



Cecilia Beaux (Philadelphia, PA, 1855–1942 Gloucester, MA)

Self-Portrait 1894

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, May 13, 1895

As a single woman from an old family but with a distinct lack of fortune, Beaux made her way in her professional life as a portraitist, one of the best of her era. Society portraiture is today a vanished art. But Beaux had perceived a need: both newly minted millionaires and well-to-do scions of aristocratic families were seeking a contemporary read on the ancestral claims that commissioned portraits offered. She filled that niche with a panache both traditional and new—brighter chroma, brilliant brushwork, and psychological immediacy. Her self-portrait is an advertisement. She is declaring: others may be able to depict stout, successful businessmen, but come to me for sympathetic views of men, women, and children.

—Robert Kushner, NA



Wyatt Eaton (Phillipsburg, Quebec, 1849–1896 Middletown, RI)

The Artist in His Studio 1873

Oil on canvas

Gift of John Elderkin, May 14, 1902



William J. Whittmore (New York City, 1860–1955 East Hampton, NY)

Charles Courtney Curran 1888–89

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma exchange presentation, May 7, 1934 Original ANA diploma presentation May 6, 1889

Painted representations of palettes make me very happy. Paint becomes a representation of itself as well as a reminder of the messy, undifferentiated origins of the crafted picture. This portrait makes a complete body out of dispersed, heterogeneous parts—a complicated body constrained and subdivided by guardrails, pedestals, canvas edges, bowler hats, and neckties. My intuition is that Whittmore and Curran were committed traditionalists, not in the business of questioning social or aesthetic conventions. But some works of art have the power to break free of their makers' intentions. Was Whittmore perhaps portraying Curran making a portrait of his palette, a blank space of potential waiting for wet colors to be squeezed out and smeared across it?

—David Humphrey, NA



William Merritt Chase (Williamsburg, IN, 1849–1916 New York City)
The Young Orphan [or] ***An Idle Moment*** [or] ***Portrait*** 1884
Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, November 24, 1890



William Merritt Chase (Williamsburg, IN, 1849–1916 New York City)
Robert Blum 1888
Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, March 18, 1889



John Singer Sargent (Florence, Italy, 1856–1925 London, England)

Claude Monet about 1887

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, October 25, 1897



Robert Frederick Blum (Cincinnati, OH, 1857–1903 New York City)

Two Idlers 1888–89

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, March 26, 1894

Blum and Chase were intimate friends: the two traveled throughout Europe together in the first half of the 1880s, frequently depicted one another in their art, and were elected ANAs in the same year. *The Young Orphan* likely depicts a model Chase found at the Protestant Half-Orphan Asylum, near his studio in New York City. *Two Idlers* pictures the prominent painter William Jacob Baer and his musician wife, Laura Schenk, lounging at their home in Brick Church, New Jersey. Although some of Chase's critics perceived an aloofness in his figures, the artist's emotionally stirring portrait of Blum forges a deeper connection between these well-known works.



John Singer Sargent (Florence, Italy, 1856–1925 London, England)

Self-Portrait 1892

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, May 9, 1892



Childe Hassam (Dorchester, MA, 1859–1935 East Hampton, NY)

The Jewel Box, Old Lyme 1906

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, January 7, 1907



Robert Reid (Stockbridge, MA, 1862–1929 Clifton Springs, NY)

Daffodils not dated

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, October 25, 1906



Robert Reid (Stockbridge, MA, 1862–1929 Clifton Springs, NY)

Self-Portrait 1904

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, December 5, 1904

In 1877, deeming the National Academy too conservative, a group of artists seceded to form the Society of American Artists. Twenty years later, a group of artists seceded from that society for the same reason and formed the Ten American Painters, better known as “the Ten.” Reid was the youngest member of the group. He is best known for the works he exhibited during the Ten’s early years, such as *Daffodils*, which present a synthesis of academic and impressionist approaches. Of his style, Reid said, “If my work has any virtue and value, it is because it is mine and does not remind you of any other man’s work, either French or American or other. It is of my time. If it has this quality, and suggests beauty, it is art.”



