

LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY

IMPRESSIONS ON FILM, CANVAS, AND PAPER

O B J E C T G U I D E

LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY (1848–1933) established his reputation creating beautiful objects. He gave us symphonies in glass and raised the modest lamp to high art. It is these visually dramatic works that have made Tiffany a beloved American artist. So it is no wonder that most Tiffany exhibitions feature his show stoppers.

This exhibition, on the other hand, draws on the Museum’s collection of Tiffany’s less well known two-dimensional works, examples that are poetic in character—sometimes joyous, sometimes elegiac.

Tiffany, who traveled broadly, was unceasingly engaged with his visual environment, recording his impressions with camera, brush, and pen. These paintings and photographs provide an intimate portrait of a man moved by the simple beauty of

everyday life—farm scenes, children playing in the surf, and boats on the Hudson River. Tiffany began his long and spectacular career as a painter and continued painting throughout his life. The artist also embraced the relatively new invention of photography enthusiastically. Some pieces here reflect the exotic places that proved so influential in his work in the decorative arts. Others were captured on family outings. Some inspired grander works, but most of them likely emerged from Tiffany’s impulse, if not compulsion, to express the whole of his being in art without regard to future development or marketability. They are moments and meditations rife with the spontaneity and creative energy that so marked Tiffany as an artistic force in design. Each of them embodies Louis Comfort Tiffany’s poetic spirit, richly rewarding the viewer who can through them share some of the artist’s impressions of life and experience.



Above: ABUNDANCE, 1888. *Watercolor, gouache on paper, Louis Comfort Tiffany, American, 1848–1933 (64-030).*

All works are by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933).

1) Landscape with Figure,
c. 1870

Oil on paper
Signed, lower right:
Louis C. Tiffany
(66-062)



2) Tower of Library in Parliament Building, Ottawa, June 30, 1919

Watercolor on paper
Signed, lower right:
Louis C. Tiffany
Marks: Ottawa June 30th 19- /
Tower of Library in Parliament building /
partially destroyed by fire
Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
(55-024)

3) Fruit Vendors under the Seawall at Nassau, New Providence, 1872

Exhibited: Pittsburgh Academy of Art and Design, 1872
Oil on canvas
Signed, lower left: L. Tiffany 72
(69-015)

4) North African Harbor Scene, c. 1877

Watercolor and gouache on paper
Signed, lower left: L. C. T.
Gift of Susan and Edwin Linville
(83-010)

5) Tangier May 5 Market Place,

September 1870
Tangier, Morocco
Photographic reproduction
Marked: Tangier / May 5 /
Market place
(1998-028:018)

This photograph inspired the 1873 painting, Market Day Outside the Walls of Tangiers, Morocco, now in the collection of the Smithsonian's American Art Museum.

6) North African Scene with City Wall,
c. 1875

Oil on canvas
Signed, lower right:
[conjoined LCT]
Gift of Susan and Edwin Linville
(83-011)

7) On the Hudson, near Dobb's [sic] Ferry,
1870

Oil on canvas
Signed, lower left:
Louis C. Tiffany
(78-0013)



Tiffany was just twenty-two when he completed this painting of Dobbs Ferry in Westchester, New York. A similar painting by his friend and mentor Samuel Colman (1832–1920) is on display in the Other Rooms Gallery in the Museum's Laurelton Hall exhibition. It is likely that the two men painted the scene in the same location at the same time.

8) Landscape, c. 1875

Oil on panel
Signed, lower right: LCT
Gift of Doris and H. K. Blumberg
(1999-111)

9) Landscape with Evening Sky, c. 1880

Watercolor on laid paper on brown board
Signed, lower left: Louis C. Tiffany
Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
(55-019)

10) Landscape, c. 1880

Probably the Adirondacks
Albumen print
Stamped: LOUIS C. TIFFANY.
Marks on mount: 16
(2015-001:118)

TIFFANY STUDIOS STUDY PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

Photographs included in this exhibition are part of the Museum's collection of images captured by Louis Comfort Tiffany to use later in his artwork. The ownership stamp—Louis C. Tiffany—often can be found on the mats around the images, identifying them as photographs taken during his travels as early as the 1870s.

