



## William Holbrook Beard

### Title

Five Bears

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Date

1869

### Dimensions

14 1/8 × 20 5/16 in. (35.9 × 51.6 cm)

### Accession number

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### Credit Line

Richard M. Scaife Bequest, 2015

### Web Description

William Holbrook Beard is widely known as a painter of animals endowed with human characteristics, and was particularly fond of using bears and monkeys. He made clever observations in his paintings about human nature, often with the implication of an underlying political or social statement. In this work, the bear standing on his hind legs wears a collar with a broken chain, suggesting he may be a dancing bear, escaped from a circus sideshow. Painted soon after the Civil War, Beard may be commenting on Reconstruction policies related to formerly enslaved people.