

Introduction

The 19th century was an era of nation-building, both politically and metaphorically. In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, 'home' represented a central concept within each of these nation's transformed identities—it was one's domestic residence, the physical land itself, and the communities built through a collective commitment to social democracy. The arts played a crucial role in reinforcing a sense of belonging, as each Nordic country strove to distinguish and celebrate specific local and national identities.

Rejecting the formulaic teaching of state-sponsored academies, Nordic artists joined a Europe-wide trend toward individual expression and local subject matter. Landscapes featured luminous Northern skies and snow-blanketed hills; trolls, fairies, and dragons adorned silver, furniture, tapestries, and more. The homes of

artists, craftspeople, art patrons, and middle-class collectors of antiques showcased this new national aspiration.

The Scandinavian Home is the first exhibition in North America to explore the core themes of art and identity in Nordic art across all media. The works are drawn from the remarkable collection of David and Susan Werner and from those public collections to which they have already made gifts. The wide-ranging artworks on view trace the evolution of Nordic visual culture in the decades around 1900.

History of Landscape in Scandinavia

Nature represented an idyllic escape from the rapid industrialization and urbanization occurring throughout Scandinavia and Europe in the 19th century. Landscape became the largest category of 19th-century Nordic painting as artists and collectors sought to escape loud, dangerous, and unhygienic cities.

Nordic landscape painting emphasizes a strong connection between nature and national identity. Citizens of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden learned about their national histories and geographies during seven years of compulsory education, an environment that nurtured an admiration for their native landscapes and appreciation for fine art.

Many successful Nordic artists studied in either Germany or Paris during their youth, an experience that enabled them to contrast the

natural environment on the Continent with that at home. As artists embraced the initiative to formulate national identities around 1890, they focused increasingly on the singular aspects that distinguished the Nordic landscape, poeticizing rugged fjords and waterways, the radiant light of long summer days and dark winter twilights, and the dazzling effects of snow-covered ground.

J. C. Dahl

Norwegian, 1788–1857

Fjord at Holmestrand, 1843

Gouache and pencil on paper



Shipwreck on a Rocky Shore, 1819

Etching



Collection of David and Susan Werner

Peder Balke

Norwegian, 1804–1887



Stormy Seas, 1850s

Oil on canvas

The storm-tossed boat was a central theme in 19th-century Romantic painting and one of Balke's favorite motifs. The artist applied the decorative techniques he learned from his early training as a cabinet painter to his oil paintings. The effects of brush and sponge sometimes bordered on abstraction. A student of fellow Norwegian J.C. Dahl in Dresden, Balke traveled widely in Europe. In his later years, Balke's commitment to socialism and civic life inspired him to design a plan for workers' housing in Christiania (now Oslo).

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Markus Larson

Swedish, 1825–1864



Water Mill in Småland, 1859

Oil on canvas

Larson depicts this landscape in the Romantic tradition, representing the sublime power of nature. The gathering clouds, deep shadows, and dramatic shafts of light are typical of the Düsseldorf-trained artist who was once a student of the German painter Andreas Achenbach. Small mills such as this were once common in the forests of Sweden. Powered by water, they mainly produced grain and lumber. The need for timber escalated rapidly beginning in the mid-18th century as improved literacy increased the demand for wood pulp to make paper. Forestry continues as one of Sweden's most important industries.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Johan Rohde

Danish, 1856–1935



Farm on a Hill, 1889

Oil on canvas

Representations of the Danish farm comprised one of the largest categories of landscape depiction in 19th-century Denmark, with images often redolent of a range of nationalist sentiments and values. Such views demonstrated a nostalgia for smallholder farms, like the one Rohde depicts here, which were gradually being displaced by the modernized efficiency of large-scale industrial farming. The writings of influential art critic and curator Niels Laurits Høyen influenced Rohde and his fellow artists. Høyen advocated for the development of a national art that placed the landscape and the people who occupied it at the heart of the program.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Emilie Mundt

Danish, 1842–1922



Two Little Girls on the Heath, **1890**

Oil on canvas

Mundt belonged to the generation of women who broke through the gender barrier in the 19th-century Danish art world. Establishing a drawing school for women in Copenhagen in 1886, she and her life partner, Marie Luplau, mentored younger artists and advocated for women's suffrage. Mundt was renowned for her landscapes and images of children, especially rural children of the laboring class. The two girls in this painting—the younger seated on a hay wagon—are bathed in the dazzling noonday sun. A tiny farmhouse located in the distance marked the path of their journey. Mundt's collectors valued this kind of intimate, sentimental scene.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Hilma af Klint

Swedish, 1862–1944

Stockholm Park with Playing Children, 1889

Oil on canvas



Hilma af Klint, whose large-scale, abstract, spiritually inspired images predate those of Russian avant-garde artists Vassily Kandinsky and Kasimir Malevich, has only recently been recognized as a pioneer of abstraction. Her earlier, naturalistic works, such as this, are virtually unknown. Painted two years after completing her studies at Stockholm's Royal Academy of Art, this image records a typical spring day in the capital. By this time, Klint had already become a disciple of Theosophy, a spiritual practice that insisted on the common ground shared by world religions.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Laurits Andersen Ring

Danish, 1854–1933



Summer Landscape at Karrebæksminde, c. 1910

Oil on canvas

Ring was a keen observer of Danish topography, the working class, and the effects of modernization on everyday life. He settled in the coastal village of Karrebæksminde in 1896 with his wife, ceramicist Sigrid Kähler, daughter of pottery manufacturer Herman A. Kähler. Ring represented the area as remote, although it was situated mere kilometers from Kähler's factory. The only references to human impact are the remnants of bog excavation in the foreground and the distant view of rural architecture. Ring used his brush handle to scratch the paint surface, adding detail and texture to the generalized, panoramic vista.

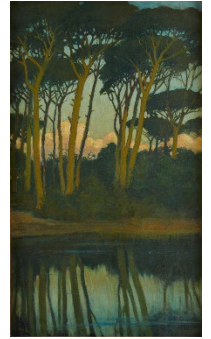
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Väinö Blomstedt

Finnish, 1871–1947

Forest Lake, 1903

Oil on canvas



Like many Nordic artists, Blomstedt traveled to and from Paris in the 1880s to experience the European cultural capital, returning regularly to Finland. Paris had a formative effect on the young Finn, living and sharing studio space with his close friend and fellow painter, Pekka Halonen. At the time Blomstedt created this painting, Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire and would remain so until the Russian Revolution. During this period, many Finnish artists viewed the unique landscape of Finland as the greatest representation of its independence, and artworks like this helped to form a new national cultural identity.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Pekka Halonen

Finnish, 1865–1933

***Morning*, 1914**

Oil on board



Trained in Paris as a pupil of Paul Gauguin, Pekka Halonen was influenced by the artistic currents that infused Parisian creativity at the turn of the 20th century—japonism, painting *en plein air* (outdoors), and synthesism (a desire to express emotional and symbolic content over representational accuracy). His paintings of the wild Finnish landscape captured the poetry of passing seasons. He loved working outdoors, even when temperatures fell below freezing, and excelled at depicting winter scenes. He called himself “the painter of snow.”

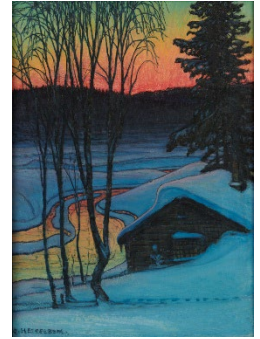
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Otto Hesselbom

Swedish, 1848–1913

Sunset in Värmland, c. 1900

Oil on canvas



This example of National Romantic painting shows a snowy winter day in the northwestern Swedish province of Värmland, which borders Norway. Hesselbom belonged to a group of artists enthusiastic about the preservation of Sweden's natural heritage. During midwinter at this latitude, the sun never rises far above the horizon, and sunset occurs in the early afternoon. This phenomenon produces intensely saturated colors in the sky, like nothing audiences in southern Europe had ever experienced. Hesselbom sought to represent a familiar moment, thereby fostering an emotional bond between Swedish viewers and the wild, sometimes inhospitable, Nordic nature.

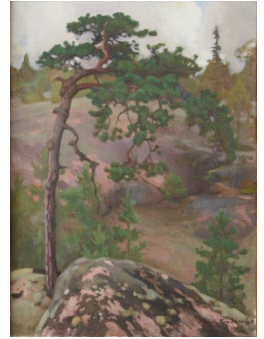
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Eero Järnefelt

Finnish, 1863–1937

Landscape, 1904

Oil on canvas



Järnefelt regularly depicted the area around the Koli forest in eastern Finland. He sought to capture what was quintessentially Finnish, fascinated by the effects of light and shadow on the landscape as well as the views from high or low altitudes. As the tourism industry developed, Koli became a popular destination with views described as representing the “most authentic” national landscape. It was eventually established as a national park in 1991. From a cosmopolitan family, Järnefelt studied in Helsinki and Paris. He taught at the University of Helsinki and later became chairman of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Beda Stjernschantz

Finnish, 1867–1910

Melting Snow in Birch Forest, 1893

Oil on canvas



While this scene looks like winter to most viewers, to Finns, the melting snow represents a harbinger of spring. Stjernschantz, a Swedish-speaking Finn, belonged to the robust cohort of Nordic women artists. Unlike many of her sister painters, she was self-supporting and struggled financially, eventually taking her own life at the age of forty-two.

