

The background is a dark, heavily textured painting. It features a central, glowing yellow circle, possibly representing a sun or moon, surrounded by swirling, mottled colors of teal, blue, and green. The overall effect is one of a night sky or a deep, mysterious landscape. The texture is very rough and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a sense of depth.

**Ralph Albert Blakelock**

The Great Mad Genius Returns









November 11 – December 10, 2016

An Exhibition and Sale

# Ralph Albert Blakelock

## The Great Mad Genius Returns

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PLATE 1 *Reflections*



# Blakelock Rising

BY LOUIS M. SALERNO

It is a powerful art that awakens a primordial instinct, that eludes and defies explanation, that lives on as others morph under the gravity of style and trend, and that impacts the thinking person of the twenty-first century as profoundly as it did in the nineteenth century.

Motivated by his disenchantment with his artistic progression, Ralph Albert Blakelock journeyed alone deep into the American West. He assimilated the beliefs and cultures of the various Native American tribes that he lived among, cultivating a vision that would forever define his art. His work inspires viewers to look beyond the accumulated thoughts and customs that obscure their connection to life in its most elemental form. Somehow, without warning, Blakelock's art brings us face-to-face with life in the raw, revealed in a way that circumvents our intellect and resonates at the core of our being. It takes us to a place, common to all mankind, in the deepest part of our minds, where we are bound to the most primal life force. It is a place celebrated and understood best by our Native American predecessors, which most of us have never discovered, and when Blakelock gets us there the impact is profound. It is shocking. We do not expect it and we lack the ability to calibrate the experience to our intellect.

Blakelock's impact is magnified by the duality of his talent. His work is infused with a musicality, and by the manipulation of oil and pigment his canvas is a visual conduit of sound. This added dimension increases the potency of his compositions exponentially. They appear as ominous as an oncoming vortex whose unbearable sound is silent, but whose roar is brought to fruition by vivid strokes, agitated texture, and imaginative imagery. It stuns the viewer so that multiple senses

must be engaged to regain balance and to contemplate what is being seen. This remarkable innovation has little precedent and is a significant part of Blakelock's unique contribution to the art of the world. It has attracted the attention of musicians for over a century. Recently, two individuals, an internationally acclaimed composer and a world renowned performer, have acquired Blakelock paintings from us, and in the past we have sold his work to two other collectors who have won a combined twenty-five Grammy awards. To gain a better understanding of this component of his work, I encourage you to read Mark Mitchell's brilliant essay included herein.

To all of you who wonder what I see in Blakelock, I ask you to suspend your doubts for the duration of a visit to the gallery. If you dismiss all that I believe, you are still left with George Bellows's assertion that Blakelock was a "genius,"<sup>1</sup> with Marsden Hartley's belief that his work was a "plausible basis for a genuine American art,"<sup>2</sup> or that Andy Warhol and Jamie Wyeth collected his paintings, and that he was abstract expressionist Franz Kline's favorite artist. You will also have to get past the headlines and the vast critical acclaim, as well as the records he broke, before you can completely absolve any interest you may have. For thirty years, I have observed Blakelock's impact. Everyone is vulnerable. Too often collectors visit the gallery and make an effort to declare their disinterest. But then, there is that one painting that halts them and inevitably it is by Blakelock.

Rarely can a gallery present a meaningful overview of an important artist's entire career. This monumental show, eleven years in the making, will feature 125 paintings representing every phase of

Blakelock's output. Every painting is for sale, something that is unheard of for an artist of this caliber and an unprecedented opportunity for collectors.

My belief in, and my hope for, Blakelock is best expressed in the final paragraph of Elliot Dangerfield's seminal biography:

*The cycle of strain is over, the golden brush is dull,—in the thoughtful places of men's hearts he has high and distinguished consideration, but to the outer, larger, more casual world he is not yet known. From dim, forgotten places, in the future years, other generations will find and bring to light his quiet, glowing jewels of color and tone, precious as jewels must ever be, whether they be from the mines of the Lord, or from the deep places of the human heart.*<sup>3</sup>

This is that future. We are another generation and once again the light shines on Blakelock.

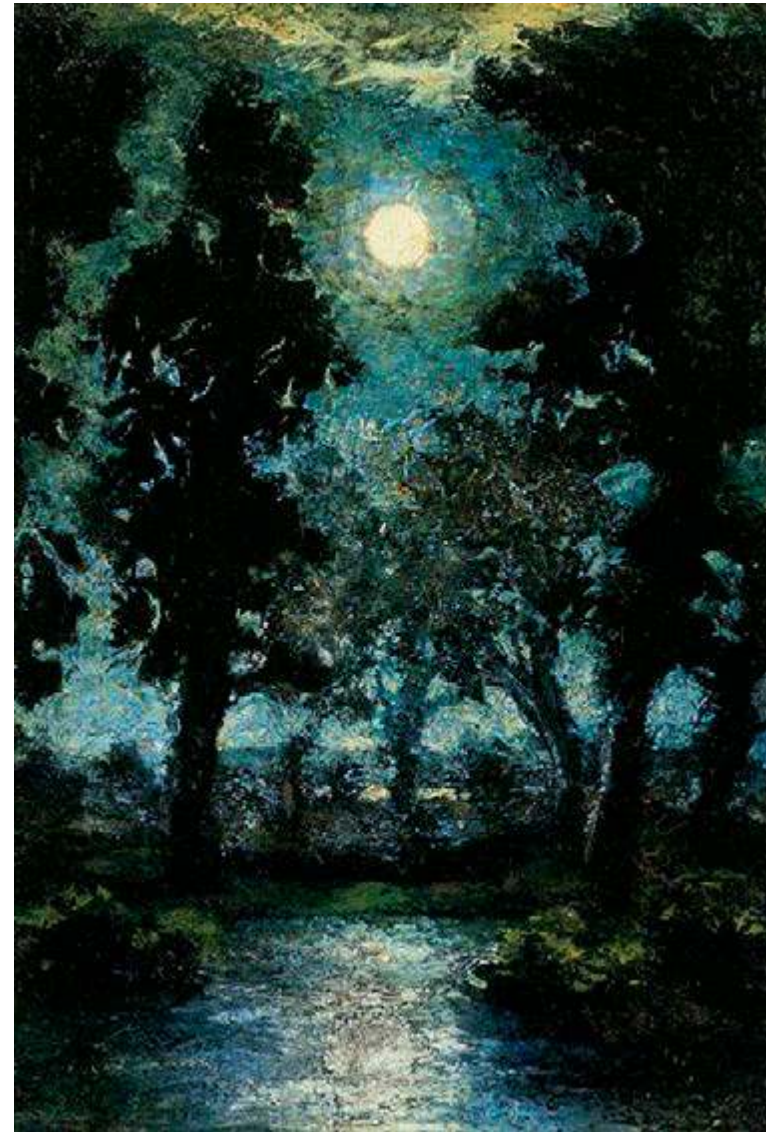


PLATE 2 *Eternal Orb*

1. George Bellows, quoted in "Plans Exhibition to Aid Blakelock: Mrs. Van Rensselaer Adams to Have Best Works Placed on View," *New-York Tribune*, March 21, 1916.
2. Marsden Hartley, "Eakins, Homer, Ryder" (1930), reprinted in *On Art by Marsden Hartley*, ed. Gail R. Scott (New York: Horizon Press, 1982), 171–72.
3. Elliott Daingerfield, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (New York: privately printed, 1914), 40.



# Blakelock in the Eyes of Artists

BY MARK D. MITCHELL

Holcombe T. Green Curator of American  
Paintings and Sculpture, Yale University Art Gallery

Ralph Albert Blakelock was an artist’s artist. His evocative landscapes contribute a distinctive and deeply felt vision to the history of American art, but Blakelock struggled to support his large family with his art and suffered increasingly with mental illness. Only after he was committed to a psychiatric hospital with debilitating schizophrenia in 1899 did his profile increase and the market for his art soar. He was famous—not least for being insane—but unable to benefit from his celebrity. Over time, however, a remarkable array of fellow artists have shared a different view, expressing admiration for Blakelock’s work and defining his role as a leading figure in the history of American art.

## Art of Darkness

Beginning in his own lifetime, Blakelock was identified with night, including in the first monograph on his art published by painter Elliott Daingerfield in 1914. Blakelock’s haunting nocturnes, some quite large (FIG. 1), often feature tree-lined embankments silhouetted by a full moon and softly glowing sky. During the early years of the twentieth century the darkness of Blakelock’s palette seemed to mirror the artist’s struggle and suggested an intimate expression of his mental illness. The strength of that impression, the very cause of his fame, eclipsed visual description of Blakelock’s art in critical and scholarly writing, including Daingerfield’s thoughtful study. In the view of art historian E. P. Richardson, writing at mid-century, Blakelock’s “work is kept alive by his tragic story,” a perspective that has been reinforced in more recent surveys.<sup>1</sup>

Daingerfield, on the other hand, was both insightful and poetic in his appreciation for Blakelock’s paintings. “When we look upon the exquisite tracery of his black trees against divine skies, we may forgive him much, and love intensely his vision of the nightfall hour,” he wrote.<sup>2</sup> Daingerfield went on to explore several dimensions that are key to the appreciation of Blakelock’s art. Unfortunately, he also regularly contradicted himself and inaccurately reported the facts of Blakelock’s life, undermining his credibility with later writers. In visual terms, however, Daingerfield’s study is a vital reference. His writing is the linguistic equivalent of both his own paintings (FIG. 2) and Blakelock’s work, and his close examinations provide durable insights into Blakelock’s art from his own time.

First, Daingerfield recognized two “phases of nature” that had special appeal for Blakelock: “Moonlight and that strange, wonderful moment when night is about to assume full sway, when the light in the western sky lingers lovingly, glowingly, for a space, and the trees trace themselves in giant patterns of lace against the light.... This was Blakelock’s moment, and it took such hold upon him that his vision translated it into all his work.”<sup>3</sup> It is an evocative account of an evocative art. Whereas most studies of Blakelock are biographical in emphasis or subdivide it into various subjects, Daingerfield persuasively focuses on climate and effect as organizing ideas.

He goes on to identify three paintings as the pinnacle of Blakelock’s art: one now in the Toledo Museum of Art (FIG. 1), another at the National Gallery of Art (FIG. 3), and the third at the Sheldon Memorial



PLATE 3 *Indian Encampment at Sunset*



FIG. 1  
Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919),  
*Brook by Moonlight*, before 1891, oil  
on canvas, 72<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 48<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches, Toledo  
Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs.  
Edward Drummond Libbey, 1916.4

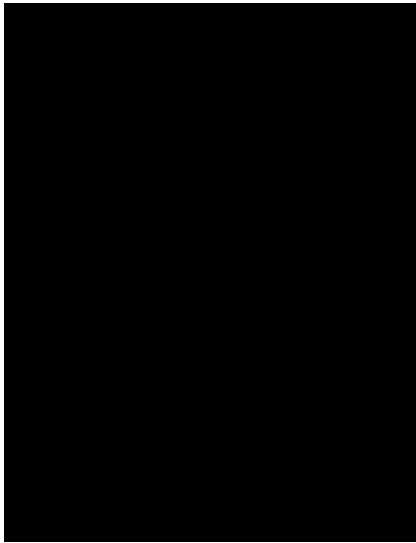


FIG. 2  
Elliott Daingerfield (1859–1932), *Moonlight*,  
late 1880s to mid 1890s, oil on canvas,  
18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches, Henry Art Gallery,  
University of Washington, Seattle,  
Horace C. Henry Collection, Acc. #26.37



FIG. 3  
Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919), *Moonlight*, 1886/1895,  
oil on canvas, 27<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 37<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches, National Gallery of Art,  
Washington, Corcoran Collection (2014.136.20)

Art Gallery. Unlike the diffuse or generic language applied in most writing about Blakelock, Daingerfield’s descriptions of these works are grounded in visual experience and therefore especially helpful to viewers seeking an introduction to Blakelock’s art. Perhaps his single best description is of *Moonlight* (FIG. 3), now at the National Gallery. He concentrates on the delicacy and gradation of color in its sky, of which the painting is largely comprised, above “slight trees” and “the mysterious glint of water somewhere out there among the shadows.” “The great sky soars up from horizon to zenith, arching overhead superbly, and baffling all search in its gradations; the moon hangs low and fills the air with light ... the light is that mysterious mingling of opaline colors merging into pale greens and blues, splendidly assembled.”<sup>4</sup> In the language of the day, Daingerfield admired “the quality of perfect completion” in *Moonlight*, in contrast to many other Blakelocks that are characterized by “suggestive incompleteness,” the visual language of dreams and memory. “The picture has for years been well known,” he continues, “and a valued work by the public and by the artists. In the profession it has been called a perfect moonlight, and, it has no enemies—a strange thing, indeed, as painters have strong prejudices.”<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, even Daingerfield’s expression of esteem is framed in terms of the universal appreciation voiced by artists.

Daingerfield expanded his field to address the power of Blakelock’s smaller compositions as well. The artist seemed, in one instance, “to search for that high note which delicate, pale-green tones give, and these feel their way through fields of silver, glinting, trembling and altogether beautiful.”<sup>6</sup> Both Daingerfield and the art publisher Frederic Fairchild Sherman recognized the strength of the small paintings. The distinction of Blakelock’s small compositions in

Daingerfield’s eyes derived from their combination of a prevailing mood and intimate effect. Sherman elaborated on Daingerfield’s perception of the essential unity and “monumental dignity” in Blakelock’s smallest works by contributing an article dedicated to the subject to *Art in America* in 1916.<sup>7</sup>

Daingerfield attempted to dispel early and persistent speculation about Blakelock’s use of unstable media, particularly the asphalt-based pigment bitumen. A self-taught painter and son of a homeopathic physician, Blakelock has suffered from the perception that he lacked proper instruction and experimented with ill-considered, unconventional materials. Blakelock painted twilight and moonlit landscapes, however, so his art was always dark. According to Daingerfield, “the accusation against Blakelock that his canvases blacken with time is hardly fair and seldom true.”<sup>8</sup> Daingerfield acknowledged that the artist had used bitumen, but only briefly, and assured his readers that most of Blakelock’s paintings are durable, an assertion that time has borne out. Nevertheless, the perception lingers today that Blakelock, like the era’s other great visionary painter Albert Pinkham Ryder, was a poor craftsman. Only further scientific study will prove Daingerfield’s point and overturn that commonly held belief, now discredited in Ryder’s case.

Daingerfield and Sherman were themselves in the thick of the market—both personally owned Blakelock paintings illustrated in Daingerfield’s book, which Sherman copyrighted. They would co-organize—with Blakelock’s trusted friend Harry Watrous—the landmark 1916 exhibition of Blakelock’s paintings at Reinhardt Galleries in New York that sparked fevered press coverage when the artist himself was permitted to leave the sanitarium for a single day to attend. Between his book and the exhibition, Daingerfield was the single leading voice

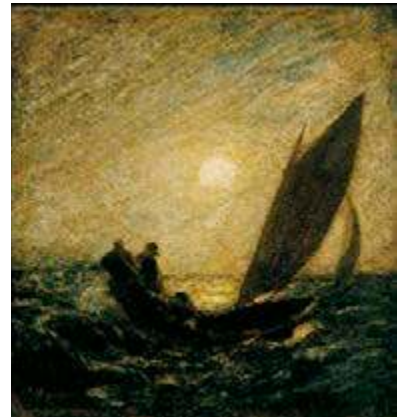


FIG. 4  
Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847–1917),  
*With Sloping Mast and Dipping  
Prow*, ca. 1880–85, oil on canvas  
mounted on fiberboard, 12 x 12  
inches, Smithsonian American  
Art Museum, Gift of John Gellatly  
(1929.6.102)  
Photo courtesy of Smithsonian American  
Art Museum, Washington, DC / Art  
Resource, NY

on Blakelock’s art during the painter’s lifetime. His admiration for Blakelock’s process and desire to define the highest level of his achievement remains foundational to the study of Blakelock’s art.

