

IDENTITY



BACKGROUND

Identity is a collection of behavioral or personal characteristics by which a person or community is recognizable. Identity defines a person or a community and is influenced by race, gender, belief and values, geography, and ideas. Identity plays a crucial role in the production of art.

The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in Cincinnati celebrates identity. Cincinnati has a rich cultural heritage and continuing artistic energy that has been shaped by the identity of its artists. Speaking to our pride of place, diversity, and the reaffirmation of our cultural importance, *The Cincinnati Wing* explores the cosmopolitan nature of the city during its two hundred-year history. The works of art represented in *The Cincinnati Wing* bring to light the significant contributions of ethnic and immigrant communities as well as religious and gender groups whose achievements have often been unrecognized. As you will see, the objects in the collection do not fully represent all of the cultural groups important in the development of the city, nor do they represent them equally well. However, through careful study, questions may be asked about who is and who is not represented and why.

The African American artistic identity in Cincinnati can best be studied through the work of Robert S. Duncanson. Duncanson's life story and his paintings, including his recognized masterpiece *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*, point to his success as the only black artist in America to become a landscape painter in the Hudson River School tradition. Living and working in the free state of Ohio (uncomfortably close to the slave state of Kentucky) during the pre-Civil War era proved to

weigh heavily against Duncanson. For his success, he depended on the support of white citizens, primarily that of wealthy art patron Nicholas Longworth. Longworth provided Duncanson with the encouragement and financial support the painter needed in order to develop his art and establish his reputation.

Many immigrant communities also made significant contributions to the artistic and cultural identity of Cincinnati. In the nineteenth century, the city was most noted for its German community. By 1851, German immigrants comprised twenty-eight percent of the city's population and gave the city a strong German character. More than five of the finest artists to emerge from Cincinnati in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were children of German immigrants: sculptor Charles Niehaus and painters Frank Duveneck, Robert F. Blum, Edward H. Potthast, and John H. Twachtman. The painter of *Springtime*, Twachtman is one of the best-known American artists to come from Cincinnati. His contribution to the art world, along with the contributions of his German American compatriots, truly helped to make the city an art center.

Religious identity also provided a perspective from which many artists worked. The people of Cincinnati practiced religions such as Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Quakerism, and Swedenborgianism. As the home of Reform Judaism, Jewish painters, such as Henry Mosler, and sculptor Moses Ezekiel, did well in the city. Of these artists, Ezekiel is most notable for expressing his religious identity through his sculpture, including the Museum's life-size bronze *Eve Hearing the Voice*.

The Women's Movement also had a major impact on the artistic and cultural identity of the Queen City. In the late nineteenth century, women were responsible for the beautification of their homes. *The Cincinnati Wing* clearly demonstrates that women in the city took this seriously. They were leaders in the fields of china painting, art pottery, porcelain, woodcarving, and metalworking. Two such leaders of the women's movement in Cincinnati were M. Louise McLaughlin, writer of the first American books on china painting, and Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, creator of an important body of metalwork and ceramics, including the *Aladdin Vase*, and founder of The Rookwood Pottery Company. They both became seminal figures in the history of American ceramics.

During the nineteenth century, the fields of painting and sculpture were less acceptable professions for women, with only a few female artists at the forefront. Nevertheless, Lilly Martin Spencer achieved

TIME LINE

1780–1790

1783 American Revolution ends.

1786 Benjamin Stites arrives at Limestone (Maysville), Kentucky, with supplies for the settlement. Impressed with the rich lands he finds in southwest Ohio, he travels to New York to the Continental Congress to interest land speculators in Ohio.

1787 The United States Constitution adopted.

1788 Stites returns to Ohio with 26 settlers and creates a community called Columbia. The second settlement in the territory, Losantiville, becomes the most successful colony in southwestern Ohio and marks the founding of Cincinnati.

Fort Washington built at Losantiville.

1789–92 French Revolution

1790 On January 2, 1790, General Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory, arrives at Fort

Washington and changes the name to Cincinnati in honor of the Society of Cincinnati.

1791–1800

1791–94 Series of bloody battles fought against the Miami and Shawnee Indians in and around Fort Washington.

1795 The Treaty of Greenville signed, ending Indian Wars in Ohio.

1801–1810

1802 Cincinnati made an official city by the territorial government. The city can now elect its own government, make laws, and raise money to build streets, roads, and public buildings.

1803 Ohio becomes a state on March 1, 1803.

1811–1820

1812–14 War of 1812

1819 Cincinnati becomes a city.

1820 Cincinnati reaches a population of 10,000.

1821–1830

1821 Robert S. Duncanson born in New York. He moves to Cincinnati in 1840.

1831–1840

1840s Landscape painter, William Louis Sonntag arrives in Cincinnati, soon followed by Worthington Whittredge and Robert S. Duncanson in the early 1840s, making Cincinnati the "Western School of Landscape Painting."

1841–1850

1844 Moses Ezekiel born in Richmond, Virginia. He moves to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1867.

1847 The Western Art Union founded to capitalize on the huge new art market in the city. The Art Union promotes artists such as Hiram Powers, Robert S. Duncanson, and James Henry Beard.

