

## Spotlight on the Art Collections: Watercolors

The acquisition of art objects at the Folger is driven primarily by subject matter and is meant as a complement to the book and manuscript collections. This differs from the aim of an art museum, whose collecting practices are often aesthetic or artist focused.<sup>1</sup> The Folger has a wide variety of art objects, ranging from oil paintings and prints to ceramics and stained glass. Arguably used less often by researchers than the book and manuscript collections, the aim of this pop-up is to introduce viewers to art material they might not usually see. Presented are a group of watercolors for your viewing pleasure. Enjoy!

(Photographs depicted in this pamphlet can be found in our digital image database at [luna.folger.edu](http://luna.folger.edu) unless otherwise noted.)

### **Part I: Portraits**

1.

*Kean in the character of King Richard III*

Jane Stuart

ART Box S931 no.1 (size XL)

[19<sup>th</sup> century]

This portrait depicts Edmund Kean, the famous British actor best known for his roles as villainous Shakespearean characters. It is appropriate that he is shown here as Richard III; it was the first role he played on the stage in the United States and it was the role that pitted him against fellow actor Junius Brutus Booth (father of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth). A transatlantic rivalry, the two actors were in warring productions of *Richard III* at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

2.

*Ellen Terry as Beatrice [in Shakespeare's Much ado about nothing]*

ART Box T315 no.1 (size S)

[late 19<sup>th</sup> century]

In this portrait, Ellen Terry is portrayed as Beatrice from *Much Ado About Nothing*. A renowned and celebrated actor in both Britain and America, her prolific career spanned roughly seven decades. She had a long-time professional partnership with Sir Henry Irving, with whom she worked on many Shakespeare productions, playing opposite him in roles such as Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, and Desdemona. In 1882, she took on the role of Beatrice. Terry was an artistic inspiration for painters and poets of the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic movements, who valued truth in nature, beauty, and a return to art as it was in the time before Raphael. The way she is depicted here--tall, graceful, with fine features and red lips dressed in a beautifully colored dress--would have been the contemporary artists' ideal.

3.

*Edwin Booth as Iago ...*

Voltaire Combe

ART Box C730 no.1 (size S)

[1911]

Edwin Booth was from an acting family; his father Junius Brutus Booth and brothers John Wilkes Booth and Junius Brutus Booth Jr. also performed on the stage. He is shown here in costume. A penciled inscription on the back of this painting reads, “Edwin Booth as Iago, an unusually accurate likeness. Taken from a photograph by Gurney 1865. Voltaire Combe, 1911.” The original photograph by J. Gurney & Son is in the collection of the Library of Congress, pictured below. Do you think Combe’s watercolor depicts an “unusually accurate likeness”?



<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a40683/>

4.

*Romeo and Juliet*, Fanny Kemble as Juliet, “Sweet, good night!”

Based on a print by John Hayter

ART Box H426 no.1 (size L)

[19<sup>th</sup> century]

Fanny Kemble was an actor and writer, the daughter of actor Charles Kemble and niece of actors Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble. Her first role, in October of 1829 at the age of twenty, was Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at Covent Garden. Based on the title, this is the moment in Act 2, Scene 2 when she and Romeo converse for the first time on her balcony.<sup>2</sup> Notice anything unusual about the composition? Her right arm does not seem to bend at the wrist but has been elongated to curve over the corner of the balcony. Our former Curator of Art, Erin Blake, believes this is an amateur’s attempt to copy a lithograph by John Hayter (see below). The woman in the lithograph has a bent wrist like the woman in the Folger painting. However, while the bend in the woman’s wrist in the lithograph seems plausible, the watercolorist was not able to translate this to their painting. A copy after a lithograph would also explain why “John Hayter del.” is written formally in the lower right-hand corner of the balcony rather than as a signature.



([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=1142914001&objectId=3442508&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=1142914001&objectId=3442508&partId=1))

5.