Daingerfield may have recognized the primary dimensions of Blakelock’s art, but other artists contributed significant perspectives as well, often while addressing broader themes in American art. In 1905, for example, nearly a decade before Daingerfield’s book appeared, the painter Samuel Isham raised “the question of texture” in recent American art, by which he meant “using pigment and varnish so that they should be beautiful in themselves.” To Isham, Blakelock was “an extreme example” of those who considered “matter as quite as important as ideas” and in whose works nature was symbolic, rather than descriptive. “Often the idea (an emotional not an intellectual idea) lay in transparent brown shadows, spots of color or interesting patterns rather than any accurate transcript of nature, and sometimes in Ryder’s work, and still more in that of a man like Blakelock, the component elements, the trees and rocks and streams, had been so adapted by the artist to his purpose as to resemble their prototypes in nature only suggestively, somewhat as a heraldic lion resembles a real one.”<sup>9</sup> As Isham observed, Blakelock and Ryder (FIG. 4), whose paintings are often compared, both



expended considerable effort building up the surfaces of their paintings to enhance dramatic expression. Their art is experienced simultaneously on the active, textured surface of the paint and in its illusion of space.

Isham identifies texture as a key aspect of Blakelock's art, one that is readily introduced in particular by his depictions of rocks, such as those featured in his *Edge of the Forest* (PLATE 30). Daingerfield was understandably preoccupied by Blakelock's atmosphere and the glimmering tracery of moonlight seen through foliage, but Blakelock's style may also be described in geological terms, both because of its accumulated strata and its impression of volume. For the visual description of rocks, the vocabulary of stone applies intuitively, and, once introduced, its logic can be extended to other features, like the massing of trees and even sky. Remarkably, a theme in Blakelock's earlier art is the rocky chasm that frames a narrow sliver of space into which the eye travels, as seen in *The Boulder and the Flume* (1878, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art). The stone faces of the cliffs prefigure the framing role of trees in his later work and provide an organizing principle to his compositions of encroaching walls.

As Daingerfield described, Blakelock's process was to paint in many successive strata atop a highly textured ground layer, building and rebuilding the upper layers to allow medium to collect in the ground's irregular surface only to be partially wiped or scraped away again. At times, entire paintings became submerged and translated into new compositions on top of them or in a different orientation. The complex surfaces that result can resemble walls of metamorphic rock. The stone outcropping at the left of *Edge of the Forest*, and the related composition *At Nature's Mirror* (ca. 1880, Smithsonian

American Art Museum), offers a varied surface of intermingled, textured strokes similar to those in the rocky hillside at the right. Even the stand of trees in the upper right corner presents a similar sense of accretion. Blakelock defines his forms through layer upon layer of imbricated brushwork to create a rich, textured formation.

The fluid movement in Blakelock's skies contrasts with the solidity of his rocks and trees, but with a similarly active painted surface of successive translucent glazes that bring light into and through the paint, rather than resisting it. Glassy with interspersed layers of glaze, light refracts in the delicately colored skies to create a sense of ephemeral luminosity. His early and dramatic *Indian Encampment at Sunset* (PLATE 3) offers a forerunner of that effect in the Hudson River School style that he practiced at the beginning of his career. In his most common configuration, the moon—or sun, in the previous example—radiates light and energy through atmosphere to shape our vision of the landscape.

Layering and scraping in turn, Blakelock kept his ground layers, which Daingerfield referred to as “silvery,” in view as he worked, unifying his compositions.<sup>10</sup> “One almost feels that it is an axiom that Blakelock is at his finest in silver, greens and pale blues,” he concludes, with colors that seem to “feel their way through a field of silver.”<sup>11</sup> The vein of silver that runs beneath Blakelock's compositions creates a sense of solidity, luminosity, and fluid movement, an effective paradox. That sense of slow, powerful movement and transient energy echoes one of the few remarks attributed to the artist from the height of his career, when he described his desire to make color “flow upon the senses, as some melody.”<sup>12</sup>

That silvery tone invokes the music that was a recurring theme in Blakelock's life and art. *Moonlight Sonata* (ca. 1889–92, Museum of



FIG. 5  
James Abbott McNeill Whistler  
(1834–1903), *Nocturne in Black  
and Gold, The Falling Rocket*,  
1875, oil on panel, 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>  
inches, Detroit Institute of Arts,  
USA, Gift of Dexter M. Ferry Jr. /  
Bridgeman Images

Fine Arts, Boston), for example, would not only become the title of one of Blakelock's finest works, but also reflects a musical association that several artists recognized in his art. Historically, his radiant, tonal nocturnes recall the allusive compositions of James Abbott McNeill Whistler, including his celebrated *Nocturne in Black and Gold, The Falling Rocket* of 1875 (FIG. 5). Whistler referred to the composition as “an artistic arrangement” and hence a “nocturne” rather than a view of a specific place. Even the colored night sky in Whistler's composition echoes in Blakelock's many night scenes, such as *Moonlit Landscape* (PLATE 52). The cascading sparks of fireworks over London in Whistler's composition resemble the flicker of moonlight through leaves in Blakelock's scenes. Even the framing trees at the left edge of Whistler's composition approximate the strong, dark shapes of Blakelock's work. They equally operate near the cusp of abstraction, composing movement, color, energy, and light to evoke musical experience.

Exposure to music was a refrain of Blakelock's life, though opinions differ as to the level of his ability as a musician. A neighbor in East Orange, New Jersey, reportedly helped Blakelock to advance his study

of the piano and sold him one for his studio, which Watrous remembered him playing to help dramatize movement in one of his dance subjects.<sup>13</sup> And among Blakelock's best collectors of the period, alongside Watrous, was the vaudevillian Lew Bloom, for whom Blakelock occasionally played. Blakelock embraced music throughout his life as well as into his paintings' titles with synesthetic effect. The rich textures of his surfaces, as Isham discussed, provided the matrix for the rhythms and structure of Blakelock's visual melodies.

Another key artist's view of Blakelock came later, in 1962, in minimalist Donald Judd's review of the exhibition *Blakelock and Some of His Contemporaries* at Bertha Lewison Gallery in New York.<sup>14</sup> Writing shortly before scholar Norman Geske began his long study of Blakelock in 1966, Judd added special emphasis on Blakelock's American-ness, a cultural emphasis that widened the lens of Blakelock's significance to the nation's culture. Writing in the midst of the Cold War, Judd's identification of Blakelock with a distinctive American tradition was also relevant to the emerging field of American art history. Like other artists before him, Judd's view of Blakelock is redemptive. His self-appointed role is to correct misperception: “It is obligatory, emotionally, in first writing about Blakelock, Ryder, Eakins, [and Homer,] to repeat that they were ignored.” Judd remarked on the endurance of the misconceptions—“cultural confusion”—of the age that endured to his own time.

Among Judd's insights, he described the “dissonant color” in Blakelock's paintings—“the blue-green and black scheme, for example,” found in *Stilly Night* (PLATE 4) among many others—emblematic of his form of “lyricism.” The eerie, otherworldly quality of Blakelock's light becomes, to Judd's mind, a conceptual device that resonates with the artistic and musical culture of the 1960s. Also, Blakelock's



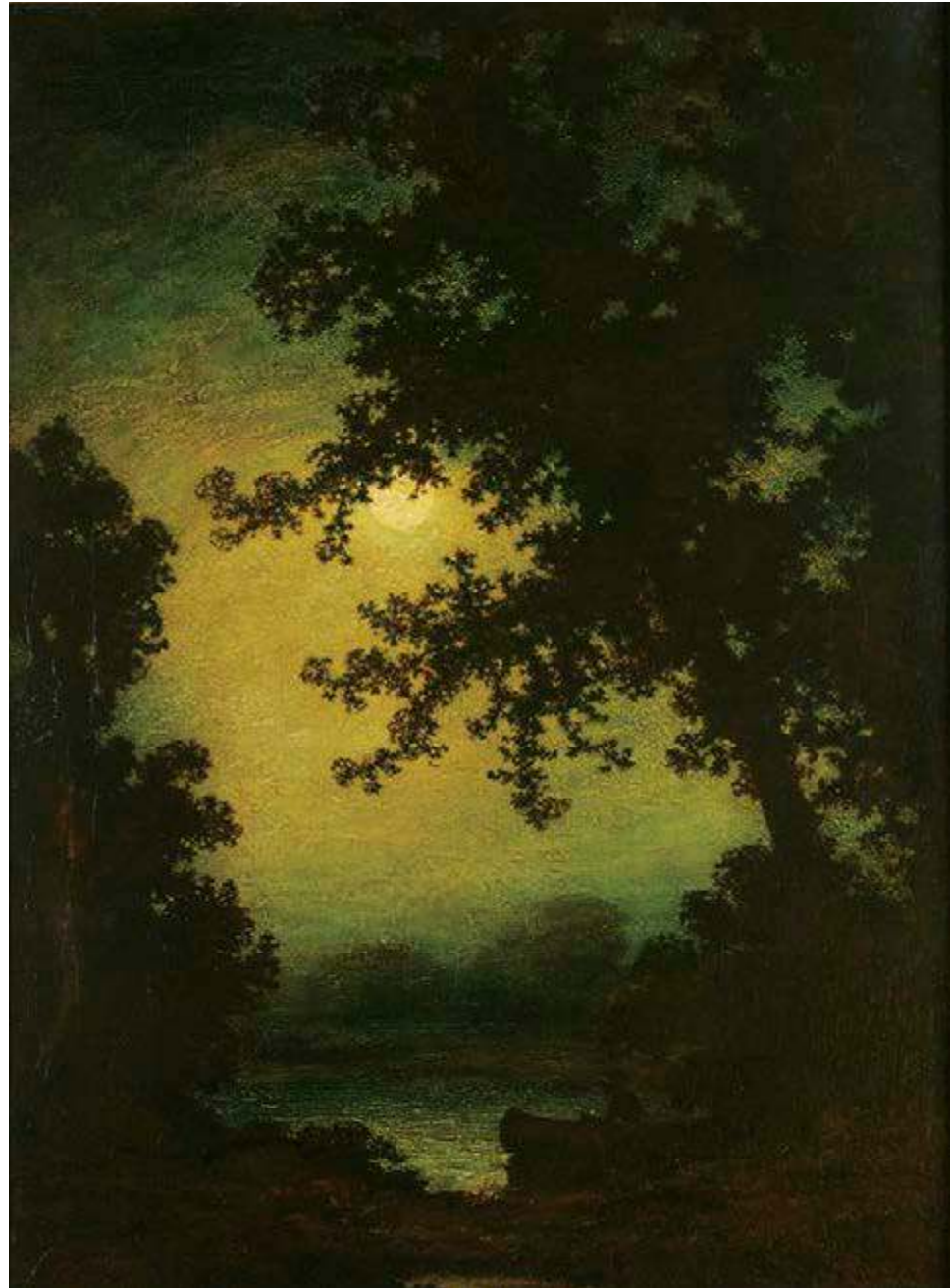


PLATE 4 *Stilly Night*

skies screened by trees are “an extreme reversal of positive and negative,” in which “the surface of a painting opens and closes and flows.” Both characterizations connect with the artistic ideas of Judd’s own time, in which the viewer’s eye is called upon to complete suggestive forms and meanings. To Judd, Blakelock’s use of texture offered unique “immediacy” in the surface of his paintings, drawing attention to the material quality of Blakelock’s medium. Each of Judd’s observations addresses a constituent component of Blakelock’s art—color, space, surface—that echoed in Judd’s own time and yet equally echoed the views expressed earlier by Daingerfield and Isham.

### Great Americans

Turning to Blakelock’s place in American art, several artists who themselves practiced remarkably disparate styles ranked him among the nation’s finest painters. By the company in which they kept him, the artists—including the academic figure painter Watrous, modernist Marsden Hartley, and social realist George Bellows—significantly revised the field’s emerging history, interjecting Blakelock as a necessary addition to the canon.

That story begins with friendship. During the 1880s, while living in the Sherwood Building in midtown Manhattan along with many of the leading painters of his day, Blakelock found a loyal advocate in the young Harry Watrous, with whom he appears to have had almost nothing in common.<sup>15</sup> A decade older than Watrous, Blakelock was self-taught, whereas Watrous studied art in Paris; Blakelock was poor, Watrous affluent; Blakelock had few friends, Watrous joined New York’s leading clubs; Blakelock mostly painted wilderness, Watrous painted beautiful young women in elegant interiors. Nevertheless, with studios on the same floor, the artists became acquainted and



FIG. 6  
Harry Watrous (1857–1940), *The Inlet*, ca. 1929, oil on canvas, 50<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 37<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, Portland Museum of Art, Maine, Gift of the Artist, 1929.6

Watrous became Blakelock’s great ally, buying many of Blakelock’s works himself and helping to sell others. Throughout Blakelock’s life, and after his death, Watrous would work steadily to promote Blakelock’s art and safeguard his legacy.

Watrous’s respect and admiration for Blakelock’s work was reflected in the quality of his collecting, including many of Blakelock’s finest works such as *Moonlight* (1886/1895, FIG. 3). Watrous’s collection constituted a clear statement of recognition and understanding of Blakelock’s art, sheltering it until recognition belatedly came and then turning the profit from their resale over to his friend. At around the time of Blakelock’s Reinhardt retrospective in 1916, Watrous himself began to paint evocative moonlight scenes (FIG. 6) much like Blakelock’s and very different from his own usual work. His dedication never wavered, and from his position as secretary (later president) of the National Academy of Design, he almost certainly advocated for Blakelock’s election to membership in the honorary association late in life.

Early on, in the 1880s, however, Watrous had astonished his friends by ranking Blakelock among the nation’s finest landscape





FIG. 7  
Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de la Peña (1808–1876), *A Vista through Trees: Fontainebleau*, 1873, oil on wood, 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher (17.120.230)

painters. The list included only three names: George Inness, Alexander Wyant, and Blakelock.<sup>16</sup> This cast of progressives set the self-taught Blakelock into a group of aesthetically advanced painters identified with the influence of the French Barbizon School, led by artists like Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de la Peña (FIG. 7) and Théodore Rousseau. This was the era in which American artists sought distinction in international terms, vying with the great contemporary artists of Europe and distancing themselves from the ostensibly native aesthetics of the Hudson River School that had prevailed at mid-century. Inness, Wyant, and Blakelock had all begun their careers in that style only to change course in the 1870s and 1880s.

