

The background is a painting of a forest scene. On the left, a large, dark tree trunk rises from the bottom, with its branches spreading out towards the top. The branches are mostly bare, with some small, brown leaves. The sky is a mix of warm, golden-brown and light yellow tones, suggesting a hazy or misty day. In the foreground, there are more bare branches and some green foliage. The overall style is impressionistic, with visible brushstrokes and a soft, atmospheric quality.

Victorian Idyll



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Yale Center for British Art
January 24–April 21, 2019



Hubert Herkomer, *Rest: Aldenham Church*, 1876, watercolor and gouache on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

Victorian Idyll

During his short life (he died in 1875 at the age of 35), Frederick Walker created a distinctive and influential body of work, expanding from the world of Victorian book and periodical illustration to produce highly sophisticated, deeply moving, and hugely popular watercolors and oil paintings. In his embrace of a rich narrative art, Walker was joined by his friends George John Pinwell and John William North. These artists were recognized in their time as forming a like-minded group, and their work was often described by critics as "idyllic." From the mid-1890s, Walker, Pinwell, and North became known as Idyllists. Yet their works frequently ventured beyond the idyllic in the sense of a pastoral paradise. While they could celebrate a vision of youth and love in a vernal countryside, they just as frequently acknowledged old age and death in an autumnal or wintry setting. And their paintings, watercolors, and prints often addressed serious issues of poverty and social unrest. It was in the social consciousness of their art that Hubert Herkomer, a great admirer of the Idyllists, found common ground.

This exhibition celebrates the gift to the Yale Center for British Art of works from the collection of a noted scholar of Victorian art, the late Lee MacCormick Edwards. Lee, the author of the major scholarly treatment of Herkomer, was a great friend and supporter of the Center. She was a regular visitor to the galleries and the Study Room with her students from Sarah Lawrence College. This posthumous gift by her daughter, Alison Edwards Curwen, of works by Herkomer and the Idyllists from Lee's collection has joined the gift by Hans and Agnes Platenius in 1983, which includes a rich archive of Herkomer and his family, to transform the Center's representation of this important aspect of Victorian art.

Victorian Idyll has been curated by Scott Wilcox, Deputy Director for Collections at the Yale Center for British Art, who acknowledges his debt to Lee's work on Herkomer and to Donato Esposito's recent book *Frederick Walker and the Idyllists*. The exhibition and accompanying booklet have been generously supported by the Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation.

Frederick Walker, 1840–1875

One of eight children, Frederick Walker grew up in straitened circumstances. He was seven years old when his father, a London jeweler, died, leaving his mother, an embroideress, to care for the family. After brief stints as an architectural draftsman and a student at the Royal Academy, he became an apprentice in the workshop of the wood engraver Josiah Wood Whymper (1813–1903). Walker supplied illustrations for the engraving firm of the Brothers Dalziel and for various periodicals including *Once a Week* and *Cornhill Magazine*. Beginning in 1863, he exhibited oil paintings at the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy and, from 1864, watercolors at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, the longest established artists' organization devoted to the exhibition and promotion of watercolors. Walker became a member of the society in 1871. With their strong narrative elements and pathos, Walker's works, popular in the exhibitions, reached an even larger audience through their reproduction in the pages of the weekly illustrated newspaper the *Graphic*. Sickly from his youth, Walker succumbed to tuberculosis on a walking tour of Scotland on June 4, 1875. Memorial exhibitions of his work were staged in London in 1876 and 1885.

Strange Faces

1862–63, gouache, watercolor, and gum arabic on wove paper

Walker's first major watercolor, *Strange Faces*, captures the moment when a timid young girl, perhaps recently orphaned, is introduced to an elderly couple who may be her new guardians. The work was a private commission from George Dalziel, a member of the family of engravers for whom Walker had done illustrations. Given its ambitious size and elaboration typical of works for public exhibition, it is strange that it was never shown publicly during Walker's lifetime.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund, B1980.6

The Moray Minstrels

1866, etching on chine-collé

Walker was commissioned by the wealthy silk merchant Arthur James Lewis to design invitations to the informal amateur musical gatherings at his home, Moray Lodge, overlooking Holland Park in west London.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.9



Frederick Walker, *Strange Faces*, 1862–63, gouache, watercolor, and gum arabic on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund

Study for the Harbour of Refuge
ca. 1872, watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

Walker exhibited his last major oil painting, *The Harbour of Refuge* (Tate, London), at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1872. In the quadrangle of the seventeenth-century alms house of Jesus Hospital in Kent, an elderly woman with a young attendant walks at sunset while a young laborer with a scythe mows the lawn. The painting was a great popular success, and Walker painted another version in watercolors a year later (sold

at Sotheby's, December 17, 2015), which according to some critics, was even more effective. This watercolor study, which truncates the view to the right and includes only the scythe not the mower, was either a study for the original oil or an intermediary trial for the completed watercolor version.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.10





Robert Walker Macbeth, after Frederick Walker,
The Bathers, 1888, etching on thick wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick
Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

preceding spread:
Frederick Walker, *Study for the Harbour of Refuge*,
ca. 1872, watercolor and gouache over graphite on
paper, Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick
Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

Robert Walker Macbeth, 1848–1910,
after Frederick Walker

Marlow Ferry

1880, etching on thin wove paper

While Walker achieved early success providing illustrations for wood engravings, his own attempts at printmaking in the form of etchings left him unsatisfied. After Walker's death, the demand for high-quality reproductions of his works led etchers, particularly his friend Robert Walker Macbeth, to produce masterly etchings after many of his most important watercolors and oils. This etching by Macbeth from 1880 reproduces a watercolor painted by Walker ten years earlier (Townley Hall Museum and Art Gallery, Burnley).

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee
MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of
Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.3

Robert Walker Macbeth,
after Frederick Walker

The Bathers

1888, etching on thick wove paper

Walker's largest and most ambitious oil painting, *The Bathers* (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight), was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1867. It was Walker's intention to fuse a subject of working-class British boys swimming with the form of a classical frieze, though some critics found the vulgarity of the boys and their nakedness insufficiently redeemed by the work's classical allusions. For Hubert Herkomer, however, it represented a "new direction, a new light, that had appeared on the horizon." Macbeth's etching was released in 1888 to coincide with the painting's inclusion in the Glasgow International Exhibition in that year, testimony to the continuing popularity of Walker's work years after his death.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee
MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of
Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.6

Robert Walker Macbeth,
after Frederick Walker

Autumn

1890, etching on thin wove paper

The watercolor this etching is based on (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London) was painted by Walker in 1865 and purchased in 1887 by the art dealer Sir William Agnew, who believed it to be Walker's greatest work. Three years later it joined the number of his paintings reproduced in etching by his friend Macbeth.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee
MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of
Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.4

Ernest Stamp, 1869–1942,
after Frederick Walker

Rainy Day at Bisham

1894, etching on thin beige wove paper

Stamp's etching reproduces a watercolor by Walker from about 1871 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). His view of the little Berkshire village of Bisham in the rain was presumably made in the early summer of 1871, during a spell of inclement weather that kept him from making progress on oil paintings including *The Harbour of Refuge* (Tate, London).

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee
MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of
Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.7

George John Pinwell, 1842–1875

Like his friend Fred Walker, whom he met when both were working for Josiah Wood Whympster, George John Pinwell had lost his father at an early age. The need to work had curtailed his formal education, but he, nonetheless, developed a keen love of literature and poetry. More than his fellow Idyllists, he made historical and literary subjects the basis of exhibited works, alternating with subjects of contemporary genre such as *Landlord and Tenant*. His accomplished watercolors were a standard feature of the exhibitions of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, of which he became an associate in 1869 and a full member in 1871. Again, like Walker, his life was cut short by respiratory illness; he died just a few months after Walker.

Study for "The Goose"

1867, graphite on wove paper

This wonderfully evocative pencil study of the interior of a barn was adapted by Pinwell, with the addition of two figures and several geese, for his wood-engraved illustration to "The Goose" in the poetry anthology *Wayside Posies*, published in 1867 by the Brothers Dalziel.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1975.4.892

"Nell stands by the stream, and her shadow glimmers below"

Wood engraving by the Brothers Dalziel
From *Wayside Posies: Original Poems of the
Country Life*, edited by Robert Williams
Buchanan (London: Routledge, 1867)

Buchanan's anthology of poems (some by him, but all are unidentified in the text) were illustrated by wood engravings by the Brothers Dalziel after designs by Walker, North, and Pinwell. Pinwell's striking image of a woman and her reflection accompanies the poem "Shadow and Substance." In a review of the volume in the *Athenaeum* for December 22, 1866, the critic was not kind: "Mr. G. J. Pinwell has not added much of wit or bulk by means of his 'odd' sketch of a damsel and her image as reflected in smooth water. We fear the forms of shadow and substance in this drawing would not bear scientific testing."