1845–48 The Great Famine in Ireland leads to mass immigration to United States, including

remarkable success by tapping into the nation's desire for paintings of everyday American life, as represented by *Patty-cake* (ca. 1855). *The Cincinnati Wing* not only considers the conditions of the woman artist in the city but also looks at women as artistic subjects and the effects that subject matter might have had upon a woman's artistic career. Notable female painters like Elizabeth Nourse and Dixie Selden were attracted to, but not limited to, strong female subjects for their paintings. Selden's *Portrait of Aunt Patsy* is a perfect example of her interest in painting faces which reveal character. It is significant that Lilly Martin Spencer, Elizabeth Nourse, and later Dixie Selden, the city's best-known women painters, specialized in images of women as mothers and women as workers.

These artists were an integral part of our community. Whether they lived in Northern Kentucky like Selden, in Over-the-Rhine like Twachtman, in East Walnut Hills like Storer, or in Mt. Healthy like Duncanson, or whether they moved here from another state like Ezekiel, they were our neighbors and contributed to our collective identity as Cincinnatians. In *The Cincinnati Wing*, we see ourselves. It is a part of us all.

Discuss with students the concept of identity. Ask them about their own identities.

What types of issues might Dixie Selden have faced as a female artist in the early twentieth century?

What are some challenges that Robert Duncanson might have confronted as an African American artist during the nineteenth century?

Discuss with students why the largest population of immigrants in Cincinnati during the nineteenth century were Germans.

What hardships would Maria Longworth Nichols Storer have faced as a woman who created her own business during the late nineteenth century?

In what ways did Moses J. Ezekiel incorporate his heritage and beliefs into his artwork?

Cincinnati.

1849 Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, daughter of Joseph Longworth and founder of The Rookwood Pottery Company, born in Cincinnati.

1851–1860

1851 Cincinnati takes its place as an international city with German immigrants making up 28 percent of the population.

Robert S. Duncanson paints the Museum's *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*.

Black Public School system is started.

1853 John Henry Twachtman born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He grows up in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood of Cincinnati.

1861–1870

1861–65 America's Civil War

1865 Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution outlaws slavery.

1866 Isaac Wise Temple, a Jewish synagogue,

completed in Cincinnati. Cincinnati is considered the birthplace of Reform Judaism

1870 Dixie Selden born in Covington, Kentucky.

1871–1880

1872 Robert S. Duncanson dies in Detroit, Michigan, at the age of 51.

1875 Hebrew Union College, a Jewish university, opens in Cincinnati.

1876–1904 Moses J. Ezekiel sculpts the Museum's *Eve Hearing the Voice*.

1880 Maria Longworth Nichols Storer founds the Rookwood Pottery Company.

Cincinnati's population reaches 255,139.

1881–1890

1882 Maria Longworth Nichols Storer creates the Museum's *Aladdin Vase*.

1884 John Twachtman paints the Museum's *Springtime*.

1886 The Cincinnati Art Museum opens to world

acclaim on May, 1886, heralded as "The Art Palace of the West."

1887 Ohio legislature abolishes segregated schools. Cincinnati celebrates its 100th birthday.

1891–1910

1902 John Henry Twachtman dies in Greenwich, Connecticut, at the age of 49.

1911–1920

1912 Henry Ford begins mass production of motorcars.

1914–1918 World War I

1919 Dixie Selden paints the Museum's *Portrait of Aunt Patsy*.

Nineteenth Amendment gives women the right to vote.

1921–1930

1929–41 The Great Depression

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- Ketner, Joseph D. *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson 1821–1872*. Columbia, Missouri, and London: University of Missouri Press. 1993.

VOCABULARY

Abolitionist
abstract
China painting
commission
earthenware
glaze
Grand Tour of Europe
Hudson River School
Impressionist
landscape
Munich School
murals
Over-the-Rhine
patron
portrait
Prix de Rome
Reform Judaism
Salon
slavery



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

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Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

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cover image: Robert S. Duncanson
Blue Hole, Little Miami River, 1851, 1926.18

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1931–1940

- 1932** Maria Longworth Nichols Storer dies in Paris, France, at the age of 83.
- 1933** Cincinnati Union Terminal completed.
- 1935** Dixie Selden dies in Cincinnati at the age of 65.
- 1937** Great Flood devastates the Midwest, including Cincinnati.

The founding of the Modern Art Society, later becomes the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC).

1941–1950

1940–45 World War II

1951–1960

1950–53 The Korean War

1959 Alaska and Hawaii become the 49th and the 50th U.S. States.

1961–1970

1962 Ohio native John Glenn becomes first

astronaut to orbit the earth

1965–74 The Vietnam War

1967 Carl Stokes becomes the first African American mayor of a major city (Cleveland, Ohio).

1969 On July 20, 1969, Ohio astronaut Neil Armstrong becomes first person to walk on the moon.

1971–1980

1972 The Arts Consortium of Cincinnati (ACC) forms becoming Cincinnati's center for African American art and culture.

1976 The United States celebrates its 200th birthday.

1981–1990

1988 Cincinnati celebrates its 200th birthday.

1990 Cincinnati Museum Center opens in the renovated Union Terminal.

1990 The Contemporary Arts Center and its director, Dennis Barrie, indicted for pandering

obscurity hours after the opening of the photography exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*. Both found not guilty.