Stjernschantz painted *Melting Snow* while studying at Helsinki's Academy of Fine Arts at a time when landscape painting—especially under typically Nordic conditions (birch forest, snow)—was considered patriotic. She visited Paris in 1892 and pioneered a pastoral Symbolist style beginning in the mid-1890s.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Harald Slott-Møller

Danish, 1864–1937

Full Moon in Early Summer, 1894

Oil on canvas



The son of a merchant, Slott-Møller studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts before undertaking a three-year fellowship with the painter Peder Severin Krøyer. The artist's wife, Agnes, was also a painter. Both were founding members of the Danish artists' association *Den Frie Udstilling* (The Free Exhibition), established in 1891 as an alternative display venue separate from the Royal Academy. Around this period, Slott-Møller's style shifted from one focused on naturalism to symbolism, influenced by his admiration for English artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Eilif Peterssen

Norwegian, 1852–1928

Pinetree in Moonlight, 1898

Oil on canvas

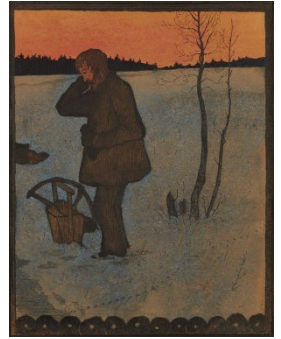


Peterssen was a lifelong traveler and absorbed the artistic styles and conventions of the locales he visited—including Germany, Italy, France, and Denmark. A central majestic pine clings to the unforgiving terrain, thereby resonating with the seemingly stalwart endurance of Nordic character. The pale moon rising behind invites further reflection on the rootedness of this shared history as both humans and pines started settling in the region after the glaciers retreated.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Hugo Simberg

Finnish, 1873–1917



***Woodcutter*, 1892**

Watercolor on paper

Hugo Simberg was a Finnish symbolist painter and graphic artist. The subject of this work is peculiar—a poor woodsman stands in a snowy landscape, one arm raised to scratch the back of his neck; he seems unsure or reluctant. A hand extends from the left edge of the picture, but it is unclear whether the disembodied figure is offering or requesting something from the woodsman. A similar drawing, dated the same year and titled “The Mystery of the Carpenter,” is in the Finnish National Gallery’s collection.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Rural Craft Traditions

Artistic practices flourished across all social classes in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Rural farming families spent their limited free time crafting decorative furniture, household wares, and textiles. Skills and craft knowledge passed from one generation to the next. Unlike their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, rural Nordic inhabitants enjoyed exceptional freedom based on the ancient *odelsrett* (laws guaranteeing land ownership and inheritance rights). For these reasons, 19th-century urban collectors characterized rural handicraft culture as a form of national inheritance and symbolic evidence of peasant independence.

In the mid-19th century, the availability of inexpensive, factory-produced home goods combined with mass emigration from the countryside threatened to displace such handwork. Design reformers found inspiration in

the British Arts and Crafts movement, which valued hand craftsmanship and rejected mass production. Women across the region began to establish crafts organizations in the 1870s that grew in impact by the turn of the century. For example, the Swedish Friends of Handicraft, founded in 1874, mobilized women in the service of national culture. In Norway, handicraft training became a mandatory component of public education, embedding 'craft literacy' in national pedagogy.

Norwegian

Unknown artist

Flour box, 19th century

Wood and pigment

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Norwegian

Unknown artist

Tankard, 19th century

Birch burl



The lion, a symbol of strength and protection, decorates this carved wood burl tankard. Such vessels, with embellished thumb lifts, were used at weddings and other festive occasions.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.1

Norwegian

Unknown artist

Ale bowl, 1831

Wood and pigment



Ale bowls (*kjenge*) were important celebratory objects passed among families and community members at weddings, funerals, births, holidays, and other important occasions. They became family heirlooms handed down through generations. Bowls such as this were carved from single pieces of wood and decorated. The double horsehead handles, common in Western Norway after the 18th century, symbolized fertility and prosperity. The horsehead bowl became something of a national symbol and a popular collectible.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.2

Agaat Torjusdatter

Norwegian, dates unknown

***Tankard*, 1834**

Wood

Collection of David and Susan Werner

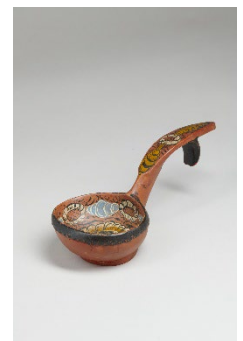


Ola Hågeseth

Norwegian, dates unknown

***Scoop*, late 19th century**

Wood and pigment



The practice of *rosemaling*—decorative painting, often of roses or other floral motifs—gained popularity in 17th-century rural Norway. Itinerant artists and local farmers adapted designs from architectural ornamentation, pattern books, and other sources of Baroque and Rococo decoration.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.5

attributed to Kittil Haukjern

Norwegian, dates unknown

***Bowl*, 1830**

Wood and pigment



Holidays and other festive occasions called for beer and ale, typically brewed and stored at home. A spouted tankard was used to pour libations into other vessels. Bowls like this would have been used first before being painted with *rosemaling* to mark a particular occasion and valued as a family treasure.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.3

Norwegian

Unknown artist



Box, 1850

Painted wood, metal

Bridal boxes (*tine*) stored or transported dry goods, including food and fabrics. In addition to the bright *rosemaling*, this example includes initials that recount an intergenerational story. Scholars believe that a carved “F” on the bottom is likely the maker’s mark and that a place name—Østre Vimme—locates the object’s origins. The initials TRS painted on the side, may identify Terje Rolvsen Harstveit and GTDH his granddaughter Gunhild T. Harstveit.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.4

Swedish, Skåne Province

Unknown artist



Carriage cushion cover, c. 1850

Cotton and linen

This sleigh or carriage cushion cover was woven in a Flemish (flatweave) technique in the southernmost Swedish province, Skåne. The padded cushion made travel over bumpy roads more comfortable. Cushions were often embroidered or woven with Biblical subjects and signed with the maker's initials and date. This one features a pair of red lions with floral embellishments.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

John Hansen Budalsplass

Norwegian, 1798–1874

Box, 1816

Wood and pigment



The artist signed and dated this bentwood box with a domed slipcover. Working in the Trondelag district of Norway, Budalsplass first soaked thin strips of wood in water and wrapped them around a form. Lacing them together to shape the body, he added a top and bottom for storage. Using a chip carving method of decoration, the artist revealed lighter wood underneath the darker surface.

American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.7

Norwegian

Unknown artist

Box, 19th century

Wood and pigment



American Folk Art Museum, New York

Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.4

Norwegian

Unknown artist

Mangle board, 1781

Painted wood

American Folk Art Museum, New York, Gift of David and Susan Werner,
2024.15.23



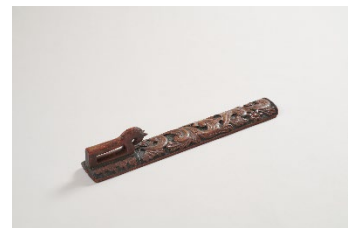
Norwegian, Gudbrandsdal

Signed MnGD

Mangle board, 1814

Wood

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Norwegian

Unknown artist



Mangle board, 1850

Painted wood

Mangle boards were used to smooth and soften clothing after washing by pushing them back and forth over damp fabric tightly wrapped around a roller (similar to a rolling pin). The earliest examples date to the late Viking period (10th to 11th centuries). They became increasingly elaborate in the 18th century. Carved and decorated (or commissioned) by grooms as gifts for their brides; mangle boards displayed handles in the form of horses, lions, and other motifs—acanthus leaves, sunbursts, flora—that were often regionally specific.

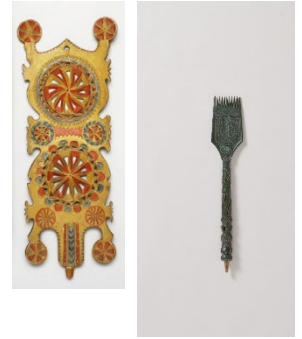
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Finnish

Unknown artist

Distaffs, 1827 and 1847

Wood



The cylindrical form of a distaff holds unspun fibers of wool or flax to keep them from becoming tangled. Men often presented them to their brides on their wedding day, to showcase their artisanal skill and as a symbol of the home the couple would build together. A distaff's beauty was intended to ease the tedium of the essential domestic task of textile production.

American Folk Art Museum, New York, Gift of David and Susan Werner, 2024.15.20, 26

Swedish

Dalarna Province, Unknown artist



Jonah and the Whale Scroll, 1834

Pigmented linseed oil on paper

This scroll is a striking example of *bonadsmålning*, a folk-art tradition of long figurative paintings often depicting biblical scenes in contemporary costume. Created by anonymous artisans in the late 18th and 19th centuries, these artworks were often commissioned for weddings or other momentous events and adorned the walls of homes. This scroll tells the Old Testament story of Jonah and the Whale, with Swedish texts narrating the events. At this time, most Swedes could read, as local priests were required by law to assess their parishioners' literacy annually. In the Lutheran faith, Sweden's state religion, it was vital for individuals to interpret the word of God personally. A clever detail in this scroll highlights the transformative effect of divine intervention: the color of Jonah's coat shifts after his epiphany in the whale's belly.