Yale University Library



George John Pinwell, *Study for "The Goose,"* 1867, graphite on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



George John Pinwell, *Landlord and Tenant*, 1871, watercolor and gouache on thick wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

right: John William North, *A Young Lover*, 1867, watercolor and gouache on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund

“And the gracious echoes woke
By man’s work: the woodman’s stroke.”
Wood engraving by the Brothers Dalziel
From Jean Ingelow’s *Poems* (London:
Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867)

Pinwell, North, and other artists provided illustrations, engraved by the Brothers Dalziel, to this collection of poetry by the popular writer Jean Ingelow (1820–1897). Pinwell’s image of woodcutters illustrates a passage in “A Dead Year,” a long poem about memory and the passage of time.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Landlord and Tenant

1871, watercolor and gouache on thick wove paper

A young widow with three daughters implores a stern landlord not to evict her for nonpayment of rent. Like Walker’s *Strange Faces*, Pinwell’s *Landlord and Tenant* was commissioned by George Dalziel. However, *Landlord and Tenant* was exhibited (winter 1870–71) by the Society of Painters in Water- Colours, where its “touching pathos” was much admired. A review in the *Morning Post* noted that “the dismay of the mother, the terror of the daughters, and the brutality of the landlord . . . are all portrayed with eloquent truthfulness of expression.”

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.5

John William North, 1842–1924

After his parents emigrated to Canada, John William North was shunted between various relatives. Apprenticed to Josiah Wood Whymper, he became friends with Fred Walker and George Pinwell. In the mid-1860s, North enjoyed his first successes, as an illustrator with the publication of *Wayside Posies* and Jean Ingelow’s *Poems*, and as a watercolorist with works exhibited at the Dudley Gallery. Of the Idyllists, North was the most devoted to pure landscape subjects. His elaboration of detail and refusal to provide picturesque focus and structure in his works were frequently the target of criticism. Although he became an associate of the Society of Painters in Water- Colours in 1871, he was not elected a full member until 1883 (by which date it had become the Royal Watercolour Society). Hubert Herkomer was a friend and strong advocate for his work, yet North’s chauvinism caused him not to support the German-born Herkomer’s candidacy for the Royal Watercolour Society in 1897, a failure that North later regretted but that Herkomer could not forgive. When North died in 1924, he had long outlived all his fellow Idyllists.





John William North, *The Home Pond*, wood engraving by the Brothers Dalziel, from *A Round of Days* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1866)
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

The Home Pond

Wood engraving by the Brothers Dalziel
From *A Round of Days* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1866)

North first visited Halsway Manor Farm in Somerset in 1860. Entranced by the fifteenth-century manor house and its surroundings, he returned several times over the next few years, often in the company of his friends Walker and Pinwell. He painted several watercolors of the house, including one that provided the model for this illustration to "The Home Pond" by Jennett Humphreys (1829/30–1917), a poet and contributor to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

A Young Lover

1867, watercolor and gouache on wove paper

This small early watercolor was painted in the same years that North provided illustrations to *Wayside Posies* and Jean Ingelow's *Poems*. It shares with the illustrations to those volumes a quirky compositional sense and a strangely elliptical form of storytelling. What exactly is the relationship between the woman on the steps and the young man with the gun?

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund, B1978.16.1

Forest Landscape

ca. 1894?, watercolor and gouache on thick wove paper

From the outset of his career, North resolutely shunned the picturesque conventions of landscape painting. In his later landscapes, he would build up the compositions in broad masses of muted color with fluctuating levels of detail. A critic in 1880 commented on "North's rapid, irregular manner of working, a manner which gives the effect of wandering from place to place in his picture, working now here, now there, and finally, that seeing so much more beauty than he can compass, he stays his hand altogether, and sends his picture out to exhibition as little finished or as much so, as one of [J. M. W.] Turner's wildest fancies."

