



## HAWTHORNE

### Fine Art



#### **ELIZABETH GILBERT JEROME (1824-1910)**

*Tropical Landscape, 1873*

Oil on canvas

22 x 17 1/2 inches (sight)

Signed and dated, lower center

“Her pictures are marked by her own individuality. In color she excelled, showing a rare knowledge of tones and values.”

Elizabeth Gilbert Jerome was born in 1824 in New Haven, Connecticut to Rebecca (Driggs) and Hezekiah Gilbert. She was descended on her father’s side from Matthew Gilbert, an early settler, and the Deputy Governor of New Haven Colony.<sup>1</sup> Her father was employed as a representative of the L. Candee Rubber Co. and in 1837 served the New Haven police Department as captain of the watch. Her only brother, Amos Gilbert, a member of 1st Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry died at Forst McHenry in 1861.<sup>2</sup>

Jerome received her education at Misses Bahewell’s School.<sup>3</sup> While a young student, her sketch-filled notebooks caught the attention of her teacher who recognized Jerome’s artistic talent. The teacher provided Jerome with encouragement and the art lessons refused by her conservative parents. At the age of 27, Jerome began studying in Hartford under the German-born artist Julius T. Busch. She studied in New York at the Springley Institute, the National Academy of Design, and under Emanuel Leutze.<sup>4</sup>

In 1857, she was awarded a silver medal at the Hartford County Fair for her copies in crayon.<sup>5</sup> The following year she received a diploma for contributing the best copy of a landscape and best copy of a head, in oil, at the fair.<sup>6</sup> In the 1860’s and 70’s Jerome exhibited floral works<sup>7</sup> and cabinet pictures depicting Dickens characters such as *Little Nell* and *Dolly Varden* at Glazier’s Gallery in Hartford. In 1868, Jerome completed a cabinet picture depicting a winter scene for the National Academy of Design which the *Hartford Courant* called, “a gem [which] deserves a

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<sup>1</sup> “Obituary,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Mon, Apr 25, 1910, 14.

<sup>2</sup> “The Late Mr. Gilbert,” *Morning Journal and Courier* (New Haven, Connecticut) Mon, Apr 5, 1886, 2.

<sup>3</sup> “Obituary,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Mon, Apr 25, 1910, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Harry W. French, *Art and Artists in Connecticut* (New York: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1879) 169.

<sup>5</sup> “Fine Arts,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Thu, Oct 22, 1857, 2.

<sup>6</sup> “Fine Arts,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Sat, Oct 16, 1858, 2.

<sup>7</sup> “City News,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Wed, Jan 23, 1867, 8; “Brief Mention,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut), Tue, Jun 25, 1872, 2; “Brief Mention,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut), Wed, Dec 18, 1872, 2.



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high place in some choice collection.”<sup>8</sup> In 1873, she contributed *Portrait* to the National Academy’s 48<sup>th</sup> annual exhibition. In 1875, Jerome contributed a work entitled *Favorites* to the National Academy of Design. Listed as E. Gilbert Jerome in the exhibition catalogue, the *Hartford Courant* erroneously identified Jerome as a male artist by the name of Mr. Gilbert E. Jerome.<sup>9</sup>



Elizabeth Jerome (1824–1910), *Tropical Landscape*, 1871. Oil on canvas, 30 x 48 inches. Private Collection.

During the 1870’s, Jerome executed several paintings depicting South American landscapes including *Tropical Landscape*, 1873. The work depicts a woman riding a pack mule on a path lined with dense tropical vegetation. The mule is being led by a man using a walking stick. These figures can also be found in a large-scale work executed by Jerome just two years earlier. In *Tropical Landscape*, 1871, we find the figures on a path beside a body of water in a vast mountain landscape. The humid atmosphere is almost palpable.

Jerome’s tropical works reveal the influence of Hudson River School artist Frederic Edwin Church. While a direct link between the artists has not been found, they lived near one another in Hartford.

Elizabeth Gilbert Jerome died in her family home in New Haven in 1910. The home was located on the street named after her father, Gilbert Avenue. Today her work can be found in the National Portrait Gallery.



Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), *South American Landscape*, 1856, Oil on canvas. 24 x 36 inches, Carmen Thyssen Collection, Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum, Madrid, Spain

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<sup>8</sup> “Winter Scene,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Thu, Mar 5, 1868, 2.

<sup>9</sup> “Hartford Artists in the National Academy of Design Exhibition,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut) Tue, Apr 13, 1875, 2.