American Folk Art Museum, New York, Gift of David and Susan Werner,
2024.15.20

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929



The Suitors, 1906

Wool and linen tapestry

While inspired by folk and fairy tales, Munthe's story of *The Suitors* emerged primarily from his imagination: three young men, transformed into polar bears, enter the chambers of the daughters of the Northern Lights to court them. Munthe first created a series of independent watercolors in 1893 with no plans to reproduce them in textiles. He later adapted them as models for production by students at the newly established Art Weaving School, housed in the National Museum of Decorative Arts in Trondheim, Norway. Such museum collections and weaving schools were crucial for the revival of regional woven textiles. Munthe's designs combine notable elements from rural Norwegian crafts and Japanese designs, characterized by bold lines, flattened forms, and bright colors. The tapestries garnered international attention after their display at the 1900 Paris World's

Fair. The initials at the bottom left likely belong to weaver Margit Kielland.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

The Rackstad Colony

Sweden's Rackstad Colony was one of many artists' collectives that emerged throughout Europe and North America in the second half of the 19th century. Situated on Lake Racken near Arvika in the western province of Varmland, it was far from the nation's capital. The area offered an idyllic, affordable site for creative experimentation and a cooperative lifestyle.

Gustaf and Maja Fjaestad moved to Arvika in 1898, eventually joined by fellow artists Bjorn Ahlgrensson, Fritz Lindstrom, Hilma Persson-Hjelm, and others. While most Rackstad artists specialized in landscape painting, they explored a wide variety of materials and techniques- including bronze sculpture, furniture making and carving, ceramics, printmaking, textile design, and weaving.

Rackstad artists were passionate supporters of the National Romantic movement, which emerged in the late 19th century and sought to create common ground through an appreciation of Swedish nature, history, and handicraft traditions. In this way, the Rackstad group fostered a democratic and egalitarian society, envisioned as a family, where each contributed according to their ability and received according to their needs-the kind of society that evolved in all the Nordic countries during the 20th century.

Björn Ahlgrensson

Swedish, 1872–1918



Melting Snow in the Forest, 1910

Oil on canvas

Ahlgrensson spent his childhood in Copenhagen and Paris, where he also attended school. In 1899, he moved his family to Värmland and joined the Rackstad colony, a community of artists committed to drawing inspiration from the natural environment. Ahlgrensson was denied critical acclaim during his lifetime, and his career was marked by periods of poverty and isolation. He died in a sanitarium in Arvika during the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Hilding Werner

Swedish, 1880–1944



Glafs fjörd. Evening, 1920

Oil on canvas

Hilding Werner was born in Kårud, a small village in Värmland near the Norwegian border. In 1900, Werner enrolled in the progressive Artists' Society school, founded by Richard Bergh and other artists as an alternative to the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts. Werner eventually returned to Värmland in 1907 and established his own artistic practice in the remote village of Hammartjärnet. The surrounding countryside offered his favorite subjects—panoramic views of vast lakes, dense forests, and rolling hills. His ability to blend romanticism with realism is evident, reflecting the influence of his contemporaries Gustaf Fjaestad and Otto Hesselbom.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Alfred Ekstam

Swedish, 1878–1935



Winter Sunset in Värmland, **c. 1910-12**

Oil on canvas

This cozy painting portrays a snow-covered house nestled in a grove of pine trees. The single glowing light in the window is warm and inviting, despite the absence of human figures.

Ekstam's use of pointillism (boldly applied dots of unblended paint) and intensified colors is characteristic of new modernist styles that emerged in the 1900s, in which artists chose colors to express an emotional experience of nature rather than a realistic representation of nature itself.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Fritz Lindström

Swedish, 1874–1962



***Springtime*, 1920**

Oil on canvas

Lindström spent time studying in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, and Paris in the 1890s. In 1900, he returned to Sweden, drawn to Värmland by his friend and brother-in-law, Björn Ahlgrensson. He joined the Rackstad colony in 1903 and would live and work near Lake Racken for the next fifty years. In this painting, Lindström captures a chilly spring sunrise as the ground is just starting to thaw. The delicate pink and purple sky envelops the landscape in a soft glow. The sun rises behind the hill, infusing the canvas with a golden light that feels like it is mere seconds away from spilling across the frigid ground.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gustaf Fjaestad

Swedish, 1868–1948

Landscape in Moonlight, 1905

Wool



Fjaestad married textile artist Maja Hallén in 1898. Inspired by the artistic possibility of tapestry, he began applying his painterly instincts to textile designs. Subtle variations of brown, blue, and green yarn combine to depict a snow-covered landscape and flowing stream under a bright, full moon.

Fjaestad worked closely with the wool dyers to achieve the nuances of tone and color he desired, the same way he would have mixed paint on a palette. Gustaf's sisters, Amelie and Anna, joined Maja as weavers, and the family started their own weaving studio in 1905, the same year woven in the bottom right corner of this tapestry.

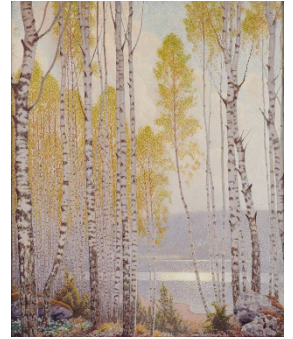
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gustaf Fjaestad

Swedish, 1868–1948

Birch Trees and Anemones at a Sunlit Lake, 1916

Oil on canvas



The Rackstad colony's goal was to foster a shared cultural identity through consciousness of a deep spiritual connection between people and their local natural environment. In this scene, Fjaestad captures the delicate beauty of birch trees in springtime, fully emerged from their winter hibernation. The soft, meditative light symbolizes the hope and renewal of spring.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gustaf Fjaestad

Swedish, 1868–1948



Winter Landscape with Hoar Frost, 1916

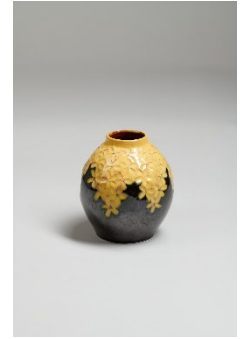
Oil on canvas

Like his National Romantic compatriots, Fjaestad adhered to the mission to depict quintessentially Swedish scenes under singularly Nordic climatic conditions. An enthusiastic athlete and outdoorsman, Fjaestad focused on the elements of winter, when humidity, sun, temperature, and wind create ever-changing conditions unfamiliar to audiences further south. This glittering landscape exudes a reverential silence, redolent of escape and containing the potential of profound wisdom.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Hilma Persson-Hjelm

Swedish, 1877–1953



Vase, 1914

Earthenware

Hilma Persson-Hjelm started her career at the Rörstrand porcelain factory and trained under renowned decorator Alf Wallander, also represented in this exhibition. Although her early works were in porcelain, she eventually began experimenting with earthenware. A native of Arvika, she opened her own workshop in 1907, designing shapes that local potters would throw for her. She would then create the surface decoration. She carved the flower-shaped motifs on the vessel here while it was still in a biscuit state before it was glazed and fired. Her husband, Rolf Hjelm, was also a ceramist and assisted with glazes. The overlapping floral decoration demonstrates a familiarity with Japanese design principles.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

The Interior

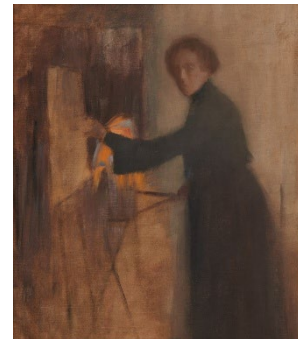
Paintings of interior spaces constituted a major genre throughout Europe in the late 19th century. In the Nordic countries, interior scenes often communicated *hygge* (a retreat into warmth, intimacy, and well-being), the sense of being nested in a secure environment. Yet, for many women, the home represented a place of containment. For those living in poverty, the idea of home was aspirational. Whether tending to the home, viewing the outside world through a window, or escaping into imagination, the everyday interior was associated with female reverie or contemplation. For artists such as Maria Wiik, who pictures herself at work, the dark interior suggests the mystery of inspiration. Other artists, including Stephan Sinding, decorated their homes as a demonstration of their skill, so that the interior functioned as a projection of the self.