Thomas Eakins (Philadelphia, PA, 1844–1916)

Self-Portrait 1902

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, May 5, 1902

On May 5, 1902, Eakins was elected Associate National Academician, and then, nine days later, he advanced to National Academician—an unprecedented progression. This much-studied portrait has long fascinated scholars. Some see in Eakins a vulnerable man laying himself bare before viewers. Others see a careworn victim with brimming eyes who was misunderstood, persecuted, and neglected throughout his life. Still others see a defiant individual, unkempt and rebellious, who chafed at the belated honors bestowed on him by the Academy, the institution where he had lectured since 1888. These combined interpretations suggest, at their heart, that the self-portrait overflows with humanity.



Maxfield Parrish (Philadelphia, PA, 1870–1966 Plainfield, NH)

Saint Valentine 1904

Tempera on gessoed panel

NA diploma presentation, May 8, 1907

The most familiar artist to me, growing up in a working-class family in Saint Louis, was certainly Maxfield Parrish, whose calendars or posters would have been found above the refrigerators in the kitchens of my childhood. *Saint Valentine* was commissioned as a cover for *Life* magazine and based on a photographic self-portrait by Parrish. The artist lost no sleep over the idea that using a photographic source might be “cheating,” nor did he worry too much about any bias toward fine art versus illustration, a distinction that has lost much of its certainty. The primacy of imagination was the driving force in Parrish’s work, as is evident in his statement: “People need outlets for their imagination. They need windows for their minds. Artists provide them.”

—John Moore, NA

A New Internationalism



Kenyon Cox (Warren, OH, 1856–1919 New York City)

Maxfield Parrish 1905

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, December 5, 1905



Kenyon Cox (Warren, OH, 1856–1919 New York City)

A Blonde 1891

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, June 1, 1903



Henry Ossawa Tanner (Pittsburgh, PA, 1859–1937 Paris, France)

The Miraculous Haul of Fishes about 1913–14

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, October 3, 1927

Although he was praised by both Thomas Eakins (his teacher) and William Merritt Chase, Tanner found greater acceptance in the less racialized climate of Europe, and in 1891, he moved to France. The son of a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Tanner eventually specialized in religious themes, such as those in *The Miraculous Haul of Fishes*, inflected by both European impressionism and symbolism—an artistic movement that stressed emotion over observation and the mystical over the rational. The American impressionist and fellow Academician Richard E. Miller consciously evoked Tanner’s expressive paint handling and jewel-like tones in his diploma portrait.



Albert Pinkham Ryder (New Bedford, MA, 1847–1917 Elmhurst, NY)

Marine 1907

Oil on wood panel

NA diploma presentation, March 4, 1907

Weir and Ryder met in class at the Academy and became lifelong friends. Weir often invited Ryder to his family farm, hoping that the countryside would have a calming effect on his eccentric friend. On one such visit, Weir created this portrait. Ryder's face and hands are composed of furrows of thick paint layered on top of more paint of varying colors—a stylistic choice where Weir paid homage to his friend's own style of painting, evident in this vibrating, almost abstract seascape. The penetrating character of the sympathetic portrait was noted soon after it went on exhibit. Academician and powerful art critic, William A. Coffin later called it "one of the best canvases in the large portrait collection of the National Academy of Design."



Richard E. Miller (Saint Louis, MO, 1875–1943 Saint Augustine, FL)

Henry Ossawa Tanner not dated

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, on or before May 11, 1910



J. Alden Weir (West Point, NY, 1852–1919 New York City)

Albert Pinkham Ryder 1902–3

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, March 2, 1903



Frederick Carl Frieseke (Owosso, MI, 1874–1939 Mesnil-sur-Blangy, France)

Hollyhocks by 1911

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, November 2, 1914