

Art of the South Tour

Tour Audience

Adults, visitors 16 years of age and older

Time Length

50 to 60 minutes

Tour Goals

The intent of the general adult tour is:

- to introduce the visitor to the Morris, its collection, programs, and resources;
- to provide an experience that encourages the visitor to return to the Morris and to visit other museums.

Tour Objectives

Through their participation in a general tour, visitors will:

- learn about the history and mission of the Morris;
- be oriented to the museum's physical spaces;
- learn general characteristics about the museum's permanent collection;
- become familiar with the themes around which the permanent collection galleries are organized;
- broadly understand the development of Southern art;
- feel comfortable and encouraged to make return visits to the museum

Art of the South Tour

Introduction

- Introduce yourself.
- Welcome our visitors to the museum.
- Ask the group questions about their knowledge of the museum and their interests or objectives.
- Review museum etiquette and expectations.
- State this tour's objective: to provide a sampling of the permanent collection galleries.
- State the tour time length.

Art of the South Tour

- When the Morris Museum of Art opened in 1992, it was the only museum in the country that was dedicated to the collection, exhibition, and interpretation of the art of the American South. It has since been joined by other public institutions, and they—along with scholars, collectors, and dealers—have established a place for the visual arts within the field of Southern studies.
- The museum's permanent collection was established in 1989 with the purchase of 230 paintings from Dr. Robert Powell Coggins, an enthusiastic, pioneering collector. In 1993, a trust created by Dr. Coggins donated 958 additional works of art to the museum. Although the museum's founders, Sissie and Billy Morris were avid collectors themselves, it was the Coggins Collection, with its concentration on the art of the South from 1840 to 1940, that identified the areas of emphasis that are reflected in the museum's galleries. The museum's permanent collection has grown dramatically over the years since, and other areas of special interest—notably folk art and photography—have been developed through purchase and donation. The permanent collection of the Morris Museum of Art now includes nearly five thousand objects in all mediums, dating from the earliest days of the United States to the present.

Art of the South Tour

Nineteenth-Century Portraits

- The dominant form of painting in the South of the 1800s is the subject of Nineteenth-Century Portraits. The **sophistication and skill of the painters vary considerably**, from that of the unknown painter who captured the likeness of Rebecca Bowen, a seventeen-year-old bride, most likely lost to disease or the rigors of childbirth, to that of the academically trained Samuel F. B. Morse, a wintertime resident of Charleston in the early 1820s. In addition to showing the wide range of portrait styles **in the days before the rise of photography**, this gallery illustrates the **geographic range** of the museum's interests and the ways in which **culture traveled** from the great port cities of Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans to such inland marketplaces as Nashville, Natchez, and Louisville.

Suggested focus works:

- Samuel F. B. Morse, *Mr. Samuel Thurston, Charleston*
- Samuel F. B. Morse, *Mrs. Samuel Thurston, Charleston*
- James Hamilton Shegogue, *Portrait of African-American Woman*



*Mr. Samuel Thurston, Charleston,
undated*



*Mrs. Samuel Thurston, Charleston,
undated*



Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791-1872)

- Born in Charlestown, Massachusetts
- After graduation from Yale, went to England to study art
- Returned to U. S., but subject matter was not popular
- Turned to painting portraits and traveled to find subjects
- Visited Charleston, S.C., three times between 1818 and 1821
- Home was New York City where he had a studio and was on faculty of new New York University
- Founded National Academy of Design in NYC in 1926
- In mid 1830s, turned to inventions
- Worked on invention of telegraph 1839-1844
- Telegraph brought financial support that art had not
- Introduced photography to U. S. with first daguerreotype in 1839



- The Thurston portraits
 - Pair of portraits of “Huguenot couple”
 - Oil on canvas, undated
 - Elegantly dressed couple in front of dark red backgrounds.
 - From Neal Auction, October 3-5, 2003



James Hamilton Shegogue, *Portrait of African-American Woman*

Art of the South Tour

Images of the Civil War

- The **central event in American history**, the War between the States (1861-1865), is recalled in Images of the Civil War. John Mooney's *Surprise Attack Near Harper's Ferry* captures the chaos and terror of battle. A version of Henry Mosler's *The Lost Cause*, one of the most widely reproduced images in late-nineteenth-century America, and Constantino Brumidi's *Columbia Welcoming the South Back into the Union* address themes of loss and reconciliation. Only a few of the paintings in this gallery depict actual events. Mooney's *Surprise Attack* records from memory an ambush in which the artist was a participant, and paintings by an unknown artist illustrate the naval battle between the ironclads CSS *Virginia* and USS *Monitor*. **Most of the paintings in this gallery were produced after the war** had ended, and all of them reflect Southern attitudes toward the causes of division.