Maria Wiik

Finnish, 1853–1928

Self-Portrait, c. 1917

Oil on canvas



Wiik was among the leading women who forged professional careers as artists in late 19th-century Finland. She remained connected with her sister students from Helsinki and Paris, with whom she traveled in Brittany, France; Cornwall, England; and Italy. Her early Naturalist approach to painting became increasingly atmospheric, as seen in this self-portrait. Picturing herself at work before her easel, she pauses within an indistinct Symbolist environment. The suggestion of radiant firelight, seen through a doorway, warms the otherwise monochromatic surroundings.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Christian Krohg

Norwegian, 1852–1925

Karl Nordström in Grez-sur-Loing, 1882

Oil on canvas



During the 1880s, Krohg and Nordström spent time in the Nordic artists' colony of Grez-sur-Loing, just south of Paris, where this was painted. Inspired by the attention to nuances of light and atmosphere found in contemporary French painting he saw while in Paris from 1881 to 1882, Krohg depicted a moment of reverie, as young Nordström imagined the masterpieces he would paint in this charming village. A version of this motif was shown at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and now hangs in Oslo's National Gallery.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Nils Kreuger, designer

Swedish, 1858–1930

Ernst Lundström, designer

Swedish, 1853–1931



Cabinet, 1897

Ash wood and leather

The Flying Dutchman, a legendary ghost ship cursed to sail the seas eternally, adorns this cabinet. A tragic yet popular tale, it has inspired artists, poets, and composers. The storm-tossed ship symbolizes the frustration of unattainable goals. The subject originated in the 17th century when the Dutch East India Company dominated international maritime commerce and Sweden was a European military power. Kreuger and Lundström (both members of Sweden's anti-establishment Artists' Union) reinforced the reference to the 17th century by using a Baroque cabinet style and embellishing it with leather repoussé, reminiscent of 17th-century Swedish palaces. Many artists at the time advocated for traditional artisanal practices to maintain continuity with the nation's past.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Carl Holsøe

Danish (1863–1935)

Interior with Woman, 1920

Oil on canvas



Renowned for his intimate interiors, Danish artist Carl Holsøe depicts his wife, Emile Heise, in their home. The canvas features indirect light effects painted in a muted palette. The couple's collecting tastes—which extended to porcelain, textiles, and antique mahogany furniture—mirrored and contributed to the austere interior aesthetic shared by well-to-do art collectors in Copenhagen. Holsøe, along with fellow painters Vilhelm Hammershøi and Peter Ilsted, updated 17th-century Dutch interior painting into a pared-down modern genre that celebrated the domestic environment as a place of refuge from the commotion of the modern city.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Johan Gudmundsen-Holmgren

Danish, 1859–1912

Girl Reading, 1900

Oil on canvas



Images of women and girls reading were popular in the 19th century. Interior scenes like this reinforced the belief in the “separation of spheres”—that a woman’s place was in the home due to her emotional, intellectual, and physical fragility. This scene also attests to the nearly universal level of literacy in Denmark around 1900. The mountainous backdrop behind the young girl does not depict Denmark, one of the flattest countries in the world. Perhaps it represents the setting of the story that she reads. The simplicity and restraint here reflect the legacy of Danish Golden Age painting, which peaked in the mid-19th century.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Artists' Homes

By the 1890s, many progressive Nordic artists had adopted a non-hierarchical attitude towards art. They judged all creative endeavors according to skill and authenticity, rather than the social class for which it was produced, as had been the case for centuries. At the same time, the home escalated in importance as a family's respite in a world of stress and uncertainty. Inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement that arose in the 1860s, artists and designers believed that one's surroundings-exterior and interior-exerted a transformative impact on one's physical and emotional well-being. The display of objects-rustic and rural as well as cultivated and contemporary-expressed such a mission.

Artists emphasized the necessity of creating a home that reflected the lifestyle, taste, and social commitment of its inhabitants-one embedded in the national landscape. Such a home, they

believed, provided the precondition for a happy, healthy family and a democratic, egalitarian nation. They felt that factory-produced furniture and aristocratic imitations led to alienation. Artists like Carl and Karin Bergöö Larsson in Sweden and Stephan Sinding in Denmark designed and furnished their homes to reflect their national roots, social identities, and aesthetic preferences. They opened them to visitors as models of personalized environments that harmonized familial needs with their cultural and natural settings.

Stephan Sinding

Danish (b. Norway), 1846–1922

Adam and Eve panels, 1904

Wood

Sculptor Stephan Sinding, best known for his dramatic realist sculpture in bronze and marble, carved these wood relief panels for the drawing room of his home. He moved to Copenhagen in 1883 and assumed Danish citizenship in 1890. Sinding and his actor wife Anna Betzonich later purchased a villa on the city outskirts. For artists like Sinding, who received commissions from municipalities, institutions, and influential individuals, the home served as both a showplace and a site of family intimacy. He razed walls to create a large salon for his interpretations of the story of Adam and Eve in “pleasant settings in and beyond Paradise.” His panels—pigmented in a manner reminiscent of Paul Gauguin’s work—feature the archangel Michael holding a flaming sword, a symbol found in both Christian stories and Norse mythology.



Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gerda Backlund, designer

Swedish, 1880–1912

Emy Wahlström, designer

Swedish, 1880–1912

Hugo Elmqvist, maker

Swedish, 1862–1930

Vases, c. 1900

Bronze



Elmqvist studied at Sweden's Royal Academy of Art and worked as a sculptor. He developed a new method of patinating bronze (the coating that gives the metal an oxidized appearance) that was popular with designers like Backlund and Wahlström. Their designs often used plant and insect motifs, popular features of the Art Nouveau style, at its zenith in 1900. During the 19th century, science demonstrated the healthful benefits of immersion in nature and the many ways in which the natural and social realms were interdependent, ideas that artists like Backlund and Wahlström embraced.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Eliel Saarinen

Finnish, 1873–1950



Table, 1905

Oak

One of Europe's leading Art Nouveau architects and town planners, Saarinen designed the monumental National Board of Railways Administration Building (1904-1909) in Helsinki. With 400 rooms spread across four stories, much of the furniture was factory-produced in Helsinki and Kuopio, based on Saarinen's designs. This heavy oak table mirrored the geometry of the building, including the profiled legs that harmonized with the wall treatments. Whether in the many private homes or public buildings that Saarinen designed—including his collaboration with Akseli Gallen-Kallela on the artist's studio—he conceived all elements as part of a unified design environment.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Aron Jerndahl, designer

