



Theodore Wendel

Title

Haystacks

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

ca. 1890-1915

Dimensions

21 × 24 in. (53.3 × 61 cm)

Accession number

2017.7.9

Credit Line

Richard M. Scaife Bequest, 2015

Web Description

In 1886, Theodore Wendel traveled to Giverny, France, where a colony of artists—many of them American—had gathered in the village where French Impressionist Claude Monet lived and worked. Wendel had already studied abroad in Munich, Florence, Venice, and Paris after his initial training in Cincinnati. He was among the first American artists, along with Theodore Robinson and Willard Metcalf, to hold Monet in high esteem and adopt his methods and subjects. Returning to the United States in 1888, Wendel continued to paint in this relatively modern French Impressionist style, teaching it to students at Wellesley College and the Cowles Art School. His loose and brushy approach to painting en plein air embraced the rural timelessness of Monet's Giverny and transplanted it to the villages of coastal New England. After another trip to France in 1897, Wendel eventually settled on a farm in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The haystacks featured in this work were a frequently painted subject of Monet after 1890. Harvested in July, the stacks often remained in the fields around Giverny over the winter. Monet, and those artists who followed in his footsteps, painted the grainstacks in all seasons and light conditions. Wendel would have known of Monet's grainstack paintings, either by seeing them in the United States or on his return visit to France in the 1890s. Perhaps he even painted his version of the haystacks in Giverny at that time. In Ipswich, the surrounding area offered saltmarshes with their own stacks of salt hay, which Wendel painted between 1912 and 1915. The painting came to the Brandywine with no known date of creation. Though it is difficult to be certain in which country this work was painted, it was certainly done under the influence of Monet.