1991–2000

1991 Persian Gulf War

2000 The Big Pig Gig, a public art event, occurs in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

2001–2003

2001 On September 11, 2001, terrorists attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

2002 The Procter & Gamble Company announces its gift of 78 paintings by Cincinnati artists to the Cincinnati Art Museum.

2003 On May 17, the Cincinnati Art Museum opens *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City*, a new wing dedicated to celebrating the art by, for, and of Cincinnati.

Ohio celebrates its 200th birthday.

IDENTITY

JOHN HENRY TWACHTMAN

ABOUT THE ARTIST

John Henry Twachtman, one of the most modern and original artists of the late nineteenth century, was born in Cincinnati in 1852, the son of German immigrants. At that time, the Germans were the largest group of immigrants in the city, comprising twenty-eight percent of the population. Twachtman's family lived in Over-the-Rhine, which in the nineteenth century was Cincinnati's boisterous German neighborhood.

Twachtman began work as a window shade decorator at Breneman Brothers in Cincinnati, a manufactory where his father also worked. He enrolled as a part-time student at the School of Design of the Ohio Mechanics Institute in 1868, in spite of his parents' disapproval of his interest in becoming an artist. He transferred to the McMicken School of Design in 1871. While there his classmates included William Baer, Robert Blum, Kenyon Cox, Joseph DeCamp, and Lewis Henry Meakin, all of whom would earn artistic acclaim later in their careers. Twachtman's strongest influence at this time was artist Frank Duveneck. A friend of the Twachtman family and also of German heritage, Duveneck noticed Twachtman's talent in an evening class that the older artist was teaching at the Mechanics Institute in 1874. Twachtman soon joined Duveneck in his studio,



John Henry Twachtman *Springtime*, 1908.1218

which he shared with Henry Farny and Frank Dengler.

Twachtman traveled with Duveneck to Munich, Germany, to further his studies in art at the Royal Academy. He spent the summer of 1877 painting in Venice, Italy, with Duveneck and William Merritt Chase. Twachtman returned home to Cincinnati the following year, upon his father's death.

Between 1878 and 1883, Twachtman traveled between Cincinnati and other cities, including New York and Florence, Italy. While in his hometown he was featured in an exhibition at P. Smith and Company's framing shop on Fourth Street, and he taught classes in drawing and painting at the Women's Art Association. Twachtman was married in Cincinnati to the artist Martha Scudder and their first child, J. Alden Twachtman, was born in the city in 1882.

Twachtman wanted to live and work in a less conservative cultural and artistic environment than he found in Cincinnati, and like many artists of his generation, he felt it was necessary to study in Paris. In 1883 he left for Paris and enrolled in the Académie Julian working with Gustave Boulanger and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre. Twachtman's work was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1884.

Twachtman returned to the United States in 1886 and worked in Chicago and on the East Coast. By 1888, he was settled permanently in Connecticut where he purchased a house and land two years later, using funds he received working as an illustrator for *Scribner's Magazine* and as a teacher at the Art Students League in New York City. During the 1890s and throughout the rest of his life, Twachtman's Connecticut property became the primary subject matter in his paintings. He also continued teaching at the Art Students League and often brought his students to Connecticut in the summers to paint the countryside. In 1897 Twachtman became

a founding member of the Ten American Painters, a group made up of primarily Impressionist painters. Twachtman died suddenly in Gloucester, Massachusetts, during a painting excursion in the summer of 1902.

ABOUT THE WORK

As stated above, one of the greatest influences on Twachtman, particularly while in Cincinnati, was Frank Duveneck. In his early work Twachtman incorporated the use of energetic brushwork, dark color palette, and gritty subject matter that Duveneck and other progressive artists who studied in Germany were using in the 1870s. During the next decade, however, the artistic capital of Europe had shifted from Munich to Paris, France. Twachtman believed it was important to study in Paris, and in 1883 he embarked for the French capital. While studying at the Académie Julian, he was exposed to a different way of painting: working with a lighter palette and looser, more abstract brushwork and concentrating on landscape as the subject matter.

Springtime was painted during Twachtman's time in France between 1883 and 1885 and depicts a view of a river in Normandy. This work was not intended to represent nature realistically, but to provide an emotional response to nature. In the painting, the delicate paint colors are applied thinly to suggest new growth caused by the spring rains. Twachtman has abstracted the forms of the hills, trees, and cottage near the center of the painting, merely suggesting their shapes.

This painting is one of the most accomplished and radical paintings created by the artist during his time in France. *Springtime* exemplifies the influences that Twachtman absorbed from his instructor at the Académie Julian, Jules Bastien-Lepage, such as the smooth surfaces and muted colors. The painting's abstracted forms and Twachtman's use of flattened space recall the work of James Abbott McNeill Whistler and of Japanese print makers, both popular sources of inspiration for artists in the late nineteenth century. In *Springtime* Twachtman has combined these ideas with his own expressive, subtle touch and his interest in serene, evocative settings.

