

Labels for *How Extraordinary! Travel, Novelty, and Time in the Permanent Collection*

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Curator: Sara Woodbury, Curatorial Fellow

How Extraordinary! Travel, Novelty, and Time in the Permanent Collection

From the exploration of new continents to the development of space programs, the pursuit of novelty has contributed to innumerable discoveries and inventions. Yet we never experience novelty in a vacuum. Rather, our imaginations use familiar forms and customs to help us comprehend new and unfamiliar concepts.¹

This exhibit explores the dynamic between novelty and convention in 18th- and 19th-century America and Europe. The first section looks at travel. Some of the artists featured here never visited the places they depicted, while others traveled extensively, but they all shared an interest in showing new places to their audiences. The second section considers some of the ways in which 19th-century Americans and Europeans incorporated novel elements into daily life, from exotic fashions to the visual deception of *trompe l'oeil* paintings. The final section considers time travel and its impact on identity, through the story of Rip van Winkle. Like Shelburne Museum itself, the works featured here are eclectic, but they all share an interest in extraordinary places, things, or circumstances.

Travel, Real and Imaginary

Charles Sidney Raleigh (American, b. England, 1830-1925)

Seal and Polar Bear, 1881

Oil on canvas

Gift of the McDowell family in memory of Electra Bostwick McDowell, 1991-61

Bold shapes and diagonal lines galvanize this depiction of a violent confrontation between a seal and polar bear. At least two other versions of this painting exist, suggesting that it was a particularly successful composition for artist Charles Sidney Raleigh.² Though he never traveled to the Arctic himself, Raleigh painted several scenes of polar bears, relying on the accounts of whalers and explorers to flesh out his works.³

¹ Katherine Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839-1879* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 9; Howard E McCurdy, *Space and the American Imagination* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 318.

² Jean Campbell, "Charles Sidney Raleigh, Seal and Polar Bear," email to the author, December 6, 2011; "Law of the Wild," *National Gallery of Art*, http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/tinfo_f?object=52956; "Maine Antique Digest - Charles Sidney Raleigh: His Second Life,"

<http://www.maineantiquedigest.com/stories/index.html?id=620>; National Gallery of Art (U.S.) and Deborah Chotner, *American Naive Paintings* (Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, England: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge University Press, 1992), 315-316.

³ "Law of the Wild," http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/tinfo_f?object=52956; "Maine Antique Digest - Charles Sidney Raleigh: His Second Life"; Philip Purrington, *Four Years A-whaling Charles S. Raleigh*,

Originally from England, Raleigh ran away to sea when he was ten or twelve and served as a merchant seaman until 1870, when he settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts.⁴ A self-taught artist, Raleigh specialized in meticulous portraits of whaling ships.⁵ In contrast to these detailed ship paintings, Raleigh's polar bears are decidedly abstract, even cartoonish, but his exaggerated style energizes these paintings, producing a strange, exciting vision of the Arctic world.

Artist unknown

Vue d'Optique Representant Prospectus Interioris Novae Esclesiae Sanctae Genovesoe Parisus, 18th century

Engraving and watercolor on paper

Shelburne Museum Collection, 27.6.2-123

This scene of the Church of St. Genevieve in Paris, now known as the Pantheon, is an example of a *vue d'optique*, or "optical view," a type of print that depicts three-dimensional views of different places.⁶ *Vue d'optiques* are ideally viewed through a device called a zograscope, which consists of a magnifying lens and a mirror mounted to a stand. The viewer places the print underneath the zograscope, tilts the mirror at a forty-five-degree angle, and looks at the reflection of the print in the mirror through the lens. Since the viewing process reversed the image, titles are usually printed backwards, allowing them to be read correctly in the reflection.⁷

Vue d'optiques were popular in Europe and America during the 18th century. Wealthy citizens typically viewed them privately through their own zograscopes, but these prints were also frequently exhibited at traveling shows and other public venues for a small fee.⁸ Thus, *vue d'optiques* enabled people of differing economic and social backgrounds to embark on imaginary journeys to new places.

