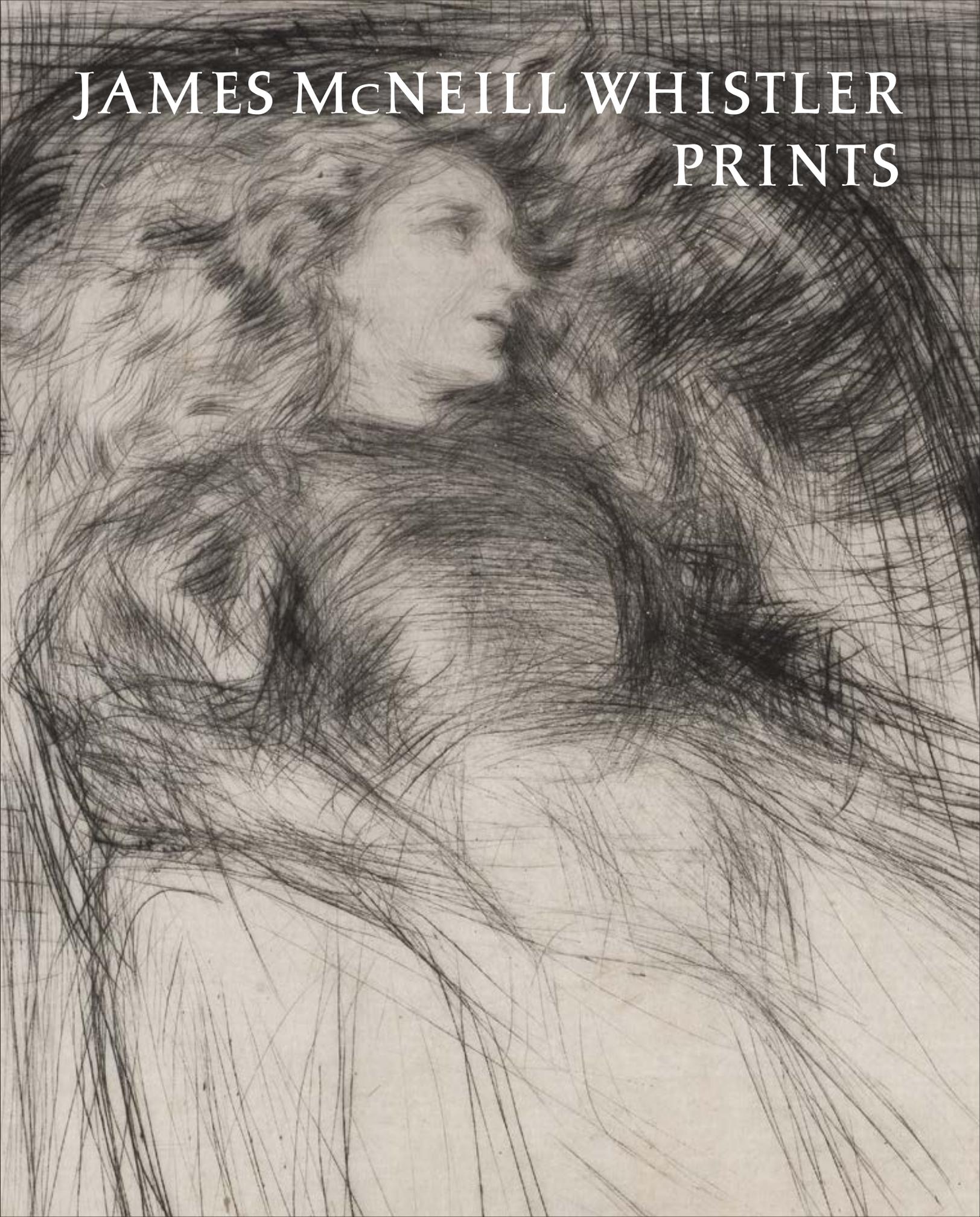


JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER  
PRINTS



The Fine Art Society

*5 to 28 April 2016*

148 NEW BOND STREET · LONDON W1S 2JT

+ 44 (0)20 7629 5116 · [gc@faslondon.com](mailto:gc@faslondon.com)  
[www.faslondon.com](http://www.faslondon.com)

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THE FINE ART SOCIETY · LONDON

DEALERS SINCE 1876

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER  
PRINTS

C.G. BOERNER · NEW YORK

DEALERS SINCE 1826

ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH  
HARRIS SCHRANK FINE PRINTS



## INTRODUCTION

IT IS APPROPRIATE IN OUR 140TH YEAR THAT THE FINE ART SOCIETY SHOULD celebrate with an exhibition of work by James McNeill Whistler, one of the first and most illustrious artists to show in our galleries. As a painter in oils and in watercolour, as an etcher and a lithographer, Whistler excelled. He also made a stand for the cause of art for art's sake, and this cost him dear. Although he won the case, he was bankrupted by the costs of his libel action against the critic John Ruskin. He also lost his new home, the White House, designed for him by E.W. Godwin and in which he had lived for less than a year.

According to tradition, The Fine Art Society opened its doors at 148 New Bond Street on 14th February 1876 and we still occupy the original premises. Within our building Whistler staged a sensational show in 1883 which was to affect exhibition design radically so that his principles still guide curators today, more than 130 years later. He was equally a pioneer in the print market, and produced a signed, limited edition of his Venice etchings in 1880, the prototype for print publishing of the future.

This is the sixth and largest exhibition of Whistler's work presented at The Fine Art Society since 1994. It will also be shown at C.G. Boerner gallery in New York and it is a collaborative effort with Armin Kunz and Harris Schrank, both of whom share with me a passion for Whistler's prints.

In the past twenty years interest in Whistler has grown. The period has seen many new publications on the artist and the building of several important collections of his work. The most significant development has been the creation of a new catalogue raisonné of Whistler's etchings by the University of Glasgow. A century after Edward Kennedy's standard work appeared, this unprecedented research project, led by Margaret MacDonald, with Grischka Petri, Meg Hausberg and Joanna Meacock, has resulted in an online catalogue which gives access to virtually all that is known about Whistler's etchings. It was completed thirteen years after the Art Institute of Chicago published a lavish two-volume catalogue of Whistler's lithographs, written by Nesta Spink, Harriet Stratis and Martha Tedeschi.

The authors of these two new catalogues raisonnés, which update those published shortly after Whistler's death, have devoted much of their lives to their research. Their meticulous work and insights have inspired others to collect and study the work of Whistler, a man who exemplified much that was important in nineteenth-century art and who has had such a profound influence on those who followed him. When I first became interested in Whistler, there were two books, both published in 1984, the 150th anniversary of his birth, which proved invaluable guides. Katharine Lochnan and Ruth Fine both brought

James McNeill Whistler 1834–1903 by an unknown photographer, c.1860–65  
Modern silver print, Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian  
Institution, Washington D.C., Gift of the Estate of Charles Lang Freer

their subject to life in their studies. I should also mention the work of Alastair Grieve, who had the inspired but simple idea of spending as much time as he could in Venice, identifying the sites where Whistler had worked. His book has been a revelation.

In the past two decades The Fine Art Society has sold more than 250 prints by Whistler. Our guiding principle has been to buy only works of real quality. The artist was fanatical about the way his prints looked, about the papers he chose and in his own determination to aim for perfection. When he first started to trim the sheets on which he had printed the etchings to the platemarks, leaving a small tab of paper at the lower edge of each for his pencil butterfly signature, he was expressing his approval of the finished product as well as presenting his work in a singular manner. Imagine the walls of the ground-floor galleries of The Fine Art Society in 1883, with his etchings floating in their mounts in white frames on walls covered with white felt. Elsewhere in the building we offered prints made by professional engravers which reproduced paintings by the leading artists of the day, in substantial black and gilt oak frames.

Whistler's life story is in itself fascinating. He was the first American artist to enjoy an international reputation and before his fellow Americans began to collect their work, he was a friend of Degas, Manet, Monet and the other leading artists working in Paris in the middle of the nineteenth century. When he sent his most famous work, *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother* to the Paris Salon in 1883, the courier was his young assistant Walter Sickert. Whistler gave him introductions to Degas and Manet.

It was in Paris that Whistler chose to begin his life as an artist. He arrived in the city in 1855 as a revival of interest in etching was gathering pace. Charles Meryon's etchings of Paris had recently been shown at the Salon and Auguste Delâtre had set up as a printer. These two men were central to the revival.

During the late 1850s Whistler divided his time between Paris and his sister's house in London. His early prints included studies of Deborah and her family, works drawn *en plein air*, working people seen on the streets of Paris and more ambitious etchings based on drawings made in Alsace and Cologne. The French Set, which included subjects carefully chosen to reflect all these interests, contained the seeds of much of his later work.

The French Set demonstrated Whistler's skilled and highly individual draughtsmanship, and he soon expanded his repertoire with a group of etchings made on the Thames in the late summer of 1859. The Thames Set was not published until 1871, after almost a decade during which he had made very few etchings. They were enthusiastically received.

The Thames was to remain Whistler's principal source of subjects during the 1870s and, encouraged by the response to his earlier work, he sought to create an equivalent for his painted Nocturnes in a print. This led Whistler to Thomas Way, who introduced him to lithography, and the late 1870s saw him making etchings alongside the new medium.

Whistler was on the verge of an artistic transformation as a series of connected events turned his life upside down. His decoration of the Peacock Room resulted in a break with

his patron, Frederick Leyland, and John Ruskin's damning review of his painting *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* drew the artist into a libel action to counter its effect on his work. He had also signed a contract with E.W. Godwin to design and build a new house for him in Tite Street, Chelsea.

His debts piled up as Leyland refused to pay him and the cost of the White House soared. At about this time, Whistler received a visit from Ernest Brown who wished to publish an etching in the *Portfolio* magazine. The artist gave him *Billingsgate* and it appeared in the issue of January 1878.

Whistler was declared bankrupt in May 1879, but Brown, who had joined The Fine Art Society, came to his rescue. The gallery bought the Thames Set etching plates and published a second edition, and Brown persuaded them to commission a set of twelve etchings of Venice from the artist. Whistler arrived in Venice in September 1879.