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.11



Robert Walker Macbeth, *The Ferry Inn*, 1881, etching on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art Gallery Collection, Gift of Ivy Lee Callender



Robert Walker Macbeth, 1848–1910

Robert Walker Macbeth was born into a large artistic family in Glasgow. He studied at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh and moved to London in 1870 to join the staff of the illustrated newspaper the *Graphic*. He had already started exhibiting in London, having sent work to the Dudley Gallery in 1869. He became an associate of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours in 1871 (becoming a full member in 1901) and exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery and the Royal Academy (where he became an associate in 1883 and an academician in 1903). Although he was a popular painter of pastoral subjects in both watercolors and oils, he was particularly known as an etcher, producing large prints after a wide variety of both old masters and contemporary artists.

Robert Walker Macbeth, after George Heming Mason, *The Harvest Moon*, 1883, etching on paper
Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art
Gallery Collection, Gift of W. R. Callender, BA 1894,
& J. A. Callender, BA 1902

The Ferry Inn
1881, etching on wove paper

When Macbeth exhibited his painting *The Ferry Inn* at the Royal Academy in 1882, the critic of the *Times* noted Macbeth as “a young artist whose work is but imperfectly appreciated, but who is pressing steadily forward in his own way, but on somewhat similar lines to the late Fred Walker.” In the same year, Macbeth contributed his etching of the composition to the first exhibition of the Society of Painter-Etchers, held at the premises of the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street.

Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art
Gallery Collection, Gift of Ivy Lee Callender,
B1994.4.373

Robert Walker Macbeth,
after George Heming Mason, 1818–1872

The Harvest Moon
1883, etching on thick beige wove paper

Writing in the *Spectator* in 1883, Harry Quilter described this print of George Heming Mason’s *The Harvest Moon* as a “free interpretation” of the painting, “worthily done from a worthy original.” Mason decided to become a painter after initially training in the medical profession. He traveled to Italy in 1845, setting up a studio in Rome. After his return to England in 1858, he was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy and the Dudley Gallery. *The Harvest Moon* (Tate, London), his masterpiece and last exhibited work, appeared at the Royal Academy in the year of his death. Along with Fred Walker, Mason was a favorite source of work for Macbeth to translate into etchings.

Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art
Gallery Collection, Gift of W. R. Callender, BA
1894, & J. A. Callender, BA 1902, B1994.4.537

Hubert Herkomer, 1849–1914

Through a combination of talent, indefatigable hard work, and relentless self-promotion, Hubert Herkomer rose from humble beginnings in Bavaria, with little formal education, to become one of the most successful artists of Victorian England, with an international reputation. At age six, Herkomer emigrated with his father, a woodcarver, and his mother, a music teacher, to Cleveland, Ohio. In 1857 the family moved to Southampton, England, where the young Herkomer studied at the local school of art. A brief period at the Munich Academy and two summer terms at the South Kensington Schools in London completed his art training.

Toward the end of the 1860s, his illustrations began to appear in London periodicals. Although he never met Fred Walker, Herkomer was inspired by the example of Walker's art. His own early work, appearing in the pages of the *Graphic* and in the London exhibition rooms, shared Walker's social consciousness. While he never abandoned this aspect of his art, he was increasingly in demand as a portraitist. His work appeared regularly at all the major London exhibition venues; he was a popular public lecturer, and he succeeded John Ruskin as the Slade Professor of Art at Oxford University. His financial success allowed him to build a lavish mansion, Lululaund, in Bushey, Hertfordshire, where he established a school of art and put on theatrical and musical productions of his own devising, as well as directing early films.

His German roots remained important to him: paintings of Bavarian peasantry were a constant thread in his art; he established a residence in Landsberg, Bavaria; and in 1899, he was awarded the Bavarian Order of Maximilien, becoming Hubert von Herkomer. He was knighted by Edward VII in 1907.



Woodland scene with rabbits
ca. 1862, oil on canvas

Herkomer's earliest artistic training came from his woodcarver father. This charming scene is his first oil painting, completed before he had enrolled in the Southampton School of Art, and in a frame carved by his father.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.1

Hubert Herkomer, *Woodland scene with rabbits*, ca. 1862, oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.1

Rest: Aldenham Church
1876, watercolor and gouache on wove paper

Aldenham is a small village in Hertfordshire, just a couple miles from Bushey, where Herkomer settled in 1873. Like many of Herkomer's early watercolors, this depiction of an elderly woman resting in a churchyard is in tone and subject very close to the work of Fred Walker. In his *Autobiography*, Herkomer confessed that one of his early works, when exhibited at the Royal Academy, "was so like Walker in feeling that I frequently heard the remark of passers-by, 'Oh, here's a Walker!'"