*Robert Inchbald*

Attributed to Joseph Inchbald

ART Box I37 no.2

ca. 1770s

A small boy, dressed in a red coat and sporting a wide brimmed hat, stares directly out at the viewer. In his book *A Catalogue of Paintings in the Folger Shakespeare Library: "As Imagination Bodies Forth,"* William L. Pressly identifies this boy as Robert Inchbald, the illegitimate son of actor Joseph Inchbald. Robert traveled around with his father and step-mother Elizabeth as they toured, acting in roles such as Fleance in *Macbeth*. The miniature was at one point mounted with a miniature of Elizabeth (depicted below), but the difference in scale and background does not support the idea they were intended as pendants. Pressly classifies Joseph Inchbald as an amateur painter, but the depiction of his son is quite sweet. This watercolor differs from others in this pop-up as it is applied on ivory instead of paper, paper being the most common material used as a support for watercolor.



(*Elizabeth Inchbald*, Attributed to Joseph Inchbald, ART Box I37 no.1, ca. 1772-79)

6.

[*Heroines of Shakespeare: Constance, from King John*]

John William Wright

ART Box W951.5 no.6 (size S)

[early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century]

This portrait displays the character of Constance, from Shakespeare's *King John*. It is one of a set of six watercolors featuring portraits of women, all of which are identical to six engravings found in Charles Heath's book entitled *The Heroines of Shakespeare: Comprising the Principal Female Characters in the Plays of the Great Poet*. Published in 1848, the book contains engraved plates and quotes from Shakespeare's plays. When the watercolors were first purchased, it was believed they had been done by John Massey Wright, as each one was initialed 'J.M.W. 60' (which can be seen on the lower right-hand corner). However, they match the engravings in Heath's book exactly, which are attributed to John William Wright. Both artists worked for Heath and are often confused with one another. While the date does not match the timeline for John William Wright (he was deceased by 1860), the matching engravings and the fact that the style is dissimilar to other John Massey Wright work in the collection, gives credence to the attribution to John William Wright.

7.

*Constance, King John*

William Henry Eggleton

ART File S528k5 no.52 (size XS)

[mid-19<sup>th</sup> century]

The engraving of Constance as it appeared in Charles Heath's *The Heroines of Shakespeare*. Notice the initials in the bottom left-hand corner "J.W. Wright."

## Part II: Scenes from Shakespeare

8.

*[As you like it, scenes of the seven ages of man]*

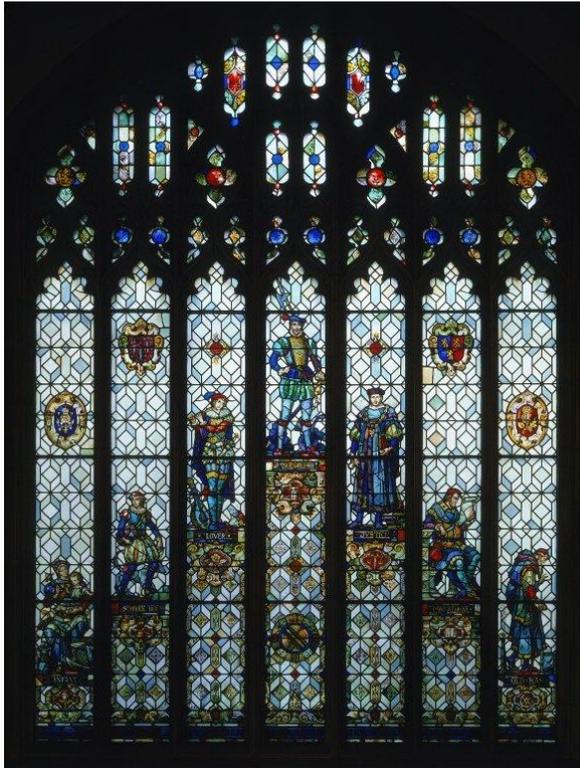
“The lean and slippered pantaloon”

John Augustus Atkinson

ART Box A876 no.28 (size S)

[late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century]

This item is part of a series, with each watercolor depicting one of the seven ages of man as outlined in Jaques' speech in Act 2, Scene 7 of *As You Like It*. The sixth stage of “the lean and slippered pantaloon” is described as a man “with spectacles on nose and pouch on side, his youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide for his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice, turning again toward childish treble, pipes and whistles in his sound.”<sup>3</sup> The same man can also be seen depicted in the stained glass window in the Paster Reading Room, second from the right. Which do you think holds truer to the original text?



