



American artist Winslow Homer (1836–1910) achieved widespread fame as a watercolorist. A selection of Homer's watercolors, alongside paintings and prints, will be on view in the exhibition *Winslow Homer in the National Gallery of Art*, in the East Building from July 3, 2005 through February 20, 2006.

You will see, in the future I will live
by my watercolors. Winslow Homer

Winslow Homer, *Key West, Hauling Anchor* (detail), 1903, watercolor over graphite, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel



1

Tell me about the artist

At age eighteen, Winslow Homer began his career in his hometown of Boston, where he worked as an apprentice at a printing company. Skilled at drawing, he soon made a name for himself making illustrations for novels, sheet music, magazines, and thirteen children's books.

He then moved to New York City, where he worked as a freelance illustrator with *Harper's Weekly*, a popular magazine of the time, and began painting. Homer was assigned to cover the inauguration of President Lincoln and, later, the Civil War. His pictures of the Union troops won international acclaim. Homer moved to England and, after a two-year stay, returned to America. He settled permanently in Maine in 1883.

Homer mastered both oil and watercolor painting during his career, portraying nineteenth-century America in a fresh way. Some of his favorite subjects were outdoor scenes of children playing and farmers and fishermen working.

Napoleon Sarony, *Photograph: Winslow Homer taken in N.Y. 1880* (detail), 1880, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, Gift of the Homer Family

Paintings of the Adirondacks

Winslow Homer, *On the Trail*, c. 1892, watercolor over graphite, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel

Winslow Homer, *Casting, Number Two*, 1894, watercolor over graphite, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel

2

Into Nature

Homer traveled widely—to New York, Virginia, Canada, Bermuda, Florida, the Caribbean, and throughout New England. During these working trips, Homer preferred to paint with watercolors because they were easy to carry around, allowing him to work outdoors. Painting in nature, Homer could closely observe each place. With quick brush strokes, he could capture crashing waves, changing light, and moving animals.





Paintings of Florida

Winslow Homer, *Key West, Hauling Anchor*, 1903, watercolor over graphite, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel

Winslow Homer, *Under a Palm Tree*, 1886, watercolor, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel

3

Woods and Water

The Adirondack Mountains and Florida were two places that Homer particularly enjoyed visiting. He recorded in watercolor the activities and environment that were specific to each locale.

In the Adirondacks, Homer painted the forests, mountains, lakes, and rivers, showing such activities as fishing and hiking. In Florida, Homer painted fishermen, schooners in Key West Harbor, women under palm trees, exotic birds, alligators, and swamps.

Look at the watercolors reproduced on these pages. Imagine that you could travel to these places. Which scene is most appealing to you? Why?



4

Shimmering Sunlight

To show sunlight, Homer left areas of his white paper untouched. With this technique, the paper's whiteness—not paint—creates glints of brilliant light.

On these pages, look for light

- peeking into the forest
- glistening off of the surface of water
- reflecting off of boat sails

book nook

These books can be found at your local library or bookstore.

Winslow Homer

By Mike Venezia | ages 4 and up

A playful introductory biography of the artist

A Weekend with Winslow Homer

By Ann Kay Beneduce | ages 8 and up

The painter talks about his life and work as if entertaining the reader for the weekend.

Eyewitness: Watercolor

By Michael Clarke | ages 8 and up

Providing an overview of the medium, this book covers art from illuminated manuscripts and Chinese silk to modern masters. Artistic analysis is combined with color photography of more than 150 works of art as well as artists' materials.

The Complete Guide to Watercolor

By Ray Smith and Elizabeth Jane Lloyd | ages 12 and up

A comprehensive introduction to watercolor materials and techniques, with step-by-step color photographs revealing the artist's process

try this!

activity



Homer's Bahamas

I think the Bahamas the best place I have ever found. –Winslow Homer

In 1884 *Century Magazine* asked Homer to illustrate an article about Nassau, the port city of the Bahamas. During his stay on the tropical island, he painted more than thirty watercolors of a variety of subjects, including island architecture, sponge and coral fishing, fruit trees, and the unusual features of the landscape.

In *Native Huts, Nassau*, Homer illustrated the thatched house of an island family. The house was built on blocks to avoid being flooded during storms, and wooden shutters were adjusted depending upon the weather.

Winslow Homer, *Native Huts, Nassau*, 1885, watercolor, graphite, and gouache on wove paper, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Find the following in Homer's *Native Huts, Nassau*, and in the word search below:

ROOSTER, PALM TREE, CLOUDS, SAND, SKY, HOUSE, SHADOW, FAMILY

N	T	E	H	R	Z	A	C
B	E	F	K	O	G	N	W
I	S	C	L	O	U	D	S
S	H	E	Y	S	I	S	M
P	A	L	M	T	R	E	E
J	D	N	G	E	H	B	S
X	O	O	D	R	Q	U	K
E	W	F	A	M	I	L	Y