

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## Albany Institute of History & Art

125 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12210

T: (518) 463-4478; F: (518) 462-1522

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## NEWS

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CONTACT:

Doug McCombs

Chief Curator

[mccombsd@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:mccombsd@albanyinstitute.org)

(518) 463-4478 ext 428

Aine Leader-Nagy

Marketing Associate

[leader.nagya@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:leader.nagya@albanyinstitute.org)

(518) 463-4478 ext 408

## NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES WALTER LAUNT PALMER'S LIFE, TRAVELS, AND ARTISTIC INTERESTS

*Walter Launt Palmer: Painting the Moment* will run March 28–August 16, 2015

ALBANY, NY— Artist Walter Launt Palmer (1854–1932), the son of Albany sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer, has enjoyed a revival of interest in the art world over the last several years. It's now common to see his paintings in art magazines and at major auctions across the country, bringing record prices for his oils and watercolors. As an artist who preferred living and working in his home community of Albany, rather than New York City, Palmer carried forward the creative genius that emerged in the region generations earlier with the Hudson River School and his father's own sculpture. The Albany Institute holds one of the largest public collections of work by Walter Launt Palmer, including oil and watercolor paintings, pastels, and drawings, as well as letters and photographs. The exhibition, **Walter Launt Palmer: Painting the Moment**, presents for the first time in more than a decade the broad range of Palmer's work, offering a visual overview of his life, travels, and artistic interests.

Walter Palmer, known as Wallie among friends and family, grew up in a household and community well connected with the arts. The portrait painter Charles Loring Elliot gave the young boy his first set of paints at age twelve, and a few years later the period's most respected landscape artist, Frederic Edwin Church, tutored the young man. Palmer began exhibiting his work in the early 1870s, but it was his travels in Europe with his family in 1873 and 1874 that exposed him to the great masters and to new trends in art. He met, for example, the younger American painter John Singer Sargent, who was working in Italy, and remarked in a letter that "his style is bold & vigorous." Palmer adopted a similar style for some of his early paintings. In 1876, he returned to Europe again to continue studies with the Parisian painting master Charles-Émile-Auguste Carolus-Duran.

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After his return to Albany in 1877, Palmer began painting his first significant series: building interiors. Palmer's interiors are rich in detail and invite close inspection. He lavished attention on the textiles, ceramics, furniture, and wall decorations that filled well-furnished parlors, libraries, and hallways. He even painted the dining room at Appledale, the Palmer family home, where he included one of his sisters seated in a rocking chair beside the fireplace.

Palmer traveled to Europe for a third time in 1881 specifically "to paint some of the fine 'interiors' that are entirely lacking in our own country," as he noted in a letter to the *Albany Argus*. There, he did find many fine interiors that became the subject of his canvases, but it was during this stay in Europe that the city of Venice caught his attention. The pastel colors of buildings, water, and the moisture-laden atmosphere captivated the artist. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s Palmer painted numerous oils and watercolors of this Italian city, including the Piazza San Marco, St. Marks Basilica, and the Grand Canal.

By the mid-1880s Palmer began working on yet a third series: winter scenes. His winter paintings captivate viewers with their serenity and masterful tonal subtleties. Fir trees and barren branches droop under the weight of freshly fallen snow and ice glistens on half-frozen streams in a way that captures the immediacy of the moment. Palmer, in fact, has often been called the "painter of the American winter." Most of his winter scenes he painted from memory, and he continued to paint these popular landscapes until his death in 1932.

The exhibition includes works from all three of Palmer's major series, and also includes oils and watercolors from other travels and other interests. A select number of works from private collections enhance the exhibition and help broaden the artist's creative life.

This exhibition has been supported in part by Martha Olson in honor of Norman Rice and James Gwynn.

The Albany Institute of History & Art is located at 125 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York. Free parking is available in the museum's lot at the corner of Elk and Dove Streets. The museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 10AM-5PM, Thursdays until 8PM\*, and Sunday Noon-5PM. On Tuesdays, the museum is open to registered groups only. The museum is closed on Mondays and some holidays. \*AIHA now offers free admission on Thursdays from 5PM-8PM.