(Stained glass window of Seven Ages of Man, Paster Reading Room)

9.

*Hamlet [1, 4] Hamlet and ghost*

J. Coghlan

ART Box C678 no.3 (size S)

[early 19<sup>th</sup> century?]

In Act 1, Scene 4, the ghost of Hamlet's father appears to Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus. There is no mention in the text of how the ghost appears, the stage direction simply says, "Enter Ghost."<sup>4</sup> This allows for an infinite variety of interpretations of the scene on stage and in art. Here, Coghlan paints the ghost in full battle armor, emerging from a cloud of bright light. Hamlet leans away in shock, his hand held up in front of his chest in a very dramatic effect.

10.

*Othello, act 5, scene 2, "Yet she must die, or else she'll betray more men. Put out the light, and then put out the light"*

L. Marchetti

ART Box M317 no.14 (size S)

[19<sup>th</sup> cent. or early 20<sup>th</sup> cent.]

This painting is from a set of twenty-four watercolors depicting scenes from *Othello*. While in varying sizes and shapes, most share the same gold matte inscribed with the play, act and scene, text relating to the scene, and Marchetti's name. The scene here is one of heightened tension. Othello is on the right, in the process of closing the bedroom door – his face serious, his stance staunch. He has come here to kill Desdemona, who is hidden behind the voluminous curtains of the bed. In the stage directions of the scene, Othello is meant to be carrying a light, which would make sense as to why he would say, "Put out the light, and then put out the light."<sup>5</sup> If there is no light in the scene and we presume it has already been put out, then there is only one thing that can happen next.

11.

*[Taming of the Shrew, Katherine and Petruchio]*

James Dromgole Linton

ART Box L761 no.1

[mid-19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century]

Sir James Dromgole Linton was an oil and watercolor painter, as well as illustrator and lithographer. He is known for his historical, figure, and portrait paintings, and was the first president of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour. The Folger owns a range of his work, from a painting of Portia (FPa39) to a deluxe copy of his illustrated edition of *Shakespeare's Comedy of the Merchant of Venice* (ART Vol. f287). The scene here depicts Katherine and Petruchio from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. No specific moment in the play is cited, but one can imagine it might be the first time they meet, a moment capturing the rapid back and forth exchange between the two in Act 2, Scene 1.<sup>6</sup> The saturated colors and almost square shape frame a sumptuous scene.

12.

*[Unknown scene, possibly from King Henry V]*

Pamela Colman Smith

ART Box S656 no.6 (size S)

[early 20<sup>th</sup> century?]

Pamela Colman Smith was an artist, illustrator, and writer. She is best known for her illustrations of the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck (see images below) and for a time she traveled with Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, and the Lyceum Theater group, designing costumes and sets for them. Stylistically, this painting has heavier and bolder lines than others in the exhibit, perhaps showing the influence of traditional Japanese woodblock prints. The painting is untitled, so please let us know if you recognize it.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=31022204>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17299531>

13.

*[Romeo and Juliet, Tomb Scene, Mr. Fred Terry as Romeo, Miss Neilson as Juliet]*

Frederick Henry Townsend

ART Box T747 no.9 (size L)

[1893]

Fred Terry and Julia Neilson were both English actors. They met when they each joined Herbert Beerbohm Tree's company at the Haymarket Theatre in the late 1880s/early 1890s. They were wed in 1891 and continued to tour and act together after their marriage. In 1900, they assumed the management of the Haymarket Theatre, where they produced and acted in numerous plays, including new plays such as *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. An example of one of the many plays they did together, it is interesting to see them portrayed here as the star-crossed lovers of Romeo and Juliet.

### Part III: Representations of Shakespeare

14.

*1916, William is with us*

D. Tenney

ART Box T298 no.1 (size S)

1916

This representation of William Shakespeare is just so fun! He is seen dressed in period clothing of his day, dancing with a woman dressed in contemporary clothing of her day, as music plays on the gramophone to the left.