This proved to be the turning point in his career. Over fourteen months he made 50 etchings, 100 pastels and seven or eight paintings. The set *Venice, a Series of Twelve Etchings* was exhibited at The Fine Art Society in December 1880 and 53 pastels the following month. A second exhibition of prints, 'Etchings & Dry Points Venice: Second Series', which the artist called *Arrangement in White and Yellow* was held in 1883. For this the gallery was transformed: the walls were covered in white felt, the mouldings, skirting board, carpet and fireplace were painted yellow and the etchings were hung in white frames in a single line.

These same Venice etchings commissioned by The Fine Art Society will hang with works from other phases of Whistler's career as a printmaker in an exhibition to celebrate our 140th anniversary in the gallery where they were first seen.

GORDON COOKE

#### CATALOGUE NOTE

References are to the standard catalogues raisonnés. For etchings, Edward G. Kennedy, *The Etched Work of Whistler*, New York 1910 (Kennedy) and Margaret F. MacDonald, Grischka Petri, Meg Hausberg, and Joanna Meacock, *James McNeill Whistler: The Etchings, a catalogue raisonné*, University of Glasgow, 2011, on-line website at <http://etchings.arts.gla.ac.uk> (Glasgow). For lithographs, Thomas R. Way, *Mr Whistler's Lithographs: The Catalogue*, 2nd ed., London and New York 1905 (Way) and Nesta R. Spink, Harriet K. Stratis and Martha Tedeschi *The Lithographs of James McNeill Whistler*, Chicago 1998 (Chicago). There are also many textual references to Katharine A. Lochnan, *The Etchings of James McNeill Whistler*, New Haven and London 1984 and Ruth E. Fine, *Drawing Near: Whistler Etchings from the Zelman Collection*, Los Angeles 1984. The state numbers described herein refer to the Glasgow catalogue (for etchings) and the Chicago catalogue (for lithographs).

## EARLY PRINTS AND THE FRENCH SET



The publication of *Douze eaux-fortes d'après Nature* (Twelve Etchings from Nature) which Whistler referred to as the 'French Set' was indicative of his future career and of the central place of printmaking in his art. It was issued in 1858 in an edition of 70: twenty printed by Auguste Delâtre in Paris and a further 50 sets printed in London under Delâtre's direction with the assistance of the artist and his brother-in-law, Francis Seymour Haden.

Its composition demonstrates how quickly Whistler's ideas and ambitions were expanding, from the direct studies of his niece, nephew and girlfriend to the complexities of *La Marchande de Moutarde*, *Street at Saverne* and *The Kitchen*. The subjects he had found in his sister's London home and on the streets of Paris were supplemented by what he saw on an expedition he made with a fellow art student, Ernest Delannoy, to Alsace and down the Rhine into Germany. They ran out of money in Cologne and walked 35 miles to Aix-la-Chapelle, paying their way by drawing portraits.

The set shows Whistler's adherence to Realism and admiration for Courbet, and the range of subjects which might show off his skills. Portraits and figure studies were a natural product of his talent and the availability of models. He also responded to old women he encountered in the poorer parts of Paris, as in *La Vieille aux loques*. But in *The Kitchen* and *La Marchande de moutarde* he drew figures in settings in which he used light and shadow to animate the picture. In *Street at Saverne* he created his first night-piece and *The Music Room* shows his ability to carry off an interior, lit from within. In *The Wine Glass* he demonstrates his natural gifts as a draughtsman.

The French Set was both a manifesto and an advertisement, but in less than three years Whistler showed his versatility and ability to make, in images which were not published, works equally distinctive and arresting.

[1] EN PLEIN SOLEIL, 1858

Etching, printed in black ink on *chine appliqué* by Auguste Delâtre, published in *Douze eaux-fortes d'après Nature* (Twelve Etchings from Nature by James Abbott Whistler; the 'French Set') in November 1858, in an edition of 70; in the third (final) state  
4 × 5¼ inches (10 × 13.5 cm) sheet 10⅞ × 11½ inches (26 × 29.4 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 15; Glasgow 11

A woman wearing a shawl is seen sitting on the grass, in the sun under a parasol. Neither her identity, nor the location is known, but it was probably done in France. The top of a building and a slender tree are visible beyond the seated figure.

As part of Whistler's first published set, *En Plein Soleil* became well known. It was first exhibited at the Hague School of Art in 1863, and then in Whistler's one-man show at the Flemish Gallery on Pall Mall in London in 1874 (no.44).