Watrous was not alone in that association, it seems, though the evidence is circumstantial. The height of appreciation for Barbizon aesthetics came at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, the same exhibition at which Blakelock received his first award, an honorary mention, for *An Indian Encampment* (ca. 1880–1900) in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Blakelock’s position relative to



FIG. 8  
George Inness (1825–1894), *Moonrise*, 1887, oil on canvas, 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, gift of Teresa Heinz in memory of her husband, H. John Heinz III, B.A. 1960, 1992.5.13

Barbizon artists is still debated, as is his specific awareness of their art, which is unrecorded. The artist who knew him best, Watrous, did not shy away from recognizing Blakelock’s ability or from identifying him with American landscapists directly influenced by Barbizon, however. Among other resemblances with the Barbizon painters are both the shadowed forest interiors of Diaz and Rousseau as well as his figure paintings of Native American encampments and rituals that parallel the restless agitation of Adolphe Monticelli’s sylvan festivals. While their subjects and expressiveness is similar, Blakelock synthesized his influences, doubtless multiple, into a visionary form of his own that is largely set in the American landscape inspired by his personal travels through the American West between 1869 and 1872.<sup>17</sup>

What both the Barbizon painters and the American tonalists, like Inness and Wyant, offered Blakelock was a break from visual experience. Instead of describing nature as seen, they refined its most expressive effects through memory and distillation. Softness of atmosphere and broad sweeps of idealized color and form suggest



FIG. 9  
Marsden Hartley (1877–1943), *Beaver Lake, Lost River Region*, 1930, oil on canvas, 34<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches, Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, gift of Bertha H. Walker, 1971

dreamscapes and convey the viewer into the expressive experience of the mind. This was Blakelock’s vision, or at least the foundation of it. Inness’s religious convictions about the presence of the spiritual in the natural world—including the Swedenborgian faith that he and Blakelock shared—manifests in paintings such as *Moonrise* (FIG. 8), with an atmospheric evocation of color in the transition to night that resembles Blakelock’s work on related themes. Within this group of artists that Watrous identified is a shared commitment to poetic expression, rather than descriptive naturalism.

Artists varied the lists of leading figures in which they included Blakelock. Marsden Hartley remarked in 1930 that an exhibition of Eakins, Homer, and Ryder at the Museum of Modern Art would have benefitted from “more enlightening comparisons” and proven “more thrilling” had Blakelock “at his best” been included along with George Fuller, Homer Dodge Martin, and Inness.<sup>18</sup> His recognition of Blakelock followed a discussion of the work of Thomas Eakins, which he finds lacking in “the essential truths of experience.” “Eakins



FIG. 10  
Winslow Homer (1836–1910), *Kissing the Moon*, 1904, oil on canvas, 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 40 inches, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, bequest of Candace C. Stimson, 1946.19  
Photo courtesy of Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA / Art Resource, NY

doesn’t tell you how marvellous [*sic*] or how inspiring the fact is,” Hartley observes, “and my ideas are running very much away these days toward the qualities of life as it is and the essential truths of experience—experience unembellished and unadorned.”<sup>19</sup> Works like Hartley’s 1930 *Beaver Lake, Lost River Region* (FIG. 9) help to clarify his meaning as to his then current preoccupations. The active surface of the painting’s massive mountainside and gathering of trees by the water’s edge creates a textural impression of its own, the tenor of which is established through a nearly monochromatic green palette and leaden sky that offer a fairly direct dialogue with Blakelock’s work. The more literary Ryder addresses American subjects and landscape less often than Blakelock or (increasingly) Hartley. To Hartley, the counterpoint between Homer and Eakins in the realm of realism correlated to the “imaginatives” Ryder and Blakelock. Homer’s dramatic scenes of man and nature (FIG. 10) contrasted with the more cerebral Eakins, as the more forceful of Ryder’s narrative inventions balanced against Blakelock’s serenity.





FIG. 11  
Franz Kline (1910–1962), *Black, White, and Gray*, 1959, oil on canvas, 105 x 78 inches, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, George A. Hearn Fund (59.165)  
© 2016 The Franz Kline Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

These were the roots of American modernism as Hartley conceived it, and Blakelock had an important role to play.

Hartley's view resonated later in the century with the experience of abstract expressionist Franz Kline, who introduced one of his most important patrons to Blakelock's work, a sympathetic forerunner of his own art.<sup>20</sup> Kline's paintings, such as *Black, White, and Gray* (FIG. 11), actively intertwine positive and negative spaces and depict powerful, expressive, dark forms in light fields that embody a sensibility that is remarkably similar to Blakelock's.

When a writer for the *New-York Tribune* sought quotes in support of the upcoming exhibition of Blakelock's paintings at the Reinhardt Galleries in 1916, the author turned not to Hartley or another modernist, but rather to the social realists George Bellows and Robert Henri. Finding any subject on which both realists and abstract painters of the era agreed is a rare thing, and yet Bellows is famously quoted as proclaiming that Blakelock "made a strong impression not only upon American art, but upon the art of the world."<sup>21</sup> Whereas Watrous



FIG. 12  
George Bellows (1882–1925), *Figures in Moonlight*, undated, black chalk, grey wash, graphite on paper, 14 x 11 inches, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903, 1961.18.9

asserted Blakelock's place among progressive American painters and Hartley listed him with the great American artists of the late nineteenth century, Bellows pushed yet farther and set him on the world stage, a unique moment of recognition for the penniless, institutionalized Blakelock.

Henri's quote in the same article is less emphatic, saying only that he hopes Blakelock will someday recuperate from his illness and make work "just as good" as before his confinement. Nevertheless, he was clearly aware of Blakelock's work and willing to make a statement of support. Taken together, however, Bellows's and Henri's quotes amount to an endorsement of Blakelock by The Eight, with their gritty urban realism and vitalist appreciation for nature. Bellows's remark, in particular, encourages a second look at works like *Figures in Moonlight* (FIG. 12) and his contemporary series of nocturnal depictions of the coast of Monhegan Island in Maine. For Blakelock's work, too, Bellows's and Henri's statements of support and appreciation offer retrospective insight. They were drawing forward a sense

of the contemplative intensity that characterizes Blakelock's art as an influence on the psychological power of their own modern realist aesthetics during the early twentieth century.

The one artist who did not list Blakelock among the great artists of his day or associate him with others stylistically was Daingerfield. His project, instead, was to set Blakelock apart, to define his art as a solitary achievement, important and different. His claim of isolation is implausible at best, especially for a painter working at one of New York's most fashionable studio buildings and showing in the city's primary contemporary art venue. Adopting the time-honored trope of the native, self-taught genius learning solely from nature itself, Daingerfield strove to set Blakelock entirely apart. But in 1914, Blakelocks were selling for astonishing prices, capturing widespread press and attention on the eve of the most famous sale of his work in history in 1916, when the industrialist Catholina Lambert sold *Brook by Moonlight* (FIG. 1) at auction for an astounding \$20,000, breaking records for a work of contemporary art. "Inness, Wyant, Homer Martin, he must have known well, but there is no trace, to me, of their influence in his work," Daingerfield insisted. Even Ryder was "kin" to Blakelock only in a shared interest in "magical" effects. "Knowledge of the Barbizon men was probably slight, and of little influence upon his mind," he concluded.<sup>22</sup> Without the obligation of asserting Blakelock's importance, which the market had done for him, Daingerfield concentrated on his uniqueness, greatness of a different stripe.

Through time, artists have seen Blakelock's art refreshingly differently from critics, journalists, and even art historians. Fortunately, his paintings are immediate in their impressions and lend them-

selves to visceral response. Each person seeing his art for the first time therefore has the opportunity to create a new understanding, a new record. If not influenced by prior knowledge of the artist's mental health, viewers respond first to his evocative poetry and vivid effects. Artists, too, generally respond to art visually, rather than biographically, and their insights provide a durable foundation now and in the future for the continuing study of Blakelock's art.

1. E. P. Richardson, *Painting in America* (rev. ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1965), 353.
2. Elliott Daingerfield, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (New York: privately printed, 1914), 34.
3. Ibid., 28.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 26.
6. Ibid., 37.
7. Frederic Fairchild Sherman, "Blakelock's Smaller Landscapes and Figure Pieces," *Art in America* 4 (June 1916): 234–42.
8. Daingerfield, 20.
9. Samuel Isham, *The History of American Painting* (1st ed., 1905; rev. ed., New York: The MacMillan Company, 1910), 446–47.
10. Daingerfield, 19.
11. Ibid., 37.
12. Quoted in "Blakelock, Ralph Albert," in *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1887), 1:287.
13. Glyn Vincent, *The Unknown Night: The Madness and Genius of R. A. Blakelock, An American Painter* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 163.
14. Donald Judd, "Ralph Blakelock," *Arts Magazine* 36 (September 1962): 53–54.
15. John Davis, "Our United Happy Family: Artists in the Sherwood Studio Building, 1880–1900," *Archives of American Art Journal* 36, no. 3/4 (1996): 2–19.
16. Lloyd Goodrich, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Centenary Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1947), 26.
17. Vincent, 93–124.
18. Marsden Hartley, "Eakins, Homer, Ryder" (1930), reprinted in *On Art by Marsden Hartley*, ed. Gail R. Scott (New York: Horizon Press, 1982), 171.
19. Hartley, "Eakins, Homer, Ryder," 171.
20. Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 204.
21. "Plans Exhibition to Aid Blakelock," *New-York Tribune*, March 21, 1916, 9.
22. Daingerfield, 21.



## Start with What You See

BY MYRA PLATT



Ralph Albert Blakelock, probably on the occasion of the artist's wedding to Cora Rebecca Bailey, February 27, 1877  
Collection Myra Platt



Ralph Albert Blakelock, ca. 1869–72  
Collection Myra Platt

In October 2005, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* opened at Questroyal Fine Art. As luck would have it, I was invited to contribute to the catalogue accompanying that distinguished show. Now, more than ten years later, “the great mad genius” returns. What a thrill it is to be asked to participate in this new, monumental exhibition of 125 paintings by Ralph Albert Blakelock. With this show comes an exceptional opportunity for me to not only honor my great-great-grandfather as an artist, but to help celebrate the power of the accumulative impact of his vision while savoring each image. To be in the midst of this immense collection, so passionately championed by this gallery, is akin to stepping back in time, with a heart so open one can barely breathe.

A hundred years ago, in April 1916, Blakelock had the most important solo exhibit of his lifetime. In order to see his paintings on display at Reinhardt Galleries,\* he was granted a one-day leave from Middletown Hospital in Upstate New York to travel to the city. Amid dignitaries and dealers, journalists and flashing cameras, there he stood, in the center of the room staring at his work on the wall. It was a gawking affair. The mental patient, seventy years old and weighing a mere ninety pounds, looked upon his paintings as if they were his offspring. Recalling their birthplace and names with innate precision, attendees were stunned into silence as the humble artist spoke eloquently and coherently about his work. This was no “madman,” this was a mastermind, full of love and pathos. This was a genius sharing his vision. Today his work continues to speak across the centuries.

“The mad genius” was the thirteenth Ralph but the first Albert and the first self-anointed Duke of York. He was an American; an unsuspecting dreamer, a nonconformist, who dared to reinvent himself, to take what he saw and reinterpret it. He risked traversing lands few had ever seen, and witnessed firsthand the solemn existence of the

country’s Native Americans. He intuited the mythical power of First Nations, seeing their virtues above all else. He was empathetic to the painful struggle of anyone attempting to live in a hostile world.

Blakelock immersed himself in finding a new language through pigment on canvas, board, and paper. Ahead of his time, he experimented with materials and techniques to achieve the desired effect. He improvised on the piano and ran between the easel and the keyboard, introducing rhythm and song to his brush. He declared imagination a means of artistic expression on par with academic study.

Artists today automatically know what Blakelock endured by trusting his intuition: that to commit to his art as a means of survival, his *raison d’être*, his sole profession, he would defy the corruption and greed of the market. Yet self-representation leaves any artist vulnerable. Blakelock put everything he had toward his fight for his personal artistic claim.

Experts agree that the oeuvre of Ralph Albert Blakelock spans multiple genres: he has been simultaneously classified as a member of the Hudson River School, a colorist, a luminist, and an early abstract expressionist. This collection revels in the full spectrum. Blakelock’s multiple avenues of entry spark our imagination, enticing us to join in this moveable feast of romance, reality, nature, history, and dreams.

The colors in his romantic paintings glisten in idyllic soft blues, blissful greens, and rosy peach yellows. And yet, these are not merely to woo a quixotic ideal, but rather to arrest a moment in the sun’s orbit—snagging at the end of a fishing line, the light of morning, or that very early evening when the delicacy of nature hangs in the balance. These pictures of tranquility whisper hush, walk down this path, and glory in the sweetness of time holding still.

His shanties of old Manhattan show us the gritty reality of hardscrabble days living on that rocky island. Nowhere to go on

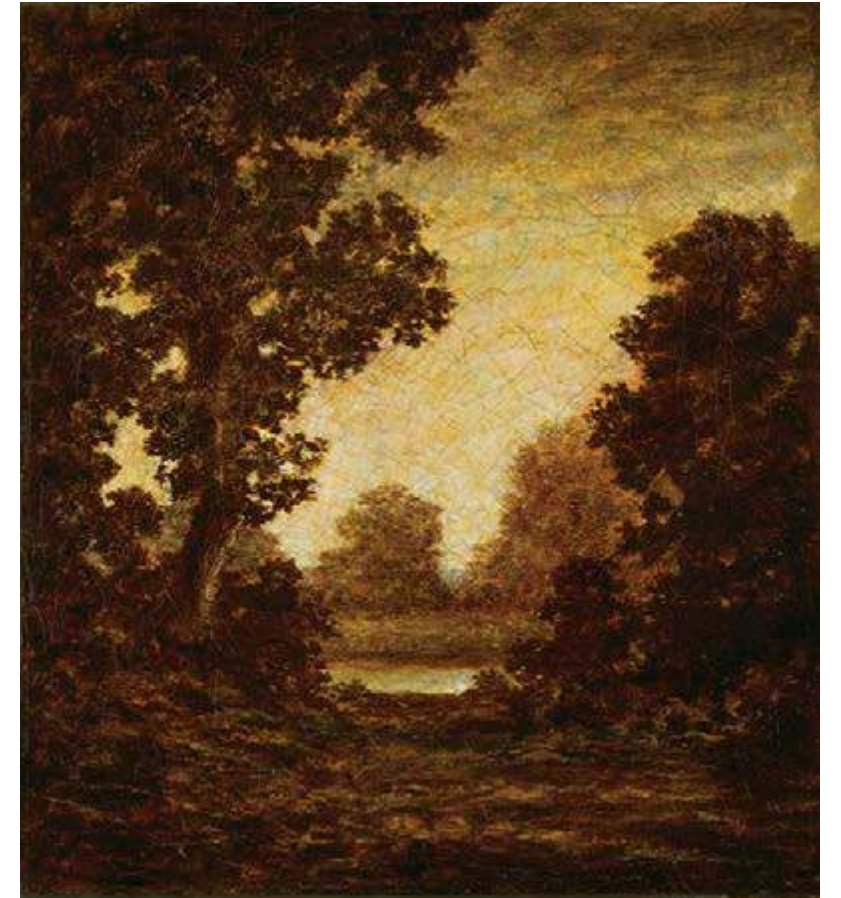


PLATE 5 *Night Glow*



the canvas but to marvel at how the earliest beginnings of the city, of living imprisoned in a broken quarry, has been replaced with concrete and glass. It is fascinating to imagine what it was like then; how similar today's sidewalks are, grounded in the same antique stony streets. The affect of the ancient shanties rising out of the mud is no different than the city reaching skyward—all the while risking, even anticipating, potential destruction.

