



## Introduction

This exhibition highlights the original Owens Art Gallery Collection, formed in the 1880s, of mainly nineteenth-century European and North American paintings and works on paper. The exhibition is augmented by a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century paintings acquired in subsequent years. Many of the works are in their original gilded ornamental frames and are hung from floor to ceiling, reminiscent of the densely packed salon-type exhibition. The high walls of the Gallery's exhibition space accommodate this large, impressive display.

The Salon originated in the mid-seventeenth century with an exhibition sponsored by the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, and derives its name from the fact that the first exhibition was held in the Salon carré of the Louvre Palace in Paris. The works in the exhibition were hung from floor to ceiling. In the early eighteenth century, the Salon came to be an annual rather than a sporadic event. In the late-nineteenth century, with the growing importance of more independent exhibitions of work by avant-garde artists, the Salon slowly lost its importance.

This exhibition makes reference to the Owens' early custom of installing the Permanent Collection salon-style to be used by Fine Arts students who would study and copy the works of art as part of their training. Students were also required to "draw from the antique" utilizing the collection of plaster copies of classical Greek sculptures, such as the *Venus de Milo*, which were acquired for this purpose.

The *Salon Hanging* represents the foundation of the Owens Art Gallery, from which the Permanent Collection has now expanded to approximately 4,000 works of art, including twentieth-century Canadian and American paintings, graphics, sculpture, photography, and video.

## The Owens Museum of Fine Arts: A Brief History

The Owens Art Gallery, formerly the Owens Museum of Fine Arts, opened in 1895 on the campus of Mount Allison University, and it is the oldest university art gallery in Canada. The building was constructed specifically to

house a collection of approximately 300 works of art and statuary acquired by Mount Allison in 1893. The collection had been assembled in Saint John, New Brunswick, during the initial establishment of the Owens Art Institution, an art school and public gallery that operated in Saint John from 1885 to 1893.

The Owens Art Institution was founded by John Owens, a wealthy shipbuilder from Saint John who died in 1867 and specified in his will that money be set aside "for the purpose of establishing a gallery or school of art." Before his death, John Owens had provided funding for the construction and operation of a church in Saint John. This church was later converted by Owens' executors into the Owens Art Institution. In 1884, Owens' executor, Robert Reed, hired Canadian artist, John Hammond, to assist with purchasing and assembling an art collection and to teach art classes at the Institution. From May 1884 to September 1885, Hammond travelled in Britain and in

Europe, buying works of art and shipping them back to Saint John, where Reed organized them for framing and display in the new gallery. Reed also purchased work for the collection, mainly during his travels to the United States. Hammond selected artwork from various countries to include examples of different genre, media, and scale as a resource for his art students.

On a limited budget, Hammond acquired as much artwork as he could, often from lesser-known artists whose work was affordable. More than two thirds of the collection purchased by Hammond was work

on paper. During this time, and for many reasons, there were large numbers of amateur artworks available on the market, particularly watercolours with the names of well-known artists added to them. In the late-nineteenth century, there was no specific, scholarly expertise in areas such as watercolours. Considered to be far less important than oil paintings, watercolours and drawings were often sold in bundles at local bookstores in Britain. Hammond may have simply acquired a large group of watercolours this way, less concerned about their authorship than about filling the walls of the new art school with British landscape watercolours. The collection distinctly reflects the era and purpose for which it was assembled.

Although the Owens Art Institution flourished in Saint John for many years, in 1893, the collection was transferred to Mount Allison University and the Owens Art Gallery was established in Sackville. John Hammond

moved to Sackville with the Owens collection and continued to conduct art classes at the gallery as he had done in Saint John. The collection of artworks and statuary was permanently displayed at the gallery for teaching purposes. Several of the paintings in the Owens collection are marked with brushstrokes of paint from students who were trying to match their palettes with those of the original paintings they were copying. Examples of this are clearly visible along the edges and frames of *Returning Home* by J.F. Millet, fils, and *A Corner in Barbizon* by Louis W. Hawkins.

The gallery building was designed by Toronto architect, Edmund Burke, and constructed with stone from nearby quarries. The terra cotta frieze, designed by the architect, was executed by the William Tallman & Sons brick yard in Beamsville, Ontario. The exterior appearance of the building has remained virtually unchanged to the present day, although most of the interior functions of the gallery have changed significantly. Art classes continued at the Owens until 1965, when the Gairdner Fine Arts building was constructed adjacent to the gallery to provide a separate space for the Fine Arts Department. Shortly thereafter, the Gallery underwent extensive interior renovations, which expanded exhibition space and initiated the development of a conservation laboratory. The Owens Art Gallery collection is now one of the finest and most important collections of historical and contemporary art in Atlantic Canada.