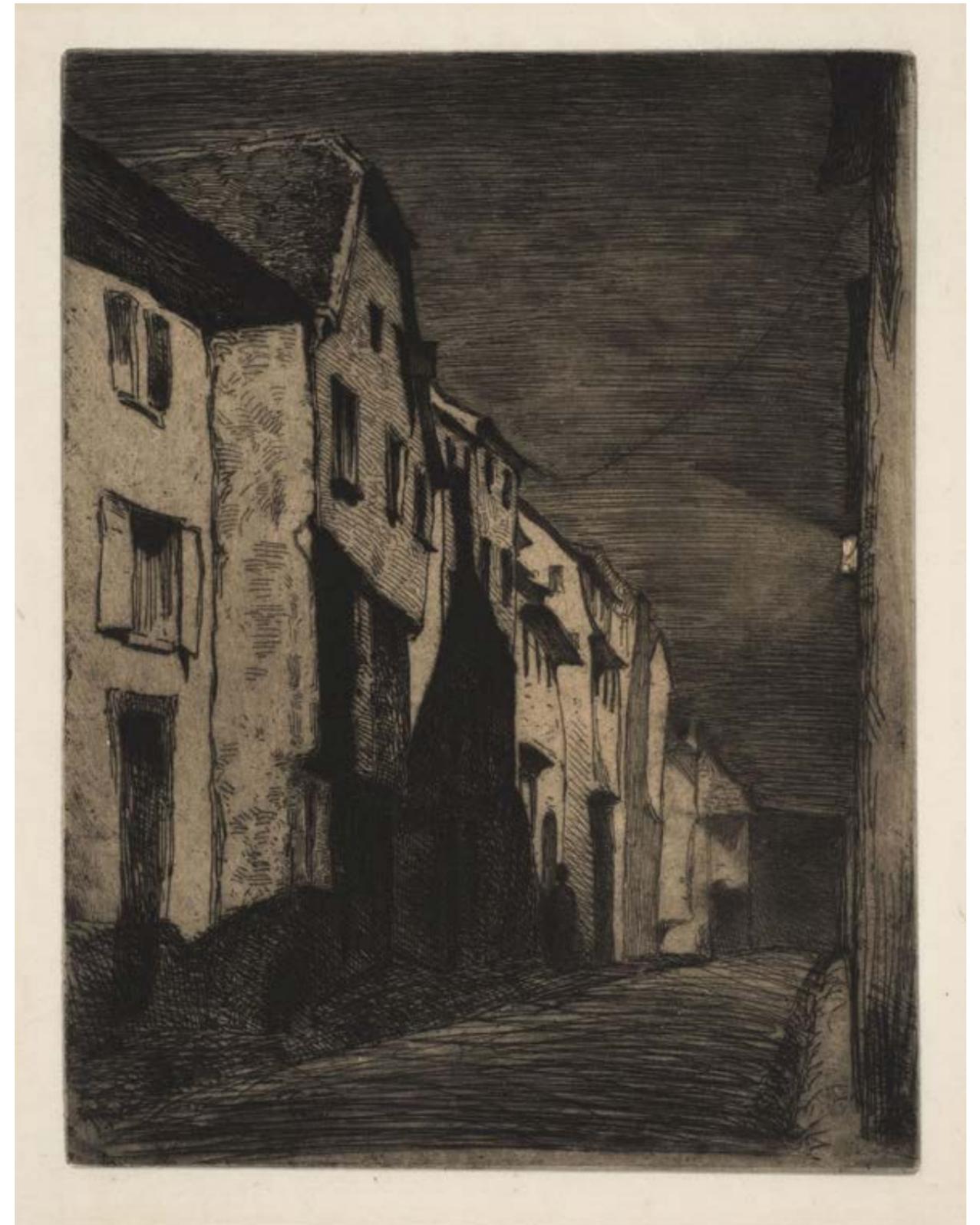


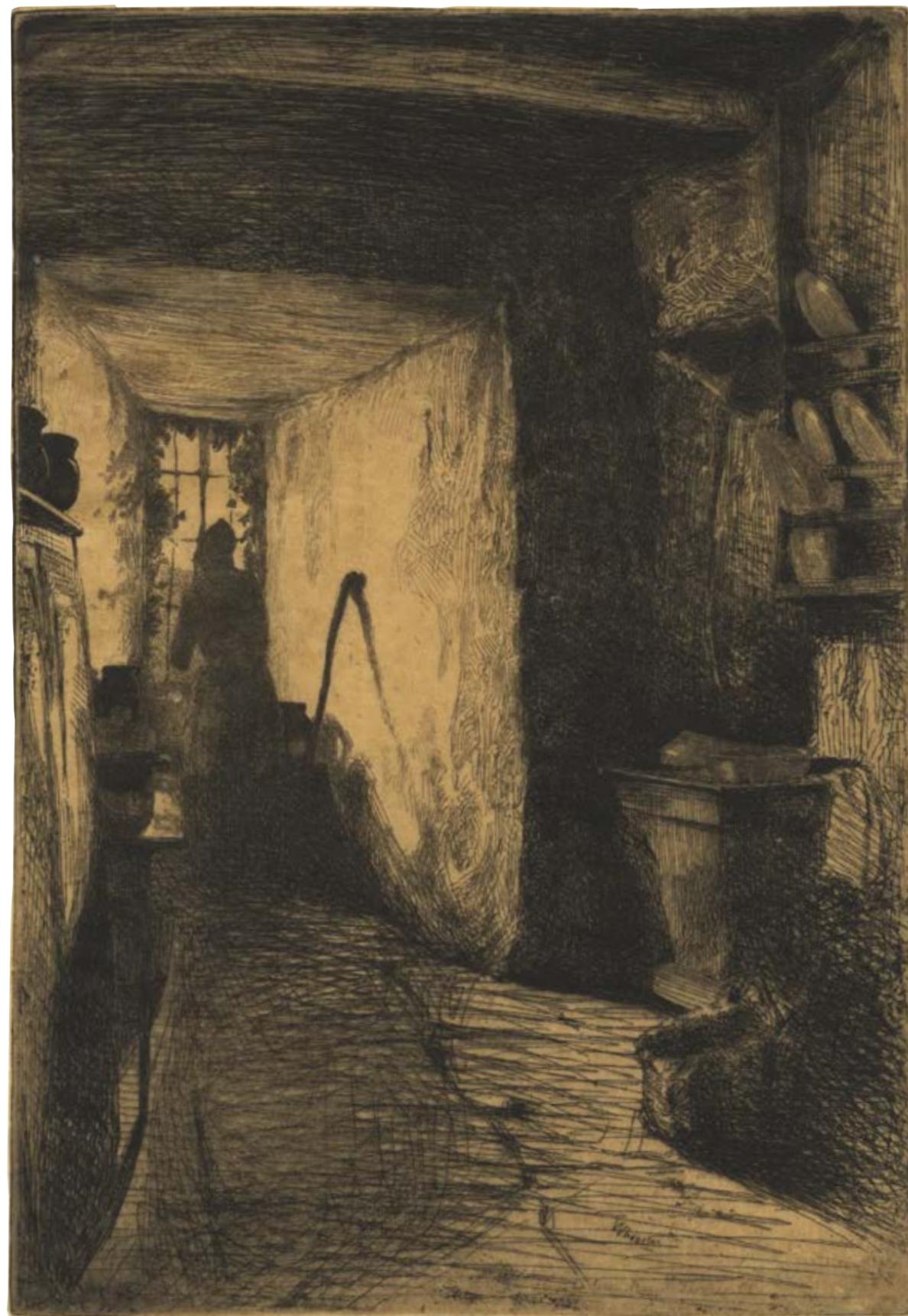
[2] STREET AT SAVERNE, 1858

Etching, printed in black ink on *chine collé*, an impression in the fourth (final) state, after the edition of 70 published in the French set  
8¼ × 6¼ inches (20.8 × 15.7 cm)  
sheet 12⅞ × 8⅞ inches (32.3 × 21.8 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 19; Glasgow 14

This study of a deserted street in the Alsace town of Saverne at night is the first in a series of works which Whistler would later describe as 'Nocturnes'. They recur at intervals throughout his career as paintings and prints. This etching was based on a pencil and watercolour drawing, now in the Freer Gallery of Art, annotated *Place St. Thomas*. A single figure stands in the shadows and a lamp mounted high on a wall casts its light across the composition.

As part of Whistler's first published set, *Street at Saverne* became well known. It was first exhibited at the Hague School of Art in 1863, and then in Whistler's one-man show at the Flemish Gallery, Pall Mall, London in 1874 (no.5, 26).





[3] THE KITCHEN, 1858

Etching on thin, yellowish-brown *chine*; trimmed to the platemark an impression in the second state (of three)  
 Signed Whistler and inscribed *Imp. Delatre. Rue St. Jacques. 171.* in the plate at lower right  
 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches (22.7 × 15.8 cm)  
 Provenance: Alexander John Godby, Baltimore and London (Lugt 1119B); Harlow, McDonald & Co., New York; Lucien Goldschmidt, Inc., New York  
 Reference: Kennedy 24; Glasgow 16

Whistler made several early drawings of kitchens in addition to a preliminary pencil sketch and the water-colour of this kitchen in Lutzelbourg in Alsace-Lorraine (now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.) that was used as the basis for this etching. He transferred the image of a peasant woman gazing through a window in her modest home to the copper etching plate after his return to Paris; it was published in the French Set in this second state. As Ruth Fine notes, this print “was considered during Whistler’s lifetime one of the most beautiful of the French Set” (p.39). Indeed, it was so popular that the artist reworked the copper plate and printed a new edition of 50 impressions, published by The Fine Art Society in 1884.

Lochnan notes the influence of the quiet domestic scenes of the French Realist painter François Bonvin on Whistler’s subject here. But like Whistler’s other etchings of women in shadowy interiors and doorways,

contemplative or absorbed in their tasks, this composition also reflects the underlying geometries and the sense of stillness found in the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch master Pieter de Hooch. Here Whistler further deploys de Hooch’s method of rhythmically juxtaposing light and dark areas to draw the eye around the picture plane and into the sequence of apparently receding spaces toward the window where the woman is shown silhouetted against the light (see Lochnan, pp.41–43).

[4] THE DOG ON THE KENNEL, 1858

Etching, printed in black ink on Japan paper, an impression in the second (final) state: there was no published edition  
 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (7.2 × 8.9 cm) sheet 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (13.3 × 16 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 18; Glasgow 19

This was drawn during Whistler’s tour of the Rhineland in search of subjects for etchings to be published in the French Set, between 14th August and 7th October 1858. Both the kennel and the dog were also depicted in *The Unsafe Tenement*. Frederick Wedmore recorded that Whistler was working on the larger plate when the dog jumped up on the kennel, but put it aside to make the small study. This information came from Samuel P. Avery, whose Whistler collection is in the New York Public Library, and who first met the artist in 1867. The etching has been rarely exhibited but was lent by Avery to the Union League Club in New York in 1881.



[5] LA MARCHANDE DE MOUTARDE, 1858

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on cream laid paper; in the first state (of five)

6¼ × 3½ inches (15.8 × 8.9 cm)

sheet 9⅞ × 7¼ inches (23.1 × 18.4 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 22; Glasgow 20

As Ruth Fine notes: “*The Mustard Merchant* is generally considered one of the artist’s most charming and important early images. One of the first demonstrations of Whistler’s interest in the quotidian experience as observed by an outsider, such views through doorways became a hallmark of his imagery” (p.33).

The composition is based on two drawings Whistler made in Cologne during an etching tour of France and the Rhineland with Ernest Delannoy between August 14 and October 7, 1858, *La Marchande de Poterie à Cologne* and *La Marchande de Moutarde* (both now in the Freer Gallery of Art). The print was probably etched after the artist’s return to Paris. While the etching was published as part of the French Set in November 1858, it was also shown together with a portrait etching at the Paris Salon of 1859 and can be considered the artist’s first introduction to the public.

Here Whistler shows a young girl leaning on the left doorpost of a stone doorway watching an old woman inside wearing a shawl and white bonnet, apparently sealing the tops of jars of mustard. It is a composition that scholars have frequently linked to Charles Jacque’s *Recureuse* (1844), an etching that Whistler might have

seen in the workshop of August Delâtre: the pose of the upper torso of the young woman in Jacque’s etching seems to have been transferred to the mustard seller. Whistler also appears to have been influenced here by the distinctive variations in line Jacque used to describe the crumbling surfaces of stonework and plaster in the same image. Katharine Lochnan also points to the influence of Dutch art, especially the work of Pieter de Hooch as well as François Bonvin’s painting *Paysanne tricotant* of 1855 (Musée Courbet, Ornans; Lochnan, pp.46–47).

This is one of only two impressions of the first state recorded by Glasgow (the other is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.).

[6] LA MARCHANDE DE MOUTARDE, 1858

Etching in black ink on Japan paper, inscribed in pencil lower left  
Coll F. Goulding imp, lower left, in the fifth (final) state

6¼ × 3½ inches (15.7 × 8.8 cm)

sheet 8½ × 4⅞ inches (21.8 × 12.3 cm)

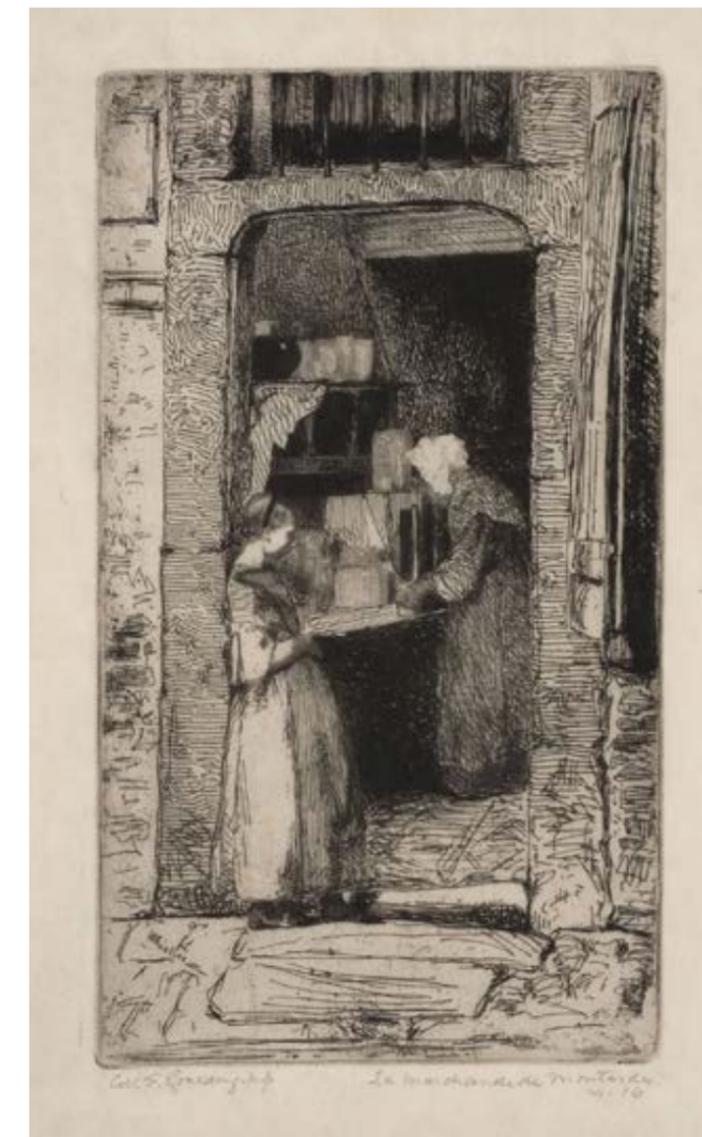
Provenance: Frederick Goulding

Reference: Kennedy 22; Glasgow 20

The two impressions of *La Marchande de Moutarde* offered here were printed nearly 30 years apart. There is the very rare first state of 1858 (cat.5) and this one, a special proof printed in black ink on Japan paper by Frederick Goulding; he inscribed the sheet and kept it in his own collection, probably when printing a second edition in 1886.



[ cat.5 ]



[ cat.6 ]

[7] LA VIEILLE AUX LOQUES, 1858

Etching, printed in black ink on cream laid paper, watermark foolscap, in the second state (of four), a proof before publication 8 1/8 x 5 3/4 inches (20.7 x 14.7 cm)

Provenance: Jules Gerbeau, Paris (Lugt 1166); his sale, Strölin, Paris, May 25–27, 1908 (Lugt mentions a “belle série” of prints by Whistler in this sale); Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock no.in pencil on verso 445616);Howard Mansfield, New York (Lugt 1342); Harris G. Whittemore, Naugatuck, Connecticut (Lugt 1384a) Reference: Kennedy 21; Glasgow 27

*La Vieille aux loques* (The Old Rag-Picker) is exceedingly rare in this state prior to publication; it appeared in the French Set in the third state. The Glasgow census indicates no early proofs among major collections of Whistler’s prints, with the exception of the New York Public Library’s Avery Collection (second state, cited by Kennedy) and the Library of Congress (first state, not known to Kennedy). The print is not rare in the third or fourth states.

The composition points to the beginning of Whistler’s preoccupation throughout his career with facades and doorways and, more specifically, with the motif of a female figure silhouetted in a doorway against a shadowed interior. While he addressed a similar subject in *The Rag Pickers* [cat.8], showing two figures in a bare room seen through a doorway festooned with rags, in this print, as in *The Kitchen* [cat.3] from the same set, the room is the main subject of his investigation. In *La Vieille aux loques*, however, the emphasis is on the poor working woman herself, seen dozing over her rags in the foreground. As in such other etchings of old working women in the French Set as that of the flower seller, *La Mère Gérard* (κ. 11); *La Rétameuse* (The Tinker; κ. 14); and *La Marchande de Moutarde* (cat.5), Whistler stresses the rag-picker’s dignity, suggested here by the orderly arrangement of her modest cooking utensils in the dark room behind her. If Whistler’s focus on working women was inspired to some degree by the peasant women in the etchings of Jean François Millet, also published by Delâtre during this period, the quiet intimacy of the composition also evokes Dutch interiors of the seventeenth-century.



[8] THE RAG PICKERS, QUARTIER  
MOUFFETARD, PARIS, 1858

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil, *Whistler*, lower left corner of sheet, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, a proof impression in the third state (of five), before the addition of figures and publication

6 × 3½ inches (15.2 × 9 cm) sheet 7⅞ × 5 inches (20 × 12.5 cm)

Provenance: Howard Mansfield [Lugt 1342], bought from Kennedy Galleries (stock number a37141, verso); Harris G. Whittemore [Lugt 1384a]

Reference: Kennedy 23; Glasgow 29

A doorway gives on to a dark, sparsely furnished room with an unmade bed and a few rags hanging from the wall. Ralph Thomas, the first cataloguer of Whistler's etchings, said that the figures added in the fifth state were drawn at the suggestion of his father in 1861 when he held an exhibition of Whistler's etchings at his print shop at 39 Old Bond Street, London.

Quartier Mouffetard is in the fifth arrondissement, the Latin Quarter, and is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Paris. It escaped the modernisation of the city by Baron Hausmann in the 1860s and remained a squalid area, home to the poorest inhabitants.

Impressions in the first four states, before the two figures were added, are extremely rare: only seven in addition to this one are recorded in the Glasgow catalogue. This impression belonged to Howard Mansfield, whose catalogue of Whistler's etchings and drypoints was published in 1909, the year before that written by Edward Kennedy. It was then acquired by Harris Whittemore whose fine collection has since been dispersed.



[9] SEYMOUR, 1858–59

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil *Whistler*, lower right and inscribed *Seymour*, lower left; inscribed in pencil by Francis Seymour Haden in lower margin *1st pr from plate*, printed in warm black ink on fine laid paper, watermark hunting horn in shield; in the second state (of three): there was no published edition

5¼ × 3⅞ inches (13.5 × 9.9 cm)

sheet 7⅞ × 5⅝ inches (18.1 × 14.3 cm)

Provenance: Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock number in pencil on verso a37155); Ethel Gardner; a gift in memory of her husband George Peabody Gardner (nephew and heir of Isabella Stewart Gardner) to Bishop Laurence of the Archdiocese of Boston; George S. van Houten, Waalre, Netherlands

Reference: Kennedy 31; Glasgow 30

The young boy leaning against a tree in contemplative pose, possibly in Greenwich Park in London, with his partial reflection visible on the surface of the water in the foreground, is Francis Seymour Haden, Jr. (1850–1918), the eldest son of Whistler's half-sister, Deborah Delano Haden, and her husband Francis Seymour

Haden, Sr. Young Seymour posed for two other portrait etchings by Whistler: *Seymour, Standing* (1857–1858; K.6) and *Seymour Haden, Jr., Seated* (1857–1858; K.29). The couple had another son, Arthur Charles (1852–1910) and a daughter, Anne Harriet, known as Annie (1848–1937), both of whom were also portrayed by their uncle in several etchings. In 1858 and 1859, Whistler visited his sister and her family at their house in Sloane Street, London from Paris; as the Glasgow catalogue suggests, the leafy trees and the light clothing of the boy suggest a date of fall 1858 or spring 1859 for the etching, which the artist may have initially drawn in the open air.

The boy is wearing typical Victorian boy's dress, with a high bonnet and a knee-length kilt or skirt, long socks, and lace-up shoes. While the execution of the work is somewhat stiff and illustrational in style, it points to Whistler's preoccupation throughout his career with reflection, both mental and physical. He was later to elaborate on the latter with an exceptionally nuanced sophistication in his watery scenes of Venice and Amsterdam.



[10] THE WINE GLASS, 1859

Etching, printed in black ink on laid paper, in the second (final) state: there was no published edition  
3¼ × 2½ inches (8.3 × 5.5 cm) sheet 7 × 3⅝ inches (17.7 × 9.4 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 27; Glasgow 38

The small study of a wine glass, perhaps a champagne glass, on a silver tray is Whistler's only still-life etching. It was probably made in London in 1859 but there was no published edition. Most impressions were printed in black ink: only one other printed in brown is recorded, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

An impression of *The Wine Glass* was not exhibited until 1881 when Samuel Avery lent impressions to the Union League Club in New York (nos.46 and 47). It made a rare appearance at an exhibition at H. Wunderlich & Co in New York in 1898 when an impression was bought by Charles Lang Freer.

[11] THE WINE GLASS, 1859

Etching, printed in black ink on laid paper, in the second (final) state: there was no published edition  
3¼ × 2½ inches (8.3 × 5.5 cm) sheet 6⅜ × 5⅛ inches (16.2 × 13.1 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 27; Glasgow 38

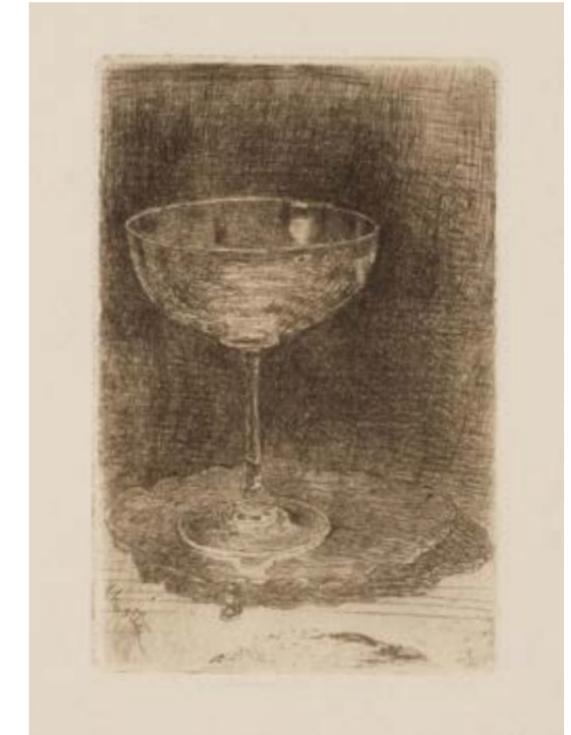
A note on the back of the previous mount reads *The Wine Glass no.28 in Ralph Thomas's Catalogue of Whistler Etchings*. Thomas wrote the first catalogue of Whistler's etchings, published in 1874, and it is rare. The inscription would suggest that this impression was bought early in the artist's career. Subsequent catalogues of the artist's work were published by Wedmore in 1886 (revised 1899); Mansfield in 1909; and Kennedy in 1910. Kennedy's catalogue remained the standard reference for more than a century.



[ cat.10 ]



[ cat.11 ]



[ cat.12 ]

[12] THE WINE GLASS, 1859

Etching, printed in brown ink on wove paper, in the second (final) state  
3¼ × 2½ inches (8.3 × 5.5 cm) sheet 12½ × 9 inches (31.8 × 22.6 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 27; Glasgow 38



[13] THE MUSIC ROOM, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, watermark Britannia, an impression in the fourth (final) state: there was no published edition  
 5½ × 8½ inches (14.4 × 21.5 cm)  
 sheet 7¾ × 11¾ inches (19.4 × 29.8 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 33; Glasgow 39

The scene is the music room at the Hadens' house at 62 Sloane Street, London. It is evening and Francis Seymour Haden sits in an armchair reading a newspaper with his legs outstretched, while his wife, the artist's half-sister Deborah, sits reading a book. Behind a table, also reading, is James Reeves Traer, Haden's medical partner and Whistler's friend and personal physician. A framed picture is propped against a fireplace beneath a mantelpiece crowded with ornaments. In the centre of the composition, a lamp stands on a round table, providing light for the readers, as in *Reading by Lamplight*.

During the artist's lifetime *The Music Room* was only exhibited in America, in New York in 1881 and Chicago in 1900. Perhaps this was because of the rift between Whistler and Haden which came to a head after Traer's death in a Paris brothel in 1867. Haden had arranged for his body to be buried quickly and without ceremony in Père Lachaise cemetery, and Whistler was outraged. A fight broke out between Haden and Whistler and his brother William in a café in Paris, and Whistler pushed Haden through a plate-glass window. The two never spoke again.



[14] GREENWICH PARK, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on laid paper, an impression in the third (final) state; there was no published edition  
 5 × 8 inches (12.6 × 20.1 cm) sheet 7½ × 12¼ inches (19.1 × 30.7 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 35; Glasgow 41

This work was made at a time when Whistler and Francis Seymour Haden often etched side by side. A woman and two children sit on the grass beneath a tree, with a standing female figure nearby. Whistler made another etching at the same time, *Greenwich Pensioner*, while Haden produced *Sub Tegmine*, a landscape in which the reclining pensioner is seen in the distance.

