



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Frank Howland (fl. 1854-1868)

American born artist Frank Howland was known for his portrait and genre paintings during the mid-19th century. While details of his life are scarce, Howland traveled to Paris in 1858 with fellow artists John Gardner Low and Charles Caryl Colman to study with the French history painter Thomas Couture (1815-1879) and Barbizon painter Constant Tryon (1810-1865).¹ Howland remained in Paris for the next 6 years.

In 1861, Howland contributed three works to the Thirty-Sixth Annual Exhibition at the National Academy of Design. A critic for the *New York Daily Herald* described Howland's painting entitled *The Rendevous* as, "a broadly painted picture, combining both sentiment and force."² A critic for *The Crayon* found his painting of a group of children in *Picking Grapes* and a young girl reading in *The First Romance* to be the most noteworthy.³ In 1865, the Old Dusseldorf Gallery in New York City held a sale to benefit artists. Howland's work was included with other important American artists including John Francis Cropsey and George Henry Yewell.⁴ Howland went on to exhibit several works at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts for the Annual Spring Exhibition in 1866 and in 1868.⁵

Howland's promising career was cut short by an untimely death. In 1909, New York City's Watson Gallery posthumously exhibited works by the artist including a pictorial head with a long blonde beard used as a model by French artist Hugues Merle (1822-1881) for his head of Christ. A painting depicting a woman reclining among draperies was lauded by a critic for the *New York Times* who compared the colors in the figurative work to a bouquet of flowers, "full hued and fresh."⁶ He went on to say, "Her shoulders emerge from the rich draperies exquisitely modeled and graceful. Her head is in shadow and a mere suggestion of blond hair and warm color is gained. It is a picture that shows knowledge of Diaz and Monticelli and Alfred Stevens, perhaps, yet keeps its individuality and its subtle note of race intact."⁷ And finally, "[Howland] painted pictures of a quality so distinguished as to sustain the trying juxtaposition of ancient potteries and tapestries without loss of character, a test which astonishingly few modern pictures can meet."⁸

¹ Burke, Doreen Bolger, et al, *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986) 232.

² "Fine Arts," *New York Daily Herald* (New York, New York) Fri, Mar 22, 1861, 5.

³ Bemus, T. Crawford, and Flake White. "Sketchings." *The Crayon* 7, no. 6 (1860): 170-78. Accessed August 12, 2020. doi:10.2307/25528073.

⁴ "Artists' Sale at the Old Dusseldorf Gallery," *The New York Times* (New York, New York) Sat, Jan 7, 1865, 4.

⁵ Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. *Catalogue of the ... Annual Exhibition*. Philadelphia: The Academy, 1866, 1868.

⁶ "News And Notes of the Art World," *The New York Times* (New York, New York) Sun, Dec 19, 1909, 48.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid