



Exhibitions at
PAAM

Charles Hawthorne from the Permanent Collection

CURATED BY CHRISTINE MCCARTHY
ON VIEW APRIL 18–JUNE 29, 2025
IN THE DUFFY GALLERY

Born in 1872, Charles Webster Hawthorne grew up modestly in Richmond, Maine, a small town located slightly inland on the Kennebec River north of Portland. Hawthorne's father made a living as a sea captain and ice farmer. After graduating from high school in 1890, Hawthorne went to New York to become an artist. Three years later, he had earned enough money as a dock-worker and later at a design studio to study for the next three years at the Art Students League in New York. It is interesting to note that Hawthorne completely bypassed artistic study in Boston, where the School of Drawing and Painting at the Museum of Fine Arts was attracting students, including E. Ambrose Webster, who enrolled there in 1892, from around the country to study with Frank Benson and Edmund Tarbell. In what would seem an odd series of coincidences, both Webster and Hawthorne, born within three years of each other, would wind up opening art schools in Provincetown within one year of each other and living on Miller Hill within one hundred yards of each other.

The Art Students League provided exactly such an opportunity for Hawthorne and an ample choice of many progressive courses from which to choose. Hawthorne's teachers included George DeForest Brush, Frank DuMond, and Henry Siddons Mowbray. Hawthorne was among the first of many Provincetown painters to attend classes at the Art Students League, and through this connection, went to paint, spend summers or ultimately settle in Provincetown. This list includes Milton Avery, Will Barnet, Peter Busa, Edwin Dickinson, Dorothy Lake Gregory, Blanche Lazzell, George McNeil, Ross Moffett, Margery Ryerson, Jack Tworlov and Agnes Weinrich, among others. At the League, Hawthorne met fellow student Oscar Gieberich, who later worked for Hawthorne as monitor at the Cape Cod School of Art. Sal Del Deo and Paul Resika, among other former League students, continue to paint and exhibit in Provincetown today.

Hawthorne, who had helped William Merritt Chase when he left the Art Students League to establish the Chase School of Art in 1896, enrolled in Chase's Shinnecock Hills Summer School of Art in Southampton, New York. Chase was one of the most prominent and recognized American painters of the period and had studied at the Royal Academy of Munich. Hawthorne's early canvases show a decidedly tonal influence, with bold brushwork favoring dark brown and black backgrounds similar to the work of Frank Duve-

neck, another major teacher and proponent of the Munich school of painting at that time. Hawthorne once again found himself living on the water. One of a hundred students with Chase that summer, Hawthorne would learn to paint en plein air, applying paint directly onto the canvas outdoors. It was here that he would also learn many of Chase's teaching traditions such as the weekly criticism and private instruction follow-up that Hawthorne would later improve and utilize in his own school. Chase clearly was impressed by Hawthorne's progress and invited him to come back next summer as his assistant. Hawthorne also probably met his future wife, Ethel Marion Campbell, another talented student from Illinois who worked for Chase as his corresponding secretary that summer. Charles and Marion were married in 1903.

When Hawthorne journeyed to Provincetown in 1899 to establish his own art school, Provincetown was still recovering from the damage of the horrendous 1898 Portland Gale, named after the steamer Portland that sank offshore in late November, claiming the lives of her entire crew and passengers. The storm destroyed nearly half of the wharves in Provincetown Harbor and had a devastating effect on the fishing industry. The fishermen and their catch provided bountiful subject matter as well as sustenance for the artist. This combination of portrait and still life appears over and over throughout Hawthorne's career, and his rendering of fish is unrivaled. One might argue that the fish was the focal point and that the inclusion of models was in some way incidental. The strong sunlight enhanced by a landscape surrounded on all sides by water created an extraordinary, if not unique, luminosity at the tip of the Cape.

Hawthorne was a founder and vice president of the Provincetown Art Association in 1914 and remained an active participant throughout his lifetime. He showed six works in the opening exhibition, in 1915, held at Town Hall. Hawthorne's watercolors show a remarkable fluidity and refreshing looseness in contrast to his works in oil. Hawthorne had always painted watercolors and tried to exhibit them throughout his career.

Text by James Bakker from "Charles Webster Hawthorne Founds the Cape Cod School of Art; The Tides of Provincetown, Pivotal Years in America's Oldest Continuous Art Colony (1899-2011)"; © 2011 New Britain Museum of American Art; University Press of New England.

ARTWORK LIST

Viera House, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

House and Backyard - Spring, Provincetown,
circa 1927
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Miss Wilson on Back Porch, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

The Philosopher, 1920
Oil on board
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne

Boy with Fish, n.d.
Oil on canvas
Gift of Karen Katzel, 1999. Framing funded
by Stephen Borkowski and David Murphy

The Fish Wife, 1925
Oil on board
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne, 1949

Still Life with Fish, 1905
Oil on canvas
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne

His First Voyage, 1915
Oil on board
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne

Venetian Lady, n.d.
Oil on canvas
Gift of Robert Duffy, 2022

Twilight, n.d.
Oil on panel
Gift of Robert Duffy, 2022

The School Girl, circa 1921
Oil on panel
Gift of Robert Duffy, 2022

Boy with Fish, 1925
Oil on panel
Gift of Robert Duffy, 2022

Seascape from the Truro Hills, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Untitled (inscribed "to my friend, Kennedy"),
1899
Oil on canvas
Gift of Lea Shepard Handler in memory
of Florence Cranford Smith Shepard,
restoration funded by Doug Cliggott and
Annemette
Cliggott-Perlt, 2017

Portrait of Houghton Cranford Smith,
circa 1916
Oil on canvas
Gift of Lea Shepard Handler in memory of
Florence Cranford Smith Shepard, 2016

Sophie (Class Demonstration, Portrait of
a Young Woman), n.d.
Oil on board
Gift of Mrs. Samuel Edmund Oppenheim,
2012

Girl with Canary, n.d.
Oil on board
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

View from the Back of Provincetown, Spring,
n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

The Farm, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Head #1, n.d.
Oil on canvas
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Portrait - Yellow Flower, n.d.
Oil on canvas board
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Marsh Flower, 1926
Oil on board
Gift of Olga Knoepke, 1969

Girl Sewing #1, circa 1923
Oil on board
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne, 1949

Charles Hawthorne's artist palette, undated
Gift of Antoinette Scudder

Gray Day, Spring, Provincetown, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Joseph Hawthorne

Unfinished Portrait, n.d.
Oil on canvas
Gift of Frederick and Carol Jules, 2023

Miss Wilson Seated, n.d.
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Untitled (portrait, woman with fan and
irises), n.d.
Oil on board
Gift of Patricia A. Rogers in memory of Isabel
J. Tesson, 1989

Another Woman Sewing, n.d.
Oil on board
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Class Study (profile), n.d.
Oil on canvas
Gift of Antoinette Scudder, 1954

Figures on Pier, 1915
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Marguerite Wilson

Recto: Palm Beach, 1907, Verso: Untitled
(Provincetown scene), 1907
Oil on paper
Gift of Alfred T. and Joan M. Morris,
2019

Portrait of Lucy Taggart, c. 1920
Oil on panel
Gift of Kathy Sinclair Wood, 2021