The first record of the etching in an exhibition was the impression lent by Samuel Avery to the Union League Club in New York in 1881.



## LONDON AND THE THAMES

Whistler chose London over Paris as the place to pursue his career, although he was closer in his artistic outlook to artists such as Courbet, Manet, Monet and Degas than most of his contemporaries in London. He followed the publication of the French Set with a series of etchings of the Thames which announced his arrival on the scene in his adopted city.

During the summer of 1859 the idea of making a series of etchings of the Thames led Whistler to explore the South Bank, Rotherhithe and Bermondsey, perhaps the most squalid part of London, where narrow streets and alleyways led down to the river. It is difficult now to imagine the area as it then was, a maze of timber ramshackle buildings crowded with a population whose living depended on the river, which was a stinking open sewer, thoroughly polluted.

No one in their right mind ventured into this area, as the dangers it harboured were well known, but it fascinated Whistler as it did Charles Dickens. It was here that Dickens gathered material for his last novel *Our Mutual Friend*, and in August 1859 Whistler decided to settle in Wapping, across the river, for almost two months. He found the subjects for eight etchings which showed the working men of the area set against the river and the decaying buildings on its banks. By this time plans existed to build an embankment to the river and so the old wooden wharfs, docks, warehouses, offices and tradesmen's workshops and yards, would soon be condemned.

Whistler was familiar with the prints of London by Wenceslaus Hollar and William Hogarth, both represented in the collection of his brother-in-law Francis Seymour Haden (1818–1910). Whistler's admiration for artists of the past fused with his knowledge of photography and of Japanese prints: he was an early collector and enthusiast for *Japonisme*.

It was the introduction of the figures of working men placed centrally in the foreground which first provided

the formula for the arresting compositions of the series of etchings which followed. Whistler's enthusiasm for Realism and for Courbet would have suggested this bold device, and by drawing the backdrop, contrasting areas of detail with passages more summarily drawn, the images which resulted expressed a new vision.

The copper plates which Whistler etched were made before the subjects. In the case of *Black Lion Wharf*, the image was drawn in reverse so that the view would appear correctly when printed on paper. The work required close study of the buildings from the river, and the artist was rowed back and forth to achieve the level of detail he required. In some areas it appears that he had seen and drawn every single brick and timber board.

The working men depicted were not described in the titles: these refer to the location, with one exception. He chose for the larger upright plate, exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1860, the title *W. Jones, lime-burner, Thames Street*, later known as *The Lime-Burner*. But the first title suggests the focus on the figure and his way of life rather than the place where he stands.

Whistler's intention to have these etchings published was not realised until 1871, twelve years after they were made. The earliest impressions were printed on Seymour Haden's press at 62 Sloane Street, but Auguste Delâtre came to London to print for a show of Whistler's prints mounted in 1861 at the premises Serjeant Thomas, a lawyer, had taken at 39 Old Bond Street to set up a print shop run by his son.

However the set, *A Series of Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and Other Subjects* by James Whistler published by Ellis & Green, was printed without Delâtre's gift for achieving rich and dramatic effects with skillful inking. The Ellis & Green edition of 100 was printed from the copper plates after they had been steel-faced to prevent wear. The impressions are clean-wiped and lack the quality, subtlety and tone of the earlier proofs.

The set included two subjects which have no connection to the Thames, *The Forge* and *Becquet (The Fiddler)*, both etched in France. The core of the set is the group of five etchings of wharfs made in the late summer of 1859 which led to *W. Jones, lime-burner, Thames Street* and *Rotherhithe*. *Billingsgate* properly belongs to this group, but it was left out of the set and not published until 1878.

In 1879 The Fine Art Society acquired the plates of the Thames Set and had Frederick Goulding remove the steel-facing and print from them. On the price list The Fine Art Society published, they were described as 'Fine Impressions of Mr Whistler's celebrated and rare series of Sixteen Thames Etchings.' The set, mounted in a portfolio, cost 14 guineas, with individual prints ranging from one to three guineas. It is not always possible to distinguish between the prints pulled by Delâtre in 1861 and Goulding in 1879, and both printers appear to have used similar papers. An impression of *W. Jones, lime-burner, Thames Street* is inscribed by Frederick Goulding as being printed after the removal of the steel-facing but is dated 1894, confirming that the edition published by The Fine Art Society was not the final printing of the Thames etching plates.

The Thames as a subject provided Whistler with many challenges. Distractions or the weather might interfere with the meticulous etcher, working out of doors in the middle of a busy river. But for a painter trained to work in the studio, capturing the effects of light and weather on the river was equally difficult. This was increasingly Whistler's concern. The sheer volume of river traffic itself posed practical problems for an artist wishing to reduce what he saw to simple forms, and these were not really resolved until the early 1870s with the Nocturnes.

The solution was to paint the river at quiet times, at night. Whistler would go out in a boat rowed by Walter

and Henry Greaves, sometimes staying on the water until dawn. The stretch between his home at 2 Lindsey Row (now 96 Cheyne Walk) near Cremorne Gardens, near Battersea Bridge and down to Westminster Bridge, became an enchanted world, with the water, buildings and bridges reduced to dark shapes among which lights and lanterns glimmered. He made drawings, but could not work in oils. Instead he committed what he saw to memory so that he could paint it when he returned to his studio.

Several accounts of this working method have survived, and the paintings themselves demonstrate Whistler's ability to memorize a subject. It was essential to commit the scene to canvas as soon as possible, and he developed a radical technique, using paint which had been thinned with turpentine and linseed oil. He painted on the floor, so that the liquid colour would not run, and the canvases were put in the garden to dry. As Richard Dorment has pointed out, in many respects Whistler's method was characteristic of watercolour painting, even to the extent that the finished works were framed behind glass.

The series of Thames etchings Whistler made in 1861 show a change from the highly detailed works which culminated in *Rotherhithe*, moving from the linear to the tonal. The influence of Japanese art is evident in prints such as *Old Hungerford Bridge* and, most obviously, in *Battersea Dawn*. These spare compositions were the precursors of the Nocturnes he painted, and they represent the first attempts at evoking the effects and atmosphere of early morning in a print.

The publication of Whistler's Thames Set was well received, albeit that most of the subjects were more than ten years old. It is in this period that he painted his Nocturnes, using a description suggested by Leyland: *I can't thank you too much for the name 'Nocturne' as a title for my moonlights! You have no idea what an irritation it*

*proves to the critics and consequent pleasure to me, – besides it is really so charming and does so poetically say all I want to say and no more than I wish.\**

Whistler's Thames etchings of the later 1870s such as *Price's Candle Factory* and *Battersea Morn*, show an increasing economy of line and may be seen as an attempt to find equivalents in etching and drypoint for the paintings of the period which culminated in *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*, exhibited at the first Grosvenor Gallery exhibition in 1877. The painting was the subject of a review by John Ruskin who wrote:

*I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.*

Ruskin was the most influential art critic of his time, and his attack on Whistler's paintings made them essentially unsaleable. It coincided with the termination of Leyland's patronage and his refusal to pay the artist for his decoration of the Peacock Room at his home in Prince's Gate. In September 1877 Whistler was due to sign a contract with the architect E.W. Godwin for the design and construction of The White House, to be built on Tite Street, Chelsea. It was to be a masterpiece of avant-garde architecture and the aesthetic movement but financial disaster loomed.

Whistler decided to sue Ruskin for libel. Although he won the celebrated case, he was not awarded costs and only one farthing in damages; he was ultimately declared bankrupt. Searching for income and intending to defend his artistic reputation, he turned once more to the Thames, the source of his early success in London.

It was at about this time that Ernest Brown came to see him with a view to publishing an etching in an issue of *Portfolio* magazine. Whistler gave him the plate of

\* An undated letter from Whistler to Leyland in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., J. and E.R. Pennell Collection

*Billingsgate*, done in 1859, which had not been included in the Thames Set, and it was published in January 1878. Simultaneously, he was encouraged to make prints in a new medium by Thomas Way, a lithographic printer. This enabled him to achieve effects much closer to those in his painted Nocturnes than was possible in etching or drypoint. Way had suggested publishing a group of lithographs in a set to be called *Art Notes*. With his trial over Ruskin's libel approaching, its publication might have enabled Whistler to foster interest in and understanding of his new work, but there was little interest in the project from the public.

By 1879 Ernest Brown had joined the staff of The Fine Art Society, and, no doubt at his suggestion, the company bought the Thames Set plates from Ellis & Green, and engaged Frederick Goulding to print a second edition. Since *Art Notes* had been a commercial failure, instead of further lithographs, Whistler embarked on a series of new etchings of the Thames, including *Old Putney Bridge*. These were to be the last prints Whistler made of the Thames for nearly a decade. In September 1879 he left London for Venice.

After Whistler's return to London in November 1880 he re-established himself as one of the foremost artists of his time. He moved back to Tite Street in Chelsea and exhibitions of the prints and pastels he had made in Venice enhanced his reputation. The streets of London remained a source of subjects.

[15] LIMEHOUSE, 1859

Etching printed in black ink on thick laid paper; inscribed in another hand 'Limehouse W.37 Trial proof before drypoint sky', an impression in the third state (of six), before publication  
5 × 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (12.5 × 19.8 cm)  
sheet 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (18.2 × 23.8 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 40; Glasgow 48

Limehouse, the entrance to the West Indies Docks, lies opposite the Surrey Commercial Docks in Rotherhithe, along the lower Thames. (The view here is reversed.) It is the most easterly location of Whistler's Thames subjects and one in which Whistler settled for nearly two months between August and October 1859; he returned to the area to make a lithotint in 1878 soon after he began experimenting with this technique.