Jane L. N. Tucker (American, ca. 1819-1840)

Map of the World, ca. 1830

Ink and watercolor on paper

Collection of Shelburne Museum, 27.2.6-4

Illustrator [by] Philip F. Purrington. (Barre Mass.: Published for the Whaling Museum New Bedford Mass. by Barre Publishers, 1972), 46.

⁴ Purrington, *Four Years A-whaling Charles S. Raleigh.*, 45.

⁵ "Maine Antique Digest - Charles Sidney Raleigh: His Second Life."

⁶ Catherine L. Whalen, "From the Collection: The Pickman Family 'Vues d'Optique'," *Winterthur Portfolio* 33, no. 1 (April 1, 1998): 75; "Perspective Prints or Vues D'Optique," <http://www.philaprintshop.com/perspec.html>; "Perspective Views," <http://kalden.home.xs4all.nl/auth/perspectiveviews.htm>.

⁷ "Perspective Prints or Vues D'Optique"; "Perspective Views," "The Zograscope," *The Georgian Print Rooms*, <http://www.georgianprints.co.uk/typesofprints/Zograscope/zograscope.html>.

⁸ Whalen, "From the Collection," 77; "Perspective Prints or Vues D'Optique"; "Perspective Views."

This map captures the dual interest in local and global space that characterized early 19th-century America. As a new nation, the United States was interested in its relation to the world at large. Geography was a critical aspect of education, and maps were a distinctive part of early 19th-century American visual culture, decorating walls, newspapers, and even playing cards.⁹

Yet this map is also about local space, as is indicated through the detailed representation of the maker's hometown along the bottom edge. Most Americans derived their sense of identity from their local communities, and the idea of the United States as a single, unified country was still a novel concept.¹⁰

Artist unknown

Ceremonie de la grande feste que les chinois celebres le 24 de la lune d'quost dans la prinetpale place de pekin, late 18th-early 19th centuries

Engraving and watercolor on paper

Collection of Shelburne Museum, 27.6.2-92

Animal-headed deities, pagoda-roofed buildings, and robed worshipers populate this *vue d'optique*, exemplifying the exotic imagery that Westerners associated with China and other Asian countries during the 18th century.¹¹ According to the inscription, this print depicts a festival that occurred in Peking (now Beijing) on August 24th, though the identity of this event remains unknown.¹²

China and other distant, mysterious places were popular subjects for *vue d'optiques*, but the scenes that these prints depicted were more fanciful than factual. Prior to 1842, Westerners were only allowed access to China at the port of Canton.¹³ Consequently, most Europeans and Americans had a limited understanding of Chinese culture, resulting in fantastic speculations about this region.

⁹ Claire Perry, *The Great American Hall of Wonders: Art, Science, and Invention in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington D.C.; London: Smithsonian American Art Museum; in association with D Giles Ltd., 2011), 49.

¹⁰ Ibid, 9; David Jaffee, "Post-Revolutionary America: 1800–1840," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pram/hd_pram.htm (April 2007).

¹¹ Peabody Museum of Salem and Ellen Denker, *After the Chinese Taste: China's Influence in America, 1730-1930* (Salem Mass.: Peabody Museum of Salem, 1985), 2, 8, 23.

¹² "Mondhare -" *Paulus Swaen Gallery*, <http://www.swaen.com/antique-map-of.php?id=12467>.

¹³ Peabody Museum of Salem. and Denker, *After the Chinese Taste*, 1, 20, 24; Jean Gordon Lee, "Philadelphia and the China Trade," in *Philadelphia and the China Trade* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Maritime Museum; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1984), 16; Conrad Edick Wright, "Merchants and Mandarins: New York and the Early China Trade," in *New York and the China Trade* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1985), 18, 25.