Compare Blakelock's scenes of impoverishment to his passionate and prolific outbursts in his Western landscapes. The purity of form, dramatic sunsets, and wild landscape all invite us to escape, to roam free, and be one with our naked selves. His utmost respect for accuracy in portraying the nomadic scenes of Native American life remains to this day a personal message, a private plea. He offers a glimpse with such veneration and respect for this wild peace. While he painted, Blakelock allowed himself to enter into feverish states in order to accurately and authentically represent not just something he saw, but something he felt: the reverberating beats of the drums, the vocal incantations and pounding feet, shaking rattles, whispers and cries, conjuring, celebrating, honoring spirits and gods of the earth. A hundred years later, we see with new eyes this early conservation effort as brilliant and true.

Blakelock's emblematic moonlight paintings exemplify his notion that in the darkest part of any forest, the rise of the moon brings the comfort of light, while the silhouetted trees reveal strength in form. The theatricality of his nightscapes is his testament to that which is inherent in life and exists in our oldest dreams.

There is a kinetic relationship between a work of art and the person who breathes it in with admiration and appreciation. There is a fluidity of history as currency for what matters, and an opportunity to reflect on our good fortune while contemplating from whence we came.

Blakelock's art, like so many before and after him, exposes the fragility and impermanence of natural wonders and reawakens our imagination. The more we are able to educate ourselves about the things we care deeply about, the better our understanding, the stronger our connection to whatever is before us. This creative conversation, this sharing and receiving, is a priceless experience. A pulsating river of energy passes from the creator to the beholder, defining a moment in history as a moment to be revered so that we may appreciate our own being. In returning to the world of this singular artist, we revisit the simple fact that art simply cannot be, unless there is an audience who receives it and one who chooses to cherish it. Fine art's worth comes with the story living behind, underneath, and within the canvas. The value of such art increases with time, as long as those stories continue to breathe. Feel the profound energy, the pulse, and the ancient rhythms; the artist's presence is palpable. We are all guardians of Blakelock.

My heartfelt thanks to Louis Salerno and all at Questroyal for their epic perseverance in bringing together this major exhibition with such fortitude and grace. My family is ever grateful for the continued interest and honoring of Blakelock's genius, for allowing his work to live and breathe, to excite us all.

\*At the time of the Reinhardt Galleries exhibition, M. Knoedler & Co. (situated across the street) displayed seven Ralph Albert Blakelock paintings that were on loan from Harry Watrous. Watrous, who was both a family friend and Blakelock's artistic colleague, chose his favorites and was pleased to have them in close proximity to the historic Reinhardt exhibition. Family lore has it that *this* show also featured work by Blakelock's daughter, Marian. In my imagination, I cannot help but wonder what could have happened had Blakelock managed to cross the street and bear witness to the paintings by the daughter whom he had taught to paint hanging on a gallery wall so close to his own. As a child, my own father, Walter Blakelock Wilson, who passed away in 2011, helped rescue the oral history of Blakelock from his family, wrestling stories from my great-great-grandmother and piecing together the how and why of the art. All his life, my father credited Blakelock for igniting his own passion for painting and creativity, an appetite that was passed along to me, along with musical composition and creating theater—a rich inheritance and responsibility.



PLATE 6 *Shanties in Harlem*, 1874



## Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919), The Life of the Artist

BY NINA SANGIMINO

*There will soon be held in New York an exhibition of paintings which will be of unusual interest, since it will recite, in terms of weird tonality, one of the saddest romances of American art—the story of a man whose genius and ambition enabled him to master his profession without the aid of instructors, who dreamed strange dreams and told them in remarkable color schemes till the tread of reason broke under the strain, and who now languishes in an asylum, his former art scarcely a recollection.*<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his death on August 9, 1919, Ralph Albert Blakelock was hailed by the London *Times* as “one of the greatest of American artists.”<sup>2</sup> Yet he had spent almost all of the previous eighteen years confined to a mental institution, separated from a family who was living in extreme poverty, and without access to the art materials he had used to create his masterpiece moonlight scenes. Despite these hardships, he created an incredibly unique, visionary, and modern body of work that continues to inspire audiences a century later.

Blakelock was born on Christopher Street in New York City, on October 15, 1847, to an English carpenter, who would later serve as a police officer before becoming a homeopathic doctor. His uncle James A. Johnson, a choirmaster with such influential acquaintances as James Renwick Brevoort (1832–1918) and Frederic Church (1826–1900), became Blakelock’s cultural mentor, introducing him from a young age to music and painting.<sup>3</sup> Initially intending to follow in his father’s medical footsteps, Blakelock enrolled in the Free Academy of the City of New York (later City College) in September 1864. Although

he excelled in drawing classes, they proved uninspiring for the burgeoning artist, and in 1866 he dropped out to begin painting full time. He first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1867, and two years later set out on his inaugural Western trip. This journey proved to be crucial to his artistic vision and an influence on his work for the rest of his life. While cross-country trips were becoming somewhat common among nineteenth-century artists, most famously Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) and Thomas Moran (1837–1926), they were typically embarked on as part of government sponsored expeditions. Blakelock, however, traveled alone. By railroad and stagecoach he made his way through the territories of Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California.<sup>4</sup> While the expansiveness and wonder of the landscape impressed him, as it did other artists, it was the time spent with various American Indian tribes that had a particular effect. From Fort Pierre in present-day South Dakota, he traveled into the wilderness alone on horseback and spent time with tribes of the Great Sioux Nation.<sup>5</sup> At a moment when Native Americans were still holding onto many of their traditional practices as white expansion was rapidly taking hold around them, Blakelock felt that they provided a mystical and ancient connection to nature. Indian encampments became a major theme in Blakelock’s work (PLATES 7, 9, 48), but rather than purely historic scenes, like those created by George Catlin (1796–1872), Blakelock applied his unique vision to the landscape of the West. As Mark Mitchell describes, “they were documents of his experience and observations, but with time they became documents of his memory, as well as the memory of the



PLATE 7 *Indian Hunters*



nation at large.”<sup>6</sup> His early Western landscapes and primeval forests foreshadowed the style he would later develop, in which mood superseded the importance of geographical detail.

When Blakelock returned to New York he listed himself as an artist in the city directory and rented his own studio space.<sup>7</sup> He was exhibiting regularly at the National Academy of Design, and, at first, still emulating the Hudson River School style (PLATES 8, 11, 21). It was during this time that he painted the extraordinary *Indian Encampment Along the Snake River* (1871, American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection).<sup>8</sup> Working in the city, he drew inspiration from the landscape surrounding him just as he had on his travels. Inspired by urban life, he continued to forge his own path. Beginning in the 1860s and persisting after his return to New York, Blakelock ventured to the undeveloped northern edges of the city (at that time the area surrounding 55th Street and into Central Park) and painted the shanties growing up out of earth (PLATES 6, 19). These works began to take on a looser and more expressive style, and again focused on a unique existence, unlike the scenes of leisure present in the works of his contemporaries.

In 1877, he married Cora Rebecca Bailey and they welcomed the first of nine children. The young artist struggled to support his new and quickly growing family. He sometimes took jobs as an art teacher and later would paint plaques at E. C. Meekers Art Novelty Shop in New Jersey while he and his family lived nearby in East Orange.<sup>9</sup> He produced many small, swiftly finished works for the purpose of a quick sale, and at times, in the interest of generating cash, undervalued his paintings and sold them for far too little. Described by Cora in a 1908 letter to art dealer Robert Vose, “His best work took a long time to complete and in the meantime he had to live. Pictures were painted

to keep things going. He could paint a really good picture in less time than anyone else I ever saw.”<sup>10</sup>

Financial success eluded him, in part because he sold his art directly rather than through a gallery or dealer. Despite this, he managed to garner a fair amount of prestige and his work was sought by some of the most important collectors, including Catholina Lambert, Thomas B. Clarke, Senator William A. Clark, William T. Evans, and Lew Bloom, a popular vaudeville star. In 1879, Blakelock received his first review, which appeared in the *New York Times*, for works hanging at the National Academy of Design. In 1883, he moved into the prestigious Tenth Street Studio Building, alongside such masters as William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) and Frederic Church. The 1884 Society of American Artists exhibition continued his climb to fame as he received recognition in the *Tribune* and *Mail Express*, and his paintings were lauded by the *World* as being “among the best works shown,” and in the *Times* as “rich and powerful.” Clarence Cook of the *Tribune* wrote that it was “the best work of his which we have seen, marked not only by rich coloring, but by the possession of a distinctive character.”<sup>11</sup>

Unanimously identified as a colorist by reviewers, it was during this period of mounting achievement that Blakelock began to focus on his most celebrated and iconic moonlight scenes (PLATES 4, 33, 36). He departed from copying a real place and instead imagined landscapes, using color and technique to create a mood and evoke a powerful response in the viewer. This was unlike other landscape painters at the time. Even Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847–1917), to whom he was typically linked in critical reviews, used strong literary references as inspiration, whereas Blakelock turned totally inward for inspiration. The unique process he developed to create the recognizable



PLATE 8 *Autumn Landscape*





PLATE 9 *Indian Encampment at Twilight*



PLATE 10 *Moonrise*



PLATE 11 *A Spring Garden*



silhouettes of his lace-like trees against a silvery, glowing moonlit sky placed an emphasis on abstraction and expression, and his focus on material and surface were surprisingly modern for the 1880s (PLATES 1, 2, 10). He worked in multiple layers of paint and varnish, and rubbed and scraped into his works to create a landscape totally unlike the Hudson River School–inspired works of his early years:

*But the man was a born colorist, and he secured tones and combinations of pigment that few have discovered. His process was slow and laborious; sometimes years would elapse from the beginning to the end of his pictures, and many years at that. He piled on pigment and he scraped, he varnished and he repainted, and he was likely at the last to completely change his theme once he had the proper foundation of paint on the canvas or panel.... It was feeling, pure and simple, like the improvisations of some gifted musician, who secures the harmonies and sweetness of his instrument unconsciously and intuitively.*<sup>12</sup>

At the same time as this burgeoning success, he was still struggling both financially and personally. In 1886, the popular *Harper's Weekly* singled out his *A Waterfall, Moonlight* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) displayed at the National Academy of Design, and hailed it as “the best landscape in the exhibition,” the author admitting “an unmixed surprise at seeing attributed to him a landscape so powerful.”<sup>13</sup> But it was also the year of the birth of his fifth child and, tragically, the death of his two-year-old daughter. The stress continued to mount until March 1890, when he suffered his first mental breakdown and was taken by his brother to Flatbush Insane Asylum. The brief time he spent there served him well and when he was released Catholina Lambert allowed Blakelock, Cora, and their four children to come to his estate in Hawley, Pennsylvania, to convalesce. Upon their

return to New York, Blakelock began working out of fellow artist and later president of the National Academy of Design Harry Watrous's (1857–1940) studio in the Sherwood Building. It was here that Blakelock painted his masterpiece *Brook by Moonlight* (Toledo Museum of Art, FIG. 2 in Mitchell, “Blakelock in the Eyes of Artists”). Blakelock enjoyed a few years respite where he continued painting and exhibiting, but the family moved constantly, including stints with Cora's parents in Brooklyn. In 1899, on the day of the birth of his ninth child, he was again admitted to Long Island State Hospital at Flatbush. He was finally taken to Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital in June 1901, where he was treated for dementia praecox, equivalent to the modern diagnosis of schizophrenia; he would remain there almost continuously until his death. Initially confined to a secluded ward and treated with hot baths that were meant to have a calming effect, he was soon placed in an open ward where he had the freedom to move about the grounds and even the nearby village.<sup>14</sup> He continued to find inspiration in his surroundings and sketched and painted with whatever meager materials were available to him; many works from this period are on scrap pieces of wood, board, and cigar box lids. (PLATES 12, 27, 28). Ironically, the moment of his greatest triumph came while he was confined to Middletown. In 1916, *Brook by Moonlight* sold at auction from the Catholina Lambert collection for \$20,000, setting the record for the largest amount ever paid at auction for a living American artist.<sup>15</sup> Later that year he was finally elected to full membership at the National Academy of Design.

The media uproar that surrounded the record-breaking sale of *Brook by Moonlight* brought the “mad” artist to the attention of the dubious Mrs. Beatrice Van Rensselaer Adams.<sup>16</sup> She decided to champion Blakelock and organized a Blakelock Fund, supposedly



PLATE 12 *The Forbidden Season*



to help support the artist and his family, and mounted the landmark Reinhardt Galleries exhibition. Dr. Maurice Ashley, superintendent at Middletown, agreed to release Blakelock into Mrs. Adams’s care for the day so that he could attend the opening. The media coverage was remarkable and attracted more than 2,500 visitors in only two weeks, among them European royalty and influential modern artists Robert Henri (1865–1929) and George Bellows (1882–1925).<sup>17</sup> Sadly, the monies from the Blakelock Fund mysteriously never reached Cora and the family, and Mrs. Adams was granted increasing custody over the artist, moving him without his wife’s or children’s knowledge and denying their requests to visit him. Her publicity savvy did however succeed in getting Blakelock’s name on the front pages of newspapers nationwide, and at the time of his death he was so well known that President Woodrow Wilson sent his regrets that he could not attend the funeral.<sup>18</sup>

While he has always remained somewhat on the fringe of mainstream American art history, as he did in life, Blakelock has been rediscovered and celebrated by every generation in the century since his death. In 1947, he was honored with an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art curated by Lloyd Goodrich. In 1969, David Gebhard and Phyllis Stuurman organized the traveling exhibition *The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919*, and Dr. Norman Geske began the monumental task of identifying and cataloguing works by the prolific artist. In 1996, Abraham Davidson published the most complete monograph on the artist, followed in 2003 by the acclaimed biography *The Unknown Night: The Genius and Madness of R. A. Blakelock, An American Painter* by Glyn Vincent. Questroyal Fine Art, whose owner Louis M. Salerno has recognized the brilliance of Blakelock for decades, mounted a major exhibition on the artist in 2005, which for the first

time in the gallery’s history sold all available paintings on opening night. The most recent examination of the artist was nearly eight years ago in a show co-organized by the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and National Academy Museum. As discussed in this catalogue by Dr. Mark D. Mitchell, Blakelock’s effect on fellow American artists has been far reaching, inspiring succeeding generations to pursue their own vision, or as critic James William Pattison stated in 1912, “The sound of it has continued to vibrate and will continue. Blakelock felt a tingle of this irritant; felt it, and then invented his own style under the stimulus. Blakelock has no imitators, but he also sent out vibrations, which tingle in other artists’ nervous systems.”<sup>18</sup>

1. Frederick W. Morton, “Work of Ralph A. Blakelock,” *Brush & Pencil* 9 (February 1902): 257.
2. “Famous Painter’s Death,” *Times* (London), August 13, 1919, 9.
3. Glyn Vincent, *The Unknown Night: The Madness and Genius of R. A. Blakelock, An American Painter* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 55–56.
4. Susielies M. Blakelock, “Western Sojourn,” in *Ralph Albert Blakelock 1849 [sic]–1919* (New York: M. Knoedler & Co., 1973), 27.
5. Vincent, 98.
6. Mark D. Mitchell, “Radical Color: Blakelock in Context,” in *The Unknown Blakelock*, ed. Karen O. Janovy (Lincoln, NE: Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 2008), 47.
7. Vincent, 110.
8. In 2000, *Indian Encampment Along the Snake River* set the artist’s current auction record at \$3,525,750.
9. Vincent, 167.
10. Ibid., 166.
11. Ibid., 159.
12. “A careful and sympathetic critic of him some years ago ... who knew intimately the man,” quoted in Morton, “Work of Ralph A. Blakelock,” 264.
13. “The Academy of Design,” *Harper’s Weekly* 30 (November 27, 1886): 760.
14. David D. Blakelock, “The Confinement Period,” in *Ralph Albert Blakelock 1849 [sic]–1919*, 22.
15. Lloyd Goodrich, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Centenary Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1947), 35.
16. See “The Real Mrs. Adams” in Vincent, 254–266.
17. Vincent, 254.
18. Ibid., 297.
19. James William Pattison, “The Art of Blakelock,” *Fine Arts Journal* 27 (October 1912): 645.