The artist seems to have been fascinated by the dilapidated wharfs and warehouses and by the working life of the river in what was then a highly dangerous and squalid area by any standard. The Thames as it ran through the City of London was so contaminated by human waste that quantities of lime were regularly tipped into it in order to keep down the stench (and it was not until 1859, the very year that Whistler was living in the area, that the government had finally begun work on a comprehensive sewer system in order to avert new outbreaks of cholera). Here, nonetheless, Whistler found the subject for the eight plates that were published as part of the Thames Set more than a decade later in 1871. As Lochnan suggests "The working men of Wapping and their venue provided Whistler with a most appropriate realist subject: it was contemporary, it was working-class, it combined elements of seascape and cityscape, and it was above all novel" (p.82). While in some of the plates for the set, like *Black Lion Wharf*

[cat.21] and *The Lime-Burner* [cat.22], the artist structured the compositions around the working men, in this etching he focuses rather on the cluttered river scene with its tangle of mooring posts, boats, masts, rigging, and men working in the middle ground. The cropping of the barge in the foreground and tops of the riverside buildings to the right serve to bring the activity closer to the viewer.

Impressions of *Limehouse* were exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum and at the Royal Academy of Arts (975) in 1861, and at the Paris Salon de Refusés (2756) in 1863. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art

[16] LIMEHOUSE, 1859

Etching, signed in pencil with the butterfly, printed in black ink on Japan paper; an impression in the fifth state (of six) probably before publication  
5 × 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (12.8 × 20.4 cm)  
sheet 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (16.5 × 24.1 cm)  
Provenance: Dr. John Witt Randall, Boston (Lugt 2130, not stamped but annotated on the old mat); The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge M.A. (not stamped); Christie's, New York, May 10–11, 1988, lot 55  
Reference: Kennedy 40; Glasgow 48

The signature on this impression dates from after 1871 and it is unusual to find the butterfly (or any other pencil signature) on Whistler's early London etchings. The artist is known, however, to have signed impressions later (see also our impressions of *La Marchande de moutarde*; [cat.5] and *Billingsgate* [cat.19]). While the plate was published as part of the Thames Set in 1871, this impression is most likely earlier.



[cat.15]



[cat.16]



[17] THE POOL, 1859

Etching, printed in black ink on ivory laid paper, watermark crowned initials in circle, in the sixth (final) state (but before the extensive wear to the drypoint work)  
 5¾ × 8¾ inches (14 × 21.7 cm)  
 sheet 7¾ × 12½ inches (20.1 × 31.7 cm)  
 Provenance: Samuel Henry Nazeby Harrington, Birkenhead, England (Lugt 1347 verso and 1349 recto in lower left corner)  
 Reference: Kennedy 43; Glasgow 49

The print depicts the pool at Wapping, part of the port below London Bridge where ocean-going vessels docked and were unloaded. Together with *Black Lion Wharf* [cat.21] and *Eagle Wharf* [cat.18], *The Pool* is among the most dramatic of the Thames prints and in each, as Lochnan notes, the artist structures the composition around the disproportionately large figure of the working man set in the foreground of the scene: “They stare out at the viewer, making no apologies for their low social status or unkempt condition. They are never

idealized, but are one with the landscape which is a physical extension of themselves” (p.82). Lochnan further suggests the influence of contemporary Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints on some of the images in the Thames Set, observing in particular a correspondence between *The Pool* and Hiroshige’s *Shinagawa: The Departure of the Daimyo* from *The Fifty-Three Stages of the Tokaido* (1833–34). *The Pool* is characterized by a similarly flattened picture space with a raised horizon line to establish the sense of recession; the cutting off of the foreground figure at the ankles also points to a device frequently employed by Japanese printmakers of the period to create an experience of immediacy. However, in Whistler’s image, this element might also owe something to the increasing popularity of amateur photography by the end of the 1850s (p.95).

The owner of this impression, Samuel Harrington, was a well-known critic and author of a catalogue raisonné of Francis Seymour Haden’s etchings (see also *Billingsgate*; cat.19).



[18] EAGLE WHARF, 1859

Etching, printed in black ink on laid paper watermark Hudelist, a proof aside from the edition published in *A Series of Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and Other Subjects* by James Whistler, The Thames Set, in the only state  
 5½ × 8¾ inches (13.8 × 21.2 cm)  
 sheet 10½ × 14¼ inches (27 × 36.3 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 41; Glasgow 50

A man sits in the foreground on top of a barge with his legs out towards the picture plane. Behind him it is low tide and a boat is beached at the far left. Another boat is raised on logs in front of Tyzac, Whiteley & Co. and Eagle Wharf, which stood at 269 Wapping High Street, opposite Rotherhithe. Beyond, barges stretch across the river with the masts of larger ships drawing the eye toward the distance.

*Eagle Wharf* was first exhibited in *The Works of James Whistler – Etchings and Dry Points* at E. Thomas’s print shop at 39 Old Bond Street in London in 1861, and then at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1862. The subject was published in the Thames Set in 1871 (no.11). The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.

[19] BILLINGSGATE, 1859

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* on the tab, printed in black ink on tan heavy laid paper, trimmed to the platemark by the artist; in the seventh state (of nine)

6 × 9 inches (15.2 × 22.9 cm)

Provenance: Samuel Henry Nazeby Harrington, Birkenhead, England (Lugt 1347 verso and Lugt 1349 in the lower left corner); Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock no. in pencil on verso a.53950); Samuel and Karen Blatt, Tampa, Florida

Reference: Kennedy 47; Glasgow 51

An extraordinarily fine impression of this unusual state, before the diagonal lines between the masts at the right were eliminated and therefore before the unsigned edition of 100 in the final state, published in January 1878 by Ernest Brown in *Portfolio* magazine. Earlier states, before the edition, are rare, and of the greatest rarity when they are signed in pencil like the one here.

As Ruth Fine suggests, the print is a typical example of Whistler's recurring interest "in the way the rigging of ships activated and defined pictorial space" (p.131). Perhaps a companion piece to *Limehouse* [cat. 15], the most eastern of the dock scenes among the Thames subjects, this is the most western of them and the two compositions mirror each other. The view of the Billingsgate fish market is most likely taken from Custom House Stairs and the bridge behind the row of boats is London Bridge. The tower of Southwark Cathedral can be made out in the distance to the right. However, the scene appears the wrong way around since it was not reversed for printing.

On the verso, Samuel Harrington noted the date *July 2 1886* in pencil. In a further pencil note on the back of the old mat he wrote: *Presented to me by JM. Whistler, July 2nd 1886 / HNH*. Harrington, a sometime etcher, collector, and print scholar is perhaps best known today as the author of an early catalogue raisonné of the prints of Francis Seymour Haden. This careful record keeping by the first owner gives us an unusually exact documentation for a date when the signature was most likely added by the artist.





[20] LONGSHORE MEN, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on thin laid paper, in the fourth (final) state; there was no published edition  
 6 x 8¾ inches (15.1 x 22.2 cm)  
 sheet 8 x 11¼ inches (20.7 x 28.5 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 45; Glasgow 52

This interior probably depicts an inn or pub in Wapping or Rotherhithe and belongs to the period when Whistler had lodgings there. Longshore men were in the news at the time of the election of the new Lord Mayor of London in the autumn of 1859 because they expected to be rewarded for supporting the favoured candidate at the Guildhall. In September 1859 *The Times* wrote that 'Long-shore men' were considered or considered themselves to some extent 'above the law', and defined them as 'a number of very dilapidated citizens who may be seen wandering along the banks of the river at low water, and pursuing their researches among the debris of dead dogs, bottles, bones, oystershells, and bits of coal which form the margin of our Father Thames' (quoted in Glasgow catalogue).

The print was never published, but it is not uncommon. Some impressions were printed in the 1890s or after the artist's death, possibly for the New York print dealer Frederick Keppel. It was first shown in Whistler's own one-man exhibition in 1874 at the Flemish Gallery on Pall Mall in London. The plate is now in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.



[21] BLACK LION WHARF, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on laid paper, an impression in the fourth (final) state, aside from the edition published in *A Series of Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and Other Subjects* (the Thames Set)  
 6 x 8¾ inches (15 x 22.5 cm) sheet 8 x 13 inches (20.3 x 33 cm)  
 Provenance: Henri Beraldi  
 Literature: Kennedy 42; Glasgow 54

An impression of *Black Lion Wharf* was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1860 (902) and it is thus one of the first of the Thames etchings to be shown in public. Its importance to the artist may be suggested by its inclusion, framed on the wall, in his painting *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother* (1871; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), perhaps Whistler's best-known work.

*Black Lion Wharf* was on the north bank of the Thames near St Katharine's Dock, just below the Tower of London. Katharine Lochnan has suggested that it was drawn from the Horsleydown New Stairs on the South

Bank, and that, uniquely among the Thames subjects, it was drawn in reverse so that the view appears the right way round in the etching.

