

GALLERY XI

SELECTED PORTRAITS

From the Morse Collection

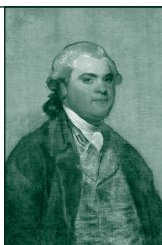
OBJECT GUIDE

Spanning three centuries, the portraits in this exhibition reveal the character of the subjects as well as the vision of the artists who created them. Portraits record more than simply a person's appearance. Artists aim to convey the personality of a sitter while infusing in it their unique talent for expression. The selected portraits represent a period of transition not only in style but material. By the 1880s, oil-on-canvas portraits were challenged by technological innovations in photography for the growing market of portraiture. Regardless of the medium or tradition, the concept of the portrait remained the same, to capture the qualities of a sitter through the skilled interpretation of an artist—painter or photographer.

1) Portrait of a man,
c. 1785

Oil on canvas
Gilbert Stuart,
1755–1828
(P-020-82)

Gilbert Stuart, most popularly associated with his portrait of George Washington that graces the dollar bill, painted many prominent men of the early republic. In this unfinished work, the costume of an unidentified man illustrates the remains of colonial America.



2) Joseph Head, c. 1815

Oil on panel
Gilbert Stuart, 1755–1828
(P-007-86)

While living in Boston, Gilbert Stuart painted Joseph Head (1761–1836), a successful local merchant. Once held in the collection of the National Gallery of Art (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum) in Washington, DC, the painting graced the walls of the White House at the request of Mrs. Herbert Hoover (Lou Henry), from September 1932 until the end of her husband's presidency in March 1933.

- 3) **Mrs. Louisa Herring, 1848**
Oil on canvas
Rembrandt Peale,
1778–1860
(P-059-85)



Louisa Cany Herring (1802–69) was the widowed sister of Rembrandt Peale's second wife Harriet. In this portrait, painted a decade after her husband's death, Louisa's face reflects the toll of her loss.

- 4) **Jeremiah Evarts, c. 1817**
Oil on canvas
Samuel F. B. Morse, 1791–1872
(P-001-81)

Jeremiah Evarts (1781–1831) was a writer, editor, and political activist who fought tirelessly for the rights of Native Americans. When this portrait was painted, he was treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

- 5) **Ann Wilson Hall, c. 1820**
Oil on canvas
Samuel F. B. Morse, 1791–1872
Gift of Mary McKinley Thompson, descendant of the sitter
(P-001-97)

In 1782, Philadelphian Ann Wilson (1763–1850) married

William Hall (1757–1814) of Charleston, South Carolina. William was a Revolutionary War veteran wounded in the Siege of Charleston and imprisoned by the British in St. Augustine, Florida, for eleven months.

- 6) **Richard Aldrich C. McCurdy, 1890**
Oil on canvas
John Singer Sargent, 1856–1925
Signed, on reverse:
John S. Sargent 1890
(P-002-81)



Painted by John Singer Sargent, the preeminent portrait painter of his day, Richard Aldrich C. McCurdy (1835–1916) of Morristown, New Jersey, was named president of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York five years before the company commissioned this once full-length portrait of him. By 1906, McCurdy had become notorious as “the last and biggest of the life insurance company giants” to be driven from the field by the New York State Legislature.

Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791–1872)

Although best-known today for his scientific achievements and the telegraphic code which bears his name, Samuel F. B. Morse was in his early career a renowned portrait painter. The portrait depicting Ann Wilson Hall (1763–1850) was completed a few years before Morse helped organize the National Academy of Design to promote American art and artists. He served as its first president from 1826 to 1845. Marrying his interests in technology and art, Morse was one of the first to take a daguerreotype photograph in the United States. Morse was a distant relative of the Museum's namesake, industrialist and philanthropist Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921).

Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942)

The only female portrait painter on display in this exhibition, Cecilia Beaux was proud of her stature as a “New Woman”—highly educated and breaking with social conventions in her artistic pursuits. She studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at the time of the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. Much like the influential women discussed in the Morse's *Earth Into Art* exhibition, Beaux was influenced by the impressionistic Barbotine pottery on display at the 1876 exhibition and even worked as a china painter. After continuing her studies in Paris, she returned to Philadelphia to become a highly sought-after portraitist to America's upper classes. The year she was commissioned to paint Mrs. Henry La Barre Jayne (1864–1955), Beaux became the first full-time female drawing and painting instructor at her alma mater.

- 7) **Portrait of James Preston, Esq., 1904**

Oil on canvas
Robert Henri, 1865–1929
Signed, lower left:
Robert Henri 1904
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Andersen in memory of
Hugh F. McKean (1908–95)
(P-001-95)

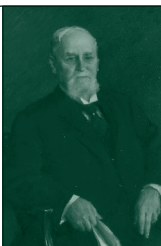
Robert Henri demonstrated his technical skill when he painted his friend and fellow artist James Preston (1873–1962) as a refined, successful gentleman. The work was shown at several exhibitions including the 1905 world's fair in Portland, Oregon—the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair.