Attributed to John Samuel Blunt (American, 1798-1835)

Imaginary Scene, 1824

Oil on wood

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.6

Extraordinary and ordinary settings are combined in this painting, with the harbor scene emphasizing the exaggerated, dramatic character of the single mountain. The solitary settlement at the top of the mountain lends the scene a romantic, narrative quality, inviting the viewer to imagine the lives of the residents there.

John Samuel Blunt was one of the first American painters to specialize in landscapes, though he also worked as a decorative painter. Originally from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Blunt moved to Boston in the hopes of finding a larger audience for his work but became frustrated with the lack of a landscape art market in federal America. He was preparing to start a new career as a rancher in Texas when he died unexpectedly of yellow fever in 1835.¹⁴ He most often painted harbor scenes, but he occasionally painted imaginary landscapes such as this one.¹⁵

Martin Johnson Heade (American, 1819-1904)

Brazilian Hummingbirds: Two Sungems and a Crimson Topaz, 1866

Oil on canvas

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.19

Reflecting on his favorite painting subjects, Martin Johnson Heade remarked, “from early boyhood I have been almost a monomaniac on hummingbirds.”¹⁶ So singular was his passion, in fact, that he traveled to Brazil in 1863 to study and paint them.¹⁷

Despite Heade’s firsthand observations, however, his hummingbird paintings are not scientific illustrations of their behavior, but carefully arranged, aesthetically-minded compositions. Heade’s artistic license is especially apparent in his depictions of nests, including this one. Female hummingbirds raise their young alone, but in Heade’s painting the male hummingbird protectively watches over the nesting female.¹⁸ His birds mirror the traditional social roles of husbands and wives in 19th-century American society, underscoring the extent to which social norms influence our perception of the world.¹⁹

¹⁴ Deborah Child, *The Sketchbooks of John Samuel Blunt* (Portsmouth N.H.: Portsmouth Athenaeum, 2007), 15–17, 19, 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 92–93.

¹⁶ Theodore Stebbins, *The Life and Work of Martin Johnson Heade: A Critical Analysis and Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 61.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 61, 66.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70, 75–76.

¹⁹ Alex Potts, “Natural Order and the Call of the Wild: The Politics of Animal Picturing,” *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 16.

John James Audubon (American, born Haiti, 1785-1851)

Esquimaux Curlew, 1834

Intaglio and watercolor on paper

Acquired from The Old Print Shop, 1958-311.15

This plate appeared in John James Audubon's seminal *Birds of America*. First published in London between 1827 and 1838, this multi-volume work was the most thorough survey of North American birds at the time, and it underscored the diversity of the wildlife on this continent. To document his birds, Audubon traveled the Mississippi River to shoot specimens and study them directly. He typically mounted dead specimens with wire to simulate lifelike poses, but in *Esquimaux Curlew* he left one of the birds lying on the ground, revealing the plumage of its underside.²⁰

Originally found in Canada and Alaska, the Esquimaux Curlew is thought to have been one of the most populous shorebirds in North America but is now considered critically endangered, possibly extinct.²¹

Novelty at Home

Currier and Ives

Old Neptune/Viejo Neptuno, 1860

Color lithograph

Gift of Harry T. Peters Jr., Natalie Peters, and Natalie Webster, 1959-67.15

Not all would-be adventurers had to undertake long, treacherous journeys to encounter novelty. Throughout the 19th century, traveling shows and menageries introduced audiences to attractions such as Old Neptune, a California sea lion. Old Neptune originally appeared in the California Menagerie of the famous mountaineer and bear tamer, James "Grizzly" Adams. P.T. Barnum invited the adventurer to tour with him and inherited his animals when Adams succumbed to head injuries sustained from years of roughhousing with bears.²²

²⁰ Wendy Moonan, "Central Park's Winged Tenants, by Audubon," *The New York Times*, December 26, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/26/arts/antiques-central-park-s-winged-tenants-by-audubon.html?src=pm>.

²¹ "Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius Borealis*) - BirdLife Species Factsheet," <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3008>.

