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Capturing Beauty: American Impressionist and Realist Paintings from the McGlothlin Collection

David Park Curry

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Drawn entirely from the collection of James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin of Austin, Texas—one of the largest holdings of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American paintings still in private hands—*Capturing Beauty* showcases thirty Impressionist and Realist oils, watercolors, and pastels and two sculptures by some of the nation’s leading artists. Appealing Impressionist works by Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassam, and John Singer Sargent join forces with powerful Realist pictures by George Bellows, Winslow Homer, and Robert Henri. Unexpected gems—a seductive sketch by William Merritt Chase, a subtle seascape by James McNeill Whistler, an evocative interior by William McGregor Paxton—add luster to the collection. Two-thirds of the pictures on view were painted in the United States. Expatriate Americans working in France, Spain, and Italy created the rest. In 1916, two years before he created the most recent work featured in the show, Robert Henri wrote to his students: "The question of development of the art spirit in all walks of life interests me. I mean by this, the development of individual judgment and taste.... If anything can be done to bring the public to a greater consciousness of the relation between art and life, of the part each person plays by exercising and developing his own personal taste and judgment... it would be well." A sparkling watercolor by Maurice Prendergast radiates the energy with which Mr. and Mrs. McGlothlin have exercised their passion for collecting since the mid-1990s. Their recently acquired Sargent oil portrait of Mme. Eugenia Errazuriz, one of the beauties of the late ninteenth century, attests to the collectors’ own love of the beautiful in American art.

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