

LOAN EXHIBITION

*Economic Models:  
The Art of the Figure*

Works from the collection of the  
Federal Reserve Board, Washington, D.C.

*Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt*



*Figure 1*  
George Cochran Lambdin  
*Rosie Reverie*  
1865  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches  
Purchase

The 'models' and 'figures' referred to here are not the interest rates set by the Federal Reserve Board, Washington, D.C., which was established in 1913 to provide the U.S.A. with a more stable monetary and financial system. 'Models' and 'figures' instead are the subjects of the works in this loan exhibition, drawn from the more than 300 paintings, drawings, prints and a handful of sculptures that have been amassed by 'the Fed.'

In 1971 Richard M. Nixon issued a presidential memorandum encouraging all federal agencies to promote art and artists. Four years later, the Fed hired Mary Anne Goley, a specialist in American painting, as director of its Fine Arts Program, with a mandate to create a collection to enhance the workplace and to provide its many foreign visitors a memorable introduction to American artistic and cultural values. The paintings she has acquired by gifts and fundraising for purchases (banks and bankers may not be solicited!), hang in offices throughout the three buildings that the 'Fed family' calls home.

The collection includes abstract expressionist prints such as Robert Motherwell's *Flesh Automatism* and landscapes such as Charles Rosen's *The Viaduct* as well as paintings in which the figure is the protagonist. Although most of the works in the collection are by American artists, there are also paintings by Australian Aborigines (gifts of the Australian Government) and by artists from Cuba, Ecuador, Japan and other countries. The figural works chosen for this loan exhibition demonstrates the breadth and high quality of the collection in paintings and sculpture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

George Cochran Lambdin first studied with his artist father in Philadelphia, then traveled to Europe in 1855 to study in Paris and Munich. By the 1860s he had established a reputation as a genre painter with a specialty in subjects of young women and children. During the American Civil War, Lambdin painted moving scenes of soldiers departing for the battlefield, leaving their families behind. After the war he began to insert roses into his paintings of figures lost in thought, of which *Rosie Reverie* (Figure 1) is a perfect example. As time went on, he specialized in painting only the roses, the first American painter to dedicate



*Figure 2*  
Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi  
*Liberty Enlightening the World—French Committee Model*  
After 1879  
Terracotta  
38¼ x 16¼ x 12½ inches  
Purchased with funds given in honor of the Twentieth  
Anniversary of the Fine Arts Program



himself to that subject.

Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi was the French sculptor of *Liberty Enlightening the World*—the Statue of Liberty—that was constructed on Bedloes Island in New York Harbor by the renowned French architects Viollet-le-Duc and Gustave Eiffel. The Union Franco-Américaine was established in 1875 to present *Liberty* to the United States as a gift commemorating the aid from France to the American colonies during the American War of Independence. One of the fundraising efforts that made the eventual gift possible was the authorized edition of 200 terracotta models for the statue (only 50 were made), ‘touched up and signed’ by Bartholdi himself to be sold for 1,000 Fr. in France or \$300 in New York. The version in the Federal Reserve Board collection (Figure 2) is one of only 10 examples known today.

The more usual connection between France and America in the arts was the large number of American painters who, like Lambdin, not only studied abroad, but spent considerable time working there. Henry Bacon arrived in Paris in 1864 to study with Cabanal at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and two years later joined the artist colony at Ecouen-Seine-et Oise, a few miles north of Paris. Bacon began as a genre painter, but increasingly