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IDENTITY JOHN HENRY TWACHTMAN

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION

GERMAN IMMIGRATION TO CINCINNATI

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the German immigration to Cincinnati during the mid-nineteenth century.

Students will explore their own heritage.

PRE-LESSON

Discuss the following questions with your students:

If your parents came home from work and said the family is leaving the country tonight, how would you feel? What would you take with you?

Why do you think people leave their homes and move to new places? Is it because of a new job? For adventure? For safety?

What is an immigrant?

POST-LESSON

Discuss with students the impact immigrants made on nineteenth-century Cincinnati. Include the contributions to both the commercial and cultural realms of the city.

ASSESSMENT

Students will create a front page for a newspaper in Cincinnati. Their front page should include advertisements, pictures, articles on new arrivals, weather, etc.

LESSON

Discuss with students of the history of German immigration to Cincinnati. Explain to students that some of them may be of German heritage and encourage them to share what they may know about their family traditions.

With your students, examine and discuss John Henry Twachtman's *Springtime*. Twachtman, the son of German immigrants, grew up in the Over-the-Rhine area of Cincinnati. One of many first generation German-Americans, Twachtman and many of his colleagues called this area of town home. Find Over-the-Rhine on a map of Cincinnati and discuss the following with your class:

Where is Over-the-Rhine located? Why is it called Over-the Rhine?

Ask students to interview their parents and grandparents about their family history. Have them collect information about when their ancestors came to the United States and from where they originated. Once students have fully investigated their background and learned about their heritage, have them create a front page for a newspaper that may have been in business in Cincinnati during the nineteenth century. Front page articles could include the following:

Information on their family's arrival in Cincinnati

Ads for businesses in Cincinnati

Pictures of immigrants (use drawings or photocopies of family pictures)

Lists of new arrivals to the city

Birth and death announcements

NATIONAL STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES

U.S. History Grades K-4

Living and Working together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago.

The History of the United States: Democratic Principles and Values and the People

From Many Cultures Who Contributed to Its Cultural, Economic, and Political Heritage

U.S. History Grades 5-12

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

World History Grades 5-12

Era 7: An Age of Revolutions

OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS: MATH

Measurement Standard

Mathematical Processes Standard



John Henry Twachtman, *Springtime*, ca. 1884, Gift of Frank Duveneck, 1908.1218

IDENTITY

MOSES EZEKIEL

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Moses J. Ezekiel was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1844. At the age of fifteen he entered the Virginia Military Institute. When the Civil War broke out shortly thereafter, Ezekiel fought for the South. After the war, he studied anatomy briefly at the Richmond Medical College before moving to Cincinnati where some members of his family had lived for a number of years. In pursuit of his life-long desire to become an artist, Ezekiel began to sculpt while living in Cincinnati.

To further his artistic studies, Ezekiel traveled to Europe where he enrolled in Berlin's Royal Academy. While there he was awarded the prestigious Prix de Rome for his sculpture entitled *Israel*, his first depiction of a Jewish subject. During his studies in Berlin, he also received an invitation from the Israelite Order of B'nai B'rith to design a sculpture of "Religious Liberty," which was to be created for and displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. This work was Ezekiel's first major public commission.

Although he often visited his family in Cincinnati, Ezekiel worked primarily in Rome. His studio was housed in the ancient Baths of Diocletian. He was given many awards and honors



Moses J. Ezekiel, *Eve Hearing the Voice*, modeled 1876, cast 1904, Gift of Dr. Merlyn McClure and the Family of Dr. George W. McClure, 1997.152

throughout his life and also received knighthoods from both Germany and Italy. Four years after Ezekiel's death in Rome in 1917, his body was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

ABOUT THE WORK

Cincinnati was the home of Reform Judaism, and many Jewish artists such as Ezekiel thrived as a result of Jewish patronage in both the city and abroad. Throughout his life, Ezekiel expressed his Jewish identity through a number of his works, including his life-size sculpture of *Eve Hearing the Voice*. This work is of Eve, the well-known figure in Judeo-Christian belief. Taken from the Old Testament of the Bible, it depicts a specific scene from the book of Genesis (3:8). In this verse Eve hears the voice of God after she has disobeyed him. As a result of being tempted by the serpent, Eve had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge although God had forbidden it. Eve also tempted Adam to eat the fruit.

In his journal Ezekiel wrote that he was “representing Eve when she hears the voice of God in the garden and is ashamed.... I wanted to make her like a fallen

Titans and perfectly human.” He represents Eve in a very lifelike manner, with ample muscle and flesh and with a painful expression on her face. Her arm is raised towards her head as she cowers from the voice of God. On the right, Ezekiel also included the serpent that convinced her to eat the fruit. While Eve is depicted in a realistic manner, Ezekiel did not include a navel on her stomach. This is due to his literal interpretation of the Old Testament, which states that Eve was not born, but rather fashioned out of one of Adam’s ribs. For Ezekiel, *Eve Hearing the Voice* was a testament to his Jewish identity.

