

# Euro-American Art: Colonial Period to Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century

## Key Ideas

- **Colonial Art: 1600s to 1770s.** Artists typically were immigrants (mostly from England) as there were few opportunities for proper artistic training in the Colonies. Portraits were the most popular type of art produced.
- **The New Nation: Mid-1770s to 1820s.** Formation of the United States of America, with the development of myths, traditions, and customs by which inhabitants began to define themselves as “Americans.” Portraits of new American leaders were especially popular.
- **Self-Discovery: 1820-1860.** American art moves beyond portraiture, into landscapes and genre scenes. Artists have better training, but they still often travel to complete their education, finally returning to America to participate in the cultural growth of the country.
- **At Home and Abroad: 1860-1900.** The nation begins to assert itself beyond its continental limits, with artists helping define the developing American character—the concern for religion, land, and Americans’ place in the world. European styles and themes still are present in American art, but American artists start to take what they learn abroad and develop it into a uniquely American expression.

*Adapted from Matthew Baigell's, A Concise History of American Painting.*

## Terms and Names:

John Singleton Copley

Mezzotint: a manner of engraving on copper or steel by scraping or burnishing a roughened surface to produce light and shade. Used most effectively to reproduce paintings.

Benjamin West

Gilbert Stuart

Thomas Cole

Hudson River School

Hiram Powers

Folk art

## Euro-American Objects

### *Portraits*

John Singleton Copley, *Portrait of Sarah Allen, née Sargent*, c. 1763, 41.3

Benjamin West, *Portrait of Diana Mary Barker*, 1766, 31.39

Gilbert Stuart, *Portrait of James Ward*, 1779, 16.2

Gilbert Stuart, *Portrait of Alexander Townsend*, 1809, 51.34

Gilbert Stuart, *Portrait of Judge Daniel Cony of Maine*, c. 1815, 75.29.1

Joseph Badger, *Portrait of Abigail Gowen*, 1763, 70.33.5

Attributed to Joseph Badger, *Portrait of Mary Croswell*, 1763, 70.33.6

Jeremiah Theus, *Portrait of Mrs. Gardner Greene*, 1770, 31.38

Jeremiah Theus, *Portrait of Marcy Olney* (1749 - 1780?), c. 1771, 25.402

Rembrandt Peale, *Portrait of Commander Lewis Warrington*, 1801-1802, 31.53

John Wesley Jarvis, *Portrait of Captain Samuel Chester Reid*, 1815, 45.6

Thomas Sully, *Portrait of George Washington*, c. 1820, 32.12

Sheldon Peck, *Portrait of Harriet Brown*, c. 1845, 98.141

Orlando Hand Bears, *Portrait of Eliza Ann and Adelia Dusenberry*, 1838, 2008.84

Attributed to James B. Read, *Portrait of a Boy*, 1856, 77.46

William Jennys, *Portrait of Moses Kimball, Jr.*, c. 1808, 97.6

### ***History Painting***

Benjamin West, *Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet*, 1804, 15.22  
Alonzo Chappel, *The Ride of General Marion's Men*, c. 1850, 44.15

### ***Genre Painting***

Junius Brutus Stearns, *A Fishing Party Off Long Island*, 1860, 78.26  
Eastman Johnson, *The Letter Home*, 1867, 74.17 (charcoal and graphite)  
Daniel Ridgway Knight, *Girl by a Stream, Flanders*, c. 1890, 64.20  
Charles M. Russell, *The Signal Fire*, 1897, 80.64  
Charles M. Russell, *Buffalo Hunt*, 1891, 83.149  
Seth Eastman, Illustrations for *Schoolcraft's Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, 1849-1855

### ***Landscape Painting***

Thomas Cole, *Landscape*, 1825, 15.299 (not on view)  
Alvan Fisher, *Approaching Storm, White Mountains*, 1820s, 2009.16.4  
Thomas Chambers, *View of West Point*, c. 1850, 44.12  
Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Catskill Mountain House*, 1855, 31.47  
Homer Dodge Martin, *Hudson River Landscape*, c. 1860-1865, 2001.92  
Albert Bierstadt, *The Merced River in Yosemite*, 1868, 81.6  
Albert Bierstadt, *Landscape*, c. 1890, 61.51  
Thomas Moran, *A Scene on the Tohickon Creek: Autumn*, 1868, 68.82  
William Trost Richards, *Quiet Seascape*, 1883, 80.67

### ***Local landscapes***

Henry Lewis, *Cheever's Mill on the St. Croix River*, 1847, 47.6  
Edward K. Thomas, *View of Fort Snelling*, c. 1850, 68.82  
Henry Lewis, *St. Anthony Falls as It Appeared in 1848*, 1855, 28.79  
Seth Eastman, *The Falls of St. Anthony*, 1848, 2009.16.1  
Ferdinand Richardt, *Steamwheeler on the Upper Mississippi*, 1865, 2004.211  
Julius Holm, *Tornado over St. Paul*, 1893, 77.28

### ***Still life***

Severin Roesen, *Abundant Fruit*, 1858, 2005.96  
Severin Roesen, *Still Life with Fruit*, c. 1860, 69.47  
Raphaelle Peale, *Still Life with Fruit, Cakes and Wine*, 1821, 2008.49  
William Michael Harnett, *Still-life with Flute and Times*, 1877, 2015.82.2  
John Frederick Peto, *Reminiscences of 1865*, 1904, 44.25

### ***Sculpture***

Hiram Powers, *Bust of the Greek Slave, after 1845-1846*, 72.67  
Hiram Powers, *Bust of George Washington*, c. 1853, 51.41a,b  
Harriet Goodhue Hosmer, *Medusa*, c. 1854, 2003.125  
Randolph Rogers, *The Lost Pleiad*, 1874 (modeled), 2004.194  
Frederick William MacMonnies, *Diana with a Bow*, 1890, 64.62  
Frederic Remington, *Bronco Buster*, 19th century, 91.120.2

### **Additional Resources:**

Textbooks on American art: Wayne Craven, *American Art: History and Culture*, 2003.

Catalogue from the Metropolitan Museum on the Hudson River School, *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, available free online:

[http://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/American\\_Paradise\\_The\\_World\\_of\\_the\\_Hudson\\_River\\_School](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/American_Paradise_The_World_of_the_Hudson_River_School)

YouTube video of presentation, with Smithsonian Museum curator describing Hiram Power's

Greek Slave: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_PxkxWbIRs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_PxkxWbIRs)

Also, how to use a pointing machine:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i30rPRmEeA>

Smithsonian Magazine article on Hiram Power's exhibition:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/scandalous-story-behind-provocative-sculpture-greek-slave-19th-century-audiences-180956029/?no-ist>

Here are a series of good biographies from the Met Museum on some of the more prominent early Euro-American artists represented in our collection:

Gilbert Stuart: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stua/hd\\_stua.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stua/hd_stua.htm)

John Singleton Copley: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/copl/hd\\_copl.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/copl/hd_copl.htm)

Hiram Powers: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hira/hd\\_hira.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hira/hd_hira.htm)

Thomas Cole: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cole/hd\\_cole.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cole/hd_cole.htm)

The Worcester Art Museum has a great timeline published for the history of the U.S. until 1830, with examples of the type of art produced during these decades:

[http://www.worcesterart.org/collection/Early\\_American/](http://www.worcesterart.org/collection/Early_American/)