

FREDERICK FRIESEKE



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FREDERICK FRIESEKE (1874-1939)

Afternoon at the Beach

1905/1906 France

oil on canvas

60 x 178 in. (152.4 x 452.12 cm)



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PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Rodman Wanamaker for the Hotel Shelburne in Atlantic City
David David Gallery, Philadelphia
Private Collection, California
Heather James Fine Art

EXHIBITION

Telfair Museum Of Art, Savannah, Georgia, *Frederick Carl Frieseke; 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 Frieseke; 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

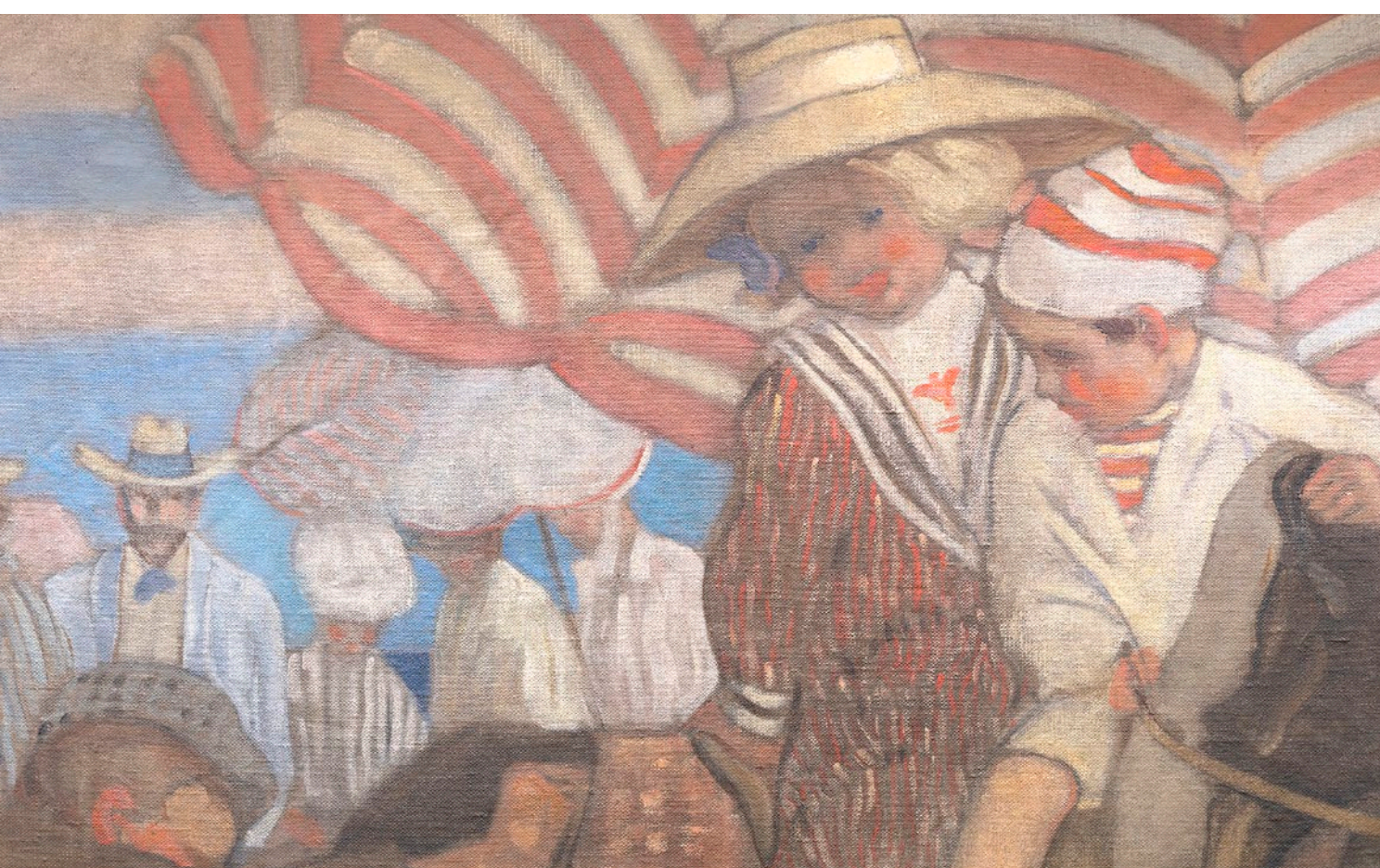
— IMPORTANT FACTS

- *Afternoon at the Beach* depicts elegant young ladies with bonnets, as well as several children — two of which appear on a donkey — and an occasional male enjoying a day at the beach under striped parasols. Female figures, flowers, and domestic interiors and exteriors were recurring elements in his paintings. Their fairly close tonalities reflect the deep influence that James Abbott McNeill Whistler had on Friesseke's style. Here, Friesseke found his aesthetic and asserted his familiar theme.
- Department store magnate Rodman Wanamaker commissioned the 15-foot-long painting for the Hotel Shelburne in Atlantic City. Friesseke designed it as a single composition in 1905, and completed it in segments in 1906.
- The painting was installed at the Hotel Shelburne in February 1906. In 2000 and 2001, *Afternoon at the Beach* was exhibited at the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia, during the 2000-2001 exhibition *Frederick Carl Friesseke: The Evolution of an American Impressionist*.

DETAIL IMAGES









"It is sunshine...which I have been principally interested in. If I could only reproduce it exactly as I see it, I would be satisfied."

Frederick Frieseke

HISTORY



Frederick Carl Frieseke, Peter A. Juley & Son Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Frederick Frieseke is often regarded as the finest American Impressionist painter of the figure. Yet when he came to study at Académie Juilian in 1898, several les Nabis painters remained a lingering presence, and it was the rich, decorative patterns of Edouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard that served as the blueprint for his early success. That influence is clearly demonstrated in the unrestrained repetition of the voluminous, pleated, striped umbrellas of *Afternoon at the Beach*, a canvas mural installed in the opulent Hotel Shelburne dining room overlooking the Atlantic City Boardwalk. The unifying impact of that repetitive element imbues the setting with cloud-like loft within a color scheme, evoking Vuillard and the richness of a Gobelin tapestry, rather than the effect of sunlight and broken color that mark his more familiar paintings from the decade of 1910 to 1920.

Afternoon at the Beach was installed under the artist's direction in February 1906. It remained on view for decades at the swanky hotel that enticed "Diamond Jim" James Buchanan Brady to pay one thousand dollars a week for permanent residence and was an unfading memory for throngs of well-heeled socialites, financiers, and notables from Irving Berlin to John Philip Sousa and Ethel Barrymore to Al Jolson. Undoubtedly, its presence high on the grand dining room wall contributed to the artist's popularity and renown.

Today, we may look upon this long, frieze-like composition as a delightful fin-de-siècle costume study or an informative expose of Victorian mores as suggested by the separate spheres of gender groupings. But mostly, *Afternoon at the Beach* recounts the artist's unbridled delight and appreciation of women, here, expressed within familial, maternal, and social contexts. It is the subject and theme that brought Friesseke acclaim and awards on both sides of the Atlantic and which, to this day, endears him to the many who count him among the most beloved of American figurative painters.



Frederick Friesseke
Le Théau Jardin, 1904

Hotel Shelburne, Atlantic City, NJ
circa 1910