PLATE 13 *Landscape, Evening Glow*



# Collections

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts

Akron Art Museum, Ohio

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio

The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie, New York

The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Brooklyn Museum, New York

Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming

The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Charles Allis Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk Virginia

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California

Dallas Museum of Art, Texas

David Owsley Museum of Art at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

de Young Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California

Denver Art Museum, Colorado

Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa

Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan

Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, Georgia

Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, New York

Hunter Museum of American Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska

Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California

Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut

Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts

Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota

Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts

Museum of Art at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney, Nebraska

Museum of the City of New York, New York

National Academy Museum, New York, New York

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

Newark Museum, New Jersey

New-York Historical Society, New York

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina

Oakland Museum of California, California

Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas

Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC

Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona

Portland Art Museum, Oregon

Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College, Claremont, California

Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri

The San Diego Museum of Art, California

Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Nebraska

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC

Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio

The University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut

# Exhibitions

**1867–69, 1871–73, 1879, 1880, 1882–86, 1888, 1894–96, 1898, 1899, 1910, 1919**  
National Academy of Design, New York, New York

**1874, 1879, 1880, 1884**  
Brooklyn Art Association, New York

**1880, 1884**  
Society of American Artists, New York, New York

**1884**  
American Art Union, New York, New York

**1889, 1904, 1939**  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

**1893**  
World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois

**1900**  
Exposition Universelle, Paris, France (prize)  
Lotos Club, New York, New York

**1902**  
Lotos Club, New York, New York, *Exhibitions of Paintings of Ralph Albert Blakelock, From the Collection of the Honorable Frederick S. Gibbs*

**1902, 1903**  
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**1905**  
Nashville Art Club, Tennessee (first annual art show, traveled to Atlanta Art Club, Georgia)

**1907–10, 1916, 1957**  
Corcoran Gallery, Washington, DC

**1913**  
Moulton & Ricketts, Chicago, Illinois, *Loan Exhibition of Important Works by George Inness, Alexander Wyant, Ralph Blakelock*

Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts

**1915**  
Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, California

**1916**  
Galleries of Henry Reinhardt, New York, New York, *Loan Exhibition of the Paintings by Ralph Blakelock, A. N. A.*

Young’s Art Galleries, Chicago, Illinois, *Blakelock—His Art and His Family*

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio  
Knoedler Gallery, New York, New York

**1917**  
R. C. and N. M. Vose Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, *Exhibition of Paintings by Ralph Albert Blakelock*

**1919**  
Union League Club, New York, New York

**1922**  
Dudensing Galleries, New York, New York, *A Small Group of Paintings by Ralph A. Blakelock*

**1934**  
Findlay Galleries, Chicago, Illinois, *Exhibition of Small Paintings by Ralph Blakelock, NA*

**1942**  
Babcock Galleries, New York, New York

**1947**  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock Centenary Exhibition in Celebration of the Centennial of the City College of New York*

**1962**  
Bertha Lewison Gallery, New York, New York, *Paintings by Ralph Albert Blakelock and Some of His Contemporaries*

**1965**  
Contemporary Arts Association, Houston, Texas, *Two Romantic Painters: Adolphe Monticelli, French (1824–1886); Ralph Albert Blakelock, American (1847–1919)*

**1969**  
The Art Galleries, University of California Santa Barbara, California; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California; Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York, *The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919*

**1973**  
M. Knoedler & Co., New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1849 [sic]–1919*

**1975**  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919*

**1977**  
Fenn Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico, *Ralph Albert Blakelock*

**1981**  
Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts, *Ralph Albert Blakelock 1847–1919—Drawings*

**1987**  
Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)*

**1995–97**  
Mitchell Museum, Mount Vernon, Illinois; Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York; Pensacola Museum of Art, Florida; Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph, Michigan; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; Paine Art Center, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, *Blakelock: Visionary in Context*

**1998**  
Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Paintings*

**2004**  
Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Paintings, Drawings, & Watercolors*

**2005**  
Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*

**2008–9**  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska; National Academy Museum, New York, New York, *The Unknown Blakelock*





