



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

JOSEPH H. GREENWOOD (1857–1927)

Autumn Scene with Golden Brush

Oil on panel

6 x 9 inches

Signed lower left

Spring landscape composition on verso

PROVENANCE: Jerome Marble, Worcester, Massachusetts, by family descent to present owner.

Joseph H. Greenwood is known for his New England landscapes executed in a direct Barbizon manner with a muted Tonalist palette, much akin to the works of his contemporaries George Inness and Willard Metcalf. Greenwood's later works feature looser, thicker brush strokes and a lightened, saturated palette, lending them an Impressionist feel. The artist himself, an independent spirit, refused to attach any label to his work.

The son of French-Canadian immigrants, Greenwood was born and raised in Spencer, Massachusetts, though he ultimately settled in nearby Worcester—the environs of which became his primary artistic subject. As a teenager he went to work at a shoe factory and then a wire mill in town, spending his evenings painting with whatever materials he could scavenge. His artistic inclinations soon caught the attention of the wealthy mill owner, who sent the young Greenwood to Wilbraham Academy, funding him for two terms of study. Greenwood subsequently relocated to Worcester and established himself as a full-time painter and teacher.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Greenwood became a sought after painter in Worcester, known for his scenes of Tatnuck Brook and Green Hill Park, among other local sites. A key figure in the Worcester art scene, he associated with the Worcester Art Student's Club, was a charter member of the Bohemian Club, and helped found the Worcester Art Museum. He summered at Nonquitt, Massachusetts with Tonalist painter, Robert Swain Gifford and painted in Boston with Impressionist, J. Appleton Brown.

Greenwood's reputation soon grew beyond Worcester as he began exhibiting at the Boston Art Club, the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Design in New York, and the 1892 Chicago World's Fair. In 1926, his work was included alongside that of George Inness, Bruce Crane, and Dwight Tryon in an exhibition titled “Selected Paintings by Modern Masters” at the



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Vose Gallery in Boston. Today his paintings can be seen at the Worcester Art Museum, which in 2004 mounted the first solo exhibition of the artist's work since his death in 1927.

Autumn Scene with Golden Brush captures the windswept Massachusetts countryside tinged with the burnt colors of autumn. Bunches of long, ochre-colored grasses frame an icy blue creek at the bottom of the scene. Beyond is a band of trees and shrubs, some bearing deep red foliage, and others completely bare in preparation for winter. A dark gray, cloudy sky bathes all in shadow. The dark mood of this scene is contrasted with the cheerful beauty of a spring composition painted on the verso, in which bright green treetops bursting with white blossoms are framed by a pale blue sky. As Philip Klausmeyer, a conservator at the Worcester Art Museum explains: “[Greenwood] was a New Englander through and through—very frugal. Most of his paintings are rather thinly applied. He recycled some of his materials. If a painting didn't work out and he had it laying around the studio he would pick it up and paint over it.”¹ In this case, Greenwood conserved materials by painting on both sides of the panel. Taken together, these two scenes reveal Greenwood's life-long commitment to capturing the pastoral beauty of New England in each season.

¹ Nancy Sheehan, “Gathering Greenwoods ; Striking works by once-famous Worcester landscape artist going on display at the WAM.” *Telegram & Gazette* (Mar 5, 2004), C1.