



John Frederick Peto

Title

Five Dollar Bill

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

ca. 1885

Dimensions

10 1/4 × 14 in. (26 × 35.6 cm)

Accession number

80.3.24

Credit Line

Gift of Amanda K. Berls, 1980

Web Description

The Philadelphia-born painter John Frederick Peto studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. One of the leading American practitioners of trompe l'oeil painting—a style that attempts to deliberately fool the eye with hyper realistic technique—Peto is perhaps not as well known as he should be. For years his primarily unsigned work was confused with that of William Harnett, another Philadelphia-trained trompe l'oeil artist. The Philadelphia region was the seat of an American still-life tradition encompassing members of the Peale family, John F. Francis, and Severin Roesen. In this composition Peto depicts torn bits of paper tacked to a board—a common trompe l'oeil conceit—as well as a five dollar note with the portrait of President Andrew Jackson visible, a design that first appeared