Suggested focus works:

- John A. Mooney, *Surprise Attack Near Harper's Ferry*
- Constantino Brumidi, *Columbia Welcoming the South Back into the Union*



John A. Mooney, *Surprise Attack Near Harper's Ferry*



Constantino Brumidi, *Columbia Welcoming the South Back into the Union*

Art of the South Tour

Southern Stories

- **Great storytelling, not artistic styles, is the real subject of Southern Stories.** Kentuckian Thomas Satterwhite Noble's *The Price of Blood* reflects both his sound academic training and his hatred of slavery. William Aiken Walker's *Plantation Portrait*, a complex painting, is about both the African American farming family that it depicts and the South's transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy. William Tylee Ranney's *Crossing the Ferry—Scene on the Peedee* represents the challenges of everyday travel as well as the widespread nineteenth-century belief that America was destined to expand westward, and the importance of religion to a community is the subject of Russell Smith's *Baptism in Virginia*.

Suggested focus work:

- Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *The Price of Blood*



Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *The Price of Blood*

Art of the South Tour

Still--Life Paintings

- Beautiful nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century images of flowers, fruit, and inanimate, everyday objects are featured in Still-Life Paintings. Some of the works of art are by native-born Southerners, while others are by artists who spent time in the South producing work that is identifiably Southern. Martin Johnson Heade's *Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*, painted late in his career when he lived in Saint Augustine, Florida, is such a picture. While it is clear that these paintings are related to themes of abundance and fruitfulness, the interest of regional painters in still life grew out of the work of the naturalists who roamed the South, recording in detail the plants and animals of the South. Other artists showed more interest in demonstrating painterly technique, suggesting how objects might feel to the touch. Paintings by Elliott Daingerfield and Willie Betty Newman, with their vigorous brushwork and dazzling light effects, have little in common with the tradition of natural science or the exacting realism of Heade.

Suggested focus works:

- Martin Johnson Heade, *Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*
- Andrew John Henry Way, *An Abundance of Fruit*



Martin Johnson Heade, *Two
Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*



Andrew John Henry Way, *An Abundance of Fruit*

Impressionism in the South

- Impressionism in the South presents works of art that are painted with vivid color, obvious brushstrokes, and an emphasis on the fleeting effects of light. After its beginnings in France in the 1870s and 1880s and its introduction to America through exhibitions in New York and Boston in the late 1880s, impressionism flourished here. Even after artists began to paint in more modern styles, impressionism continued to thrive in certain regions and for an especially long time in the South.
- *The Yellow Parasol*, by Louis Betts, from Arkansas, is an example of a successful impressionist painting. Its bright colors, the suggestion of a subject rather than a careful drawing, and attention to the effects of light identify it as impressionist by definition. Other artists took a similar approach to dissimilar subjects, everything from a rainbow to a doorway in Charleston.

Suggested focus works:

- Wayman Adams, *New Orleans Mammy*
- Gari Melchers, *Rainbow*



Wayman Adams, *New Orleans Mammy*



- Wayman Elbridge Adams (1883-1959)
 - Born in Muncie, Indiana
 - Early 1900s, traveled to Italy with William Merritt Chase and to Spain with Robert Henri
 - Became known for portraits of prominent subjects
 - Called a “lightning artist,” often painting a portrait in one sitting
 - In 1916, made first trip to New Orleans and spent several winters in the French Quarter
 - Genre paintings and portraits of African American subjects
 - Self portrait is from collection of Indiana State Museum



- *New Orleans Mammy*

- c. 1920, signed middle left
- Oil on canvas
- Appears to be an example of Adams' "lightning portraits"
- Adams may have kept these portraits of everyday people for himself
- Writer in The Southern Collection refers to an ambiguity in the artist's narrative intent
- Ambiguity of referring to an earlier role of enslaved African American women and the dignity with which the subject is presented in this painting



Gari Melchers, *Rainbow*



Julius Garibaldi (Gari) Melchers (1860-1932)

- See Klacsmann biography in *New Georgia Encyclopedia*
- Born in Detroit, son of German immigrants
- Father was sculptor and art teacher
- At 17, began studying art in Germany and France
- Became an expatriate artist in Holland
- Married in 1903 to Corinne Lawton Mackall of Savannah
- In 1909, moved to Germany until he came back to U. S. at beginning of WWI.
- Settled in Falmouth, Virginia, at Belmont estate
- Served as an advisor at Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences in Savannah; acquired more than 70 works, many of the museum's most important impressionist works.
- Lived at Belmont until his death in 1932



- *Rainbow*
 - c. 1926
 - Oil on canvas
 - One of several landscapes painted in Virginia
 - Sun shining, lofty clouds
 - Small figures in lower right corner echo Melchers' earlier genre paintings
 - Rappahannock River in the background
 - Palette, brushwork, impasto are elements of high style American Impressionism