15.

*Shakespeare [portrait surrounded by a muse, clown, lion, cupids, and various characters from his plays]*

Johann Heinrich Ramberg

ART Box R167 no.1 (size L)

1832

Johann Heinrich Ramberg was a German painter and printmaker. He was known to King George III and studied and exhibited at the Royal Academy, London in the 1780s. He participated in John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery as a book illustrator. While executed later than work he would have done for the Boydell Gallery, this work shows a keen interest in Shakespeare. Not only is Shakespeare surround by protagonists from his plays in this painting, but characters from *King Henry IV*, *King Lear*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, and *Timon of Athens* appear in twenty-six other works that are part of this grouping.

16.

*Shakespeare the infant, surrounded by sprites and muses*

Thomas Uwins

ART Box U95 no.1 (size S)

[early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century]

A baby Shakespeare rests languidly in the foreground of the painting, surrounded by sprites and muses. The artist, Thomas Uwins, was a well-known watercolorist. From 1809-1818, Uwins was a member of the Old Watercolour society and frequently contributed to the group's exhibitions. George Romney also painted the subject of the infant Shakespeare. His painting *The Infant Shakespeare Attended by Nature and the Passions*, pictured below, is part of the Folger collection and on view in the Bond Reading Room.



*(The infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions, George Romney, FPa49, ca. 1791-92)*

#### **Part IV: Locations Related to Shakespeare**

17.

*[So-called Shakespeare's house, Adlersgate Street, London]*

C.P. Norman

ART Box N842 no.1 (size S)

1864

The building depicted in this scene makes the claim, in letters neatly written on its façade, that it is Shakespeare's house. According to Walter Thornbury in the second volume of *Old and New London: A Narrative of its History, its People, and its Places*, this claim is unfounded. With delightfully Victorian outrage, he calls it "audacious" and states, "there is no documentary evidence (the best of all evidence), and not even a tradition, to connect our great poet's name with the house."<sup>7</sup> Apparently, the owner of the establishment heard mention that Shakespeare frequented a public-house in the neighborhood and decided that his house was going to be the one. There is no mention if he made any money off the claim, but perhaps the pride of claiming it was Shakespeare's house was enough.

18.

*Study sketches for the reconstruction of Elizabethan theaters, 1946-1947*

"Watercolor sketch of the Globe stage"

C. Walter Hodges

ART Box H688 no.1 pt.31

[1946-1947]

C. Walter Hodges was an author and illustrator known for his children's books and works depicting reconstructions of Elizabethan theaters. This study is part of an almost 900 item collection of Hodges' drawings. Many of the studies he drew as preparatory drawings for illustrations in his books, but he also did numerous study sketches as part of what he refers to as "research by drawing." In his notes on the series, Hodges explains that his work on reconstructing the Elizabethan theater began in 1946, when he was commissioned to draw Shakespeare directing a rehearsal at the Globe. He consulted the standard books on the subject and they proved unsatisfactory in providing a concrete description of the famed theater. He then expanded his search to a variety of literary sources and tried out every idea suggested as to what an Elizabethan theater would look like. He developed his ideas over two years and then assembled the work into an album, one page of which you see here.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Folger Collection policies, please consult Folgerpedia at [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Collection\\_development\\_policy](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Collection_development_policy)

<sup>2</sup> To read more, please consult Folger Digital Texts at <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=Rom&loc=line-2.2.123>

<sup>3</sup> To read more, please consult Folger Digital Texts at <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=AYL&loc=line-2.7.146>

<sup>4</sup> To read more, please consult Folger Digital Texts at <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=Ham&loc=line-1.4.40>

<sup>5</sup> To read more, please consult Folger Digital Texts at <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=Oth&loc=line-5.2.1>

<sup>6</sup> To read more, please consult Folger Digital Texts at <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=Shr&loc=line-2.1.188>

<sup>7</sup> Walter Thornbury, *Old and New London: A Narrative of its history, its people, and its places* (London, New York: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1873-1878), Vol. 2, 221.

<sup>8</sup> <https://findingaids.folger.edu/dfohodgesc.xml#anchorref14>