²² "Ursus Horribilus - California Grizzly", n.d., <http://www.notfrisco.com/calmem/bears/barnum.html>; "Life of P. T. Barnum - Phineas Taylor Barnum - Google Books," http://books.google.com/books?id=IHs9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA202&dq=old+neptune+sea+lion&hl=en&ei=mCTdTvbGIcfl0QGa_qzGDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=old%20neptune%20sea%20lion&f=false.

While sea lions can be found in colder climates, the icy setting in this lithograph also reflects the widespread interest in arctic exploration in mid-19th century Europe and America, as explorers sought a northwest passage to China.²³

N. Currier

The Living Chinese Family, 1850

Color lithograph

Gift of Harry T. Peters Jr., Natalie Peters, and Natalie Webster, 1959-67.17

Animals were not the only novelties to travel with P.T. Barnum. People were also exhibited as attractions, including this Chinese family.²⁴ The family has been portrayed as aristocratic, with each member dressed in brightly colored, sumptuous clothing. Western-style furniture and traditional European background props such as the drape and column emphasize the family's unusual appearance. The musical instruments, meanwhile, recall traditions of European genteel musicianship while simultaneously appearing strange and unfamiliar.

The actual identity of this family remains unknown. Given P.T. Barnum's propensity for exaggeration, it is likely that he fabricated their aristocratic background in order to offer his visitors a more luxurious, unusual attraction.²⁵

Artist unknown

Illustrated Lecture: The Arabs at Home! Or, the Holy Land and its Inhabitants, late 19th century

Collection of Shelburne Museum, 27.7.2-145

Slide lectures were a common form of entertainment during the 19th century, with illustrated travelogues being especially popular. Slides were viewed through a stereopticon, a type of projector developed during the mid-19th century.²⁶ Like the *vue d'optiques* of the 18th century (see opposite wall), stereoscopic technology allowed audiences to take imaginary journeys to new, exciting destinations.

The lecturer for this talk, the Reverend C.D.R. Meacham, served as a pastor for several New England churches, including one in Townshend, Vermont.²⁷ It was during his time

²³ "Bradford - Arctic Diary - The Exhibition," <http://www.clarkart.edu/exhibitions/bradford/content.cfm?id=1>.

²⁴ Lee, "Philadelphia and the China Trade," 18.

²⁵ Bill Moyers, "Program One: Gold Mountain Dreams," PDF transcript, *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*, 2003, http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/program1_transcript.pdf.

²⁶ Del Phillips, "A Brief Stereoscopic History," *Double Exposure: The Home Page of Del Phillips*, March 1, 2012, <http://home.centurytel.net/s3dcor/history.htm>.

²⁷ Andy Osterdahl, "The Strangest Names In American Political History: Cola De Rienzi Meacham (1838-1907)," *The Strangest Names In American Political History*, February 18, 2012, <http://politicalstrangenames.blogspot.com/2012/02/cola-de-rienzi-meacham-1838-1907.html>.

in Townshend that Meacham traveled to Europe and Palestine, with the latter trip likely inspiring this lecture.²⁸

Jules David (French, 1808-1892)

Le Moniteur de la Mode Series: Coiffures etc., ca. 1860

Color engraving

Gift of Gordon Ford, 1997-7.15

Oriental fancy dress is contrasted with contemporary Western attire in this fashion plate, with accessories such as fans, jewelry, and an animal skin rug underscoring the exotic character of the two standing figures. Yet the seated woman's dress is also novel, for its bright purple color is likely mauveine, the first popular synthetic dye. Discovered in 1856, mauveine became a desirable color during the mid-19th century.²⁹

The contrasting fashions also underscore the worldview that dominated Western thought during the 19th century. Whereas the oriental fancy dress exhibits a timeless exoticism, the seated woman's dress emphasizes innovation.³⁰ In Western eyes, China and other Eastern places were considered unusual but stagnant, decadent places, whereas Europe and the United States viewed themselves as harbingers of technological and social progress, an attitude that helped fuel the imperialist conquests of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Artist unknown

Soap and Candles, ca. 1893

Wood engraving

Acquired from Hardy Kruger, 1992-14.1

Old ways and new technologies are compared in this educational wood engraving dedicated to soap and candlemaking. Historical techniques and materials are shown on the right side of the image, while the left side highlights the potential of modern machines. The children playing in the bottom left corner, meanwhile, anticipate their future adult roles as they wash and dry doll clothing.