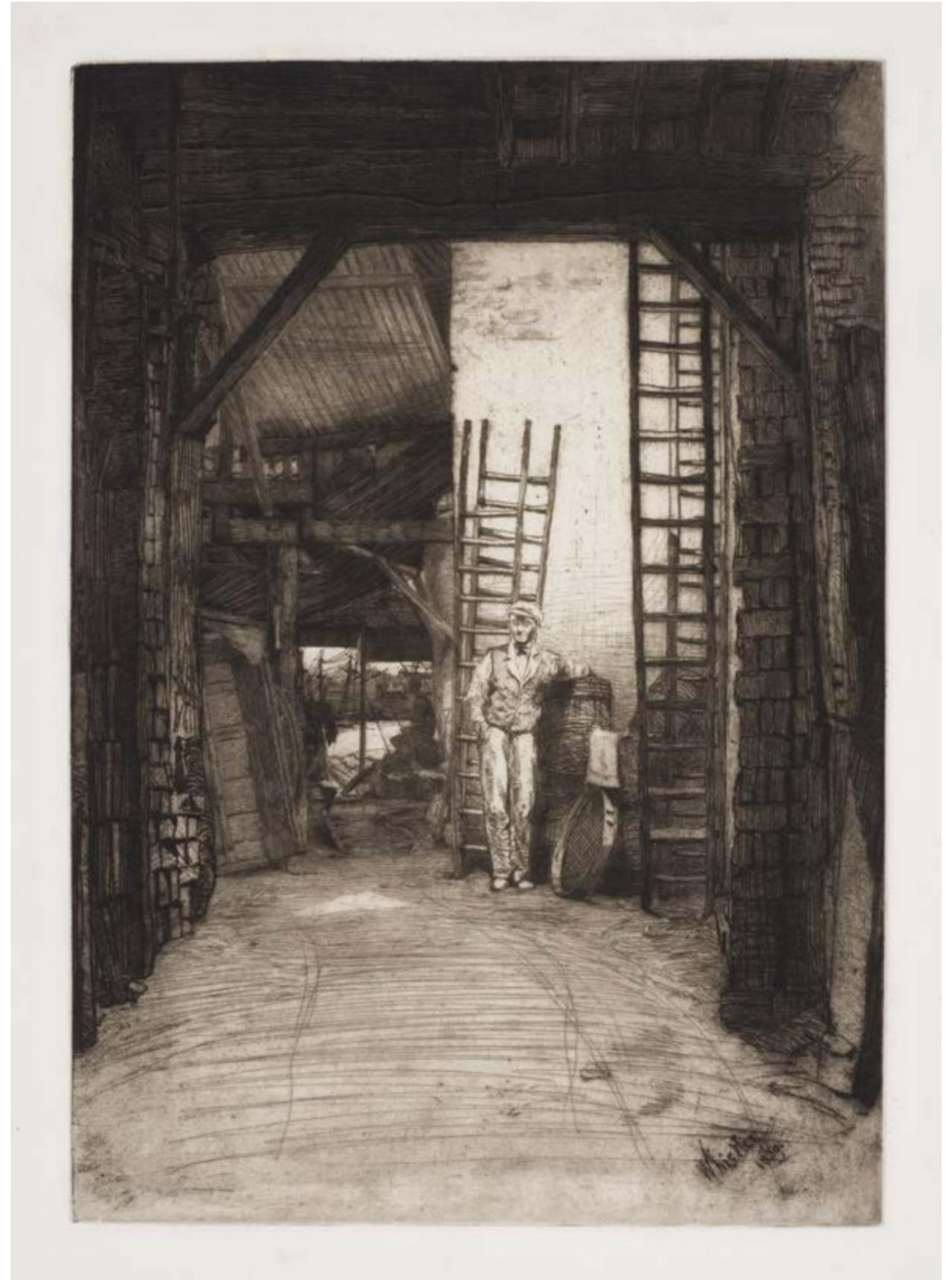
The print was exhibited in *The Works of James Whistler – Etchings and Dry Points* at E. Thomas's print shop at 39 Old Bond Street in 1861, and then at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1862. The subject was published in the Thames Set; no.1. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.

[22] THE LIME-BURNER, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in warm black ink on thin laid Japan paper, an impression in the second (final) state, aside from the edition published in the Thames Set  
9¾ × 6⅞ inches (24.9 × 17.2 cm)  
sheet 14⅛ × 8 × ¾ inches (36 × 22.5 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 46; Glasgow 55

Using an upright format, Whistler shows the Thames from the shore, leading the eye through a succession of timber buildings to a small vignette of the river and the opposite bank, placed just left of centre. The premises of William Jones & Co were at 241 and 242 Wapping High Street, a few doors from the sites of *Thames Police* and *Eagle Wharf*. Although this work is widely known as *The Lime-Burner*, it was initially given the title *W. Jones, Lime-burner, Thames Street* when it was shown at the Royal Academy of Arts the summer after it was made. This original title shows Whistler as a committed Realist, choosing a subject from modern life and specifically identifying the working man in the picture.

After its first showing at the Royal Academy in 1860 (943), it was exhibited in *The Works of James Whistler – Etchings and Dry Points* at E. Thomas's print shop at 39 Old Bond Street in 1861. The subject was published in the Thames Set; no.9. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.



[23] ROTHERHITHE, 1860

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on cream laid paper; trimmed to circa 1/8 inch outside the platemark; first/second state (of six)

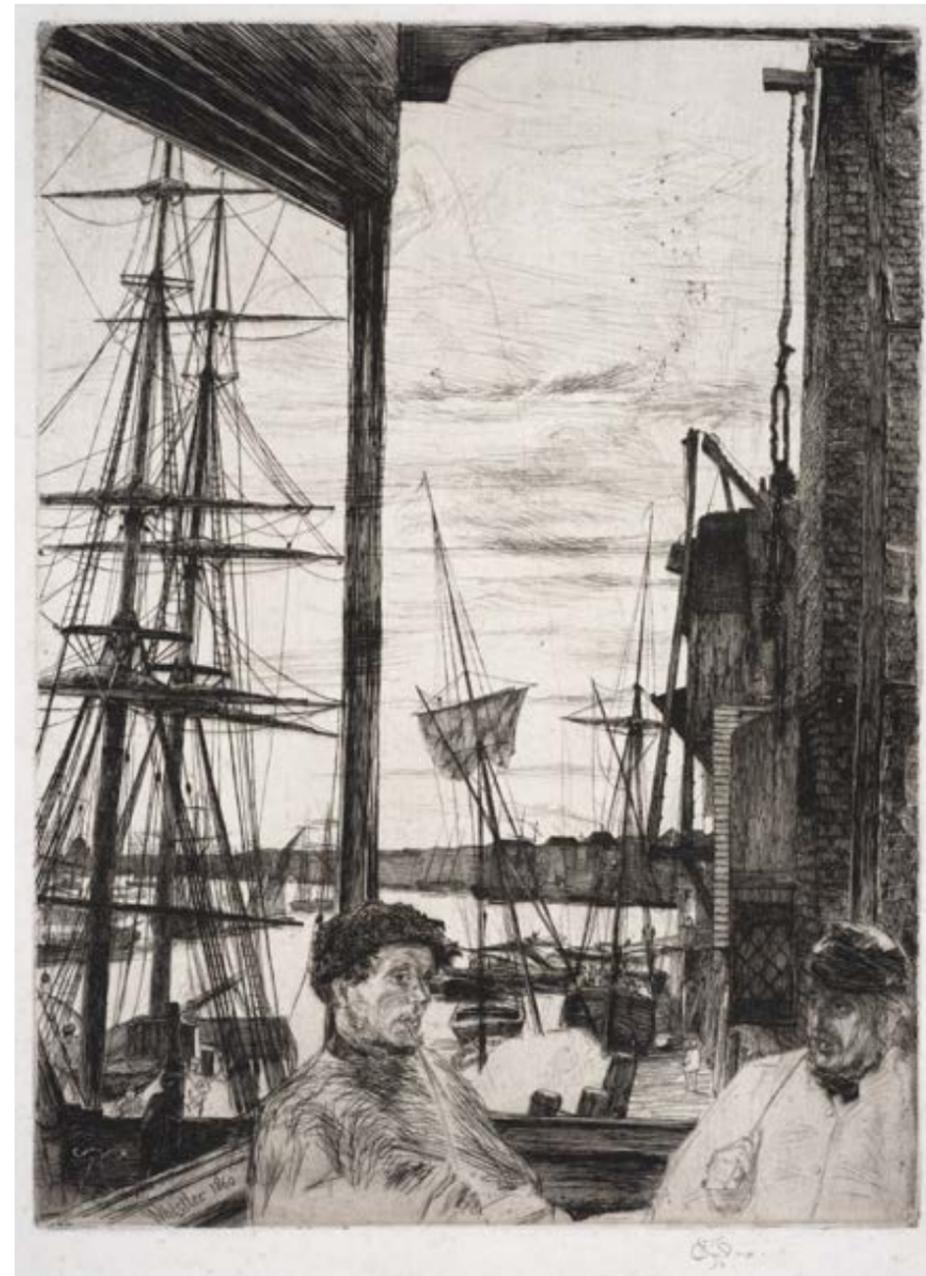
10 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches (27.3 x 19.6 cm)

Provenance: unidentified collector; initials in ink on verso (not found in Lugt)

Reference: Kennedy 66; Glasgow 70

In one of his most iconic early etchings, Whistler shows a view looking northwest across the Thames to Wapping from the balcony of the Angel Inn, Cherry Gardens, in Bermondsey (not, in fact, Rotherhithe), according to Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell and Howard Mansfield. The dome of St. Paul's is just visible on the left. (As in *Black Lion Wharf*, the scene appears correctly, so the plate must have been etched in reverse.) This print was made the year after the other Thames dockside subjects and was intended as a preliminary study for the artist's painting *Wapping* (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.). Whistler also painted *The Thames in Ice* (Freer Gallery of Art) from the same location.

The print was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1862 under the title *Rotherhithe* but when it was published by Ellis & Green in the last state as part of the Thames Set in 1871, the title was changed to *Wapping*. In a review of the impression at the Royal Academy, F.G. Stephens, the critic of *The Athenaeum*, commented that: "Mr. Whistler sends some fine etchings ... with extraordinary feeling for substance and marvellous tone: Rotherhithe ... a ship unloading, with all her rigging



solid as Rembrandt could give it" (*The Athenaeum*, May 24, 1862, p.699; quoted in Glasgow catalogue). An impression was also shown at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1862 and at the Paris Salon in 1863 (2758).

The vertical bisection of the picture space into two unequal sections by the asymmetrical post to the left of center shows Whistler experimenting with the forms and compositional devices of Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodcuts. As Lochan observes, "The reduction of the balcony of the Angel to a geometric box has more in common with Japanese stylization than with French realism. The shallow and unconvincing construction, together with the asymmetrical placement of the post, recalls such prints as Kiyonaga's *Snowy Morning in the Yoshiwara* ... which Whistler owned at the time of his death" (pp.119-120).

The composition was complete in this rare first state; in subsequent states, Whistler added lines and areas of shading in drypoint. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.

[24] ROTHERHITHE, 1860

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a butterfly and inscribed *imp*, lower right, printed in warm black ink on laid paper; a proof in the second state (of six)

10 7/8 x 7 3/4 inches (27.5 x 19.5 cm) sheet

17 7/8 x 12 3/8 inches (45.4 x 31.5 cm)

Provenance: Edward G. Kennedy (his stamp on the verso; Lugt 857)

Reference: Kennedy 66; Glasgow 70

[25] PENNY PASSENGERS, LIMEHOUSE, 1860

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a butterfly and inscribed *imp*, printed in black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab, an impression in the second (final) state, one of only six recorded

3¼ × 8½ inches (8.2 × 20.7 cm)

Provenance: Otto Gerstenberg, stamp verso [Lugt 2785]

Reference: Kennedy 67; Glasgow 71

The buildings on the far bank of the Thames and the ship and their masts moored there show the distinctive draughtsmanship of the period 1859–1860 when Whistler worked in Limehouse and made an etching there which was published in the Thames Set.