PLATE 14 *Landscape with Farm*

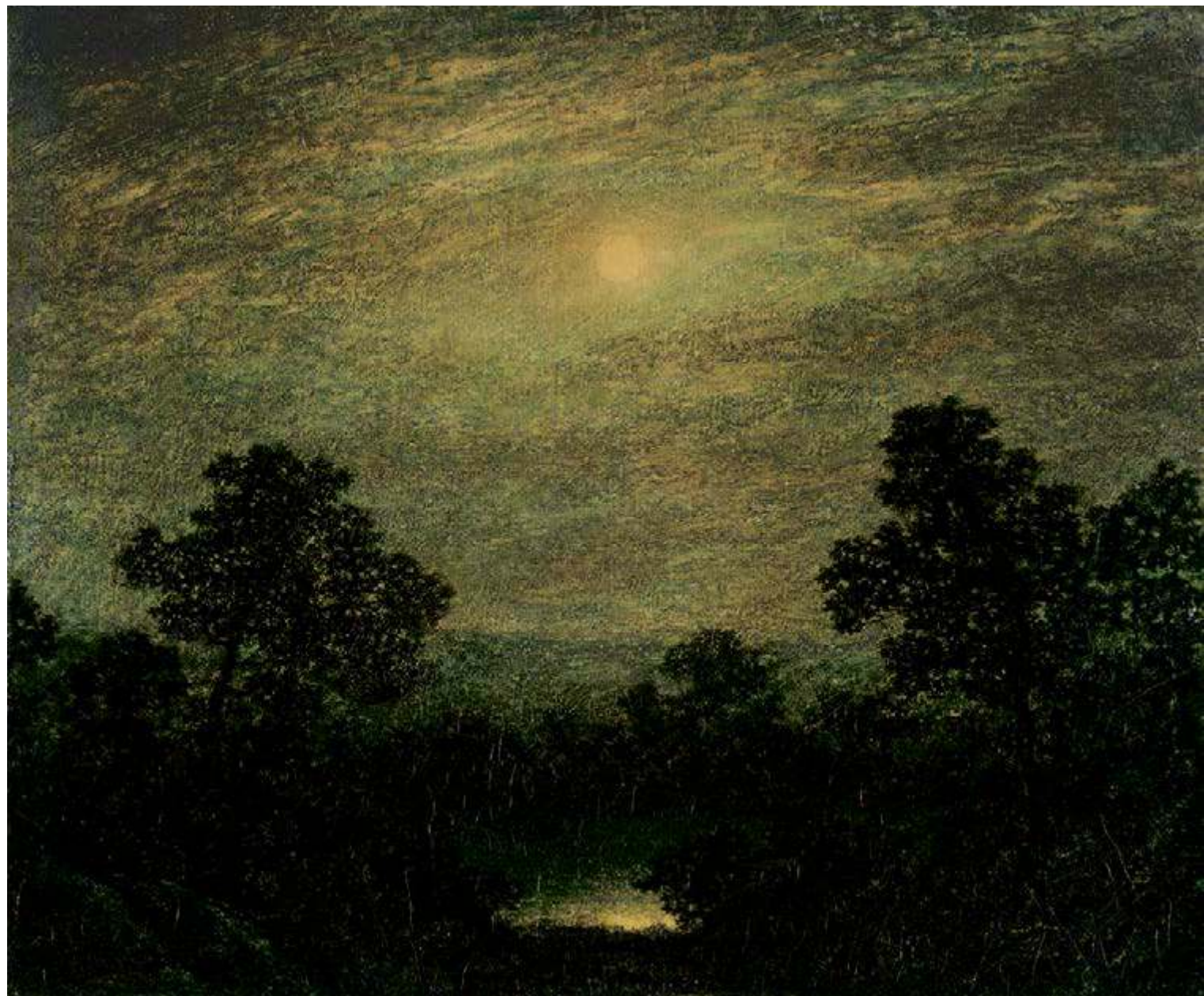


PLATE 15 *Moonlight*





PLATE 16 *Early Landscape*, 1867



PLATE 17 *Wonder*

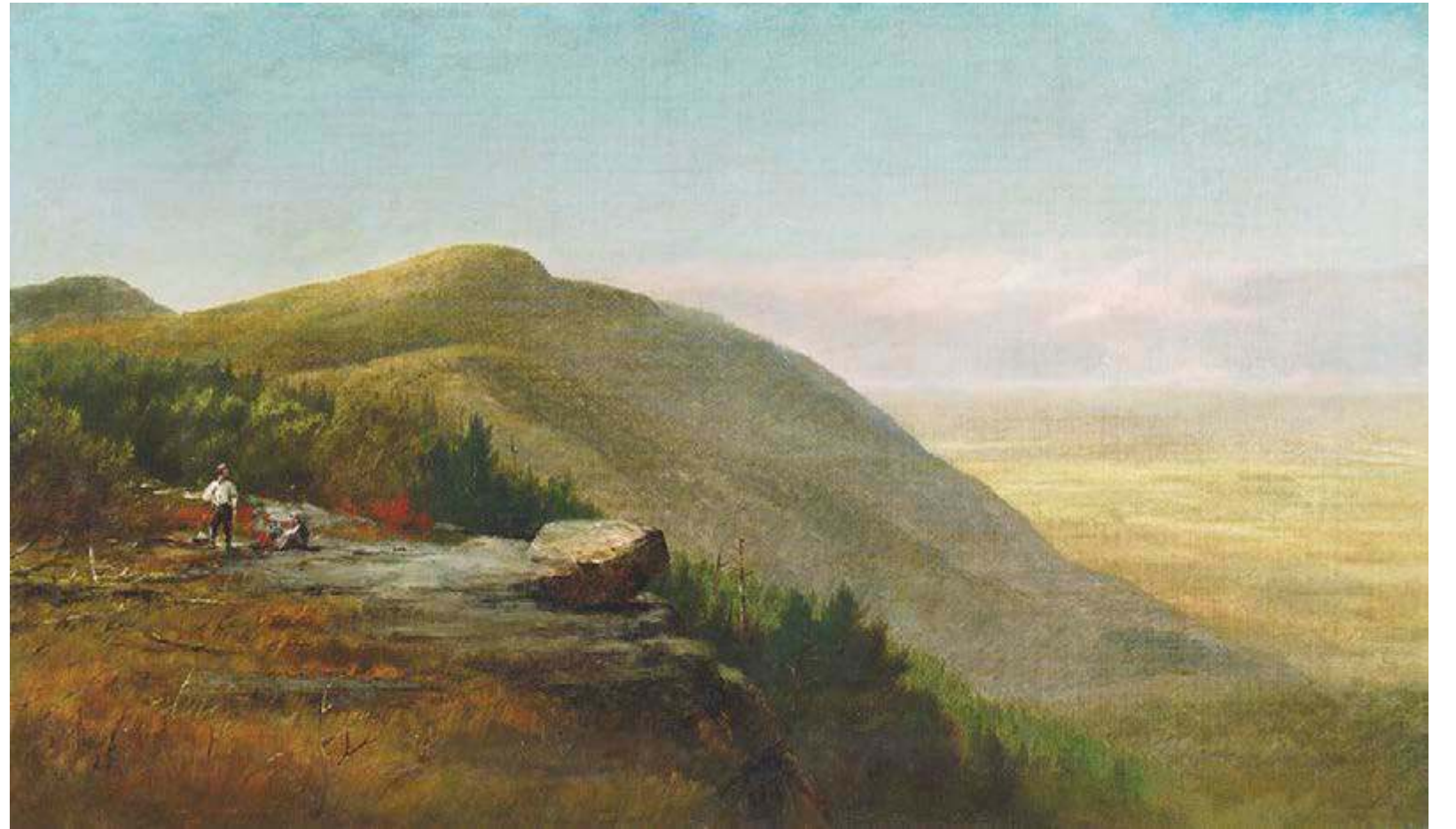


PLATE 18 *Mist in the Valley*





PLATE 19 *Shanties, Seventh Avenue and Fifty-Fifth Street*



PLATE 20 *At the Asylum*

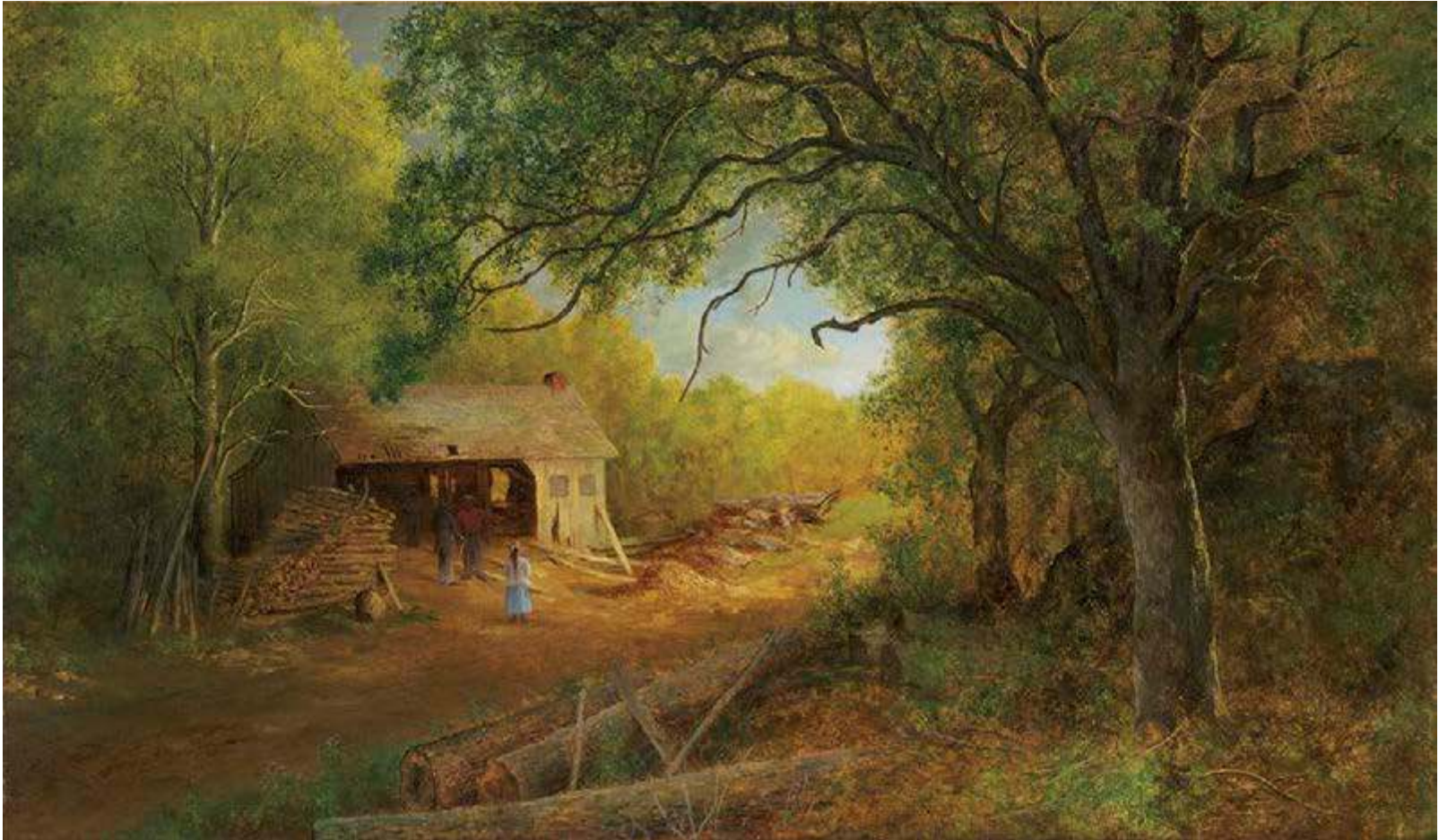


PLATE 21 *A Sawmill in the Woods*





PLATE 22 *Indian Encampment on the Lake*



PLATE 23 *Nocturne*



PLATE 24 *The Netherworld*





PLATE 25 *Middletown Landscape*



PLATE 26 *Golden Valley*



PLATE 27 *Landscape*



PLATE 28 *Dream Within a Dream*





PLATE 29 *Forest Interior*



PLATE 30 *Edge of the Forest*



PLATE 31 *Autumn Landscape with Stream*





PLATE 32 *Sunset*



PLATE 33 *Solitude (The River)*, 1889





PLATE 34 *Dancing Trees*



PLATE 35 *The Last Pond*

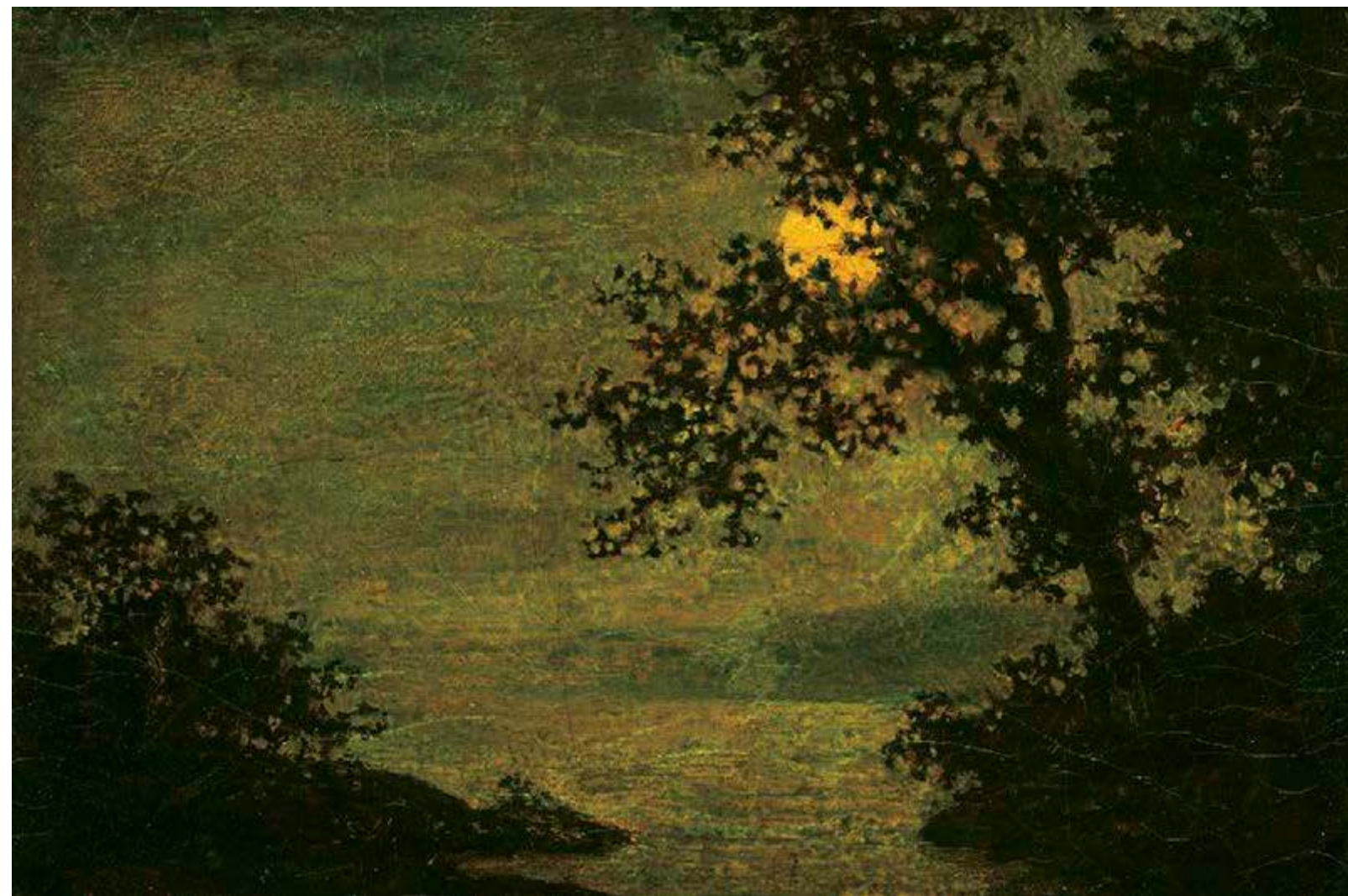


PLATE 36 *Rising Moon*





PLATE 37 *Evening Silhouettes*



PLATE 38 *Night Emerald*



PLATE 39 *Indian Warrior at Moonlight*





PLATE 40 *The Apparition*



PLATE 41 *Vanishing Tribe*



PLATE 42 *Indian Encampment / Three Figures, Campfire, and Tents*





PLATE 43 *Indian War Dance*



PLATE 44 *Encampment in the Woods*



PLATE 45 *The Pow Wow*



PLATE 46 *Earthen Spirits*



PLATE 47 *Indian Encampment*





PLATE 48 *In the Primordial Woods*



PLATE 49 *Indian Madonna*



PLATE 50 *View of a Teepee at Sunrise*



PLATE 51 *Afterglow*





PLATE 52 *Moonlit Landscape*



PLATE 53 *Twin Trees*



PLATE 54 *The Last Red Canoe*





PLATE 55 *Sunset with Figure on a Road by a Garden*

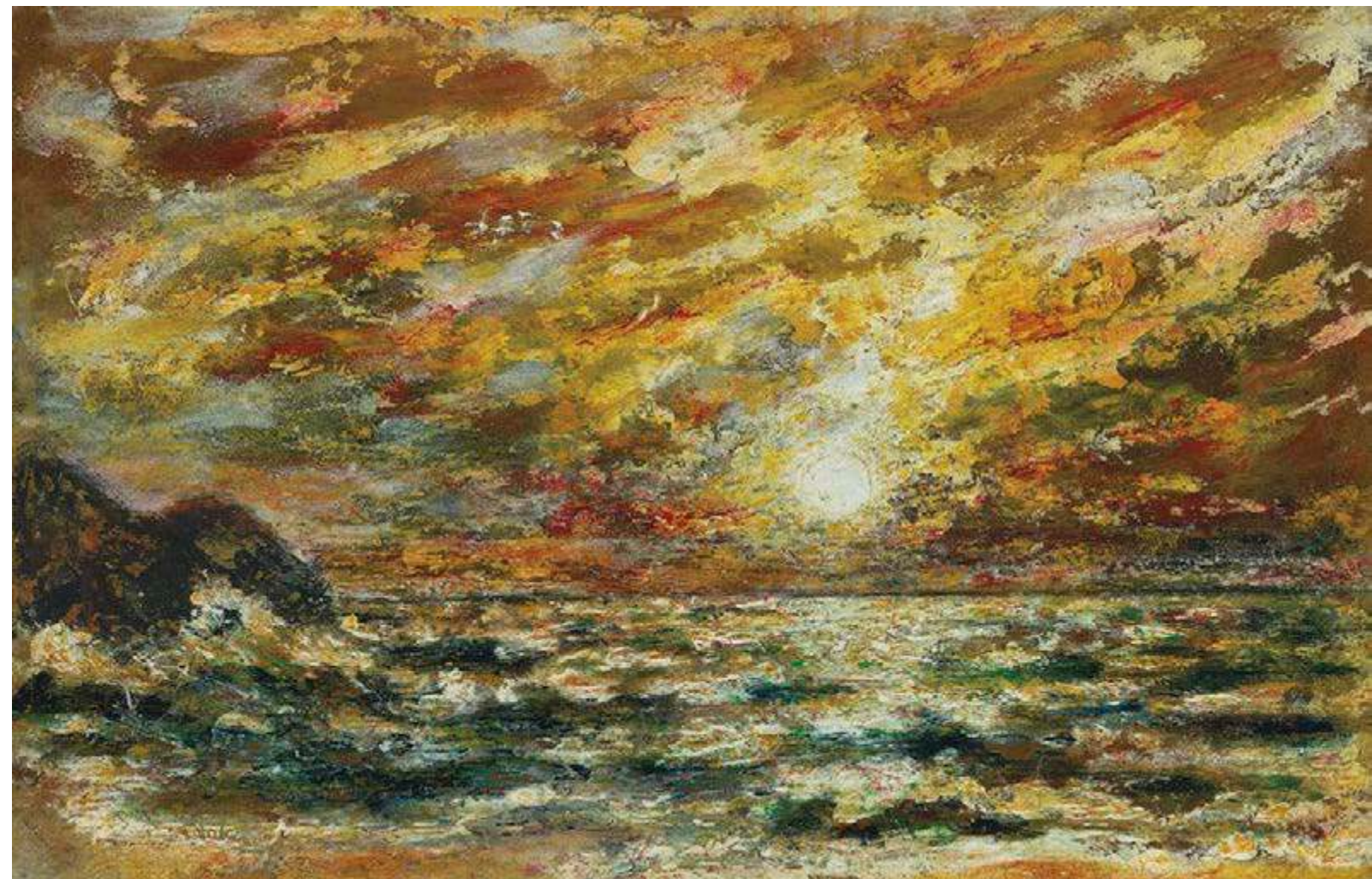


PLATE 56 *Seascape*



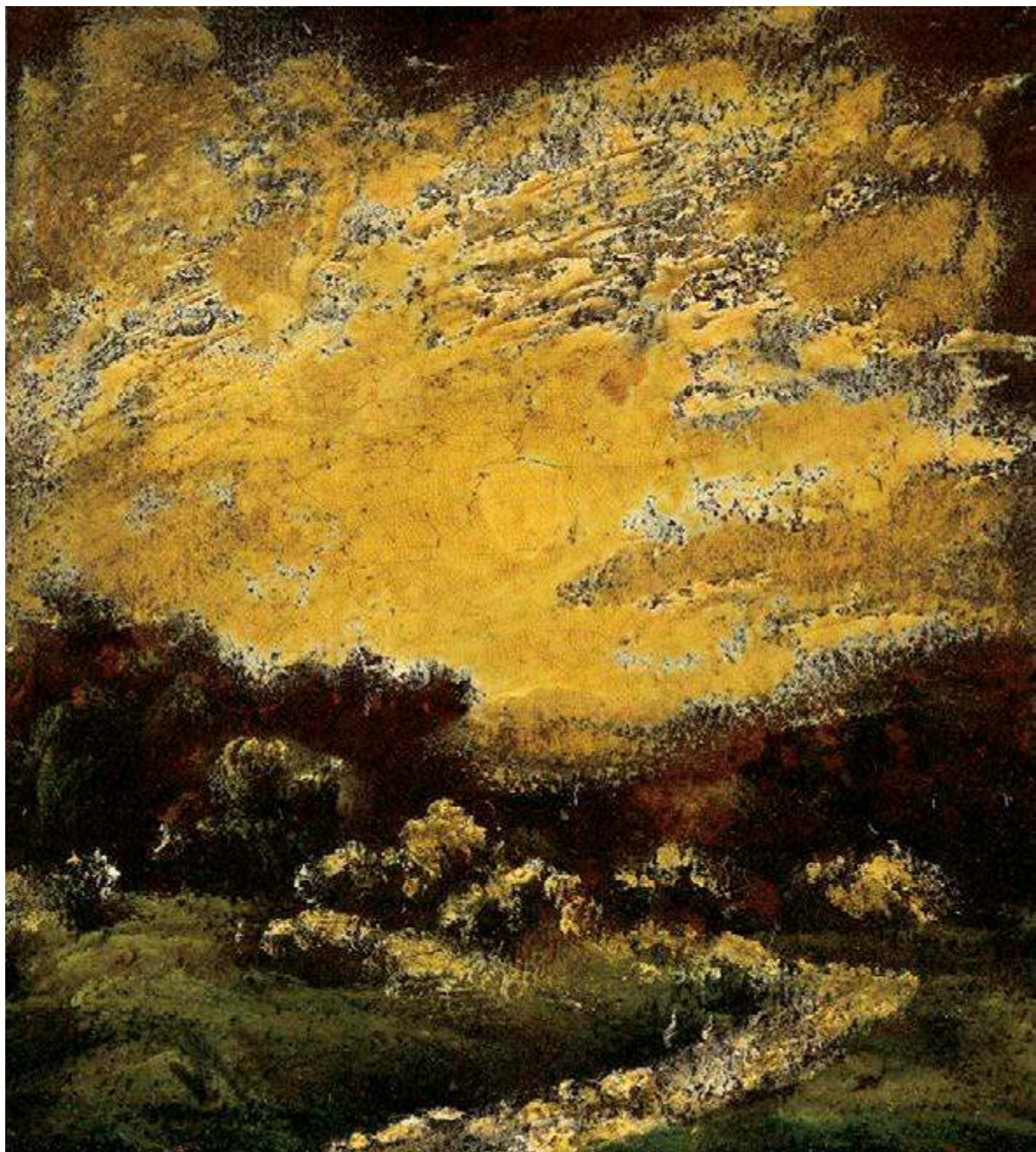


PLATE 57 *Summers Past*



PLATE 58 *Silvery Moon*



PLATE 59 *Valley of the Sun*





PLATE 60 *Illusion and Delusion*

## Works in the Catalogue

### PLATE 1

#### *Reflections*

Oil on canvas laid down on board

10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

Signed lower right in arrowhead:

*RA Blakelock*

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Midwest

Sale, Heritage Auctions, New York, New York, May 7, 2016, lot 68080, from above

### PLATE 2

#### *Eternal Orb*

Oil on board

5<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 3<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

#### PROVENANCE

The artist

Allen O. Blakelock Sr., Bakersfield, California, son of above, by descent, 1919

Kitty Jenkins Blakelock, Sequim, Washington

Private collection, North Carolina

### PLATE 3

#### *Indian Encampment at Sunset*

Oil on canvas

20 x 30 inches

#### PROVENANCE

Snite Museum of Art, Notre Dame, Indiana

Hon. and Mrs. Joseph P. Carroll, New York, New York

Julie and Lawrence Salander, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005

Private collection, New Jersey, acquired from above, 2005

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2007

Private collection, Annapolis, Maryland, acquired from above, 2007

### EXHIBITED

*Blakelock: Visionary in Context*, Mitchell Museum, Mount Vernon, Illinois; Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York; Pensacola Museum of Art, Florida; Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph, Michigan; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; Paine Art Center, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, November 4, 1995–July 6, 1997

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

### LITERATURE

Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 62, plate 4.