This wood engraving was created for *Chatterbox*, a weekly British magazine aimed at older children. Created by the Reverend John Erskire Clark, this paper was published from 1866 until the 1950s and was available in the United States from 1870 until 1933.

²⁸ "Rev. Cola Meachum, Vermont," <http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.meachum/29/mb.ashx>. The specific reference to Meachum's trip comes from *History of Barnet, Vermont*, by Frederic Palmer Wells, 1923. A copy of this work can be found in the archives and special collections of UVM.

²⁹ Anthony S. Travis, "Perkin's Mauve: Ancestor of the Organic Chemical Industry," *Technology and Culture* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 51-52.

³⁰ Sara J. Oshinsky, "Exoticism in the Decorative Arts," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/exot/hd_exot.htm, October 2004.

Primarily dedicated to illustrated stories and poems, *Chatterbox* also featured illustrated educational articles and fact sheets such as this one.³¹

Charles Calistus Burleigh, Jr. (American, 1848-1882)

Lady with Peacock Fan, 1882

Oil on canvas

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1961-186.1

Iridescent peacock feathers define the decorative character of this portrait, with skillfully applied brushstrokes evoking their myriad colors and soft texture. While the woman's attire is modern, historical precedents inform the actual composition itself, creating a striking fusion of past and present. The profile format recalls portraits of Roman emperors on coins, for instance, while the circular form of the fan itself is reminiscent of halos in medieval and Renaissance religious art.

The artist of this portrait, Charles Calistus Burleigh, Jr., would have been familiar with these historical antecedents. The son of a prominent abolitionist, Burleigh demonstrated an artistic inclination at a young age. After studying in Boston and Pennsylvania, he spent five years in Europe, sketching and copying Old Masters. Shortly before his intended return to the United States, however, he died of a sudden illness in Cologne, Germany.³²

Attributed to Emil Foerster (American, b. Germany, 1822-1906)

Fruit in a Crystal Compote, 1864

Oil on wood

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1957-690.36

Still lifes allow artists to highlight their skills in rendering different textures and surfaces, but the objects they choose to depict are also informative about consumer patterns and demands, as is the case with the pineapple in this painting.

Discovered in South America during the 16th century, pineapples were considered a novelty in Europe. Although the fruit was successfully cultivated in Europe and North America, it remained a relative rarity until the 20th century, when the Dole Company brought production to an industrial level.³³ The appearance of a pineapple in a 19th-century American still life, then, is a declaration of affluence and sophistication, given the fruit's limited availability at the time.

³¹ "1867 Chatterbox Weekly Children's Newspaper Magazine Antique," *Ruby Lane*, [http://www.rubylane.com/item/462942-FRY11021/1867-Chatterbox78-Weekly-Childrens-Newspaper](http://www.rubylane.com/item/462942-FRY11021/1867-Chatterbox78-Weekly-Childrens-Newspaper;); "Children's Annuals – THE CHATTERBOX," <http://www.ampneycrucis.f9.co.uk/Chatterbox/index.htm>.

³² Shelburne Museum and Nancy C Muller, *Paintings and Drawings at the Shelburne Museum* (Shelburne, Vt.: Shelburne Museum, 1976), 38.

³³ "Pineapple History," *About.com Home Cooking*, <http://homecooking.about.com/od/foodhistory/a/pineapplehist.htm>. There is also a book called *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones* (Gary Y. Okihiro, 2009) that discusses the fruit's social history in greater detail, though I was unable to obtain a copy at the time.