SUGGESTED READING

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Haverstock, Mary Sayre (compiler). *Artists in Ohio, 1787–1900: A Biographical Dictionary*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000.

Lucas, Judith S. “Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Prix de Rome Sculptor,” *Queen City Heritage*, 44, No. 4 (Winter), 1986.

IDENTITY

MOSES EZEKIEL

MATH CONNECTION

CONVERTING WEIGHT MEASUREMENTS

OBJECTIVE

Students will use Moses J. Ezekiel's *Eve Hearing the Voice* to learn about the American and Metric measurements for weight.

MATERIALS

scale

PRE-LESSON

Discuss the following questions with your students:

How much do you think you weigh?
How much do you think your desk weighs?

How much do you think Moses J. Ezekiel's *Eve Hearing the Voice* weighs?

Why is it important for a museum to know the weight of a sculpture like *Eve*?

POST-LESSON

Discuss with students what makes certain things weigh more than other things.

ASSESSMENT

Students will create a conversion chart for the classroom objects measured during class.

Students will create a chart comparing the weight of *Eve Hearing the Voice* to the classroom objects they measured.

LESSON

Discuss with students the concepts of weight and mass. Introduce to your students the difference between U.S. and Metric measurements (used in other countries) for weight. Share with them the following terms and conversions:

Metric Measurements

0.001 grams = 1 Milligram
0.01 grams = 1 Centigram
0.10 grams = 1 Decigram
10 grams = 1 Dekagram
100 grams = 1 Hectogram
1000 grams = 1 kilogram
10,000 grams = 1 Myriagram
100,000 grams = 1 Quintal
1,000,000 grams = 1 Metric Ton

U.S. Measurements

16 drams = 1 ounce
16 ounces = 1 pound
2,000 pounds = 1 ton

Conversions

1 pound = 16 ounces
.453 kilograms
453 grams
1 ounce = 28 grams
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

Once students understand the difference between U.S. and Metric forms of measurement, weigh various classroom items. Have students convert U.S. measurements to Metric measurements.

Example: if a desk weighs 20 pounds on the U.S. scale it would weigh 9,060 grams on the metric scale (20 pounds X 453 grams = 9,060 grams)

Look at Moses J. Ezekiel's *Eve Hearing the Voice*. How much do you think it weighs? This sculpture was cast in, meaning it is hollow. Imagine if it were solid bronze; how much more do you think it would weigh?

NATIONAL STANDARDS: MATH

Number and Operations: Compute Fluently and Make Reasonable Estimates
Measurement: Understand the Measurable Attributes of Objects and the Units, Systems, and Processes of Measurement

OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS: MATH

Measurement Standard
Mathematical Processes Standard



Moses J. Ezekiel, *Eve Hearing the Voice*, modeled 1876, cast 1904, Gift of Dr. Merlyn McClure and the Family of Dr. George W. McClure 1997.152

IDENTITY

MARIA LONGWORTH NICHOLS STORER

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maria (pronounced Mar-EYE-a) Longworth Nichols Storer was born in Cincinnati in 1849. Her father was Joseph Longworth, one of the city's leading art patrons and collectors, and her grandfather was Nicholas Longworth, a great philanthropist and patron of the arts as well as the city's first millionaire. Storer grew up surrounded with works of art from her family's collection, and as a child she had lessons in art and music. She married George Ward Nichols, an artist and musician, at the age of nineteen.

Storer soon became interested in the art of painting undecorated china, a popular hobby for many wealthy women during the 1870s, and began to receive recognition for her work. Although her pieces were exhibited both locally and at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, Storer became increasingly eager to further her creative expressions in the art of ceramics, particularly in underglaze decoration.

With the financial support of her father, Storer opened her own pottery company in an old school house and named it after her childhood home, Rookwood. The Rookwood Pottery Company provided many employment opportunities for local artists and art students from the School of Design at



Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, The Rookwood Pottery Company, *Aladdin Vase*, 1882, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Gardner, 2002.94

the University of Cincinnati (later the Art Academy of Cincinnati) and included a number of women. As a result of the Women's Movement, employment in the industrial arts—such as china painting, art pottery, woodcarving, and metalworking—became a suitable source of income for women. Other early Rookwood decorators included artists Henry Farny, Albert R. Valentien, Harriet

Elizabeth Wilcox, and Edward T. Hurley.

As a result of Storer's guidance and personal wealth, which allowed her to fund all the resources her company needed, Rookwood became the foremost art pottery in America. Only nine years after it was founded, it had earned the highest honors at international art fairs. In 1900, Rookwood won the grand prize at the Paris Exposition Universelle, making it internationally successful. In 1886, six months after the death of her first husband, Maria married Bellamy Storer, Jr., a lawyer with political aspirations. Soon after their marriage, she began focusing on her husband's political career rather than her business.

