, *Virginia Sunset*, 1889, Oil on canvas, 30 1/4" x 45 1/4". Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, Gift of Herbert W. Plimpton, the Hollis W. Plimpton (class of 1915) Memorial Collection.

To Register

REGISTRATION — The symposium fee is \$125. A special rate of \$75 is available for students (ID required). To register, complete the registration coupon below and mail to: Spanierman Gallery, 45 East 58th Street, New York, New York 10022, or fax to 212-832-8349, or call 212-832-0208. For further information, contact Lisa Koenigsberg at 646-485-1952 or Ralph Sessions at 212-832-0208.

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

By Fax: Fill in the registration form, including credit card information, and dial (212) 832-8349, 24 hours a day.

By Mail: Return form with a check or money order payable to Spanierman Gallery, LLC, 45 East 58th Street, New York, New York 10022

By Phone: Using American Express®, Visa®, or MasterCard®, call 212-832-0208.

Fee: The conference fee is \$125. A discounted rate is available for students. To receive the discounted rate you must provide proof of ID and register with the program office at 646-485-1952. For students with ID the conference fee is \$75.

Withdrawal and Refunds: Notice of withdrawal must be made in writing to: Ralph Sessions, Spanierman Gallery, LLC 45 East 58th Street, New York, New York 10022 or via email at ralphsessions@spanierman.com. No refunds after November 5, 2005.

Conference Location: This conference is at the Dahesh Museum of Art and at Spanierman Gallery, LLC.

The Gallery, which has served the American art community for over half a century, is known for its support of scholarly endeavors including exhibitions, publications, catalogues raisonnés, and symposia.

Program subject to change.



Courtesy, Spanierman Gallery, LLC, New York.

REGISTRATION FORM

Please register me for **American Tonalism — A Symposium in New York**

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Payment is enclosed (check or money order made payable to Spanierman Gallery, LLC, 45 East 58th Street, New York, NY 10022), or

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Courtesy, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Spanierman Gallery, LLC
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New York, New York 10022

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