Swedish, 1858–1936

Fabriksaktiebolaget Herkules, manufacturer

Sweden (Stockholm), active early 20th century



Tureen, 1903

Pewter

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Märta Måås Fjetterström

Swedish, 1873–1941

Angarna rug, designed 1928

Wool



Collection of David and Susan Werner

Alfred William Finch, designer

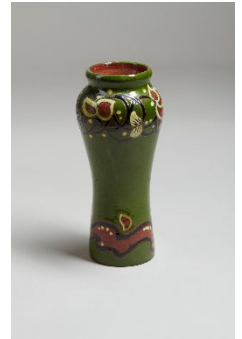
Belgian, active Finland, 1854–1930

Iris Workshops, maker

Finland (Porvoo), 1897–1902

Vases, c. 1900

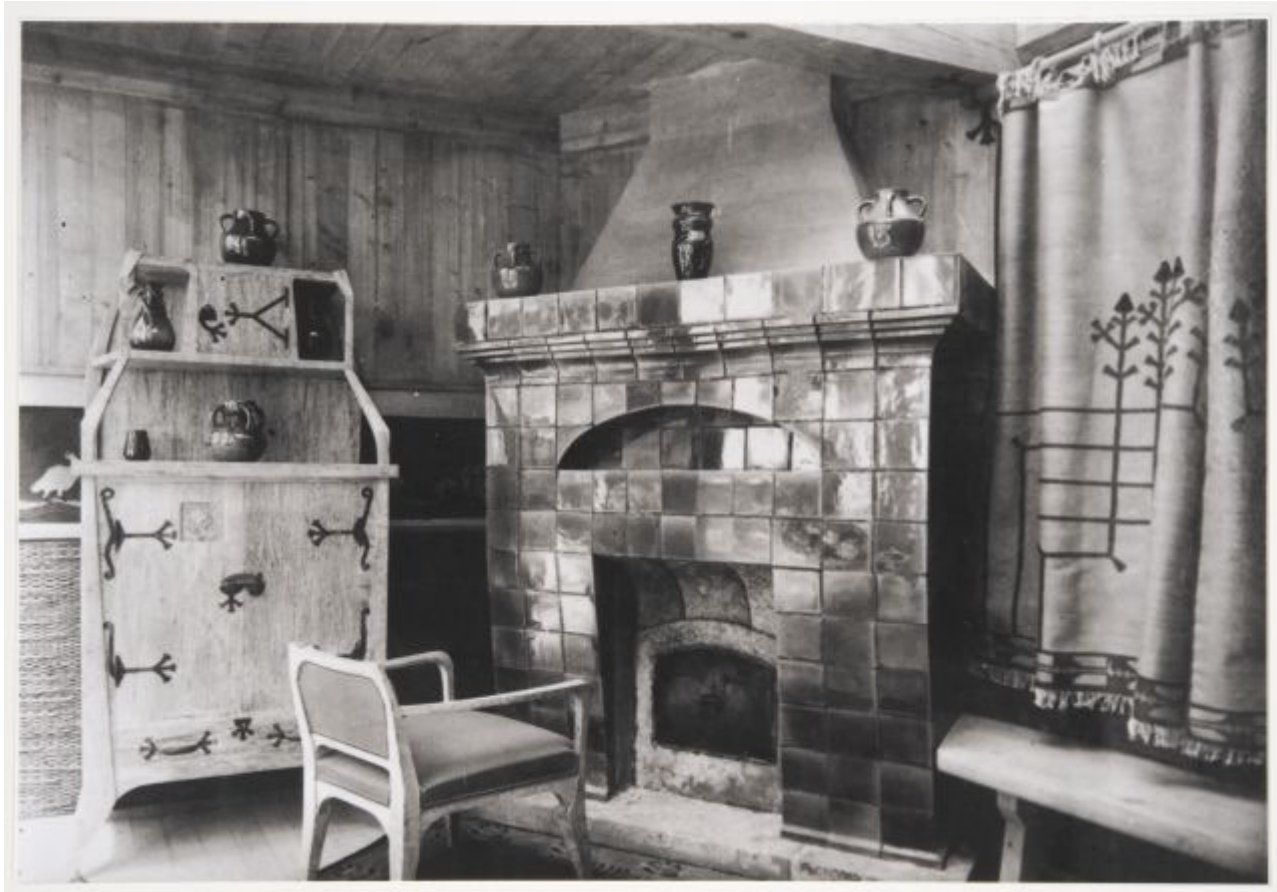
Glazed earthenware



Porvoo, Finland was home to Iris Workshops, an artists' collective organized in 1897 by Louise Sparre and Akseli Gallen-Kallela and modeled on the principles of the British Arts and Crafts movement. As head of the ceramics department, Belgian-born avant-garde artist Alfred William Finch created utilitarian earthenware objects from local red clay. The bold, abstract decoration bears little similarity to the organic forms favored by other Nordic potteries. Iris Workshops designed a room for the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Paris World's Fair, celebrated internationally for its unified design and singular Finnish national aesthetic.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

The Frick Pittsburgh, Gift of David and Susan Werner



Iris Room in the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Paris World's Fair. Courtesy of Finnish Heritage Agency.

Symbolist Experimentation

The psychologically and emotionally debilitating effects of the Industrial Revolution, combined with recent scientific discoveries such as sound waves, electrical currents, x-rays, and germs, led to an understanding that many real things were intangible. This presented a conundrum for artists: how might they convey sound, touch, feelings, thoughts, or the images seen in dreams? Such questions belonged to the larger mission of contemporary artists to serve as historians of their own era. To convey to viewers that images could refer to something imaginary or impalpable, artists throughout Europe experimented with a wide variety of imagery, media, and techniques.

The Symbolist movement, first defined in 1880s Paris, proposed such a revelation of subjective experience and advocated for an experimental means of expressing it. Finnish artist Akseli

Gallen-Kallela, for instance, applied traditional approaches like tempera (used for fresco painting in ancient Rome and during the Italian Renaissance) to modern and mythological subjects. He also tried techniques that produced multiples and permitted modifications between printings, such as etching and lithography, an increasingly important medium used in magazine and newspaper illustration. However different Symbolist works appear, they all deviate from perceptual reality in terms of color and form, or by including fantastical objects or beings, such as those encountered in dreams and fairytales.

Akseli Gallen-Kallela

Finnish, 1865–1931

***Birth of Fire*, 1914**

Oil on canvas



This is a sketch for a section of a decorative fresco called “The Birth of Fire,” intended for Helsinki’s national theater, a commission never completed. It depicts the prehistoric Finnish springtime tradition of lighting a bonfire to mark the end of winter and the beginning of the growing season, an event celebrated in national legend and in Finland’s epic, the *Kalevala*. To harmonize with Christian practice, which arrived in Finland in the 11th century, the celebration was moved to coincide with Pentecost, the Christian holiday marking the descent of the Holy Spirit (often represented as a dove emanating rays of light) to the followers of Jesus, seven weeks after his death.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Akseli Gallen-Kallela

Finnish, 1865–1931

Rune Singer, Listening to Rapids, **1896**

Etching



Rune singers were itinerants who traveled the Finnish forests and countryside reciting epic poetry compiled in the 1830s by Lars Lönnrot into the *Kalevala*. They accompanied recitations with music played on a kantele, the zither-like instrument the singer holds in his right hand. Dressed like a Finnish peasant, wearing leather shoes with upturned toes, he closes his eyes to focus on the music of nature, an activity Gallen-Kallela considered necessary for achieving a sense of groundedness.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Akseli Gallen-Kallela

Finnish, 1865–1931

Kullervo's Curse, 1906

Etching



Kullervo was a tragic hero featured in the *Kalevala*, Finland's national epic. First published in 1835, the *Kalevala* provided the most important source for visual imagery in the nation's struggle for independence from Russia, which was finally achieved in 1917. Gallen-Kallela was the most prolific illustrator of the epic, including prints like this that—thanks to a process that produced relatively inexpensive multiples—enabled the image to reach a wider public than his 1899 painting of the subject, now in the collection of the Ateneum in Helsinki, Finland.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Akseli Gallen-Kallela

Finnish, 1865–1931

Lake Keitele, 1906

Tempera on paper



Gallen-Kallela enjoyed the Finnish wilderness because it gave him a sense of rootedness in his native land. With his family, he rented a house on the shores of Lake Keitele, two hundred miles north of Helsinki, in a region comprised of almost equal amounts of land and water. Japanese prints, popular collectibles among artists in the second half of the 19th century, inspired his use of a vertical format for a landscape and the intrusion of tree branches in the left foreground.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Ernst Josephson

Swedish, 1851–1906

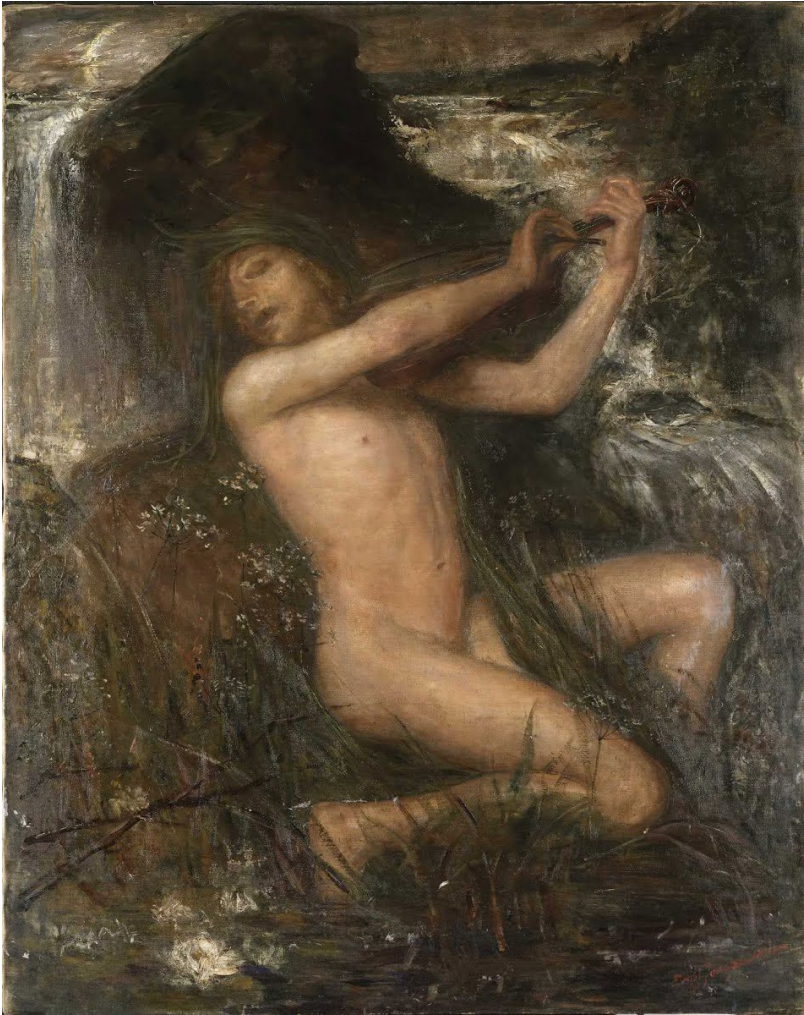
Water Sprite, 1890s

Graphite on paper



Josephson, ringleader of the self-styled Opponents to Sweden's Royal Academy of Art, identified with the fictional tragic character of the Water Sprite because he too felt like a social outcast. According to Nordic legend, the Water Sprite was an ally of Lucifer, who landed in Nordic forests when banished from the realm of the gods. There, he sings mournful songs that express regret for his choice, songs so beautiful that they unintentionally lure forest wanderers to their deaths by drowning. Josephson authored a poem about and created several paintings of the subject.

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Ernst Josephson (Swedish, 1851–1906).