- 8) **Mrs. Henry La Barre Jayne (Elizabeth Matthews), 1895**
Oil on canvas
Cecilia Beaux, 1855–1942
(P-072-93)



The daughter of a Boston industrialist, Elizabeth Matthews (1864–1955) married the Philadelphia millionaire lawyer Henry La Barre Jayne (1857–1920) two years before this portrait was commissioned. They chose the well-known local artist Cecilia Beaux, but upon completion, Mrs. Jayne decided she did not want a full-face portrait and refused the work.

- 9) **Sylvester S. Marvin**,
c. 1905
Oil on canvas
William Merritt
Chase, 1849–1916
Signed, lower left:
W M M. Chase
Gift of Leslie and
Kathryn Grammer
(2016-009)



Sylvester S. Marvin (1841–1924) was an industrialist and one of the founders of the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco). A self-made man, he had worked on a riverboat in Missouri and served in the military during the Civil War before, in 1863, founding an enormously successful business. Noted for his innovative production methods, Marvin became known as the “Edison of Manufacturing.” By the 1880s, his biscuit company was the largest in the United States and soon became the chief company of several to form Nabisco.

- 10) **Portrait of a young girl**, c. 1920
Oil on canvas
Charles Webster
Hawthorne,
1872–1930
Gift of Mr. and
Mrs. Aldis
(P-084-80)



Charles Hawthorne, a student of William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), built the image of a young girl with impressionistic brushstrokes in a series of similar color tones. Though the young girl's identity is unknown, her immediacy and

charm foretells the illustrations by Hawthorne's student, Norman Rockwell (1894–1978). Hawthorne spent time from 1923 to 1930 at Laurelton Hall serving as an art advisor for the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation. His painting, The Fountain, made there is in the Morse's Laurelton Hall Dining Room gallery.

- 11) **Portrait of a young girl**, c. 1910
Oil on canvas
Robert Henri,
1865–1929
(P-059-87)



Robert Henri was a member of “The Eight,” an informal group of socially conscious artists who sought to represent the grittier side of New York City. Although the young girl in this portrait appears happy, she likely had few pleasures in life. The anonymous subject is seemingly at odds with the tradition of portrait painting; the girl's ancestry was not aristocratic, her social standing low, but her smiling image in three-quarter pose nonetheless ensures her legacy. Here Henri used the tradition of portraiture as a medium for social commentary.

Early Photos

From its public debut in the 1830s, after experimentation in France under Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787–1851) and in England under William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), photography was recognized as an important new venture in visual expression. It was described in period literature as having been “executed by the pencil of the sun.” Early portrait photography was painfully hindered by technical problems; successful daguerreotypes required long periods of complete immobility on the part of sitter. As a result, many images captured subjects in forced poses that conveyed their misery. Nevertheless, the romance of owning these “pocket-portraits” quickly grew in popularity.

Please see Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921) family tree regarding exhibited photographs.

- 12) *Top shelf, left to right:*

**Three portraits of
Mrs. John Williams Owens
(Martha Jane Cummins)**

Daguerreotype, c. 1855
(2020-002:4)

Ambrotype, c. 1855
(2020-002:2)

Photograph,
c. 1880
Marked, frame:
*A Stowell & Co. /
Boston / ZP / W*
(2013-005:273)



Martha Jane Cummins (1819–57) was Charles Hosmer Morse's mother-in-law. She died over a decade before his marriage to her daughter, Martha J. Owens (1839–1903). This framed photograph was produced after her death from an earlier format.

**Two portraits of Martha J. Owens,
c. 1857**

Daguerreotype
James Presley Ball, 1825–1904
Marks: *[J. P.] Ball / [Cinci]nnati*
(2020-002:5)

Ambrotype
(2020-002:1)

As a seventeen-year-old girl, Martha J. Owens (1839–1903, m. 1868), Charles Hosmer Morse's future wife, was photographed in mourning clothing after the death of her mother, Martha Jane Cummins (1819–57). When her father, John Williams Owens (1811–64) died, he left her daguerreotypes depicting several generations; the images of Martha, along with some of the gold-tinted jewelry she wears, remained treasured objects in the family. They were ultimately passed down to Martha's granddaughter, Jeannette Genius (1909–89), who founded the Morse Museum.



Bottom shelf, front row, left to right:

Hugh Ferguson,
c. 1860
Ambrotype
(2013-013:02AB)

Hugh Ferguson (1850–1936) was the grandfather and namesake of the Morse Museum’s first director, Hugh Ferguson McKean (1908–95).



Mrs. John M. Morse
(Elizabeth Hosmer), c. 1880
Photograph
(2013-005:001)

This photograph was produced posthumously from the daguerreotype with her husband which is on exhibit.

Bottom shelf, back row, left to right:

Mr. and Mrs. John M. Morse,
c. 1845
Daguerreotype
(2020-002:6A)

John M. Morse (1800–1871) and Elizabeth Hosmer (1809–49), Charles Hosmer Morse’s parents,

were married on Christmas Day 1832 in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. This image of the couple was taken shortly before her death at age forty.

