



# HAWTHORNE

## Fine Art

MARY JOSEPHINE WALTERS (1837-1883)

*Autumn River with Punt in the Reeds*

Oil on canvas

13 ¼ x 23 ¾ inches

Inscribed in pencil on the stretcher

Although little is known about the life of Mary Josephine Walters, her artistic pedigree is undisputed. In a biography of his father, Asher B. Durand (1796-1886), John Durand describes Walters as his father's favorite female student. Works such as *Study of Ferns* illustrate this affinity of style; Durand was known for his arched woodland thickets, from which Walters' composition seems to take its cue. The small size of *Study of Ferns* creates an intimate portrait that begs careful study. Intricately detailed and carefully composed, her use of warm colors and the impression of filtered light lends a somewhat paradoxical grace and sophistication to the rugged-edged slab of rock at the painting's center. *Autumn River with Punt in the Reeds*, similarly, shows close alignment with both the detailed landscapes of Durand, as well as the Hudson River School in general. The presence of the abandoned punt in the foreground suggests an absent human element and narrative, while the winding path draws the viewer's eye and concentration deeper into the scene. Walters was a member of the Ladies' Art Association, where she also exhibited. Her work was shown at the National Academy of Design and the Young Men's Christian Association.