



# HAWTHORNE

## Fine Art



### **Hezekiah Anthony Dyer (1872-1943)**

*Venezia*

Watercolor and gouache on paper

16 x 12 inches

Signed and inscribed *Venezia*, lower left

Hezekiah Anthony Dyer was born in Providence, Rhode Island on October 28, 1872 to Nancy Anthony (Viall) and Elisha Dyer, Jr. The Dyers were part of an illustrious family whose ancestors settled in New England in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Dyer's grandfather, Elisha Dyer, served as the twenty-fifth governor of Rhode Island from 1877 to 1859.

In 1893, a bronze statue entitled *The Falconer* by artist Henry Hudson Kitson was erected in his memory in Roger Williams Park in Providence. Dyer's father served as the 45<sup>th</sup> governor of Rhode Island from 1897 to 1900. During his father's tenure as governor, Dyer served as secretary, colonel, and aide-de-camp on his staff.

As a young man, Dyer attended St. Paul's School in New Hampshire. He graduated from his father's alma mater, Brown University, in 1894 with a Bachelor of Science degree. Dyer traveled to Europe where he studied art in France, Holland, Italy and Germany and "...acquired the love of old-world beauty so often expressed in his paintings."<sup>1</sup> Dyer returned to Europe each year for painting tours lasting up to six months.<sup>2</sup> Painting in watercolor Dyer captured views of the European countryside and picturesque villages. In 1919, Dyer received an honorary Master of Arts degree from Brown University and became an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa.<sup>3</sup>

Dyer exhibited his watercolors annually at Knoedler & Co. in New York City. Upon viewing an exhibition of Dyer's watercolors in 1905 a critic stated that the work was "well worth serious study."<sup>4</sup> According to the critic, "the strength and seriousness" with which Dyer captured expansive New England views using watercolor was quite unexpected. Dyer believed the range that one can achieve using oils could be just as successfully achieved using watercolors. In 1909, a critic for *American Art News* stated, "Col. Dyer paints with appreciation and sympathy, gets true and delightful atmospheric and tonal effects, while his work is characterized by rare refinement."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Col. H. Anthony Dyer Dies in Providence," *Newport Mercury* (Newport, Rhode Island), Fri, Aug 27, 1943, 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Col. H. Anthony Dyer Dies in Providence," *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut), Wed, Aug 25, 1943, 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Col. H. Anthony Dyer Dies in Providence," *Newport Mercury* (Newport, Rhode Island), Fri, Aug 27, 1943, 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Current Art Events," *The International Studio*, Volume 25 (1905): 42 Accessed September 4, 2020.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924015157559>.

<sup>5</sup> "Anthony Dyer's Water-Colors." *American Art News* 7, no. 15 (1909): 6. Accessed September 4, 2020.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25590404>.



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*French Village, n.d.* watercolor on paperboard,  
Smithsonian American Art Museum

Dyer was awarded the Order of the Commendatore of the Italian Crown in 1926 and the Degree of Cavalier of his order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus from King Victor Emanuel 3d of Italy in 1931 for his work as an ambassador of good-will for Italy. Dyer also received the silver medal and a diploma by the French government for his work in aiding French orphans after World War I.<sup>6</sup>

During his lifetime, Dyer was a president of the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Providence Art Club (1905-1914) and the Providence Watercolor

Club. In addition, he was an active member of Boston Society of Water Color Painters, the American Federation of the Arts and the Newport Art Association.

Col. Hezekiah Anthony Dyer died on August 27, 1943 in Providence, Rhode Island. He was 70 years old.

Dyer's work can be found in many important collections including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Strong Museum [Rochester, NY], the Nantucket Historical Association, and the Rhode Island Historical Society.



*Marshland with Grey Mist, ca 1894.* watercolor on paper, Rhode Island School of Design. #94.007



*Landscape, ca. 1910,* watercolor and gouache on paper, Rhode Island School of Design. #20.496

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<sup>6</sup> "Col. H. Anthony Dyer Dies in Providence," *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut), Wed, Aug 25, 1943, 4.