



FREDERICK FRIESEKE (1874-1939)

Under the Striped Umbrella

oil on canvas

60 1/2 x 190 1/2 in.

1905/06 France

3874.b

PROVENANCE:

David David Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Private Collection, California

EXHIBITION:

Telfair Museum Of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Frederick Carl Frieeseke; The Evolution Of An American Impressionist, 2000/2001; travelling to Dixon Gallery & Gardens, Memphis, Tennessee, 2001; San Diego Museum Of Art, San Diego, California, 2001; Terra Museum Of Art, Chicago, Illinois, 2001

LITERATURE:

N. Kilmer, Frederick Carl Frieeseke; The Evolution Of An American Impressionist, Princeton University Press, 2000, reproduced p. 139

International Studio An Illustrated Magazine Of Fine And Applied Art, Volume Forty-Three, Comprising March, April, May & June 1911; numbers 169 to 172; "American Artists In Paris" pages 263-270

L'Art Decoratif, Revue Mensuelle D'Art Contemporain, 8me Annee, 2 Semestre, Juillet 1906-December 1906; "La Decoration D'un Hotel Americain" page 195-200

"Under the Striped Umbrella" is a mural painting by Frederick Carl Frieeseke, an American Impressionist who spent most of his productive years as an expatriate in France. Department store magnate Rodman Wanamaker commissioned the 15-foot-long painting for the Hotel Shelburne in Atlantic City. Frieeseke designed it as a single composition in 1905, and completed it in segments in 1906. Ultimately, the painting depicts elegant young ladies with bonnets, as well as several children playing in the sand and figures on horseback enjoying a day at the beach under striped parasols.

In 1906, Frieeseke and his wife settled in the art colony in Giverny, where the great French Impressionist Claude Monet resided. Here, Frieeseke found his aesthetic and asserted his familiar theme. The parasol also became a frequent motif — protecting his female models and reinforcing their position as articles of beauty and the recipient of the viewer's gaze.

"Under the Striped Umbrella" was installed at the Hotel Shelburne in February 1906. In 2000 and 2001, it was exhibited at the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia, in the exhibition "Frederick Carl Frieeseke; The Evolution of an American Impressionist."

Frieeseke exhibited extensively in the United States and in his adopted France. His work is in the permanent collections of the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum of Fine Arts-Boston.

Frederick Frieeseke was born in Owosso Michigan in 1874. He studied art at the Art

Institute of Chicago in 1893 and then at the Art Students League in New York City in 1897. He moved to Paris in 1898 and studied at the Académie Julian and then for a short period at the Académie Carmen with James Abbott McNeill Whistler. Friesseke's early work, consisting of images of women in interior settings, with their fairly close tonalities, reflects Whistler's influence on him. However, once he and his wife moved to the art colony in Giverny in 1906, where Claude Monet resided, Friesseke came into his own aesthetic. In Giverny, they rented a house and cultivated a colorful garden that became the backdrop to many of Friesseke's paintings. During his time in Giverny, Friesseke mostly painted images of women, posed in either domestic settings or sun-filled outdoor settings. His main focus in all of his paintings was on the sunlight.

Unlike the artists that preceded him, Friesseke's impressionism was an unreal construct; his sunlight and color were entirely synthetic. The parasol became a frequent motif in Friesseke's work, both protecting his female models and further emphasizing their position as articles of beauty and the recipient of the viewer's gaze. Like many Impressionists, Friesseke often positioned his female figure on a threshold between the interior and the outdoors, between the shadows and the sun. After World War I, Friesseke and his family moved to Normandy because he felt France offered more freedom of expression than the US.

Frederick Friesseke's earliest mural work was for his patron, Rodman Wanamaker. Friesseke painted mural decorations that were installed in Wanamaker's New York department store in 1904 and 1907 and for the Rodman Wanamaker Hotel in 1905, the Shelburne Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1906 and the Amphitheater of Music in New York in 1908. Art historians credit Wanamaker's constant commissions as being the sole reason Friesseke was able to devote himself to painting. Sarah Anne O'Bryan, known as Sadie, who was Friesseke's wife, was a model for many of the figures, elegant and almost six feet tall, she was intelligent, dramatically gregarious and variously talented. The poise and assurance of the figures were undoubtedly inspired by Sadie.

Despite winning many awards for his work, which was acquired by a variety of museums, there was a decline in Friesseke's popularity after World War I. Critics saw his work as outdated and overly conservative. It was during this same time that the mood of Friesseke's paintings became more contemplative, his colors muted and somber, and his composition more static.

Today, his artwork is in major public and private collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Musée des Impressionnismes in Giverny, and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid.

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