

LANDSCAPES

Among the first objects in the Museum's collection were paintings acquired by Jeannette McKean's mother, Elizabeth Morse Genius (1872–1928), daughter of Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921), and which were hung in the family home in Chicago. Two of the landscape paintings are included here: a summer scene by Edward Dufner (c. 1871–1957) and a winter scene by Guy Wiggins (1883–1962). Wiggins, who was most noted for his New York City views, is the more famous and has connections to other artists in this exhibition. He studied with both William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) and Robert Henri (1865–1929) and also painted with American Impressionist Childe Hassam (1859–1935).

Landscapes, which summon the refreshing beauty of nature and in the United States were associated with national identity, have a long tradition in the fine arts. In American art, landscape painting was one pathway taken by the American art pottery industry. Anxious to overcome the reputation of ceramics as a purely decorative art rather than a more prestigious fine art, influential potters adopted both landscape along with portraiture as proper subjects for pottery. So mountain and river scenes and even portraits of important Native American tribal leaders would be painted on traditional and practical ceramic forms like pitchers and vases. But the art potteries also made landscape plaques that could be hung on parlor walls like oil paintings. Examples of pottery landscapes from two major American art potteries in Ohio—Rookwood Pottery (1880–1967) and S.A. Weller Pottery (1872–1948)—are presented in this exhibition.