Rookwood remained a strong enterprise until the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression, when the demand for luxury goods,

including art pottery, began to decline drastically. When America entered World War II in 1941, materials such as lead, needed for glazes, were restricted for use in the war effort. After the war, art pottery was no longer fashionable and sales could not sustain Rookwood. Looking for cheaper labor and taxes, the company relocated to Starkville, Mississippi, in 1960. In 1967 Rookwood closed its doors thirty-five years after Storer's death in 1932.

ABOUT THE WORK

The *Aladdin Vase* of 1882 was one in a series of Aladdin Vases first created in 1880 by Storer as a response to another work of art. She learned that her artistic rival in Cincinnati, M. Louise McLaughlin, had successfully created the largest ceramic vase decorated under the glaze in America. McLaughlin, the first person in America to discover and master the technique of decorating pottery under the glaze, called her large vessel the "*Ali Baba*" Vase, after the jar that held the forty thieves in the book *Arabian Nights*. Storer, who was extremely strong-willed and never happy in second place, was determined to outdo McLaughlin's creation. Her response was the *Aladdin Vase*. Although this vessel is not quite as tall as the "*Ali Baba*" Vase, it was wider and thus technically more difficult to produce.

The *Aladdin Vase* is cylindrical and tapers towards the base. Around the shoulder of the vase is a modeled dragon that is raised from the surface of the vessel. The dragon, complete with a snarling face and sharp fangs, holds itself up with a thin craggy arm that grasps the neck of the vase. The work also has two catfish in relief

with bulging eyes and areas of raised white swirls of clay. In addition to the decoration under the glaze, Storer also applied gold over the glaze, particularly around the lower portion of the vase.

The dragon and catfish are motifs found in Japanese folklore. After a visit to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, Storer was fascinated with Japanese art and culture. She was so inspired by it that she brought a Japanese artist, Ichidsuka Kenzo, to Cincinnati to work at The Rookwood Pottery Company in 1881. The *Aladdin Vase* is a wonderful example of her interest in Japanese art and culture, as well as her desire to push the limits of ceramic art.

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IDENTITY MARIA LONGWORTH NICHOLS STORER

SCIENCE CONNECTION WHAT IS CLAY?

OBJECTIVE

In this lesson students will use scientific inquiry to learn the properties of clay and will be able to recognize what makes this substance a good source for pottery making.

PRE-LESSON

Discuss the following questions with your students:

What is sand? What is clay?

Discuss with students the differences between sand and clay.

Was Maria Longworth Nichols Storer's *Aladdin Vase* made from sand or clay? Why?

POST-LESSON

Discuss with students the principles of clay that make it appropriate for use in pottery making (plasticity, texture).

Have students try to make something out of the sand in Bag A and the clay in Bag B. How did each turn out?

MATERIALS

plastic bags
sand
powdered clay
newspapers
water
paper for note taking
plastic containers

LESSON

Divide class into teams of no more than five to seven students.

Hand out plastic bags labeled **Bag A** and **Bag B** to each team. (Bag A contains sand and Bag B contains powdered clay)

Have each team appoint a student to record team responses as they answer the following questions about each bag:

What are the physical characteristics of **Bag A**?

How does it smell? Feel? Sound?

What color are the contents?

What is the weight of the contents?

What are the physical characteristics of **Bag B**?

How does it smell? Feel? Sound?

What color are the contents?

What is the weight of the contents?

Ask each team to add water to **Bag A** and **Bag B**. You may want to use plastic containers for mixing of the sand and clay. Place newspapers under plastic containers to control mess.

Have each team answer the above questions again. Each team should create a chart comparing and contrasting the differences between the dry contents and the wet contents.

Have each student make an educated guess on which bag was sand and which was clay.

ASSESSMENT

Each student will write a one paragraph summary of what they observed during the lesson. Paragraphs should include the properties of clay which make it suitable for use in pottery making.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: SCIENCE

Science as Inquiry

OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS: SCIENCE

Scientific Inquiry



Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, The Rookwood Pottery Company, *Aladdin Vase*, 1882, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Gardner, 2002.94

IDENTITY

DIXIE SELDEN

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dixie Selden was born in Cincinnati in 1868, the first child of John and Martha Selden, an affluent and well-connected couple. Born just a few short years after the Civil War, she was given the name Dixie because of her parents' enduring sympathies for the Southern cause. Two years after her birth, her family moved to Covington, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River. Selden attended Miss Bartholomew's School for Girls in Cincinnati. She also traveled to Europe twice before enrolling in art classes at the McMicken School of Design in 1884. Selden attended the school, which was renamed the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1885, until 1890. At the academy she studied under Frank Duveneck (1848–1919) and Fernand H. Lungren (1859–1932) among others. As a result of her parents' wealth, she was provided with all of the necessities to become a successful artist. One room in their home was made into a studio, and her mother and father included her in the social events they attended at art clubs and cultural societies in the area. In 1892 Selden became a charter member of the Woman's Art Club, an organization that was founded to support professionalism among women artists in Cincinnati. She twice served as president of the club.