## Art Conservation

The purpose of the original Owens collection was as a teaching resource for art students and for the enjoyment of the general public. The collection was permanently displayed in the natural climate of the building, which included skylights for optimal viewing, fluctuating temperatures and humidity, exposure to soot from coal or wood furnaces, and general activities that did not reflect the "precious regard" with which we now perceive original works of art. Since the collection was purchased overseas and later transferred from Saint John to Sackville, the rigours of transportation in the past have affected the condition of some of the paintings as well.

There are several works from the original collection that remain in storage and require conservation treatment due to their deteriorated condition. Some of the watercolour paintings have faded from exposure to sunlight, and paper has discoloured for the same reason. Varnishes have become yellowed, and sooty layers of dirt remain accumulated on paint surfaces. Cracks in paintings have developed during the cycling of dry and humid air. Tears and punctures in canvases and damaged frame ornaments likely occurred during transit in the nineteenth century. Conservation treatments repair some of these damages, but faded watercolour pigments cannot be revived and cracks in oil paintings are permanent disfigurements.

The collection is no longer permanently displayed or exposed to direct sunlight in an uncontrolled environment. The Owens is equipped with climate controls to moderate temperature and humidity, and light levels are reduced to minimize the deterioration of the art works. There are no longer classes of art students testing their palettes on the paintings, and in the current salon hanging, the paintings do not bump and overlap each other. The collection continues to reflect changing attitudes and interests in all areas of visual art, including art conservation.

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## Owens Art Gallery

Mount Allison University  
61 York Street, Sackville, NB, E4L 1E1  
Curator and Installation Technician: Roxamy Ibbitson  
Photography: Roger J. Smith, Fredericton, NB  
Design: Tara K Wells

Owens Art Gallery  
Mount Allison University

Canada



- Hammond, John** (Canadian, 1843-1939) *Bruges*, 1907
- Ferneley, Claude L.** (British, 1822-1892) *Portrait of a Horse*
- Gray, John Warren** (Canadian, 1824-1912) *Untitled*, 1866
- Ferneley, Claude L.** *Smuggler*, 1854-1855
- Hammond, John** *Antwerp*
- Webb, Jacob Louis** (American, 1856-1928) *At Work*, 1884
- Gray, John W.** *Fort Beauséjour*, 1870
- Royle, Stanley** (British, 1888-1961) *Morning Sunlight, Moraine Lake*
- Smith-Hald, Frithjof** (Norwegian, 1846-1903) *The Old Net*
- Parrish, Stephen** (American, 1846-1938) *Midsummer Sunset after a Shower*, 1879
- Riccardi, N.** *Romeo & Juliet*
- Lévy, Henri L.** (French, 1840-1904) *Slaughter in a Church*
- Hammond, John** *Fishing Boats*, 1913
- Gush, William** (British, 1813-1888) *Portrait of Charles F. Allison*
- Kozakievicz, Antoni** (Polish, 1841-1929) *The First Spinning Lesson*
- Ogden, Ethel** (Canadian, 1869-1902) *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Dutch Cottages*
- Gillett, Violet** (Canadian, 1898-1996) *Untitled*
- Royle, Stanley** *A Winter's Evening*



- Simpson, Henry** (British, 1853-1921) *Beach at Scheveningen*, 1883
- Albani, Tito** (Italian, 19th c.) *Near Castellamare*, 1881
- Gush, William** *Mary Allison, Daughter of the Founder*
- Smith-Hald, Frithjof** *Sunday Morning*
- Ogden, Ethel** *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Untitled* (Portrait of a Young Woman), 1879
- Bauck, Jeanna M.C.** (Swedish, 1840-1926) *A Scene in Switzerland*
- Simpson, Henry** *A Shipyard in Zealand* (British, 1818-1910)
- DeVivo, Donato F.** (Italian, 19th c.) *Watching*
- Strobel, Konrad** (German, 1849-?) *Still Life*
- Carabain, Jacques F.** (Belgian, 1834-1907) *European Town*
- Gush, William** *Mary Allison, Daughter of the Founder*
- Smith-Hald, Frithjof** *Sunday Morning*
- Ogden, Ethel** *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Untitled* (Portrait of a Young Woman), 1879
- Bauck, Jeanna M.C.** (Swedish, 1840-1926) *A Scene in Switzerland*



