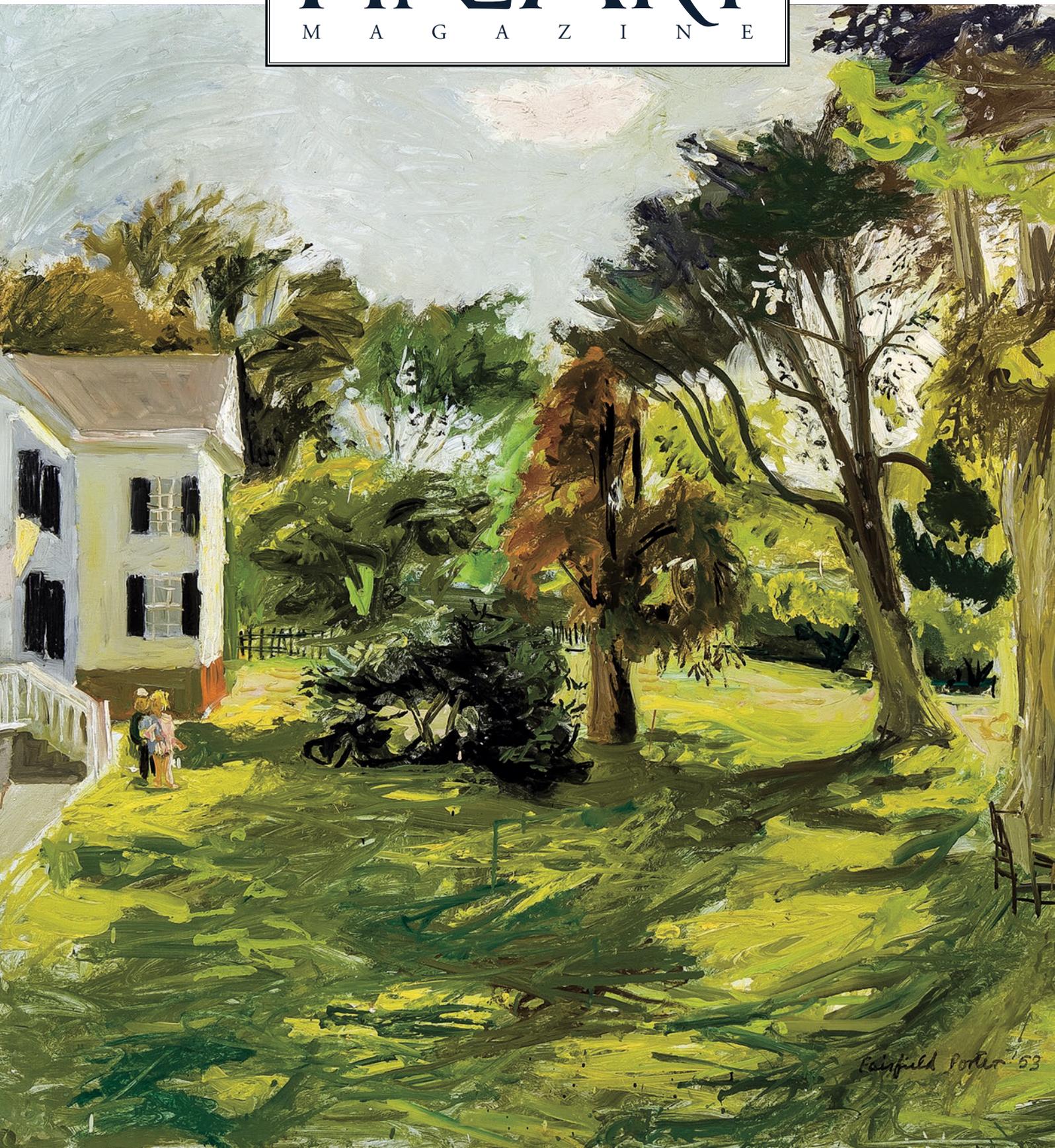


AMERICAN  
**FINE ART**  
M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 16

JULY/AUGUST 2014



# Background with Figures

*Cecilia Beaux inspires Hawthorne Fine Art's Summer Reading, the New York gallery's book and exhibition combo*

## Through October 1

Hawthorne Fine Art  
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This year's Hawthorne Fine Art book and exhibition—the New York gallery's fourth installment of its *Summer Reading* series—was inspired by portrait artist Cecilia Beaux's autobiography, *Background with Figures*, which conceives that a painting's foreground and background are careful and

deliberate harmonies that could not exist without each other.

This synchronization of imagery is represented in Hawthorne's 2014 book *Summer Reading: Background With Figures*, which pairs paintings, both landscapes and figures, with literary text that allows for a contextualized analysis of the works in new, refreshing



PAUL CORNOYER



Left: Edward Gay (1837-1928), *Under the Birches*. Oil on canvas, 30 x 20 in., signed and dated lower left: '1872'.

Opposite page: Paul Cornoyer (1864-1923), *Early Evening, Empire Park, New York*, ca. 1910. Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in., signed lower left.



James Carroll Beckwith (1852-1917), *Nita*, 1897. Oil on panel, 10 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 7 $\frac{5}{8}$  in., signed lower left; inscribed verso: 'Background of Nita Sewell/1897'.



Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904), *Red Rose*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 15 x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  in., signed and dated lower right: 'M.J. Heade 1878'. Images courtesy Hawthorne Fine Art, LLC, New York.

ways. The project was originally conceived as an actual summer read, a beach book that art collectors and enthusiasts could take on vacation and ponder during a relaxing break.

"Each year it seems as though the publication garners more and more enthusiasm. The original idea was to pair art and literature, and all the succinct little bites that conjure an image and its scene and feeling," Jennifer Krieger, Hawthorne's managing partner says. "It's been fun to find some kind of unifying theme, and to use that to see the works in new way."

Krieger says she envisions *Summer Reading* as more of a book project, but she hopes that readers will appreciate the book and want to see the images in person at the gallery. "We want the book to bring them to

New York to experience the paintings in person, because nothing beats seeing them in the gallery," she says.

Pairings in the *Summer Reading* book and exhibition include Paul Cornoyer's oil *Early Evening, Empire Park, New York* with dialogue from an O. Henry short story; Martin Johnson Heade's oil *Red Rose* with poetry by Emily Dickinson; and Edward Gay's landscape *Under the Birches* "endowed with the lavish sensory engagement" of prose by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.

James Carroll Beckwith's portrait *Nina*, its female subject framed within a scenic background of hills and a farmhouse, will be juxtaposed against the poetry of William Carlos Williams, whose linguistic cadence will echo and complement Beckwith's impressionist inflection.

"I love the immediacy of the

figure pressed against the plane of the painting. There is just the right amount of information in the painting, with the hills in the background and the clouds swirling up by her head," Krieger says. "Her neck bisects the foreground with the base of the hill and you realize how much the background really does enhance her features."

Asked if finding text for paintings were difficult, Krieger responds: "Sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's difficult, but that's what is fun about it—the hunt. We hope it inspires readers to enjoy the literature and the paintings as one unified experience."

*Summer Reading: Background With Figures* is available now through the gallery; the artwork hangs until October 1 in New York. ■