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.16

Portrait of Richard Wagner
1878, etching on wove paper

Herkomer's etching reproduces his watercolor portrait of Wagner, based on sketches made during rehearsals for a series of concerts of the German composer's music at the Royal Albert Hall in London in the spring of 1877. A great enthusiast for Wagner's music dramas, Herkomer attended the first complete performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in London in 1882 and made several pilgrimages to Wagner's Bayreuth Festival.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.595

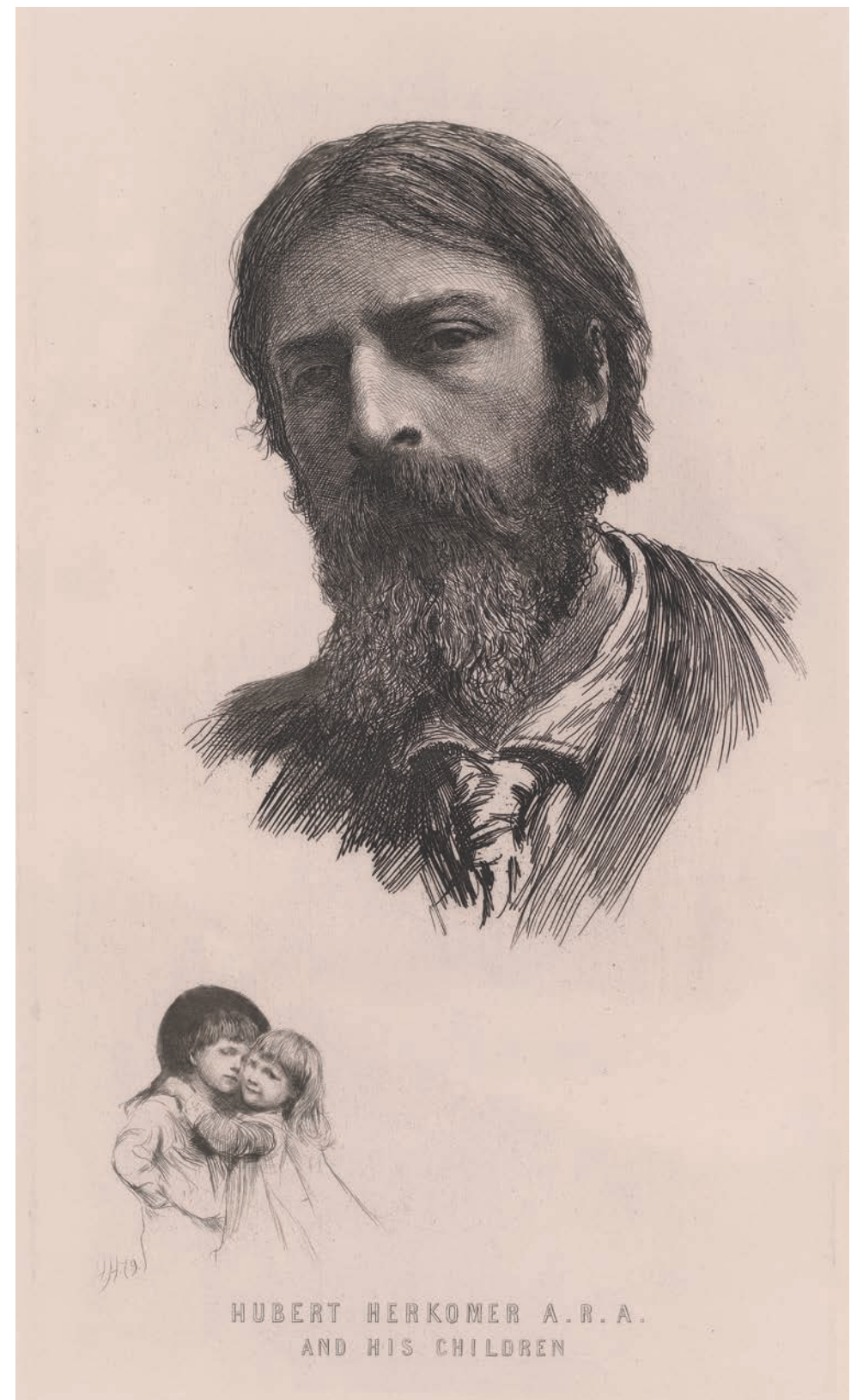
Self-Portrait with portraits of Siegfried
and Elsa Herkomer
1879, etching on wove paper