Selden's early paintings were heavily



Dixie Selden, *Portrait of Aunt Patsy*, 1919, Gift of the Dixie Selden Estate, 1936.649

influenced by Duveneck and the style of the Munich School that he introduced to his Cincinnati students. This approach to painting included studying the Old Masters, such as Titian, Velázquez, Murillo, Rubens, van Dyck, Rembrandt, and Reynolds. However, in the summer of 1913, Selden studied with William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) in Venice, Italy, and learned to paint landscapes and other subject matter as immediate responses and notations of her direct observations. Soon after this experience, she began to travel the world, creating paintings of the various places she visited, including France, Mexico, Denmark, Spain, China, Japan, Morocco, and England.

Although she did not have to rely on her paintings for a living, they sold well. Her works were frequently exhibited in Cincinnati as well as in other major cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. Selden also received many awards throughout her lifetime for her paintings. She died in Cincinnati in 1935.

ABOUT THE WORK

Portrait of Aunt Patsy was painted in 1919 and depicts Patsy Swiney. Swiney was born into slavery around 1834. Her original owner, Miles Swiney, brought Patsy's grandparents from Virginia to Kentucky around 1800. Three generations of her family worked as slaves for the Swiney family.

When Miles Swiney's daughter was married to Francis M. Webster of Newport, Kentucky, Patsy was given to the couple as a gift. She lived with the Webster family for the remainder of her life. After the Websters died, she worked for two of their children, Samuel Bigstaff of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and Kate Victor of Cynthiana, Kentucky, who were Selden's childhood friends. Patsy raised their children and continued to work for the family as a paid employee after the abolition of slavery.

Although Patsy was not the Swiney's biological aunt, everyone called her Aunt Patsy, and she even took the surname of the slave owners as her own. Patsy viewed the Swineys as her family. She spent the last years of her life living in the home of the Victor family in Cynthiana, where this work was painted.

In the painting, Patsy Swiney is sitting on a chair, wearing a servant's dress, with her head turned slightly to the right. She has a bright white apron tied around her waist that billows down her lap and a crisp white morning cap on her head. In her right hand Swiney holds a bentwood cane and a folded white handkerchief, and she

rests her left hand upon her knee.

Although Swiney is shown in a maid's uniform, Selden has depicted her as a dignified and strong woman. Selden delighted in the opportunity to paint a portrait of a person whose face reveals so much character.

SUGGESTED READING

Aronson, Julie (editor), Anita Ellis, Jennifer Howe (contributors). *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003.

Haverstock, Mary Sayre (compiler). *Artists in Ohio, 1787–1900: A Biographical Dictionary*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000.

McLean, Genetta. *Dixie Selden: An American Impressionist From Cincinnati*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Cincinnati Art Galleries, 2002.

IDENTITY

DIXIE SELDEN

VISUAL ARTS CONNECTION SELF-PORTRAITS

OBJECTIVE

Students will create a self-portrait using Selden's *Portrait of Aunt Patsy* as an example.

PRE-LESSON

Discuss the following questions with your students:

What is a portrait? What is a self-portrait?

Look at Selden's *Portrait of Aunt Patsy*. How has the artist represented her?

Have you ever had your portrait made? If so, what kind (painting, photograph, sculpture)?

What can objects in a portrait tell you about the sitter?

POST-LESSON

Discuss with students why painting a portrait of a person is important.

By what other means can we capture a portrait of a person? Photograph, video?

Has this always been so? Why or why not?

LESSON

In this lesson, students will create a self-portrait. They will then compare it to Selden's *Portrait of Aunt Patsy* and discuss the similarities and differences.

Give each student a small hand-held mirror. Have the students look closely at their faces before they begin their self-portraits. Using any type of art materials, such as paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons, yarn, or paints, have the students draw or paint themselves. Students can also choose to include objects (such as types of clothing, pets, favorite books, toys, etc.) that describe themselves.

ASSESSMENT

Students will present their self-portraits to the class.

They will discuss how they created it. If they added objects to it, what do those tell about the students.

The students will also tell the class how they want to be viewed, using their own portraits as an example.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Process

Using Knowledge of Structures and Functions

Reflecting upon and Assessing the Characteristics and Merits of Their Work and the Work of Others



Dixie Selden, *Portrait of Aunt Patsy*, 1919, Gift of the Dixie Selden Estate, 1936.649

IDENTITY

ROBERT S. DUNCANSON

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Robert S. Duncanson was born in Fayette, New York, around 1821. The son of free African American parents, Duncanson's paternal grandfather, the illegitimate son of a Virginia slave owner, had been given freedom as a young man. The Duncanson family later settled in Monroe, Michigan, and became skilled in house painting, decorating, and carpentry. Robert began to work in these trades during the late 1830s. Desiring to become an artist, Duncanson left Michigan around 1840 for Cincinnati, which was at that time the economic and cultural center of the United States west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Upon his arrival, Duncanson settled in Mount Healthy, an area northwest of the city known for its abolitionist sympathies and home to a tightly knit group of African Americans. Although he was aware of the struggles he would face as an African American working in a city so close to the south, he soon received several commissions from Cincinnati citizens.