The Water Sprite, 1882. Oil on canvas. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

Hugo Simberg

Finnish, 1873–1917

Nightmare. Syphilis, 1896

Drawing



One of Finland's foremost Symbolist artists, Simberg produced numerous mordantly humorous fantasy images. In this nightmare representation, the snakelike humanoid entraps one body while another shuffles into the distance, offering an adept allegory for the disease. Syphilis, untreatable until the 1940s, presented an ongoing health crisis in the late 19th century, its symptoms often mimicking other conditions. One of Simberg's biographers surmised that the artist later succumbed to syphilis, mistakenly attributing his visionary work to neurological symptoms.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Ivar Aronsenius

Swedish, 1878–1917



***The Scarecrow and the Four
Winds, 1906***

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Edvard Munch

Norwegian, 1863–1944



***Omega's Flight*, 1908-1909**

Lithograph

Norway's most famous painter and printmaker, Munch was also a writer. In 1908, he composed a bitter fairy tale entitled *Alpha and Omega*, which he produced as a lithographic portfolio. The protagonists, Alpha and Omega—referring to Adam and Eve or the first and the last—live on a paradisiacal island. Alpha shares her love with several animals on the island, including the deer on whose back she rides, while Omega sits by the shore in a posture of melancholy. At the end of the tale, Omega kills Alpha and is then torn apart by Alpha's monstrous progeny. The portfolio, collected by print connoisseurs throughout Northern Europe, was an experiment in modern mythmaking.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Norwegian Revival

In the latter part of the 19th century, Norway's artists, writers, composers, and historians looked to their country's medieval past to assert their desire for political independence. Traditional folk tales and Norse mythology inspired a generation of artists to adapt fantastical motifs for silver, furniture, tapestries, and even architecture.

Medieval stave churches-timber structures once common in Norway and increasingly rare after the 16th century-often included intricate decoration with interlaced patterns and dragon motifs. These sources inspired a new style that emerged in the 1890s, known as Dragon Style. Lars Kinsarvik, a wood carver and furniture maker, became the style's leading proponent.

Similarly, Norwegian painter Gerhard Munthe helped to formulate what he termed a "Norwegian national style;" a modern aesthetic rooted in traditional rural culture. Munthe

explored folk tales and mythology in a distinctively bold abstract style that incorporated the influences of Japanese art and European Art Nouveau with inspiration from medieval tapestries and colorful hand-painted folk art. In the 1890s, he began to produce tapestry designs (woven by his wife Sigrun Sandberg and female artisans at Trondheim's Art Weaving School), contributing to a textile renaissance in Norway. His tapestries, critically acclaimed at the 1900 Paris World's Fair, shaped Norway's national identity abroad in the years leading up to its independence in 1905.

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929



The Evil Stepmother, 1893

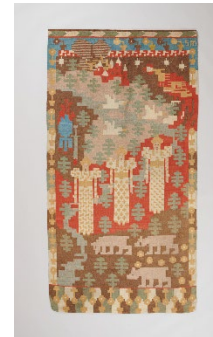
Watercolor on paper

The scene here is inspired by a transformation myth taken from the ballad *Venill Fruva and Drembedrosi*. The sorceress Drembedrosi marries the king and wants his daughter Venill to marry her brother, a giant. Venill refuses, and Drembedrosi threatens to turn her into a linden tree and chase her out to sea, preventing her from taking root in the earth. The crying page highlights the evilness of the stepmother's plan. The artist added borders of stylized pansies. A similar pattern adorns the queen's dress.

Collection of David and Susan Werne

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929



The Red Rooster, 1890

Wool and linen tapestry

The Red Rooster tapestry shares similarities with *The Suitors*, Munthe's tapestry on view in the introductory gallery. It represents the same transformation myth of the three bears and the maidens with the spiky hair. Munthe's wife, Sigrun, wove the design for the first time in 1894. It became the most frequently woven motif at *Den Norske Husflidsforening*, also known as DNH (Norwegian Handcraft Association). As a member of the DNH board, Munthe played a significant role in promoting the production of affordable handicrafts for a broader public.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Lars Kinsarvik

Norwegian, 1846–1925

Cabinet, 1900

Painted pine



The complex design of this cabinet rewards close looking: trolls, animals, enigmatic faces, and fantastical details peer out from the interlaced patterns—folkloric imagery that helped forge a national design identity in Norway at the turn of the 20th century. A renowned woodcarver, Kinsarvik also worked as a journalist and writer who promoted the dissolution of Norway’s union with Sweden. He summarized his conviction that Norway had a distinctive material history in his 1907 book *Old Norse Ornamental Art*. A chronicler of Viking ornament and rural material culture, he incorporated historical motifs into his invented repertoire of trolls and other imaginary creatures. The blue-green background color was a signature of his workshop.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Lars Kinsarvik

Norwegian, 1846–1925

Armchair, 1900

Painted pine



One of Norway's leading wood carvers, Kinsarvik was an enthusiastic proponent of Dragon Style ornament. Applying colors derived from regional painted decoration to his intricately carved low-relief furniture and objects, he was influential in reviving the color palette associated with peasant homes for modern urban interiors. He trained generations of woodcarvers at his school in rural Norway. Working on commission, he produced furniture and ensembles for homes, businesses, and hotels, which sparked tourists' interest in Dragon Style decor. He exhibited at international exhibitions, including the 1900 Paris World's Fair. The elaborate interlace patterning and abstracted botanical and animal forms interact with details derived from old stave churches and Viking relics. Its upright form, sporting a mysterious head at its highest point, offers the sitter the illusion of occupying a Viking throne.

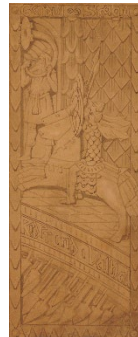
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929

Bridge to Valhalla, 1895

Watercolor



This motif is a rendering of the lower central panel of Munthe's cabinet, a scene described in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, initially published in the 13th century. Runic-style letters that frame the central image identify the figures as the helmeted Valkyries, Gandul and Skagul, who ride into Valhalla. Sent by the god Odin to choose a fallen hero to enter the great hall at Valhalla, trumpeters announce their arrival. The scale-like patterning behind them is derived from the pointed wooden shingles of stave churches and echoes the warrior's padded armor. Stylized arrows below signal the violence of a mighty battle.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gerhard Munthe, designer

Norwegian, 1849–1929

Johan Borgersen, maker

Norwegian, 1863–1930



Cabinet, 1910

Pine wood with gouache on glass

Munthe adapted motifs from the 1899 publication of Snorri Sturluson's sagas of Norwegian kings into decorative panels on this cabinet. Pictured is the bridge that, in Norse mythology, connects Midgard (Earth) to Asgard (the realm of the gods), where Viking heroes reside in the giant feasting hall, Valhalla. Johan Borgersen, Munthe's longtime collaborator, carved the cabinet. Their most famous project was the Fairytale Room in Oslo's Holmenkollen Tourist Hotel, one of the most splendid examples of Norse Dragon Style. For commissioned furniture, Munthe and Borgersen adapted a color palette from rural Norwegian domestic furniture because it transmitted to urban elites the ideal of historical continuity.

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Gerhard Munthe (Norwegian, 1849–1929).
Fairytale Room in the Holmenkollen
Turisthotell, 1896. © O. Væring

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929



***The Wise Bird*, 1890s**

Watercolor on paper

Munthe first produced *The Wise Bird* as an independent decoration and exhibited it at the 1893 Black and White Exhibition of works on paper in Kristiania (present-day Oslo). It became one of the first models he identified as appropriate for tapestry production. In the late 1890s, he made copies of his watercolors as weaving designs and sold them to select clients, remaining heavily involved in the tapestry production process.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Gerhard Munthe

Norwegian, 1849–1929



The Wise Bird, 1898-1899

Wool and linen tapestry

An elderly king wanders through a stylized chestnut forest and confronts a large bird while a courtier, bearing a sword, feeds golden birds in flight. Perhaps a parable of the wisdom of age versus youthful frivolity, the motif was not drawn from a single folk or fairy tale, but rather an artistic convention. Munthe's study of rural crafts led to his conviction that there was, in his words, a Norwegian "instinct for color"—high red or crayfish red, reddish violet, pot blue, bluish green, and strong yellow or brass yellow. The members of the Art Weaving School in Trondheim dyed their wool according to this palette to achieve the nuances found in Munthe's designs.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Henrik Møller

Norwegian, 1858–1937



Tureen with the Legend of Ragnar Lodbrok, 1906

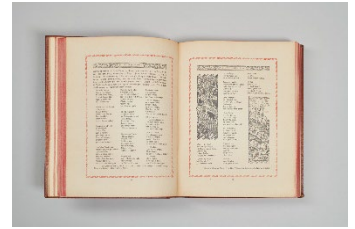
Silver

Henrik Møller, a skilled goldsmith, was one of the foremost proponents of the Norse-revival Dragon Style. His creations feature strange beasts, mythical figures, and intricate patterns, often accompanied by rune-like texts. Møller showed his work at international expositions and catered to an international, wealthy clientele. One of his standout creations is this tureen that tells the tale of Ragnar Lodbrok, a legendary Viking king and hero. His exploits unfold across the surface, from his complicated courtship to his dramatic death in a snake pit.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Snorri Sturluson

Icelandic, 1179–1241



Kongasagær (Stories of the Norse Kings), 1899

Leather-bound book illustrated by Gerhard Munthe, et al.
Published by J. M. Stenersen Forlag, Kristiania.