In his autobiographical memoir of 1910, Herkomer wrote of the genesis of this print on a camping trip to Wales:

"I took with me all the paraphernalia of the etcher—plates, grounds, dishes, acids, and a small printing-press (an invention of Mr Hamerton's). This wretched little contrivance proved utterly inadequate for my work. In order to get a decent impression we tightened the rollers to their last gasp, and then we dragged the whole machine around the tent in the vain attempt to turn the toy handles. Still, it was under those circumstances that I did—what I consider my best etching—a portrait of (the handy model) myself, with my two children in the lower corner of the plate."

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.19

Hubert Herkomer, *Self-Portrait with portraits of Siegfried and Elsa Herkomer*, 1879, etching on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen





Hubert Herkomer, *Carding Wool*, 1881, oil on board
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee McCormick Edwards Collection,
Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

Portrait of Hamerton

Etching on vellum

This unpublished work records Herkomer's debt to the art critic Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1834–1894), whose volume *Etching and Etchers* (1868) Herkomer used to teach himself the printmaking technique in 1877. He quickly became proficient in the medium, and in 1892 he published his own book *Etching and Mezzotint Engraving*, based on lecture demonstrations he had given at Oxford as Slade Professor of Art.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.563

Portrait of Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1879, etching on wove paper

Like his portrait of Richard Wagner, Herkomer's watercolor painting of Tennyson was undertaken without financial consideration and was eventually given to the sitter's family. Herkomer's etchings after the paintings, however, insured that the images would enjoy wide circulation, promoting the artist's burgeoning reputation as a portrait painter of notable men and women.

Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art Gallery Collection, B1994.4.513

Words of Comfort

1879, etching and drypoint on wove paper

This print appeared in *The Portfolio: An Artistic Periodical*, edited by Philip Gilbert Hamerton, where it was noted that Herkomer had only recently taken up etching. The accompanying text added, "Our etching represents an actual scene in the Bavarian Highlands, sketched from life by the artist, and exhibits at once his tenderness of feeling, and the thoroughly artistic qualities of his execution."

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee McCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.25

Carding Wool

1881, oil on board

Throughout his life, Herkomer made frequent visits to Bavaria, the land of his birth. And he frequently chose subjects of Bavarian peasant life, as in this small painting, done at the time that he was building a memorial tower to his mother in Landsberg. On its completion in 1885, the tower would become his summer residence.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee McCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.14



Hubert Herkomer, *The Lady in Black*, 1888, etching on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection,
Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen



Hubert Herkomer, *The Lady in White (Miss Katharine Grant)*, ca. 1885, etching on wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection,
Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

Study of a Man Seen from the Back

1881, black chalk on beige laid paper

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.570

The Dying Monarch, Funtensee

1884, oil on canvas

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.3

The Lady in White (Miss Katharine Grant)

ca. 1885, etching on wove paper

Herkomer exhibited his oil portrait of Katharine Grant, the daughter of a friend (private collection), at the Royal Academy in 1885 to great acclaim. Rather than sell it, Herkomer kept the painting to use in promoting his work as a portraitist, exhibiting it on the Continent and in America.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.21

The Lady in Black

1888, etching on wove paper

A portrait of a Miss Silsbee of Boston (Leeds City Art Galleries), *The Lady in Black* was undertaken during Herkomer's visit to Boston in 1885–86 as a conscious pendant to another work of his, *The Lady in White*, which was on display at the time in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. When Miss Silsbee's portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1887, it was titled *Entranced in some Diviner Mood of Self-Oblivious Solitude*.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.20