Art of the South Tour

Southerners at Play

- The paintings in *Southerners at Play* illustrate some of the ways in which Southerners have traditionally spent their **leisure time**. Augusta Oelschig's *Play Ball*, Frank Lloyd's *Playing Marbles*, and John Martin Tracy's *A Field Trial-On the Point* show them as **active participants** in a variety of enjoyable pastimes. Other paintings—most notably, Robert Grafton and Louis Griffith's depiction of a 1917 horse race in New Orleans—emphasize the **spectators** as much as the participants. These paintings are about more than recreation, however. They also illustrate **economic status** and the emergence of the middle class, the nature of American culture and the way it travels, and the role that the land plays. While it is clear that quail hunting, for example, is not available to everyone in the same way that shooting marbles is, it also is clear that there are equalizing pastimes, such as a pleasant day spent at the beach.

Suggested focus works:

- Louis Oscar Griffith and Robert Wadsworth Grafton, *The Start*
- Edgar Nye, *The Bathers*



Louis Oscar Griffith and Robert Wadsworth Grafton, *The Start*



Edgar Nye, *The Bathers*

- Edgar Hewitt Nye (1879-1943)
 - Painter and teacher
 - Born in Richmond, Virginia
 - Moved with family to Washington, D.C. at age 6
 - Studied art at Corcoran School of Art from 1892-1900
 - Traveled between D.C. and England and France until about 1914
 - Prolific painter, producing mostly landscapes and city scenes
 - Lived and worked in D.C. until his death in 1943

Art of the South Tour

Modernism in the South (Gallery opens October, 2010)

- To most people, *modern* simply means “up to the moment.” But *modernism* in art was a specific movement that began, perhaps, as early as 1870 and lasted until after World War II. The South was as open to its influence as any other part of the country, and Modernism in the South reflects those influences. Most of the major artistic movements that emerged in Europe early in the twentieth century can be seen here: cubism in Paul Ninas's *Abstraction*, surrealism in John McCrady's *I Can't Sleep*, and expressionism in Lamar Dodd's *From This Earth*. It is also clearly demonstrated here that the influence of these European movements was both indirect and late, usually filtered through the experiences of other American artists who had spent time in Europe, where they had direct contact with European modernists between the world wars.

Suggested focus works: To be determined

Art of the South Tour

The Southern Landscape

- The Southern Landscape represents the **geography of the South**, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Potomac and Ohio Rivers and from the Atlantic Coast to eastern Texas. The gallery also includes a very **broad range of painting styles** that span more than one hundred years. Most importantly, however, this gallery captures the extraordinary range of *cultural landscapes* in the South. Britain provided the basic cultural stamp, but the influences of native peoples, of the French, Spanish, Irish, and German settlers, and of African Americans are clear. The cultural landscapes of the South continue to evolve, and the paintings displayed here reflect the times in which they were created.

Suggested focus works:

- William C. A. Frerichs, *Gorge, North Carolina, Toulia Falls, Waterfall, North Carolina*
- Meyer Straus, *Bayou Teche*
- Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Georgia Landscape*
- Stephen Alke, *Tobacco Setters on a Hilltop*
- John Kelly Fitzpatrick, *Autumn in the Hills, Wetumpka, Alabama*



Meyer Straus, *Bayou Teche*



William C. A. Frerichs, *Gorge, North Carolina*, *Toula Falls*, *Waterfall, North Carolina*



William Charles Anthony Frerichs (1829-1905)

- Born in Ghent, Belgium, then part of the Netherlands
- Studied at Royal Academy of the Hague
- Immigrated to New York in 1850; exhibited at National Academy of Design the same year
- Influenced by American style of painting natural and untamed beauty of landscape
- In 1854 he married and accepted teaching position at what is now Greensboro College in N. C.
- Fire destroyed the school and Frerich's art in 1863
- Moved to position at Quaker school that now is Guilford College in Greensboro
- Served as artist for Confederate Corps or Engineers and was taken prisoner and released three times
- Moved back to New York in 1865 and established studio in Manhattan
- Remained in NY area until his death



- *Frerichs's Landscapes*

- Horizontal waterfall painting is undated
- Two other paintings are dated 1855-60
- Frerich became first painter to explore and paint the gorges, waterfalls and foliage of Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge around the French Broad River
- Landscapes reflect Dutch training with heavy glazing, sparks of color on darker backgrounds
- Affiliated with painters of Hudson River School...man was insignificant intrusion in a landscape...pride in beauty of homeland



Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Georgia Landscape*



Stephen Alke, *Tobacco Setters on a Hilltop*

- **Stephen Alke (1874-1941)**
 - Known as portrait and landscape painter, illustrator, and designer of posters and art glass
 - Born in Augusta, Kentucky
 - Active in Cincinnati from 1891-1901
 - Studies part-time at the Cincinnati Art Academy
 - Worked as commercial illustrator in Kansas City
 - After marriage, moved to rural New Richmond, Ohio, a short distance his birthplace
 - Lived and worked there until wife's death in 1898
 - Died in Cincinnati in 1941