The Icelandic historian, poet, and chieftain Snorri Sturluson (1178/79–1241) is the credited compiler of the *Heimskringla*, the famous sagas of the Norse kings. During the 19th century, it symbolized Norway's legitimacy as an ancient kingdom amidst a push for independence. The *Heimskringla* significantly influenced the National Romantic movement and was published in multiple editions. In the late 19th century, Gerhard Munthe, Erik Werenskiöld, Christian Krohg, and others were commissioned to illustrate the stories. Munthe's motifs in this luxury edition are repeated on the cabinet in this gallery.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

The Finnish National Home and Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau, also known as Jugendstil, was a movement in art, design, and architecture that emerged in the 1880s and reached its peak in 1900. Rejecting historical revival styles in favor of youth and rebirth, designers integrated Japanese art, the dynamics of natural growth, the microscopic world of flora and fauna, and new scientific understandings of the nervous system into the look, feel, and symbolic content of their designs. Many Art Nouveau practitioners experimented with various media to create harmonious, unified designs intended to provide their inhabitants with a spiritually uplifting environment.

Organic curves and naturalistic motifs characterize the modern international aesthetic. In the Nordic countries, artists integrated Viking-era strapwork and historical rural decorations into their designs. International exhibitions and

world's fairs provided a platform for Nordic artists and manufacturers to share their contributions to the modern international aesthetic. The creations of Rorstrand Porcelain Manufactory and Iris Workshops in particular garnered international attention.

Thorolf Holmboe

Norwegian, 1866–1939

***Three Princesses*, 1910**

Wool and linen tapestry



Thorolf Holmboe was a Norwegian painter, illustrator, and designer who worked in a variety of media. *Den Norske Husflidsforening* (Norwegian Association for Handicrafts, founded in 1891) commissioned several designs from Holmboe, including this one. The scene is possibly a reference to one of several Norwegian fairy tales featuring three princesses, or perhaps it refers to the three primary Norse goddesses known as the Norns—Urðr, Verðandi, and Skuld—who weave the threads of fate and represent the past, present, and future.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Louis Sparre, designer

Swedish, 1863–1964

Iris Workshops, maker

Finland (Porvoo), 1897–1902



Writing desk, c. 1900

Waxed maplewood decorated with leaded stained glass, inlays, and brown pegamoid



Sofa, c. 1904

Oak and modern upholstery

In 1897, Count Louis Sparre founded the Iris Workshops in Porvoo, Finland. Sparre and his fellow artisans were committed to excellent design at affordable prices and sold their wares at a shop in Helsinki. The sofa and desk here incorporate Japanese-inspired motifs and design elements gleaned from Scottish and French Art Nouveau furniture. The desk includes a pegamoid top—a newly developed material simulating leather. After its international triumph at the 1900 Paris World's Fair, Iris Workshops went bankrupt, in part due to its commitment to high-quality materials and low7

prices. Sparre and his artist-wife Eva Mannerheim went on to establish their own design firm.

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Advertisement for Iris Workshops (Aktiebolaget Iris, 1897-1902). Courtesy of Helsinki City Museum.

Ilma Hirn, designer

Finnish, 1870–1966

Wetterhof, maker

Finland (Hämeenlinna), est. 1885



***Jugend* rug, 1986 (designed 1903)**

Wool

Ryas (hand-knotted, long-pile rugs) were used in the Nordic countries for personal warmth and comfort. They originated from the Medieval Viking trade with the Byzantine Empire. This form evolved as a domestic decoration throughout the 19th century, gaining international popularity when Akseli Gallen-Kallela exhibited his *Flame Rug* in the Finnish Pavilion at the 1900 Paris World's Fair. Hirn's symmetrical floral designs exemplify the aesthetic and handwork of the Friends of Finnish Handcraft. Such rugs, whether designed by men or women, were typically handwoven by women.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Elsa Palmroth

Finnish, 1877–1922

Screen, c. 1915

Wood and pigment



Palmroth's resplendent screen displays motifs and styles characteristic of later Art Nouveau—sinuous lines framing a woman's head and intertwining flowers combined with dynamic fretwork (the open pattern at the top). The artist enhanced the feel of luxury by using pigments to complement the shades of the inlaid wood. Freestanding screens, a form that originated in East Asia, were popular at the turn of the 20th century as decorative elements in homes. They created a zone of privacy or masked domestic clutter.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

C.G. Hallberg

Swedish, 1860–1961

Bowl, 1903

Silver with malachite cabochons



Marius Hammer

Norwegian, 1847–1927

Bowl, 1890

Silver with enamel



Fanny Garde, designer

Danish, 1855–1928

Effie Hegermann-Lindencrone, designer

Danish, 1860–1945

Bing & Grøndahl, manufacturer

Denmark (CITY), under name 1853–1987

Bowl, 1920

Porcelain



Many Nordic artists infused their interpretation of Art Nouveau with imagery that reflected their national and cultural heritage. Viking-inspired scrollwork adorns the delicate silver and enamel bowl by Norwegian goldsmith Marius Hammer. The

abstracted masks and outspread wings that decorate C.G. Hallberg's bowl are another evocation of Viking heritage. Other artists, including Fanny Garde and Effie Hegermann-Lindencrone, took inspiration from Japanese art. The Asian-inspired decoration on their bowl, produced for Danish manufacturer Bing & Grøndahl, is executed in the firm's hallmark cobalt blue decoration under a glossy, transparent glaze.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Arabia Porcelain Factory

Finland (Helsinki), 1873–2016

Fennia series vase, c. 1902

Earthenware



Finnish artists played a key role in supporting Finland's independence movement by highlighting the country's unique cultural and artistic traditions. They drew inspiration from folk crafts, which they viewed as authentic representations of national heritage. Traditional Karelian textiles and embroidery patterns inspired the decoration on the Fennia series produced by the Arabia Porcelain Factory (an outgrowth of Sweden's Rörstrand Manufactory). Such a vase displayed in the home—whether in Finland or abroad—signaled affiliation with Finland's National Romantic movement during Russian occupation.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Thorolf Holmboe, designer

Norwegian, 1866–1935

Porsgrunds Porselaensfabrik, manufacturer

Norway (Porsgrunn), est. 1885



Vase, 1910

Porcelain

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Astrid Ewerlöf, designer

Swedish, 1876–1927

Rörstrand Manufactory, manufacturer

Sweden (Stockholm), est. 1726



Vase, 1901-1902

Porcelain

The Frick Pittsburgh, Gift of David and Susan Werner

Nils Lundström, designer

Swedish, 1865–1960

Rörstrand Manufactory, manufacturer

Sweden (Stockholm), est. 1726



Vase, 1901-1902

Porcelain

Founded by a Swedish royal decree in 1726, Rörstrand experienced significant expansion and technical development at the end of the 19th century. Critics at the 1900 Paris World's Fair were charmed by the lithely elegant forms and soft, muted color palette, which they felt emulated the atmospheric tones favored by Nordic landscape painters. The undulating body of a starfish wraps around the neck of the vase modeled by Nils Lundström, embodying a perfect harmony among form, motif, materiality, and technique.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Alf Wallander, designer

Swedish, 1862–1914

Rörstrand Manufactory, manufacturer

Sweden (Stockholm), est. 1726



Vase, 1897

Porcelain

Two magnificent poppies wind around the body of this vase, a tour-de-force of Swedish Art Nouveau. Wallander was the lead artist of Rörstrand's art pottery department. He led a talented team of young, well-trained artists who adopted the design vocabulary and color palette he developed. One critic at the 1900 Paris World's Fair rhapsodized, "These vases are perfection, and their style is the most exquisite that one can dream of...What a pink! So nascent, so pale, that it is barely a reflection of the snow on which it lies. On these vases, everything is done as if by the subtle fingers of a Northern fairy."

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Sweden and Social Reform

The artists in this section believed in the power of art to improve the living and working conditions of their fellow citizens. After a youthful search for fame in Paris, a sense of social responsibility prompted their return to Sweden in the 1890s. With pride instilled by patriotism, they focused on subjects and developed individual styles intended to foster empathy and social solidarity among fellow Swedes. Inspired by design reform movements championed by Swedish intellectuals like Eric Gustaf Geijer, August Strindberg, and Ellen Key, they rejected the outmoded, elitist norms of the state-sponsored art academy.

Like the French Impressionists in the 1870s, Swedish artists in the 1890s began to concentrate on the subjects they knew best and developed personal styles to express them. But unlike their French counterparts, whose

paintings were perceived as radical and rejected by French collectors, paintings by these Swedish 'Opponents: as they called themselves, were eagerly patronized by collectors like Pontus Furstenberg in Goteborg and Ernest Thiel in Stockholm.

This generation of artists was committed to publicly accessible works of art. Carl Larsson and Prince Eugen executed numerous commissions in schools, museums, and theaters, and all of these artists donated works to Folkets hus (literally 'houses of the people'), municipal centers established throughout Sweden with free public libraries, lectures, meeting spaces, and educational courses open to all Swedes. Their efforts contributed to the Social Democratic principles that continue to thrive in the Nordic nations today.

Carl Larsson

Swedish, 1853–1919



Fan: Grez-sur-Loing, A Rococo Fantasy, **1884**

Watercolor on paper

Larsson moved to Paris, the center of the art world, in 1877. He later spent the years from 1882 to 1885 in the sleepy village of Grez, on the Loing River, fifty miles south of Paris, a more peaceful and affordable place to concentrate on his art. Here, Larsson imagines a man from the Rococo era of the mid-18th century, identified by his knee breeches and tri-cornered hat, on the banks of the Loing. Artist-designed fans were popular collectibles in the late 19th century, and this, his only fan, may have been an attempt by the enterprising Larsson to exploit this lucrative market.