Attributed to Thomas Hope (American, 1832-1926)

Letter Rack with Blue Ribbon, 1883

Oil on wood

Gift of John Wilmerding, 1980-5

Trompe l'oeil means “to fool the eye” and refers to a type of painting that is executed so meticulously that it seemingly tricks viewers to believe that what they see is an actual object rather than a representation of it. *Trompe l'oeil* paintings are a deception, and their novelty arises from transforming mundane objects into convincing illusions.³⁴

Trompe l'oeil paintings started becoming popular during the 15th century, though accounts of them exist in ancient Roman writings about art.³⁵ Paintings of letter racks were especially popular, with their two-dimensional nature allowing artists the easiest opportunity to deftly replicate nature.³⁶

Artist unknown

Trompe l'oeil with map of United States, dated 1779

Watercolor on paper

Collection of Shelburne Museum, 27.18-6

Mystery surrounds this watercolor *trompe l'oeil*. Invitations, letters, and other documents, all in French, have been fixed onto a map of the United States. The invitation on the left comes from the Order of St. Louis, a French military order that awarded membership on the basis of merit rather than nobility.³⁷ The repetition of the date 1779, meanwhile, recalls the negotiations between the United States and France during the American Revolution, when the colonies sought the financial and military support of Britain's traditional enemy.³⁸ Such objects and dates suggest that this painting once had political connotations, but their meanings have become lost over time.³⁹

Trompe l'oeil paintings are usually executed in oil paint, but watercolor experienced a vogue in 18th-century Europe.⁴⁰ The anonymous artist of this painting has taken

³⁴ “Trompe L’oeil,” *About.com Art History*,
http://arthistory.about.com/od/glossary/g/t_trompe_loeil.htm.

³⁵ Columbus Museum of Art; Norton Gallery and School of Art., *More Than Meets the Eye : the Art of Trompe L’oeil*. (Columbus Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 1985), 76.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “Histoire De L’ordre Royal & Militaire De Saint Louis: Ordre De Chevalerie & Décoration, De A. Mazas,” http://www.memodoc.com/article_ordre_st_louis.htm.

³⁸ John J. Meng, “French Diplomacy in Philadelphia: 1778-1779,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (April 1, 1938): 41; “French Alliance Brings Joy to Washington at Valley Forge,” http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/history/alliance_washington.html.

³⁹ Columbus Museum of Art; Norton Gallery and School of Art, *More Than Meets the Eye*, 20.

⁴⁰ “Medley,” *Victoria and Albert Museum: Search the Collections*,
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O725054/drawing-medley/>. This piece and other examples of watercolor

particular care to replicate the etched lines of printed images, while details such as folded edges of paper and hanging spectacles enhance the three-dimensional quality.

Extraordinary Time: Rip van Winkle

Stories of enchanted time travel have appeared in various cultures throughout human history, and underscore the tension that occurs when established ways confront change. In the United States, that quintessential time-travel story is Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," first published in 1819.⁴¹ The eponymous character is a kindly but indolent man living in a village at the base of the Catskill Mountains during the mid-18th century. While hunting in the mountains, Rip encounters a group of men in old-fashioned clothing playing ninepins, a type of bowling game.⁴² After drinking an enchanted wine with them, Rip falls asleep for twenty years, only to awaken as an old man in a world transformed by the American Revolution.

The story of Rip Van Winkle was immensely popular during the 19th century, when the United States was undergoing radical social and economic change through industrialization, immigration, and movements such as those for women's rights.⁴³ With its themes of old ways confronting sudden change, the story struck a cultural nerve in late-19th-century America, inspiring plays, early films, and paintings.⁴⁴ The following four paintings belong to a series by Albertus del Orient Browere and were executed around 1880.⁴⁵

Albertus del Orient Browere (American, 1814-1887)
Rip Van Winkle Chased from Home by Dame Van Winkle, 1880
 Oil on canvas
 Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.10

Washington Irving describes Rip van Winkle as "one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy."⁴⁶ Unfortunately for Rip, he is married

trompe l'oeil paintings can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum's virtual collections. The virtual collections for the Metropolitan Museum of Art also include several examples of watercolor trompe l'oeil.