- Stanick, A.** *A Political Discussion*
- Velten, C.** *After Raphael's Portrait of a Gentleman*
- Unknown** *After Van Dyck's Portrait of Cornelis van der Geest*
- Juengling, Frederick** (American, 1846-1889) *An Intruder*, 1884
- Velten, C.** *After da Vinci's Mona Lisa*
- Aber, M. W.** *Still Life*
- Montfort, Antoine** (French, 1802-1884) *Farm House Near Rheims*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *Spanish Musician*, 1882
- Unknown** *Landscape with Figures*
- Mayer, Fritz** (Danish) *On the Coast of Denmark*
- Smith-Hald, Frithjof** *Summer Morning, Coast of Cornwall*, 1884
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *Light and Shade*
- Aber, M. W.** *Still Life*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *News from Home*
- Robinson, Theodore** (American, 1852-1896) *A Poacher*, 1884
- Lessi, Giovanni** (Italian, 1852-1922) *Marketing in Florence*, 1881
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *Sunday*
- Eaton, Wyatt** *Head of a Florentine Girl*, 1885
- Eaton, Wyatt** *Head of a Barbizon Peasant*
- Millet, fils, J.F.** *Cattle Being Driven Home Before a Coming Storm*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *A Corner in Barbizon*



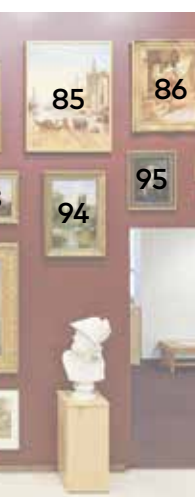
- Caliga, Isaac H.** (American, 1857-1944) *Study of a Head*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *The Last Step*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *Hide and Seek*
- Robinson, Theodore** *Watering*, 1884
- van de Velde, William** *Spinning*
- Muller, Rosa** (Belgian, 1861-1887) *In the Highlands*
- Mardi** *A Promenade*
- Unknown** *Flower Composition*
- Anderson, A.** *Summer in Sweden*
- Spinetti, Mario** *Spanish Musician*, 1882
- Vernon, H.** (British, 1820-1909) *Landscape in Kent, England*
- Millais, Sir John E.** (British, 1829-1896) *Portrait of Hugh Fenn*
- Catridge, H.** (British) *Fisherman's Daughter*



- Conti, Tito** (Italian, 1842-1924) *The Proposal*
- Royle, Stanley** *First Snow*, 1931
- Orpen, Sir William** (British, 1878-1931) *The Well-Earned Rest*
- Burne-Jones, Sir Edward C.** (French, 1844-1931) *Summer Scene Near Paris*
- Meunier, Constantin E.** (Belgian, 1831-1905) *Sœur de charité*, 1868
- Bianchi, Carlo** (Italian) *Doge's Palace, Venice*
- Miller, F.** *A Large Family*
- Romney, George** (British, 1831-1905) *Mrs. Edward Salisbury and Daughter*, 1767
- Unknown** *Two Cottage Children*, 1852
- Millais, Sir John E.** (British, 1829-1896) *Portrait of Hugh Fenn*
- Wertheimer, Gustav** (Austrian, 1847-1902) *The Young Skipper*
- Caliga, Isaac H.** (American, 1857-1944) *Rosamond (A Study)*



- Verschuur, Wouterus** (Netherlands, 1841-1936) *The Wayside Halt*
- Verschuur, Wouterus** *The Sportsman's Return*
- Baudouin, Paul** (French, 1844-1931) *Summer Scene Near Paris*
- Meunier, Constantin E.** (Belgian, 1831-1905) *Sœur de charité*, 1868
- Gray, John Warren** *Playing Marbles*
- Bianchi, Carlo** (Italian) *Doge's Palace, Venice*
- Miller, F.** *A Large Family*
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- Caliga, Isaac H.** (American, 1857-1944) *Rosamond (A Study)*



- Herring, John F.** (British) *Untitled*
- Verboeckhoven, Eugene** (Belgian, 1799-1881) *Untitled*
- Hammond, John** *Harbour Scene*, 1895
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *The Bird's Nest*
- Cooper, Thomas S.** (British, 1803-1902) *Untitled*
- Appian, Adolphe** (French, 1818-1898) *Solitude*
- Burne-Jones, Sir Edward C.** *St. Michael, the Archangel*
- Hawkins, Louis W.** *Mending*
- Vernon, H.** *View in Sussex, England*
- Vernon, H.** *View in Essex, England*