Glyn Vincent, *The Unknown Night: The Madness and Genius of R. A. Blakelock, An American Painter* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), unnumbered color plate.

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 45, plate 32.

Mark D. Mitchell, “Radical Color: Blakelock in Context,” in *The Unknown Blakelock*, ed. Karen O. Janovy (Lincoln, NE: Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 2008), 34, fig. 3.

### PLATE 4

#### *Stilly Night*

Oil on canvas

30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 22<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower right in arrowhead:

*R. A. Blakelock*

#### PROVENANCE

John Farrar

Curtis Ireland

J. W. Young, Chicago, Illinois

Mrs. H. H. Dow

James McEvoy, Detroit, Michigan

Mrs. James McEvoy, Detroit, Michigan

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts, 1969

Private collection, acquired from above, 1970

Private collection, by descent from above

### EXHIBITED

Young’s Art Galleries, Chicago, Illinois, *Paintings by Eminent American Old Masters and by Some of the Prominent Living American Artists*, March 1918, no. 8

### LITERATURE

J. W. Young, *Catalog of Paintings by Eminent American Old Masters and by Some of the Prominent Living American Artists* (Chicago: Young’s Art Galleries, 1918), 20–21, no. 8.

### PLATE 5

#### *Night Glow*

Oil on canvas

18 x 16 inches

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection

### PLATE 6

#### *Shanties in Harlem, 1874*

Oil on canvas

18 x 32 inches

Signed and dated lower right:

*R. A. Blakelock 1874*

#### PROVENANCE

R. G. Johnston, New York, 1896

I. A. Rose, New York

Otto F. Struse, New York, acquired from above, 1906

Henry Struse, Sharon, Connecticut

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts, 1971

George Hart, Ross, California, acquired from above, 1971

Private collection, by descent from above

Sale, Sotheby’s, New York, New York,

May 20, 2015, lot 25, from above

### EXHIBITED

(Possibly) Brooklyn Art Association, New York, April 1874, no. 331 (as *Old Shanties, 55th St., New York*)



*Ralph Albert Blakelock: 1847–1919*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska, January 14–February 9, 1975; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, May 4–June 7, 1975

LITERATURE

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Art Association, 1974), 10, 35–36, 65, no. 10.

Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 120, fig. 93.

Norman A. Geske, *Beyond Madness: The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 56, plate 27.

**Note:** According to the Nebraska Blakelock Inventory, in 1972 Robert Vose stated, “I would rate this the greatest Blakelock I have handled in forty years.”

PLATE 7

*Indian Hunters*

Oil on panel

11<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 15<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

Signed lower right in arrowhead:

*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection

Davis & Long Company, New York, New York

Meredith Long & Company, Houston, Texas

Richard Weimer Gallery, Darien, Connecticut, 1978

Private collection, Connecticut

Driscoll & Walsh Fine Art, Boston, Massachusetts, 1986

Private collection, Minnesota, 1986–2003

Private collection, New York, 2003–5

Babcock Galleries, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005

Private collection, Riverside, Connecticut, 2013

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

PLATE 8

*Autumn Landscape*

Oil on canvas

11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower right: *R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Sale, Parke-Bernet, New York, New York, n.d.

Private collection, New York, New York

Sale, Christie’s, New York, New York, March 5, 2009, lot 130, from above

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above

Private collection, New York, acquired from above, 2009

PLATE 9

*Indian Encampment at Twilight*

Oil on canvas

16 x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead:

*RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Estate of Giles Whiting

Museum of the City of New York, New York

Bernard Danenberg Galleries, New York, New York

Private collection, Omaha, Nebraska, acquired from above, 1973

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2008

Private collection, New Jersey, acquired from above, 2008

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2009

Private collection, Florida, acquired from above, 2013

PLATE 10

*Moonrise*

Oil on panel

3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower right in arrowhead:

*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts

Private collection, acquired from above, 1981

Sale, Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers, Cranston, Rhode Island, July 25, 2016, lot 13

PLATE 11

*A Spring Garden*

Oil on panel

6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches

Signed lower right in arrowhead:

*RA Blakelock*; on verso: *A Spring Garden*

PROVENANCE

Macbeth Gallery, New York, New York

Private collection, acquired from above, 1889

Alexander Gallery, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2002

Private collection, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, acquired from above, 2003

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 32, plate 17.

RELATED WORK

*The Artist’s Garden*, ca. 1880–82, oil on canvas, 16 x 24 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

PLATE 12

*The Forbidden Season*

Oil on panel

4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and 1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

PLATE 13

*Landscape, Evening Glow*

Oil on canvas

10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead:

*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Catonsville, Maryland

PLATE 14

*Landscape with Farm*

Oil on canvas

18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead: *Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York

Michael Altman Fine Art & Advisory Services, New York, New York

Hon. and Mrs. Joseph P. Carroll, New York, New York, 1999

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2007

Private collection, Saddle River, New Jersey, acquired from above, 2007

EXHIBITED

Babcock Galleries, New York, New York, 1999

Nielsen Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, *The Self-Reliant Spirit*, February 13–28, 2004

LITERATURE

*The Self-Reliant Spirit* (Boston: Nielson Gallery, 2004).

PLATE 15

*Moonlight*

Oil on canvas

25 x 30 inches

Signed lower left: *R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Henry McKnight, Minneapolis, Minnesota

L.D. Andrews Gallery, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1996

Private collection, Connecticut

Sale, Christie’s, New York, New York, March 3, 2005, lot 66, from above

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above

Diane Salerno, Palisades, New York, acquired from above

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 40, plate 27.

PLATE 16

*Early Landscape*, 1867

Oil on canvas

6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

Monogrammed and dated lower right: *RABLAKELOCK. 1867*

PROVENANCE

Schweitzer Gallery, New York, New York

Private collection, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2012

Private collection, Boston, Massachusetts, acquired from above, 2012

PLATE 17

*Wonder*

Oil on panel

7<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and 1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

PLATE 18

*Mist in the Valley*

Oil on canvas

14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

Sale, Doyle, New York, New York, May 21, 2003, lot 83

Alexander Gallery, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005

Private collection, Greenville, Delaware, acquired from above, 2011

LITERATURE

Elizabeth Wilson, review of *The Nature of a Nation: Paintings of the Hudson River School*, Questroyal Fine Art, New York, *ARTnews* 107 (May 2008): 149.

PLATE 19

*Shanties, Seventh Avenue and Fifty-Fifth Street*

Oil on canvas

16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

Signed lower left: *R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Justice M. Warley Platzek, New York, New York

National Democratic Club, New York, New York, gift from above, by 1932

Coe Kerr Gallery, New York, New York

Richard A. Manoogian, Michigan, acquired from above, 1980

Private collection, Pelham, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2004

Private collection, Los Angeles, California, acquired from above, 2004

EXHIBITED

(Possibly) The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, 1904, no. 28 (as *Shanties at 55th St. and 7th Ave., New York*, 1868)

*Ralph Albert Blakelock Centenary Exhibition in Celebration of the Centennial of the City College of New York*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, April 22–May 29, 1947, no. 23

*Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1849 [sic]–1919*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, New York, March 3–31, 1973

*Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska, January 14–February 9, 1975; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, May 4–June 7, 1975, no. 12

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, November 15–December 15, 2005

*The Unknown Blakelock*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska, January 25–August 24, 2008; National Academy Museum, New York, New York, September 25, 2008–January 4, 2009

LITERATURE

Lloyd Goodrich, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Centenary Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1947), 51, no. 23.

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Art Association, 1974), 36, 66, no. 12.

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 13, no. 6.

Karen O. Janovy, ed., *The Unknown Blakelock* (Lincoln, NE: Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 2008), 11, no. 1.

PLATE 20

*At the Asylum*

Oil on board

6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 9<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower right: *RABlakelock*

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Ralph Albert Blakelock

Macbeth Gallery, New York, New York, acquired from above

John F. Garrety, New York, New York, acquired from above, 1926

Private collection, Pennsylvania, by descent from above

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2012

PLATE 21

*A Sawmill in the Woods*

Oil on canvas

23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 40 inches

Signed lower right: *Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

The artist

Private collection, New York

Private collection, Florida, by descent from above

Babcock Galleries, New York, New York, 1996

Private collection, Minnesota, 1997

Driscoll Babcock Galleries, New York, New York



EXHIBITED

Babcock Galleries, New York, New York,  
*From the Light of Distant Skies, A Selection of 19th Century American Paintings*, April 8–August 11, 2010, no. 41

Driscoll Babcock Galleries, New York, New York, *Refuge and Remembrance: Landscape Painting in the Civil War Era*, May 16–June 22, 2013

PLATE 22

*Indian Encampment on the Lake*

Oil on canvas  
15 x 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower left: *Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Steven Straw, Inc., Newburyport, Massachusetts

Bernard and S. Dean Levy, New York

Alfred A. Funai, New York

Private collection, Connecticut

Sale, Christie's, New York, New York, September 27, 2004, lot 63, from above

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above

Private collection, Massachusetts, 2005, acquired from above

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 44, plate 31.

John Zeaman, “Visions of a Troubled Genius: An American Original Gets His Due,” review of *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, Questroyal Fine Art, New York, *New Jersey Record*, November 25, 2005, 28.

PLATE 23

*Nocturne*

Oil on panel  
6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead: *R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Pennsylvania

Avery Galleries, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

PLATE 24

*The Netherworld*

Oil on canvas  
16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead: *RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, New York, New York

PLATE 25

*Middletown Landscape*

Oil on board  
4<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
On verso: *R.A.B.*

PROVENANCE

The artist

Allen O. Blakelock Sr., Sequim, Washington, son of above, by descent, 1919

Museum Art Exchange, New York, New York

Private collection, Nassau County, New York

EXHIBITED

M. Knoedler & Co., New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1849 [sic]–1919*, March 3–31, 1973

Fenn Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico, *Ralph Albert Blakelock*, 1977, no. 18

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)*, September 8–October 31, 1987, no. 44

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock 1849 [sic]–1919* (New York: M. Knoedler & Company, 1973), 23, fig. 12.

*Ralph Albert Blakelock NA (1847–1919)* (Santa Fe: Fenn Galleries, 1977), no. 18.

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)* (New York: Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, 1987), no. 44, plate 18.

**Note:** An inscription on the reverse of this work reads, “This painting was executed by my father Ralph Albert Blakelock during the period of his confinement at Middletown, New York. It came into my possession after his death in 1919. Allen O. Blakelock.”

PLATE 26

*Golden Valley*

Oil on board  
5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 9 inches  
Signed lower right: *R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Ralph Albert Blakelock

Macbeth Gallery, New York, New York, acquired from above

John F. Garrety, New York, New York, acquired from above, 1926

Private collection, Pennsylvania, by descent from above

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2012

PLATE 27

*Landscape*

Oil on board  
7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Initialed lower right: *A-I*; on verso: *R.A. Blakelock fecit.*

PROVENANCE

The artist

Private collection, great-great-grandson of above, by descent

Sale, Treadway/Toomey Auctions, Oak Park, Illinois, March 7, 2015, lot 543, from above

PLATE 28

*Dream Within a Dream*

Oil on panel  
5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 8<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and 1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

PLATE 29

*Forest Interior*

Oil on canvas  
42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right: *R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Midwest

Sale, Heritage Auctions, New York, New York, May 7, 2016, lot 68077, from above

PLATE 30

*Edge of the Forest*

Oil on panel  
15<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead: *R. A Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Spector collection, Petaluma, California

Adamson-Duvannes Galleries, Downey, California

[With] Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, from above, 2005

Private collection, Kensington, California

EXHIBITED

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)*, September 8–October 31, 1987, no. 14 (as *Landscape*)

LITERATURE

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)* (New York: Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, 1987), no.14, plate 8 (as *Landscape*).

Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 35, 60, plate 2.

PLATE 31

*Autumn Landscape with Stream*

Oil on canvas  
18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower right: *Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Alexander Gallery, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2004

Private collection, Philadelphia, acquired from above, 2005

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 49, plate 36.

PLATE 32

*Sunset*

Oil on canvas  
21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 39<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead: *R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

James Marshall, Brooklyn, New York, by 1927

Mrs. Roger Scholle, Scarsdale, New York, by descent from above

Private collection, by descent from above

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above

PLATE 33

*Solitude (The River)*, 1889

Oil on panel  
11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right: *R.A. Blakelock*; on verso: *Solitude by R. A. Blakelock 1889*

PROVENANCE

Estate of David C. Copley, La Jolla, California

PLATE 34

*Dancing Trees*

Oil on panel  
7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

Private collection, New York, New York

PLATE 35

*The Last Pond*

Oil on board  
4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Initialed lower left: *A. I*

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and 1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

PLATE 36

*Rising Moon*

Oil on canvas  
7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower left: *R.A Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Museum Art Exchange, New York, New York

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts

M. Knoedler & Co., New York, New York, by 1973

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Frank, by 1993

Private collection, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2011

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2014

EXHIBITED

M. Knoedler & Co., New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1849 [sic]–1919*, March 3–31, 1973

Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, New York, *Long Island Collections, The Gilded Age to the 1990s*, May 29–September 12, 1993 (as *Moonrise*)

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock 1849 [sic]–1919* (New York: M. Knoedler & Co., 1973), 16, fig. 12.

RELATED WORK

*Moonlight*, 1890, oil on canvas, 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**Note:** In M. Knoedler & Co.'s 1973 exhibition catalogue, this work is described as “a fine example of the marvelously haunting quality of stillness and solitude that is the artist's finest work.”

PLATE 37

*Evening Silhouettes*

Oil on canvas laid down on board

16 x 24 inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead: *R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

The artist

Harry Watrous, acquired from above

Erickson Perkins, acquired from above, 1896

Mrs. Erickson Perkins, Rochester, New York

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts, 1946

Michael Altman Fine Art & Advisory Services, New York, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2004

Private collection, Bloomington, Illinois, acquired from above, 2004

EXHIBITED

*Ralph Albert Blakelock Centenary Exhibition in Celebration of the Centennial of the City College of New York*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, April 22–May 29, 1947, no. 6

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, 1956

*The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919*, The Art Galleries, University of California Santa Barbara, California, January 7–February 2, 1969; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California, February 15–March 16, 1969; Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, March 24–April 27, 1969; The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York, May 17–June 23, 1969, no. 62

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, November 15–December 14, 2005

LITERATURE

Lloyd Goodrich, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Centenary Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1947), 44, 52, no. 6.