John M. Morse,
c. 1855
Ambrotype
(2020-002:6B)

John M. Morse (1800–1871) remarried in 1851, two years after the death of his wife, Elizabeth Hosmer (1809–49). This image was handed down to his eldest child, and only son with Elizabeth, Charles Hosmer Morse.



Zelotes Hosmer, c. 1860
Daguerreotype
(2020-002:3)

Zelotes Hosmer (1801–68), the brother of Elizabeth Hosmer (1809–49), was recognized by one contemporary writer as having “one of the most pleasant residences and finest private libraries in Cambridge [Massachusetts].”

James Presley Ball (1825–1904)

In the thriving nineteenth-century art community of Cincinnati, James Presley Ball ran a successful photography studio from 1845 to 1871 known as the “Great Daguerrean Gallery of the West.” Born a free black man in Virginia, Ball began as a traveling daguerreotypist. He served as an abolitionist and created photo exhibitions which documented the atrocities facing African-Americans traded as slaves. Over his career Ball captured images of a who’s who of figures including Queen Victoria (1819–1901), Charles Dickens (1812–70), Frederick Douglass (1818–95) as well as society people in Cincinnati like Martha J. Owens (1839–1903). Robert Seldon Duncanson (1821–72), the respected African-American landscape painter, worked in Ball’s studio at the time Owens was photographed, retouching images with bits of color.

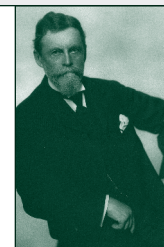
Jens Rudolph Matzene (c. 1870–1950)

In 1900, Jens Rudolph Matzene set up a photography studio to provide modern portraits that catered to high society in the Midwest. The Matzene Studio was located in the heart of Chicago. Representing himself as a European count, the Danish-American photographer quickly became fashionable to the elite. Matzene photographed some of the most important figures in Chicago, including the architect Daniel Burnham (1846–1912) and Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921). But Matzene was most famous for his ability to “best express feminine personality.” Matzene later opened a short-lived, financially disastrous studio in New York City before finding his way under the assumed name of Richard Gordon Matzene to Los Angeles. His style of dramatic photography was embraced by clientele involved in the new industry of moving pictures.

13) Top to bottom,
left to right:

Charles Hosmer Morse, c. 1900
Photograph
Matzene Studio,
Chicago,
1900–1937
Marks: MATZENE / STUDIO / CHICAGO
(2019-005:5)

Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921), in whose memory the Morse Museum was named, was the grandfather of Jeannette Genius (1909–89), who founded the Museum in 1942. He was the controlling partner in Fairbanks, Morse & Co. headquartered in Chicago. The company manufactured engines and scales essential to the Industrial Revolution in nineteenth-century America. Morse, his wife Martha, and their ancestors embraced portrait photography early in its development, leaving the Museum a visual family record.



Elizabeth Owens Morse, c. 1900
Photograph
Matzene Studio,
Chicago,
1900–1937
Marks: MATZENE / STUDIO / CHICAGO
(15005)

Charles Hosmer Morse’s daughter Elizabeth (1872–1928) visited Matzene’s studio in 1900 where Jens Rudolph Matzene (c. 1870–1950) framed her in his signature three-quarter view (from the knees up). He preferred simple backdrops that would emphasize elegant costumes like Elizabeth’s dress which she intended to wear a few months later at her brother’s wedding.



Julia Dean (1878–1952)

Publications like *Theatre Magazine* and the *Dramatic Mirror* were filled with images of the latest stars, like Julia Dean who was making the transition from stage to film. Dean was the niece of an acclaimed nineteenth-century actress for whom she was named. Working her way up through vaudeville, she became celebrated in her own right. By 1902, after proving herself as both a comedic and dramatic actress on the New York stage, her career began to decline despite a starring role in the 1913 Lyric Theatre production of *Her Own Money*. Fortunately, by then she was being wooed into the new market for moving pictures. At age thirty-five, she was recruited to Los Angeles for her star power rather than her youth. There Jens Rudolph Matzene (c. 1870–1950) completed the autographed portrait of Julia Dean on display.

Julia Dean, c. 1914

Photograph
Matzene Studio,
Los Angeles,
1900–1937

Marks: *Matzene /*
LOS ANGELES

Inscribed: *To dear*
old “Buster” / from his playmate /
Julia with love
(2003-033:60)



Mounted photographs served as promotional tools for actresses and as keepsakes for their admirers. Although the true identity of Dean’s fan is unknown, “Buster” was likely one of the hundreds of workers at Tiffany Studios (1902–32). This photograph found its way into the extensive photographic art reference files that were available to workers at Tiffany Studios. These thousands of photographs are now in the Morse’s collection.

Charles Hosmer

Morse, c. 1915

Photograph
Matzene Studio,
Chicago, 1900–1937
Signed, lower right:
MATZENE
(2019-005:2)



Charles Hosmer Morse (1833–1921) is presented here as the fruitful industrialist, reclined and reaping the benefits of his business pursuits while smoking a cigar. By 1915, Morse was enjoying retirement in Winter Park after a long career at Fairbanks, Morse & Co.



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