An Idyl, A Pictorial Music-Play

1889, etching on chine-collé

In 1887, Herkomer converted a chapel on the Bushey estate into a theater and presented a series of theatrical productions for which he designed the scenery and costumes, wrote the music, and acted. The most elaborate of these "pictorial music-plays" was *An Idyl*, given thirteen performances in the spring of 1889. In this story of English village life in the fourteenth century, Herkomer played John the Smith, depicted here with his daughter Edith, played by Dorothy Dene, a young actress and favorite model of Frederick Leighton. To lead the orchestra of twenty-seven, he recruited a noted conductor and associate of Wagner, Hans Richter.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.567

Herkomer as John the Smith

Etching on laid paper

From *An Idyl: A Pictorial-Music-Play* (London and New York: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1889)

To commemorate the production of *An Idyl*, Herkomer published this limited-edition volume of the songs he had composed for the play, interspersed with related prints including this image of himself in the role of John the Smith. Accusations by the etcher Joseph Pennell that the illustrations to *An Idyl* were mechanical reproductions rather than original etchings called into question Herkomer's printmaking credentials. Herkomer later admitted that some of *An Idyl's* illustrations had been reproduced mechanically.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius

Hubert Herkomer, *On Strike*, 1897, watercolor and gouache on wove paper, Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen



**Christmas Card with Mummers
from *An Idyl***

1889, lithograph on heavy wove paper

Herkomer often sent Christmas cards of his own design. For Christmas of 1889, he chose a drawing of two mummers, or traveling musicians, from *An Idyl* who appear on stage and sing a song before the climactic wedding of Edith and Dick o' the Dale.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.10

Lorenz Herkomer (the artist's father)

Photogravure on wove paper

From *The Autobiography of Hubert Herkomer*, 1890

Herkomer reproduced the portrait he had painted of his father in 1882 as one of the illustrations to his first memoir, printed for private circulation in 1890. The climax of the narrative is the production of his pictorial music-play *An Idyl*, which was performed the previous year in the theater that he had created on the Bushey estate. In 1910 he published a fuller account of his life and that of his father in two volumes.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius

The Printers

1891, etching with drypoint on laid paper

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.598

The Quarrel

1891, etching and drypoint on beige wove paper

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.584

Wild Weather

1891, drypoint on gray wove paper

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.572

Invitation to the private view of *On Strike*

1891, lithograph on card

Prior to its exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1891, Herkomer exhibited his oil painting *On Strike* in a gallery at 22b Ebury Street in Belgravia. In the twentieth century, this building, which had originally been built as a Baptist chapel in 1830, would become the home of the fascist leader Oswald Mosley and (later) Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond.

Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Hans and Agnes Platenius, B1983.33.79

Study of an Arab Head

1895, herkomergravure on wove paper

Herkomer developed a variant of the monotype process, which, with his typical lack of modesty, he called herkomergravure. In the monotype, an artist paints on an unworked copper plate, which is then printed. Only one image (or one strong and one weak image) results. By treating the painted plate chemically and then electrotyping it, Herkomer was able to produce a plate that could be printed multiple times.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.17



On Strike

1897, watercolor and gouache on wove paper

Although much of his artistic activity and the source of his financial success lay in portraiture, Herkomer spoke of a lifelong "sympathy for the old, and for suffering mankind" near the end of his life. For his diploma picture when he was elected a Royal Academician in 1891, he chose the monumental presentation of a striking worker, balanced between defiance and an uneasiness over the fate of his family who cluster behind him. Six years later, Herkomer produced this small watercolor replica of the diploma piece.

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.12

A Bacchante

1897, enamels on copper

In his autobiography of 1910, Herkomer recalled that he had taken up enameling in 1897 "in order to arrest the tendency to dullness of colour into which I had drifted." He also noted that there was something "occult, mysterious, dangerous" about the process and that working on gold or silver rather than canvas or paper "raised the practitioner to the status of a magician!"

Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen, B2015.18.15

Hubert Herkomer, *A Bacchante*, 1897, enamels on copper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

Victorian Idyll will be on view at the Yale Center for British Art from January 24 through April 21, 2019.

Opening Lecture

Wednesday, January 23, 5:30 pm

Social Realism, Class Politics and Pastoral in later Victorian Art

Alex Potts, Max Loehr Collegiate Professor, University of Michigan

(This lecture can be viewed on the Center's website,

britishart.yale.edu/multimedia.)

The exhibition and accompanying booklet have been generously supported by the Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation.

Images of all Yale Center for British Art works in the exhibition may be accessed on the Center's website.