David Gebhard and Phyllis Stuurman, *The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1969), 27, 63, no. 62.

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 4, no. 2.



PLATE 38

Night Emerald

Oil on board  
8¾ x 8⅝ inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Connecticut

EXHIBITED

R. C. and N. M. Vose Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, *Exhibition of Paintings by Ralph Albert Blakelock*, 1917

PLATE 39

Indian Warrior at Moonlight

Oil on panel  
18 x 14 inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Beverly, Massachusetts  
Estate of above  
Sale, Kaminski Auctions, Beverly, Massachusetts, November 30–December 1, 2013, lot 2114, from above

PLATE 40

The Apparition

Oil on canvas  
24<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower right: *RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Pennsylvania

PLATE 41

Vanishing Tribe

Oil on panel  
8⅝ x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*; on verso in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Macbeth Galleries, New York, New York  
David Findlay Jr. Gallery, New York, New York

PLATE 42

Indian Encampment / Three Figures, Campfire, and Tents

Oil on panel  
8 x 12 inches  
Signed lower right: *RAB* [illegible]

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Van Rensselaer Adams, New York  
August Propersi, Mount Vernon, New York, 1974  
Sale, Sotheby’s Arcade, New York, New York, March 31, 2004, lot 89  
Sale, Doyle, New York, New York, October 1, 2014, lot 73

PLATE 43

Indian War Dance

Oil on panel  
5⅝ x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York  
Hon. and Mrs. Joseph P. Carroll, New York, New York  
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)*, September 8–October 31, 1987, no. 24

LITERATURE

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919)* (New York: Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, 1987), no. 24, plate 16.  
Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 78–79, plate 6.

PLATE 44

Encampment in the Woods

Oil on canvas  
16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower left: *RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Sale, Hyde Park Country Auctions, Poughkeepsie, New York, 2008  
Private collection, Larchmont, New York, acquired from above  
Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2008  
Private collection, Annapolis, Maryland, acquired from above, 2013

PLATE 45

The Pow Wow

Oil on panel  
5 x 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

William Doyle Gallery, New York, 1978  
Private collection  
Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2012  
Private collection, Bloomington, Illinois, acquired from above, 2013

PLATE 46

Earthen Spirits

Oil on panel  
12 x 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

David Findlay Jr. Gallery, New York, New York

PLATE 47

Indian Encampment

Oil on canvas laid down on panel  
18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York, New York  
Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2003  
Private collection, Bell Canyon, California, acquired from above, 2003  
Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005

Diane Salerno, Palisades, New York, acquired from above

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 10, plate 4.

PLATE 48

In the Primordial Woods

Oil on canvas  
17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 23<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*RA Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

George F. McMurray, Glendale, California (as *Indian Encampment*)  
Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, on long term loan from above, 1970s–80s  
Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York  
Private collection, New York  
Sale, Brunk Auctions, Asheville, North Carolina, March 13–14, 2015, lot 79, from above

EXHIBITED

*The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919*, The Art Galleries, University of California Santa Barbara, California, January 7–February 2, 1969; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California, February 15–March 16, 1969; Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, March 24–April 27, 1969; The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York, May 17–June 23, 1969, no. 76 (as *Indian Encampment*)

LITERATURE

David Gebhard and Phyllis Stuurman, *The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1969), 29, no. 76 (as *Indian Encampment*).

PLATE 49

Indian Madonna

Oil on panel  
8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection  
Private collection, by descent from above  
Biltmore Galleries, Scottsdale, Arizona, acquired from above  
J. N. Bartfield Art Galleries, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2014

PLATE 50

View of a Teepee at Sunrise

Oil on canvas  
16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, by 1999  
Withers Fine Art, Scottsdale, Arizona  
Questroyal Fine Art, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2005  
Private collection, New Jersey, acquired from above, 2005

PLATE 51

Afterglow

Oil on canvas  
16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R.A Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Mrs. D. M. Keith  
Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York  
Private collection, New York  
Sale, Brunk Auctions, Asheville, North Carolina, March 13–14, 2015, lot 81, from above

EXHIBITED

Young’s Art Galleries, Chicago, Illinois, *Blakelock—His Art and His Family*, April 27–May 13, 1916

LITERATURE

J. W. Young, *Catalog of the Works of R. A. Blakelock, N. A. and of His Daughter Marian Blakelock* (Chicago: Young’s Art Galleries, 1916), 20–21.

**Note:** The 1916 Young’s Art Galleries catalogue attests that “this artist has never left us a finer piece of glowing color than this picture. The luminous amber tint of the sky reflects in the little pool in the foreground and illumining the ground just back of it makes the richest possible setting for the autumn trees, with Indians and wig-wams grouped underneath in a way to give a perfect composition. Both Mrs. Blakelock and her daughter Marian were charmed with this picture when they saw it some time ago.”

PLATE 52

Moonlit Landscape

Oil on panel  
6<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Signed lower left in arrowhead:  
*R.A. Blakelock*; initialed lower right:  
*R.A.B.*

PROVENANCE

Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, by 1998  
Ivana B. Salander, New York, New York  
Private collection, New Mexico, acquired from above, 2012

EXHIBITED

Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Paintings*, 1998  
Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: Paintings, Drawings, & Watercolors*, May 1–October 31, 2004

LITERATURE

Glyn Vincent, *The Unknown Night: The Madness and Genius of R.A. Blakelock, An American Painter* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), unnumbered color plate.

**Note:** In a letter dated April 3, 2012, Glyn Vincent attests that “the painting’s size, style, subject matter, tone, coloring and brushwork, conform to certain types of work Blakelock completed between 1885 and 1899. The painting exhibits his characteristic handling of paint, using impulsive dabs of white over darker pigment to create the silhouettes of trees, his striated skies, his use of multiple layers of under-paint to achieve the unique bluish-green timber of his twilight skies.”

PLATE 53

Twin Trees

Oil on board laid down on canvas  
15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 20 inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R. A Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

John Alden Philbrick Jr., New York, New York, by 1950  
Ann Philbrick Knight, Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, by descent from above  
Private collection, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, by descent from above

PLATE 54

The Last Red Canoe

Oil on panel  
147⁄8 x 21<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches  
Signed lower right in arrowhead:  
*R.A Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Scottsdale, Arizona

PLATE 55

Sunset with Figure on a Road by a Garden

Oil on panel  
16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Signed lower right: *R.A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Doll & Richards, Boston, Massachusetts  
Sale, Brunk Auctions, Asheville, North Carolina, July 8–9, 2016, lot 783

PLATE 56

Seascape

Oil on board laid down on board  
77⁄8 x 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches  
Signed indistinctly lower left

PROVENANCE

The artist  
Mrs. Ralph Albert Blakelock  
Allen O. Blakelock Sr., Bakersfield, California, the artist’s son, from above  
Kitty Jenkins Blakelock, Sequim, Washington  
Private collection, North Carolina

EXHIBITED

*The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919*, The Art Galleries, University of California Santa Barbara, California, January 7–February 2, 1969; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California, February 15–March 16, 1969; Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, March 24–April 27, 1969; The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York, May 17–June 23, 1969



*Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska, January 14–February 9, 1975; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, May 4–June 7, 1975

LITERATURE

David Gebhard and Phyllis Stuurman, *The Enigma of Ralph A. Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1969), 85, no. 106.

Norman A. Geske, *Ralph Albert Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Art Association, 1974), 59, no. 85.

Abraham A. Davidson, *Ralph Albert Blakelock* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 184, fig. 126.

Glyn Vincent, *The Unknown Night: The Madness and Genius of R.A. Blakelock, An American Painter* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), unnumbered color plate.

Norman A. Geske, *Beyond Madness: The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847–1919* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), plate 31.

**Note:** According to David Gebhard and Phyllis Stuurman of The Art Galleries, University of California Santa Barbara, family tradition holds that *Seascape* was the last painting completed by Ralph Albert Blakelock.

PLATE 57

*Summers Past*

Oil on board

6¾ x 5<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Initialed lower left: A-1

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and

1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

PLATE 58

*Silvery Moon*

Oil on canvas laid down on board

18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 24 inches

Signed lower left in arrowhead:

*R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts

Private collection, New York

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2003

Private collection, Bloomington, Illinois, acquired from above, 2003

EXHIBITED

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, *Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius*, November 15–December 15, 2005

LITERATURE

*Ralph Albert Blakelock: The Great Mad Genius* (New York: Questroyal Fine Art, 2005), 53, 56, no. 41.

PLATE 59

*Valley of the Sun*

Oil on board

6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 9<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Signed lower left: *R. A. Blakelock*

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Ralph Albert Blakelock

Macbeth Gallery, New York, New York, acquired from above

John F. Garrety, New York, New York, acquired from above, 1926

Private collection, Pennsylvania, by descent from above

Private collection, New York, New York, acquired from above, 2012

Questroyal Fine Art, LLC, New York, New York, acquired from above

Private collection, Bloomington, Illinois, acquired from above, 2013

PLATE 60

*Illusion and Delusion*

Oil on board

11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

PROVENANCE

The artist

Dr. Maurice C. Ashley, Middletown, New York, from above

Private collection, Stuart, Florida, by descent from above

**Note:** Dr. Maurice C. Ashley was superintendent at Middletown State Homeopathic Hospital from 1902 to 1923. The artist Ralph Albert Blakelock was a patient at the hospital between 1901 and 1919 where he was treated for dementia praecox (schizophrenia).

Additional Works in the Exhibition

PLEASE CONTACT US

TO REQUEST AN IMAGE

*A Meeting in the Woods*

*A Rider in the Park*

*A Uintah Squaw*, 1879

*Amber Night*

*Arizona Canyon*

*Autumn Gold*

*Autumn Touches*

*Blue Indian Encampment*

*By the Lake*

*Emerald Pool*

*Encampment at Sunset*

*Encampment at Sunset with Lone Figure*

*Fading Light*

*Fall Landscape*

*Fall Landscape, Catskills, with Hikers*

*Forest Fantasy*

*Forest Interior*

*Forest Pond*

*Golden Glow*

*House by a Stream*, 1870

*House in a Grove of Trees*

*Hudson River Landscape*, 1867

*Indian Dancer*

*Indian Encampment / Three Riders*

*Indian in an Autumnal Landscape*

*Indian with a Canoe*

*Infernal Night*

*Landscape with Figures and Boat*

*Landscape with Shepherd*

*Landscape, Long Island*

*Last Gleam*

*Marine, Seal Rock*

*Moon Memory*

*Moonlit Lake*

*Morning Glory*

*Mountain Landscape*, 1877

*Near Oblivion*

*Open Landscape*

*Pass in the Rocky Mountains*, 1877

*Portrait of Cora Bailey (Mrs. Ralph Blakelock)*

*Ship at Sunset*

*Shooting the Arrow*

*Snow Scene*

*Sunset Landscape*

*Sunset on the Marsh*

*The Full Moon*

*The Golden Orb*

*The Guide*

*The Last Night*

*The Lost Tribe*

*The Trout Stream*

*The Waterfall*

*Two Women in a Landscape*

*Vibrant Landscape*

*Waterfall by Moonlight (Woodland Waterfall and Brook)*

*Wedding Gift*

*Western Encampment*

*Wildflower Still Life*

*Woodland Cabin*, 1864

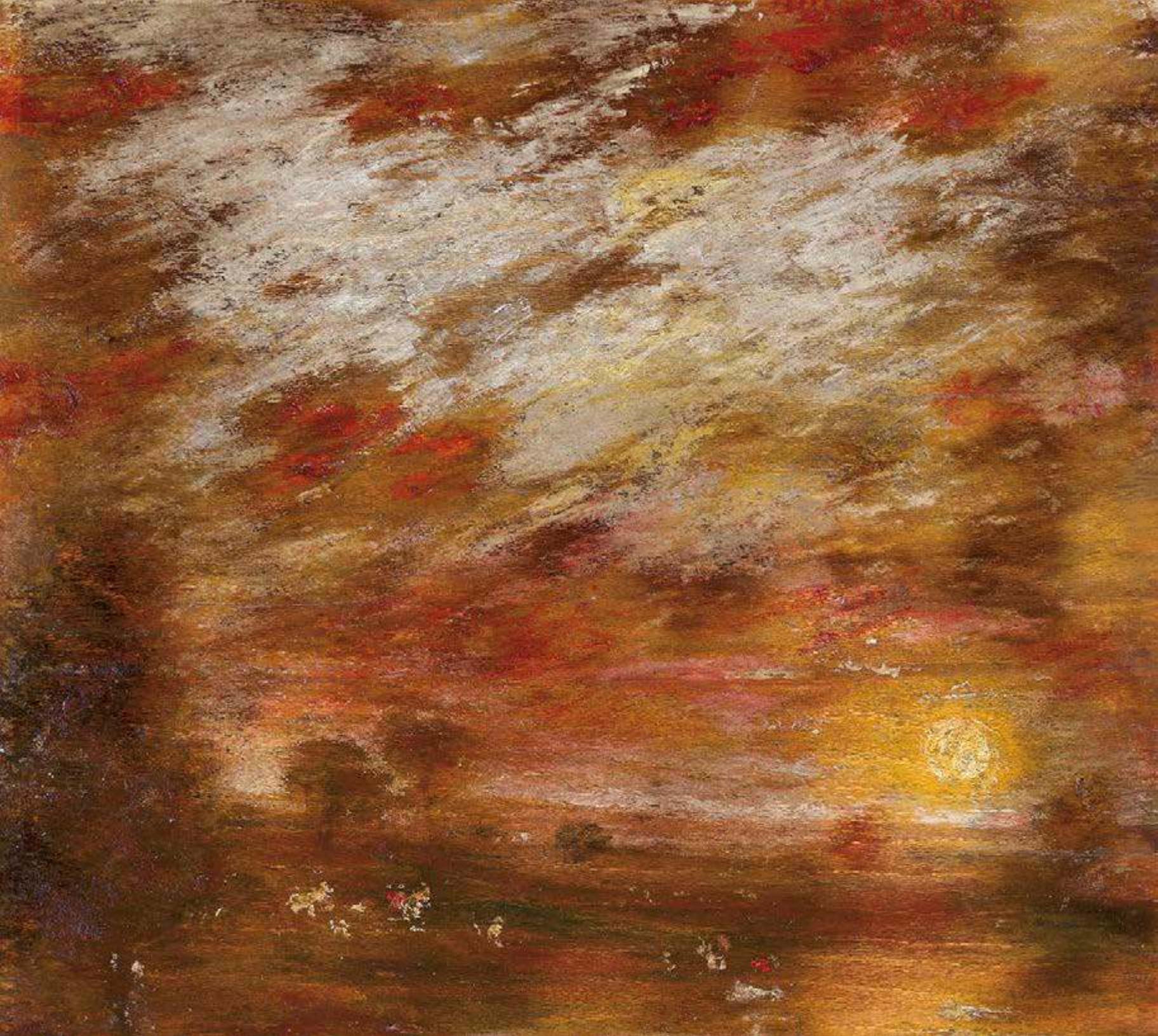
*Woodland Landscape*

*Woodland Stream*

*Woodland Waterfall*

*Woodlands Glen with Stream*

PLATE 60 *Illusion and Delusion* (detail)











QUESTROYAL FINE ART, LLC