



John La Farge

Title

Fountain in Our Garden at Nikko

Medium

Oil on wood panel

Date

1886

Dimensions

11 3/4 × 9 3/4 in. (29.8 × 24.8 cm)

Accession number

2016.11.17

Credit Line

Richard M. Scaife Bequest, 2015

Web Description

In this small painting, John La Farge reveals his intense interest in Asian art, through both subject matter and composition. It displays his expert knowledge of color, gathered through his work in stained glass and study of French academic and English Pre-Raphaelite painting. As an avid and early collector of Japanese prints—La Farge's wife, Margaret Mason Perry, was the grand-niece of Commander Matthew G Perry, who played a major role in initiating trade with Japan in 1854—La Farge absorbed and appreciated Asian cultures and aesthetics. On his first visit to Japan in 1886 he recorded this view of a garden fountain in Nikko, the town in which he and traveling companion Henry Adams spent six weeks. His journey to Japan and the South Pacific formed the basis for a series of illustrated articles for *Century Magazine* (1890-93) and later his book *An Artist's Letters from Japan* (1897).