Tobacco Setters on a Hilltop

- Dated c. 1938
- Oil on canvas
- Painted while Alke was working for federally sponsored Works Progress Administration
- Type of scene Alke would have been familiar with growing up in Kentucky or seeing other areas of the South
- Typical of WPA projects with focus on scenes of labor, industry, and local history



John Kelly Fitzpatrick, *Autumn in the Hills, Wetumpka, Alabama*

- John Kelly Fitzpatrick (1888-1953)
 - Born near Wetumpka, Alabama
 - Studied briefly at U. of Ala. Tuscaloosa and Art Institute of Chicago
 - Enlisted in Army in 1918, served briefly in France, and was wounded severely from shrapnel
 - War experience was profound influence on his work; pastoral beauty of work marked contrast to destruction of war
 - After war, returned to Wetumpka, Alabama, where he painted and taught.
 - Studied at Academie Julian in Paris in 1925
 - First director of Montgomery Museum of Art School
 - Taught at Dixie Art Colony
 - Work formed core of Montgomery Museum of Arts initial collection



Autumn in the Hills, Wetumpka, Alabama

- Dated 1936
- Oil on canvas
- As early as 1920s, Fitzpatrick was known for painting sun-drenched Alabama scenes.
- Would become foundation for his artistic reputation
- Wrote in 1926, “I strive to paint sunlight in all its wonderful changes.”
- By 1946, was termed “Sunshine Painter”

Art of the South Tour

Regionalism in the South

- Regionalism in the South reflects the **important influence of painter Thomas Hart Benton**, who traveled widely through the rural South in 1928 and 1929 gathering visual material for mural projects in New York City. The paintings that Benton produced during that trip predicted the kind of work that many Southerners turned to in the 1930s. Lamar Dodd, Rachel Hartley, and Pamela Vinton Ravenel celebrated the real values of everyday life and the beauty of simple things. Charles Shannon and Marie Hull sought to identify and address problems that were distinctive to Southerners, black and white. Finally, in this gallery hangs a masterpiece by one of the most important of all regionalist painters, John Steuart Curry, whose *Hoover and the Flood*, commissioned by *Life* magazine, depicts the catastrophic Mississippi River floods of 1927.

Suggested focus works:

- John Steuart Curry, *Hoover and the Flood*
- Lamar Dodd, *Bargain Basement*



John Steuart Curry, *Hoover and the Flood*



Lamar Dodd, *Bargain Basement*

Art of the South Tour

Contemporary Art in the South

- Contemporary Art in the South features works of art that illustrate the **richness and vitality of the contemporary South's art scene**. The contemporary South is marked by an active and extensive network of museums and art centers, art schools and departments, galleries, and private and corporate collections. The art of today's South exists in a wide variety of expressive forms, everything from the realism of John Baeder and Edward Rice to the abstraction of William Christenberry and Ida Kohlmeyer. There is a middle ground occupied by artists as different as Jonathan Green and Wolf Kahn, who use the visual language of abstraction to capture recognizable subjects. A representative collection of contemporary art must also include the work of self-taught and visionary artists. While such artists have worked in the South throughout its history, their work has garnered increased attention only over the past forty years, owing, in part, to an ever-widening understanding that these works of art are as valid a mode of visual expression as that of academically trained artists.

Suggested focus works:

- James William "Bo" Bartlett, *The Art of Drawing*
- Jonathan Green, *Daughters of the South*
- Edward Rice, *923 Telfair*



James William "Bo Bartlett, *The Art of Drawing*



William James "Bo" Bartlett, (b. 1955)

- Born in Columbus, Georgia
- Known for large scale narrative paintings
- Studied in Florence, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia
- Earned degree in film making at NYU
- Friendship with Andrew and Betsy Wyeth
- Received Pew Fellowship in the Arts in 1993
- Lives and works in Philadelphia, Seattle, Columbus, and Maine
- Work is rooted in a southern Gothic tradition
- Paintings are usually figurative, large scale, and often contain spiritual, psychological and art historical references
- Family regularly appears in work
- www.bobartlett.com



The Art of Drawing

- 1998
- Oil on linen
- 51 x 96 inches
- Part of artist's Heartland series



Edward Rice, 923 Telfair



Jonathan Green, *Daughters of the South*

Art of the South Tour

Conclusion

- Restate the tour objectives.
- Ask for any questions.
- Express our appreciation for the group's visit.
- Provide information concerning the Center for the Study of Southern Art, public programs, and temporary exhibitions.
- Invite our guests to gather brochures and visit the Museum Store.