



Greenville County **Museum of Art**

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gcma.org

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--Impressionism, the first bombshell launched against academic painting tradition, defined light as color, becoming the first modern language of paint. Sun-drenched and spontaneous, the 15 American Impressionist paintings from the GCMA collection found in the exhibition *Impressionism and the South* invite viewers to consider the ideas and techniques that opened the door to modern visual expression. The exhibition includes works by Frank Duveneck, Helen Maria Turner, Gari Melchers, Alfred Hutty, Catherine Wiley, and a number of other noted American Impressionist painters.

One of the most advanced painters and teachers working at the beginning of the last quarter of the 19th century was Kentucky born **Frank Duveneck** (1848-1919). After enrolling in the Royal Academy of Munich at the age of 22, the precocious young artist progressed rapidly, and a host of talented American expatriates were drawn to him and his own fledgling Munich school. Future masters of American Impressionism, including William Merritt Chase and John H. Twachtman, joined the "Duveneck Boys," as the group became known, traveling and painting with their mentor in Germany and Italy through the late 1870s. Duveneck's masterful *Steps of the Riva*, circa 1880, is one of his finest achievements and depicts the watery highway of St. Mark's Basin, the venerable stone facades and grand promenade of the Riva degli Schiavoni.

Having lost his father early in the Civil War, **Gaines Ruger Donoho** (1857-1916) was taken by his mother from the Mississippi cotton plantation where he was born to Vicksburg. After the war the family settled in Washington, DC, and Donoho was educated and later employed as a draftsman in the Office of the United States Architect. Drawn to a career as an artist, Donoho frequented artist communities in the Paris suburbs, such as Barbizon near the Forest of Fontainebleau. Consistently reflecting the distinct influence of the Barbizon painters, Donoho's work of the period is marked by subdued colors and less radically expressive brushwork than typical Impressionist examples.

Mississippi-born **Kate Freeman Clark** (1875-1957) left her native Holly Springs, chaperoned by her mother, to enroll at the Art Students League in New York. Over the next 20 years she studied with some of the most important teachers of the era, including John H. Twachtman and William

Merritt Chase. When Clark began submitting her *plein air* landscapes to competitive exhibitions, she enjoyed significant success, showing at the National Academy of Design, the Carnegie Institute, and other major museums.

The natural beauty of the Lowcountry's rivers, lagoons, ancient live oaks, and brilliant azalea gardens repeatedly drew **William P. Silva** (1859-1948), a native of nearby Savannah, Georgia. Silva dedicated himself to painting at the age of 48. He studied French Impressionism firsthand in Paris, exhibited there, and, although he settled permanently in the Carmel, California art colony in 1913, he was active throughout his career in the Southern States Art League and often returned to paint in the picturesque coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia. Reminiscent of Monet's famed studies of haystacks and cathedral facades, Silva's *The Sun Dispels the Morning Fog*, 1927, was one of a series of Lowcountry plantation paintings that explored in endless variations the atmospheric effects of heat and humidity on color and form.

Impressionism and the South is on view through September 16, 2018. The Greenville County Museum of Art is located in the center of downtown Greenville's cultural campus, Heritage Green, at 420 College Street. The GCMA is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am until 6 pm and on Sundays from 1 pm until 5 pm. Admission is free.

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