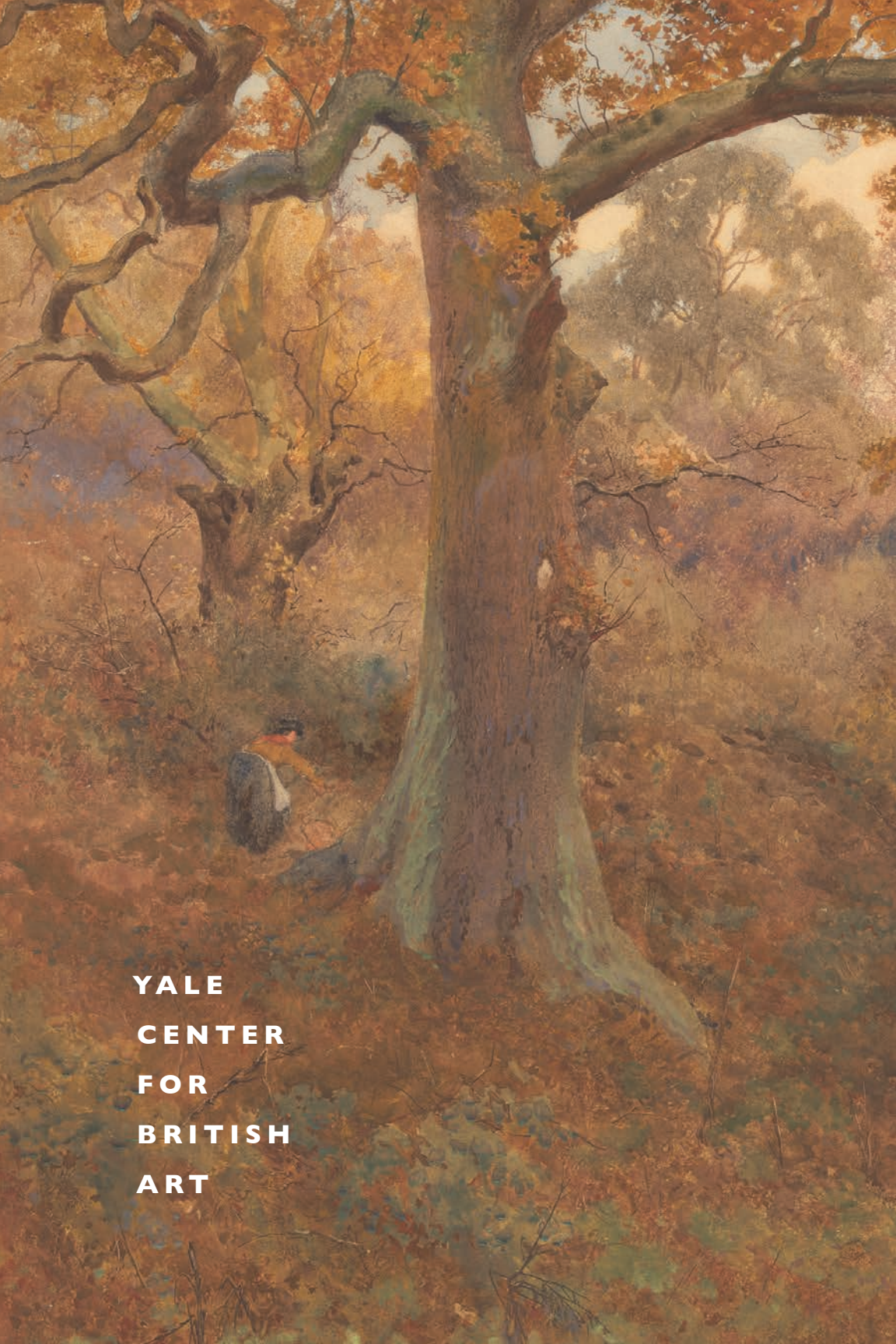
cover:

John William North, *Forest Landscape* (detail), ca. 1894?, watercolor and gouache on thick wove paper
Yale Center for British Art, Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Collection, Gift of Alison Edwards Curwen

inside front and back cover:

Robert Walker Macbeth, after George Heming Mason, *The Harvest Moon* (detail), 1883, etching on thick beige wove paper, Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art Gallery Collection, Gift of W. R. Callender, BA 1894, & J. A. Callender, BA 1902





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