As the artist's photographs grew in quantity, a number was added to the mat for filing purposes, and they were incorporated into a broader collection maintained by his companies. In this way, Tiffany's personal pictures, impressions always artfully composed, continued to be an essential part of the creative process for decades.

Tiffany was one of the earliest artists associated with the relatively new medium of photography, and most of his images are albumen prints. The albumen print was a popular form of photograph produced between the 1850s and 1890s. Improving upon the earlier salt print, albumen—or egg white—added a sheen to the surface and a wide range of tonal variation.

The Morse Museum's archive of Tiffany Studios study photographs encompasses thousands of images, and these are likely only a fraction of the original collection. The Museum acquired the photographs from a glass studio that had probably purchased them from the Tiffany Studios bankruptcy sales in the 1930s.

11) Top to bottom:

Drying Sails, c. 1888

Sea Bright,
New Jersey
Albumen print
(1998-028:078)



Boats on Beach, c. 1888

Sea Bright, New Jersey
Albumen print
(1998-028:052)

Sea Bright, New Jersey, was a well-known resort area, but also served as an important hub for commercial fishing. Tiffany took scores of photographs from as early as 1878, capturing both the leisure activities as well as the boats and men at work.

12) Dune landscape, c. 1883

Probably St. Augustine, Florida
Albumen print
Marks on photograph: 53
(1998-028:049)

13) Beach, c. 1883

St. Augustine, Florida
Albumen prints
Stamped: LOUIS C. TIFFANY.
Marks on photographs: 15 / 1 /
48 / 30 / 29 / 9 / 16 / 31
(2001-052:A-H)

14) Castillo de San Marcos, c. 1883

St. Augustine, Florida
Albumen prints
Stamped: LOUIS C. TIFFANY.
Marks on mount: 15
Marks on photographs: 16 / 28 /
47 / [illegible] / 37 / 38
(2001-050:A-F)

The lower left image inspired the painting of the entrance to the Castillo on view in the Museum's exhibition Louis Comfort Tiffany's Life and Art. Tiffany visited St. Augustine in part to improve the health of his first wife, Mary, but the surviving sets of photographs taken while there speak to his excitement with his surroundings.

15) Mountain landscape, c. 1886

Albumen print
(1998-028:039)

16) Children at Guard

Lock, June 21, 1886

Lehigh Canal,
Easton, Pennsylvania
Albumen print
(1998-028:106)



Tiffany captured dozens of images while on a pleasure trip down the Lehigh and Delaware Canals with his fiancé, Louise Wakeman Knox, soon to be his second wife. This stop in Easton was especially important because they met up with her father, then president of nearby Lafayette College.

17) Children at the Beach c. 1887

Sea Bright, New Jersey
Albumen print
(1998-028:215)

18) Children at the Beach

c. 1888

Sea Bright,
New Jersey
Oil on panel



Gift of Comfort Tiffany Gilder
(55-022)

Tiffany exhibited a painting from this study at the National Academy of Design in 1889. One New York Times critic observed, "Even the so-called impressionists have invaded the Academy and we find Mr. Tiffany seeking to realize the 'key of nature' in his study of children on the shore... ."

19) Wagon Fording a Stream, c. 1875

Oil on canvas
Signed, lower right: *L. C. T.*
Gift of Susan and Edwin Linville
(83-009)

20) Abundance, 1888

Exhibited: Society of Painters in Water-Colors, at the National Academy of Design, 1889; Louis Comfort Tiffany Retrospective, Tiffany Studios, New York, 1916
Watercolor and gouache on paper
Signed, lower right: *Louis C. Tiffany*
(64-030)

21) Cradling, c. 1877

Oil on artist's cardboard
Marks: *by / L C Tiffany*
Gift of Mrs. Comfort Gilder
(75-003)

An etching of this painting was published with "Glimpses of New England Farm Life" in the August 1878 issue of Scribner's Monthly alongside illustrations of works by American artists including R. Swain Gifford (1840-1905) and Winslow Homer (1836-1910).



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