



GEORGE COCHRAN LAMBDIN (1830–1896)

The Gentle Sister, 1866

Oil on canvas

24 x 20 inches

Signed, titled and dated verso

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Georgia

EXHIBITED: *Georgia Collects*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, January 24-March 6, 1989.

REFERENCED: Kelly Morris, Amanda Woods, Margaret Miller, eds., *Georgia Collects*, (Atlanta, GA: High Museum of Art, 1989), 75, 204.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1830, George Cochran Lambdin was the son of the portrait painter James Reid Lambdin (1807-1889). The senior Lambdin—a museum founder¹ often best remembered for his stately portraits of United States Presidents, including William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) and Zachary Taylor (1784-1850)—directed the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts (1845-1864) and was his son's first painting teacher. By the time he was eighteen, the younger Lambdin had already exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy (1848). Lambdin traveled to Europe from 1855-57, most likely to Munich, Paris and Rome.

Lambdin was elected an Academician by the Pennsylvania Academy (1863), and was a member of the National Academy of Design (1868). He exhibited at the National Academy of Design (1858), and at the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1867). By 1868, he had taken up a studio at the now-famous Tenth Street Studio Building. Today, Lambdin's work is retained by the collections of: the Peabody Art Collection, Baltimore; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Institute of Arts, Detroit; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; and the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington D.C.

¹ James Lambdin founded the Museum of Natural History and Gallery of Paintings in Pittsburgh which was, in its time, notable for being the first museum west of the Allegheny Mountains.



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Throughout his career, Lambdin consistently excelled at anecdotal genre scenes—especially those depicting children—which were extremely popular subjects at the time. *The Gentle Sister* depicts a quiet moment between two siblings seated on the floor of a rustic home. The younger child rests on the elder sister's lap, dreaming sweetly, while the latter brushes her scarf over the slumbering toddler's upturned palm. As is characteristic for his painting style, Lambdin prioritized high levels of detail—in the drape of his subjects' clothing, in the heightened drama of light and shadow, and in the sensitive rendering of the children's rosy-cheeked faces. With delicate attention, fine lines, and a dark palette, *The Gentle Sister* is as much a faithful portrait as it is a sentimental genre scene.