Figure 3

Henry Bacon

*Etretat*

1890

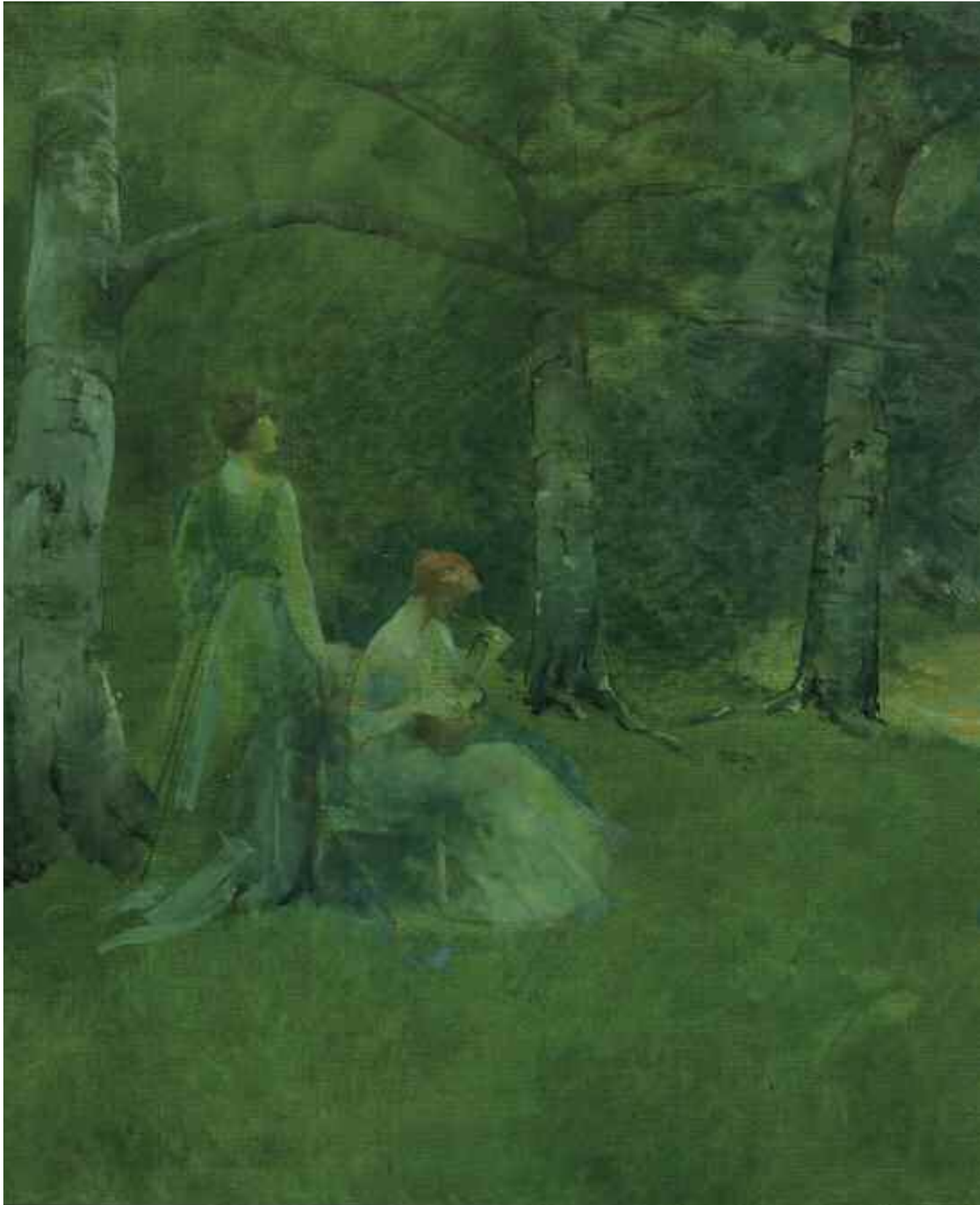
Oil on panel

13 x 16 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred T. Morris, Jr.

painted in an impressionist manner, as demonstrated in *Etretat* (Figure 3). He began visiting the village of Etretat in the late 1860s and continued to do so until 1896. The site is reflected not only in his paintings from those years, but in his 1895 book, *Etretat, Hamlet of the Setting Sun*, and in his poetry.

Like Lambdin and Bacon, Edith Mitchell Prellwitz, who began her studies in the U.S. at the Art Students League in New York, chose to further her studies abroad. She attended the Académie Julian in Paris, where she received critiques from William-Adolphe Bougeureau. She returned to New York in 1891, married painter Henry Prellwitz, and won several prizes for her paintings that enabled the purchase of a summer home in Cornish, New Hampshire. The sculptor Augustus Saint-





*Figure 4*  
Edith Mitchell Prellwitz  
*Summer Landscape (Cornish)*  
(Summer of 1895, 1896, 1897, or 1898)  
Oil on canvas  
28½ x 37 inches  
Gift of Samuel Prellwitz in honor of the Twentieth  
Anniversary of the Fine Arts Program



*Figure 5*  
Richard Miller  
*Studio Still Life*  
c.1927  
Oil on canvas  
25½ x 21 inches  
Purchased with funds provided by Anne and Ron Abramson,  
Erwin and Terri Harris, The Whitehead Foundation and general  
acquisition funds

Gaudens had established an artist colony in Cornish in 1885, and Edith and Henry spent their summers there until 1898. Her *Summer Landscape (Cornish)* offers a range of cool greens enlivened by the white bark of the birch trees and the pale summer frocks of the women.

Richard Edward Miller studied at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts in the 1890s, then, courtesy of the school's first scholarship for study in Paris, he enrolled in the Académie Julian in 1899. Along with other members of the 'second generation of American Impressionists' that gathered at Giverny, Miller developed a synthetic style that reflected the color and brushwork of the Impressionists, the flat planes of color of the Post-Impressionists, Aestheticism, and academic figural conventions. At the time, the paintings of the Spanish master Diego de



*Figures 6 and 7*  
Karl Heinrich Gruppe  
*Hudson Receiving His Commission from the Dutch East Indies Company*  
*Hudson Trading with the Algonquin Indians*  
1937  
Plaster  
Each 14¾ x 19 x 1 inch  
Gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stover



*Figure 8*  
Minna Citron  
*Construction (TVA Engineers)*  
1941  
Oil on masonite  
27 x 17 ¼ inches  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H.  
Citron

Velázquez were considered harbingers of modernism and Miller greatly admired his work. Even years later, in composing his *Studio Still Life* (Figure 5), Miller appropriated the figures from Velázquez's *The Spinners*.

Sculpture is not widely represented in the Federal Reserve Board collection, as it is not always suited to installation in offices: the two bas reliefs by Karl Heinrich Gruppe are an exception. Gruppe was born in Rochester, New York, but grew up in Holland where his father was a painter in the style of The Hague School. Gruppe studied at the Royal Academy in Antwerp and, when the family returned to the U.S., found work with Herbert Adams, an American Renaissance-style sculptor, then he apprenticed with the Viennese-born sculptor Karl Bitter. Between 1934 and 1937 Gruppe supervised the artists who worked on the New York City Monument Restoration project under the Public Works of Art Project. In 1938 the NYC Parks Commission hired Gruppe to complete the monument to Henry Hudson for a site in Riverdale that had been originally designed by Bitter. The pair of reliefs (Figures 6 and 7) he designed for the base of the bronze statue of Hudson reflect the conservative style of architectural decoration of the time, for which Gruppe's clean,



modernist forms were perfectly suited.

Minna Citron was of the generation of artists who created genre scenes in what might be called an 'urban realist' style. She was from Newark, New Jersey and Brooklyn, studied in New York, and, established a studio on Union Square, where she was part of the 14th Street School. Citron is best known as a printmaker, but she also taught and painted murals under the Federal Art Project of the New Deal for which her sketch of Tennessee Valley Authority engineers at work is a study (Figure 8). Not

*Figure 9*  
O. Louis Guglielmi  
*New York 21*  
1949  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 29 inches  
Purchase

until after World War II did Citron visit Europe and turn to abstraction in her art.

O. Louis Guglielmi was born in 1906 in Cairo to parents of Italian descent. In 1914 the family settled in New York, where Guglielmi eventually dropped out of high school to study full time at the National Academy of Design.

His early work was intended to have a social purpose, and he later used symbolism to express this vision. By 1951, however, he was teaching 'Abstract Painting, Drawing, and Composition' at the New School. *New York 21* (*Figure 9*) was a prize winner at the 147th Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1952. The semi-abstract, patchwork style of the composition reflects Guglielmi's friendship with Stuart Davis, and the energetic 'everything's up to date in New York City' ambience is underlined by the presence of a transistor radio, invented the year before Guglielmi painted it.

The Federal Reserve Board will continue to acquire works for its collection, with gifts from friends of the 'Fed family,' from ambassadors who want their countries' culture represented on



the walls of this august institution, and through the astute fundraising and purchasing of Mary Anne Goley, director of the Fine Arts Program.

NOTE: The information in this essay is based on catalogues published by the Fine Arts Program and information in the files.

*Our thanks to Gander & White for sponsoring the shipping of the loan exhibition to and from the fair.*