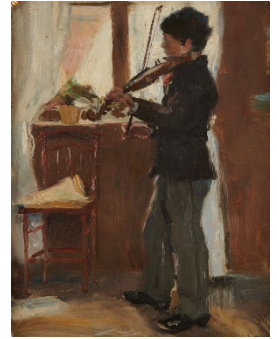
Collection of David and Susan Werner

Richard Bergh

Swedish, 1858–1919

Boy Playing the Violin, 1884

Oil on board



This painting depicts a contemplative interior scene where a young boy practices the violin. Bergh painted it while he was living in Paris, among a vibrant colony of Nordic artists hoping for success in Europe's avant-garde epicenter. This painting witnesses Bergh's encounter with Naturalism and Impressionism because he focused more on nuances of light than on descriptive detail.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Nils Kreuger

Swedish, 1858–1930

Springtime in Varberg, 1888

Oil on board



Kreuger, a founding member of Sweden's Artists' Union, moved to the seaside town of Varberg in 1887 in the hopes of starting an artists' colony. *Springtime in Varberg*, with its pastel colors and feathery brushwork, reveals the influence of French Impressionist painting, which Kreuger would have seen during his six years in Paris. His colleagues Richard Bergh and Karl Nordström joined him in Varberg in the fall of 1893.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Eugen Bernadotte, Prince of Sweden

Swedish, 1865–1947



The Cloud, 1895

Oil on canvas

Eugene Napoleon Nikolaus, the youngest son of Oskar II and Sofia of Nassau, showed early artistic promise and studied in Paris. He became one of Sweden's most accomplished painters. This is the earliest known version of a recurring subject of his, the most famous of which hangs in the Prince's Waldermarsudde, the Stockholm residence-museum he bequeathed to the nation. Eugen elevated nature to the realm of the sacred by framing it in a gilded border reminiscent of a medieval masterpiece. The prince gifted the painting to a friend, who later emigrated to the United States. Lost for decades, it resurfaced at a Florida auction house in 2008, still in its original frame.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Eugène Jansson

Swedish, 1862–1915



Bastugatan in the Evening, 1896

Oil on canvas

Now one of the trendiest residential streets on Stockholm's Södermalm (South Island), Bastugatan was in the working-class neighborhood where Jansson lived in the 1890s. This painting belongs to his Blue Period (1890–1904), when he painted twilight cityscapes. Once he could afford to pay for models, thanks to the patronage of Ernest Thiel, Jansson turned to figure painting.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Karl Nordström

Swedish, 1855–1923



Sunnaberg, Tjörn, 1888

Colored chalk on paper

Nordström studied at the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm, spent most of the 1880s in Paris, was a member of the Varberg artists' colony, and served as director of the Artists' Union. His favorite subject was the landscape of his native Tjörn, a rocky, treeless island north of Göteborg. He subscribed to the National Romantic theory that painting the subjects one knew best fostered social solidarity and appreciation of nature.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Helmer Osslund

Swedish, 1866–1938



Autumn Day near Stora Sjöfallet, **1920**

Gouache on paper

In 1894, Osslund resigned from his job as a decorator at Gustavsberg's porcelain factory and traveled to Paris to study painting. He trained under post-impressionist Paul Gauguin at the Académie Colarossi and later visited Bonn, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Scotland before returning to Sweden. He began to paint the northern wilderness expanses in a dynamic patchwork of bold, flat, highly decorative color. Recent academics have criticized Osslund's art as an example of a broader historical trend of indigenous erasure, minimizing or eliminating the presence of indigenous Sámi communities in Lappland and beyond.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Vitalism

Naked youthful bodies became widespread symbols of personal and national rebirth in the first decade of the 20th century. In the Nordic countries, nudity in art became associated with Vitalism, a scientific and philosophical movement that proposed a connected universe, a vital force found in all living things. Images of naked individuals exercising in the open air embodied the notion of society renewed by natural energies.

To address growing concerns over the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, health and hygiene reformers played a crucial role in shaping modern sports culture. Swimming, weightlifting, gymnastics, and hiking were recognized as activities that renewed the body, especially when practiced in the open air. In the wake of medical research demonstrating the benefits of heliotherapy (the therapeutic use of

sunlight) on various physical ailments, reformers recognized the sun as having powerful healing properties.

The Dane J. F. Willumsen and the Swede J. A. G. Acke popularized these ideas in art through their images of athletes set in radiant outdoor settings. Adopting the bright palette of French Neo-Impressionism and Fauvism, they suggested the transmission of the solar spectrum as it healed and strengthened bodies. The principle of "a sound mind in a sound body:" the motto of the modern Olympic Games, underlay a physical culture that promised to renew morals as well as muscles through contact with nature. In the Nordic countries today, the belief in nature as an arena for renewal persists as a form of well-being and self-care.

Peder Severin Krøyer

Danish, 1851–1909

***Boys on the Beach at Amalfi,* 1890**

Oil on panel



Peder Severin Krøyer began painting seaside paintings in the 1880s and 1890s, setting his subjects against brilliant blue skies and ochre beaches, the color contrast heightening the effect of the sunlit scenes. Krøyer painted *Boys on the Beach* in 1890 while on his honeymoon in Amalfi with his painter wife Marie Triepke. The long shadows suggest that dusk soon approaches.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

J.A.G. Acke

Swedish, 1859–1924

Bathing Youth, 1900

Oil on canvas

Collection of David and Susan Werner



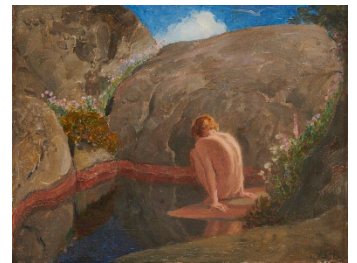
Venny Soldan-Brofeldt

Finnish, 1863–1945

By the Spring, 1910

Oil on canvas

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Sigrid af Forselles

Finnish, 1860–1935

***Jar*, 1909**

Earthenware

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Herman A. Kähler

Danish, 1846–1917

***Bowl*, 1900**

Stoneware

The Frick Pittsburgh, Gift of David and Susan Werner



Thorvald Bindesbøll

Danish, 1846–1908

Armchair, c. 1900

Oak and modern upholstery



Charger, c. 1900

Earthenware



Bindesbøll was a polymath—architect, painter, graphic artist, furniture designer, illustrator, and ceramicist. A founding member of the vanguard group *Den Frie Udstilling* (The Free Exhibition), Bindesbøll was a central figure in Denmark's modern art movement. His designs often combine classical and natural elements. This chair, likely made by Rud. Rasmussen, Denmark's oldest cabinetry workshop, features his bold, swirling, abstract patterns inspired by East Asian cloud motifs, like those on the charger above. Working for Copenhagen pottery, G.A. Eifrig, Bindesbøll built his vessels by hand rather than turning them on a wheel. He used a *sgraffito* (scratched) technique to decorate them before glazing and firing. He was also a pioneer in product

branding, designing the Carlsberg beer logo still in use.

Collection of David and Susan Werner

Jens Jacob Bregno

Danish, 1877–1946

Female Nude, 1903

Bronze

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Jens Ferdinand Willumsen

Danish, 1863–1958

Lady Mountaineer, 1902

Gouache on paper

Collection of David and Susan Werner



Jens Ferdinand Willumsen

Danish, 1863–1958



Study for *Sun and Youth*, 1909

Oil on canvas

Willumsen's monumental painting *Sun and Youth* (1902–1910) signaled the artist's turn toward the cult of youth and health associated with Vitalism. From the beaches of Amalfi, Italy; Brittany, France; and Skagen, Denmark, Willumsen made numerous studies for the painting, including this vibrant example. He exhibited the full-scale painting and its preparatory works in his home and studio in 1910. There, he also displayed *Mountain Climber* (1904), an oil painting with which the nearby work on paper is associated. Willumsen's reputation as Denmark's first modernist is confirmed here by his vibrant colors and free handling of paint.

Collection of David and Susan Werner



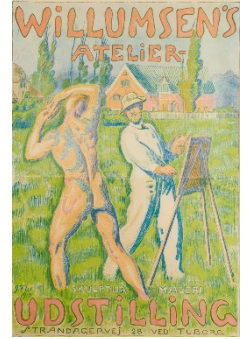
Jens Ferdinand Willumsen (Danish, 1863–1958). *Sun and Youth*, 1910. Oil on canvas. 104 3/4 x 168 inches (266 x 427 cm). Courtesy of Göteborgs Konstmuseum © Jens Ferdinand Willumsen/BUS 2012.

Jens Ferdinand Willumsen

Danish, 1863–1958

Poster for Studio Exhibition, 1910, 1909

Lithograph



At the turn of the last century, artists began using large-format color lithography to create posters to advertise their exhibitions. Willumsen designed this promotional poster to showcase the display of his new works, including the impressive painting *Sun and Youth*. Willumsen's image of himself outdoors, painting a nude model, signaled the new Vitalist direction of his art. It also features his newly built, self-designed home and studio in the background, presenting the shared space with his sculptor wife, Edith Wessel, as itself a work of art.

Collection of David and Susan Werner