Among those who were interested in Duncanson was Nicholas Longworth (1783–1863), the city's greatest patron of the arts. Longworth commissioned Duncanson to create a series of landscape murals for his home, Belmont (now the Taft Museum of Art), and also financed Duncanson's trip to Europe to further his artistic studies. During April of 1853 to June of 1854, Duncanson became the first African American artist to



Robert S. Duncanson, *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*, 1851, Gift of Norbert Heermann and Arthur Helbig, 1926.18

journey through Europe, making stops in London, Paris, and Florence. While on this excursion, his interest in painting landscapes increased.

After returning to Cincinnati, Duncanson continued to paint landscapes in addition to portraits of local abolitionists, including Longworth. His style of landscape painting was influenced by the Hudson River School painters as well as a group of Cincinnati painters, including Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910) and William L. Sonntag (1822–1900). Duncanson would often go on painting excursions throughout the Ohio River Valley, accompanied by Whittredge and Sonntag.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Duncanson traveled through the northern United States and Canada, hoping to escape the turmoil of the fighting and anti African American fervor. Duncanson went on a second excursion to Europe in the summer of 1865, and he traveled to Scotland. While there, he received international acclaim from the British press.

By the late 1860s Duncanson struggled with mental illness and believed that the spirit of a master artist possessed him. His delusions may have been brought on by his continuous exposure to lead-based paint, first as a house painter and later as an artist. This exposure eventually led to the poisoning of his mind and body. Having spent his last years in Michigan, Duncanson died in a Detroit sanatorium on December 21, 1872.

ABOUT THE WORK

As mentioned above, Duncanson was greatly influenced by the Hudson River School painters, including such artists as Thomas Cole (1801–1848) and Asher B. Durand (1796–1886). The Hudson River School painters likened America to the Garden of Eden. These painters saw the country’s untamed wilderness as a source of national pride. Many Hudson River School artists lived and worked in the Hudson River Valley (New York) and in New England. Locally Duncanson was influenced by a group of Cincinnati landscape painters, including Worthington Whittredge and William L. Sonntag.

The geography of Cincinnati and the surrounding region, with its lush river valleys and woodlands, attracted many landscape painters to the area. Duncanson and Sonntag would often wander throughout the area searching for locales to inspire their work. Since the 1830s, one popular spot for artists to paint near Cincinnati was a pool of water on the Little Miami River, known as Blue Hole. This picturesque area is located in what is now John Bryan State Park, near Yellow Springs, Ohio. Duncanson painted *Blue Hole, Little Miami River* in 1851.

In the painting, the waters of Blue Hole are calm and serene. The mirror-like pool reflects the trees in the background as well as the clouds in the sky. At first glance

this scene appears untouched by humans, until one observes three fishermen in the central foreground. In this area of the painting, Duncanson also included plants, flowers, and rocks, as well as a few dead tree limbs. The foreground is darker than the rest of the painting, which draws the viewer’s eyes towards the lighter middle and background areas, such as the water and the sky. Duncanson used a palette of cool colors—silvery blues and greens—to depict the water and especially the tree tops in the background. He painted *Blue Hole, Little Miami River* with a feeling of softness and tranquility, that is apparent in the sensitive handling of the tree foliage.

SUGGESTED READING

- Aronson, Julie (editor), Anita Ellis, Jennifer Howe (contributors). *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003.
- Britton, Crystal A. *African American Art: The Long Struggle*. New York: Todtri. Cincinnati Art Museum. 2000. *The Collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Cincinnati Art Museum, 1998.
- Haverstock, Mary Sayre (compiler). *Artists in Ohio, 1787–1900: A Biographical Dictionary*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000.
- Katz, Wendy Jean. *Regionalism and Reform: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002.
- Ketner, Joseph D. *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson 1821–1872*. Columbia, Missouri and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993.

IDENTITY

ROBERT S. DUNCANSON

LANGUAGE ARTS IMAGINING NATURE

OBJECTIVE

In this lesson, students will learn about the ecosystem found in Duncanson's *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*. Students will write about their senses in an imaginatively concise journal entry.

PRE-LESSON

Read the information in the *Artist Profile* and discuss the following questions with your students:

- What is nature?
- What is found in nature? Animals, what kind? Plants, what type?
- Look at Duncanson's *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*. Is this a real place? Have you been there?

POST-LESSON

Imagine that you are one of the people in this painting. What would they see? Smell? Hear?

LESSON

In this lesson, students will imagine that they are one of the people in Duncanson's *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*. Discuss with students what they would see, hear, smell and touch if they were part of this painting.

Students will write in their journal for ten minutes about the different types of sounds they would hear, those close as well as those far away, about the smells they would smell, and the objects they see that are near them and far away from them. Encourage them to let the nature around them come alive. At the end of the ten minutes students will share their observations.

ASSESSMENT

Students will write in their journals for ten minutes. Students must have at least three paragraphs describing what they saw, heard, smelled and touched while in the painting.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Applying Language Skills

Ohio Academic Content Standard: K–12 English Language Arts

Writing Applications



Robert S. Duncanson, *Blue Hole, Little Miami River*, 1851, Gift of Norbert Heermann and Arthur Helbig, 1926.18