



# HAWTHORNE

## Fine Art

### **Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932)**

Endowed with remarkable skill, Walter Launt Palmer was surrounded by creative talent very early in his life. As the son of master sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer, he was introduced to the arts not only by his father but also by the many artists who visited the family home in Albany, New York: “Among them were Frederic E. Church, Kensett, McEntee and Hubbard.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, these artists may have steered young Palmer towards painting instead of sculpture.

Palmer began his formal artistic training under Charles Loring Elliot, and by 1870 he was put under the schooling of Frederic Church at Olana, his estate near Hudson, New York. By 1873, Palmer made one of many trips abroad to work with Emile Carolus-Duran. It was at this time that he met John Singer Sargent, who was highly influential and also a student of Carolus-Duran.<sup>2</sup>

Palmer spent much time in Europe, drawn by his growing interest in French Impressionism and his attraction to Venice for subject matter. Upon returning to the United States, he settled once again in Albany, where artists such as William and James Hart, Homer Dodge Martin, and Edward Gay were all working. He did, however, spend a short period of time in New York City at the well known Tenth Street Studio Building.

The artist won numerous awards and honors during his career, including a prize at the National Academy of Design in 1887, a medal at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, a gold medal at the Philadelphia Art Club, and a prize at the Paris Exposition of 1900. His works were shown at the Brooklyn Art Association, the Boston Art Club, and the Corcoran Gallery Biennials. His paintings commanded the admiration of critics and are now featured in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of the Fine Arts, Boston; and the Butler Institute of Art among other important institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Mann, Maybelle, *Walter Launt Palmer: Poetic Reality* (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1984) 12.

<sup>2</sup> Owens, Gwendolyn, *Golden Day, Silver Night: Perceptions of Nature in American Art 1850–1910* (Ithaca, New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University Press, 1982) 82.