Admission is free for Institute members; \$10/adults; \$8/seniors; \$8/students with ID; \$6/children 6-12; FREE/children under 6. Bank of America and Merrill Lynch card holders get free admission to the Albany Institute of History & Art on the first weekends of the months that *Triple Play! Baseball at the Albany Institute* is open (February through July 2015). This is part of Bank of America's Museums on Us program. You can learn more about this program on their website, <http://museums.bankofamerica.com/>.

For more information, visit [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org) or call (518) 463-4478.

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Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 35,000 objects and one million documents in the library, it is an important resource for the region, giving our community a sense of the part the Hudson Valley played in the American story, and our own place in history. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are open year-round and create a sense of place, allowing visitors to meet the people who helped shape this region. Over 25,000 people visit the Albany Institute of History & Art every year, enjoying the collections, workshops, school programs, and lectures, helping to build an understanding of the history and culture of our region. Among the museum's best-known and most-loved collections are the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hudson River School landscape paintings by artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, the 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture collections, and, of course, the famous Albany Mummies that came to the museum in 1909 and have been on view ever since. For more information, please visit [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org) and be sure to follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute](https://www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute)) and Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute).

## SAMPLE IMAGES

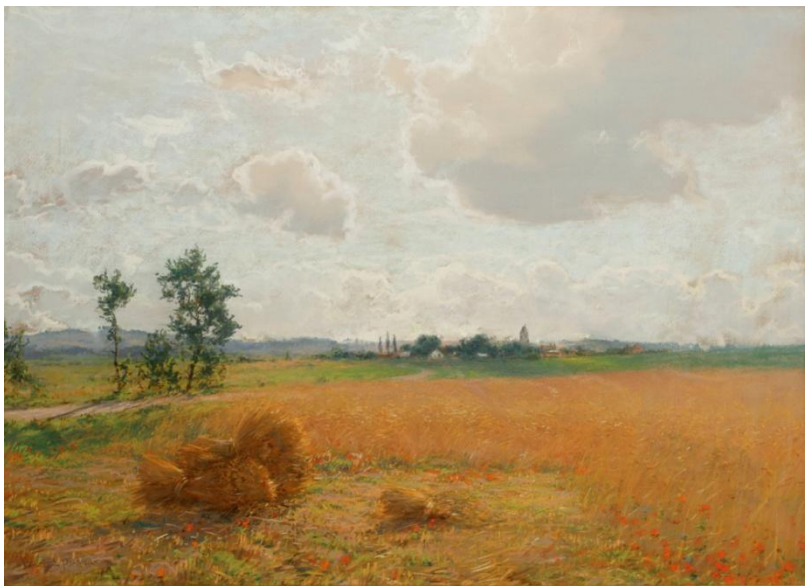


Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932),  
photography by Antonio Sorgato,  
1885, Albumen print, Albany  
Institute of History & Art Library,  
Erastus Dow Palmer Papers,  
AQ185

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Erastus D. Palmer (man with beard), Mrs. E. D. Palmer (sitting next to Erastus), Walter Launt Palmer (man standing with glasses) and family, unidentified photographer, July 14, 1892, Albumen print, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, Walter Launt Palmer Papers, B3.F23.248



*Wheatfield with Poppies*, Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932), 1889-90, pastel on composition board, gift of the Estate of Catherine Ganesvoort Lansing, 1919.4.23



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*Stanway Interior*, Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932), 1881, Oil on canvas, Albany Institute of History & Art purchase, 1967.9



*Venetian Scene*, Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932), c. 1890, Watercolor, Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of Philip Kerr in Memory of Caroline Peltz, 2009.33.3

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*Road to Olana*, Walter Launt  
Palmer (1854-1932), 1888,  
watercolor and gouache on paper,  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
gift of the estate of Miss Evelyn  
Newman, 1964.31.40

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