⁴¹ Phillip Lopate, "The Days of the Patriarchs: Washington Irving's A History of New York," in *Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture* (Yonkers: Hudson River Museum/Fordham University Press, 2009), 191.

⁴² "Ninepins," *The Free Dictionary*, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/ninepins>

⁴³ David Jaffee, "Industrialization and Conflict in America: 1840-1875, in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000).

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/indu/hd_indu.htm; Lopate, "The Days of the Patriarchs: Washington Irving's A History of New York," 261-262.

⁴⁴ Lopate, "The Days of the Patriarchs: Washington Irving's A History of New York," 202; Laura Vookles, "Return in Glory: The Holland Society Visits 'The Fatherland'," in *Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture* (Yonkers: Hudson River Museum/Fordham University Press, 2009), 261-262.

⁴⁵ Shelburne Museum and Muller, *Paintings and Drawings at the Shelburne Museum*, 34.

⁴⁶ "Rip Van Winkle by Washington Irving - WriteWords Library Online", November 20, 2011, <http://www.writewords.org.uk/library/8413.asp>.

to Dame van Winkle, a wife possessing “a tart temper.”⁴⁷ Dame Van Winkle pesters her husband to take responsibility for his household, but Rip always responds by leaving the house instead.

Browere depicts Rip walking dejectedly toward a forested area, foreshadowing his later adventure in the forests of the Catskills. The ghostly figure of a little girl standing behind the dog is an example of a *pentimento*, the reappearance of a painted-over design. Oil paint thins as it ages, allowing painted-over figures such as this one to become visible again.

Albertus del Orient Browere (American, 1814-1887)

Rip Van Winkle at the Inn, 1879

Oil on canvas

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.8

To escape Dame van Winkle, Rip often visits the town inn, a place Irving calls “a kind of perpetual club of sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village.”⁴⁸ Dame van Winkle always finds her husband, however, and drives him out in her effort to make him accept responsibility.

Browere uses the opposing body language of husband and wife for humorous effect in this painting. Dame van Winkle extends her arm and shakes her fist as she demands the whereabouts of her husband, while Rip pulls his arms inward and cautiously slips away, his body leaning in the opposite direction of his wife. The earthy colors of his clothing, meanwhile, contrast with his wife’s red bodice and blue skirt, further suggesting their different temperaments.

Albertus del Orient Browere (American, 1814-1887)

Rip Van Winkle in the Mountains, 1880

Oil on canvas

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.9

When Rip cannot find solace at the inn, he retreats to the mountains to go squirrel hunting. During one of these excursions, he finds a “strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back.”⁴⁹ Rip helps the man carry the weight, which turns out to be a barrel of enchanted wine.

Browere’s painting depicts the moment when Rip first sees the stranger, who is shown emerging from the lower right-hand corner of the scene. The real star of this painting, however, is the landscape, with dense foliage and ragged tree trunks creating an aptly mysterious setting for Rip’s strange encounter.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Albertus del Orient Browere (American, 1814-1887)

Rip Van Winkle Asleep, 1879-1880

Oil on canvas

Acquired from Maxim Karolik, 1959-265.7

After Rip helps the stranger carry the wine up the mountain, he serves it to a party of ninepin players dressed in antiquated clothing. Curious, Rip tastes the mysterious draught himself and drinks until “his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.”⁵⁰ When Rip awakens and returns home, he finds both himself and his world transformed.

Rather than depict Rip’s dramatic awakening, Browere shows him asleep, using soft colors and textures to create a tranquil scene. The long beard, tattered clothes, and rusty rifle indicate that he is nearing the end of his prolonged nap, however, and will soon experience a rude awakening.

⁵⁰ Ibid.