*Penny Passengers, Limehouse* is very rare, with only five impressions known in public collections. It shows in outline a group of passengers waiting for the ferry to cross the river. Whistler inscribed the impression from the Samuel P. Avery collection *Thames – Limehouse* (now in the New York Public Library).



[26] OLD HUNGERFORD BRIDGE, 1861

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on thin laid paper, a proof in the second state (of four), before publication in the Thames Set

5¼ × 8¼ inches (13.5 × 20.8 cm) sheet 8⅞ × 13¾ inches (22 × 27 cm)

Provenance: Otto Gerstenberg [Lugt 2785], stamp verso

Reference: Kennedy 76; Glasgow 76

The composition shows the old suspension bridge seen from a high vantage point, looking eastwards downstream, with Hungerford Pier below. The river and the foreground are indicated with a few lines. But the complex of piles, struts and the bridge in the middle distance are drawn in greater detail. The old bridge and the iron columns supporting the new Charing Cross railway bridge, visible beyond, are placed towards the top of the picture, accentuating the empty space in the foreground.

In design, drawing and conception it differs markedly from Whistler's etchings of 1859.

*Old Hungerford Bridge* was first shown at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1862 and then at the Royal Academy of Arts as *Hungerford Bridge* in 1863 (969). The subject was published in the Thames Set; no.6. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.



[27] THE STORM, 1861

Drypoint, printed in black ink on blue-tinted laid paper, in the third (final) state, after the reduction of the cancellation lines, as re-issued in an edition of 15 by H. Wunderlich & Co., New York in 1889

6½ × 11½ inches (15.5 × 28.5 cm) sheet 9⅞ × 15 inches (25 × 38 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 81; Glasgow 81

*The Storm* is one of a small group of prints which Whistler made on a camping trip on the Thames to Maple Durham with the painter Matthew White Ridley in June 1861. They borrowed a boat from Edwin Edwards who lived near the river at Sunbury. Two of them, *The Punt* and *Sketching*, were published in *Passages from Modern English Poets* in 1862, and they depict peaceful scenes on the river. *The Storm* is a larger and more ambitious work and shows Ridley battling against driving wind and rain.

An impression of the etching was first exhibited in Whistler's one-man show at the Flemish Gallery on Pall Mall in London in 1874, but the plate was cancelled and published in an album of *Cancelled Plates* by The Fine Art Society in 1879. H. Wunderlich & Co., New York acquired the plate in 1889 and re-issued the print in an edition of 15. Very few impressions from the plate before cancellation have been traced.

[28] BATTERSEA DAWN (CADOGAN PIER), 1863

Etching and drypoint, printed on laid japan paper, a proof in the second (final) state, aside from the edition published by Ellis & Green in the Thames Set

4½ × 6 inches (11.4 × 15.2 cm) sheet 7 × 7⅝ inches (18 × 19.4 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 75; Glasgow 95

The subject is Cadogan Pier on the north bank of the Thames, between Battersea Bridge and the site of Albert Bridge, which had not yet been built, near the artist's home in Lindsey Row. It is distant from the busy wharves of the earlier etchings, geographically and in conception. Already the atmosphere and the sense of a river waking in the dawn light has become the subject while the details of the boats and the pier are seen as through a veil. This plate was not well printed in the Ellis & Green edition of 1871; impressions lack the clarity and definition of this one.

The subject was published in the *Thames Set* as 'Early Morning (Battersea; no. 15)'. The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co. to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the Freer Gallery of Art.





[29] PRICE'S CANDLE FACTORY, 1876–77

Drypoint, signed in pencil with an elaborate *butterfly*, and inscribed *imp*, printed in black ink on antique laid paper, with an old inscription in Italian in brown ink, verso, between the eighth and ninth state (of thirteen)

6 × 9 inches (15 × 22.7 cm) sheet 8¼ × 13 inches (21 × 33 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 154; Glasgow 166

After the publication of the Thames Set in 1871, the river continued to be a source of subjects. Near his Chelsea home Whistler etched this view of the candle factory in Battersea on the opposite bank of the river. It was not published, and was not exhibited until 1898 when it was included in the H. Wunderlich & Co., New York exhibition (no.107). Only nineteen impressions are recorded in the Glasgow catalogue.



[30] BATTERSEA MORN, 1875

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp*, printed in pale sepia on ivory laid paper, watermark arms of Amsterdam, a proof in the first state (of five)

5¾ × 8⅞ inches (15 × 22.5 cm)

sheet 8 × 13 inches (20.3 × 33 cm)

Provenance: P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London (their stock no.in pencil recto in the margin: C.27198); Knoedler & Co., New York (their stock no.in pencil recto in the margin: MK17120); George Mathew Adams, New York (Lugt 59, stamped recto and verso in the margin)

Reference: Kennedy 155; Glasgow 174

A fine and delicate impression of the very rare first state, before much additional line work and shading were added to further define the buildings and vessels.

Lochnan suggests that when Whistler returned to Thames subjects in the 1870s, he was simply intending to experiment with a range of printmaking techniques and did not necessarily have a publication in mind. In *Battersea: Dawn*, the artist “reduced his line to the thinnest, most suggestive ever employed in the history of the medium. The images were drawn with faint, hair-like lines, probably using a diamond-tipped needle” (p.174). This observation seems especially relevant to the evanescence of this earliest state in which the industrial area of Battersea appears bathed in an impressionistic glow, “in the half light of dawn when forms coalesce and appear to become two-dimensional” (ibid., p.168).

In 1879 an impression of this print appeared on a price list issued by The Fine Art Society, one of only three prints offered at the top price of £10.10.0 (ten guineas). According to the same list, £14.14.0 would have bought an entire Thames Set.

[31] THE ADAM AND EVE, OLD CHELSEA, 1878

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on thin Japan paper, in the third (final) state, from the edition of 100 or more published by Hogarth & Son, 1879

7 x 11 1/16 inches (17.5 x 30.2 cm)

sheet 8 3/4 x 13 7/8 inches (22.2 x 33.2 cm)

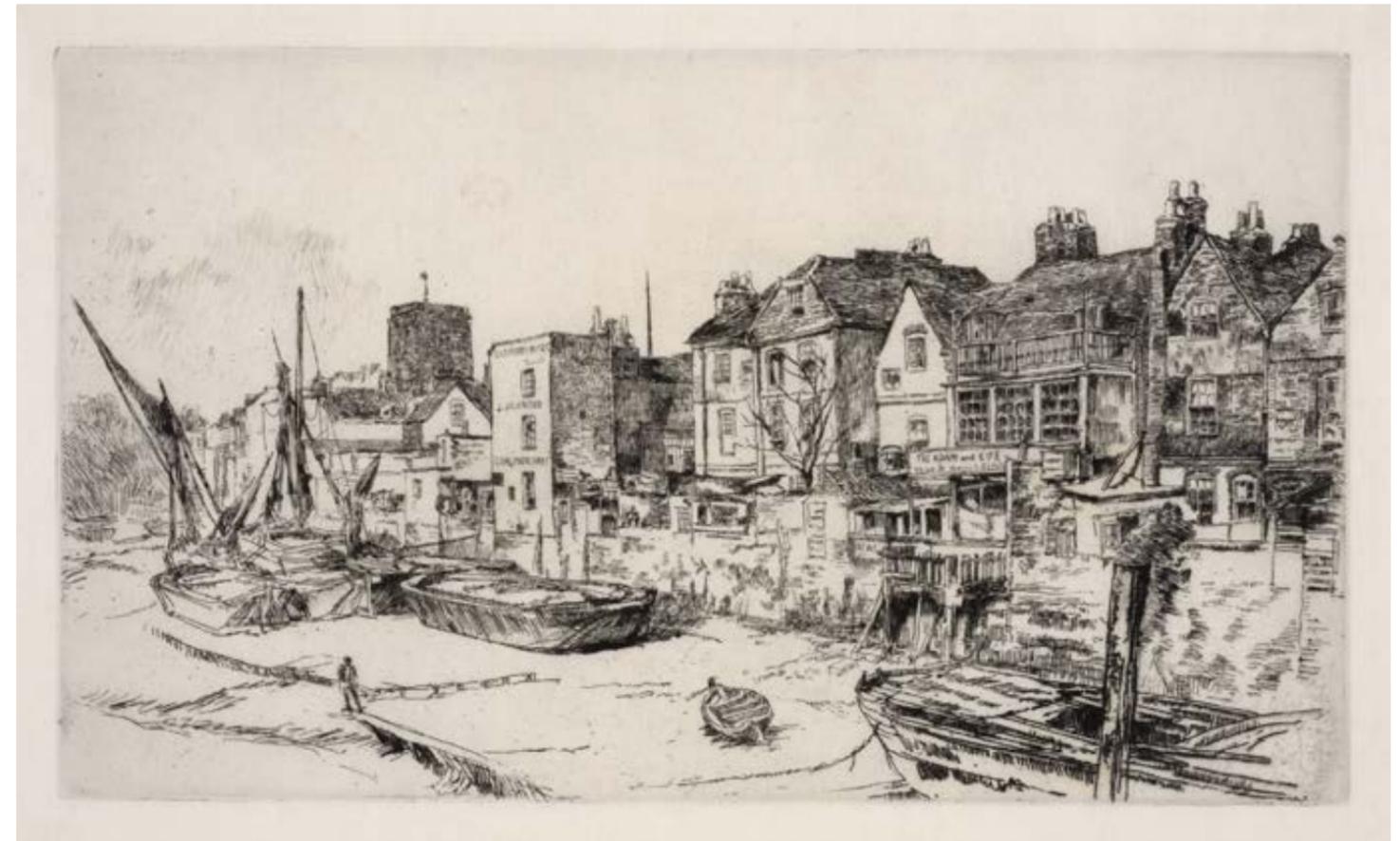
Provenance: lettered in pencil on the verso VAT and G (not in Lugt)

Reference: Kennedy 175; Glasgow 182

Whistler based this view of the Chelsea bank of the Thames showing the Adam and Eve public house (the third building from the right with three large multi-paned square windows and a sign in front reading "THE ADAM AND EVE- / Wine & Spirit Establ") on an earlier photograph of the scene by James Hedderly titled *Duke Street House Backing on the River*. For by the time Whistler made this print, the old waterfront pub had already been demolished to make way for the Chelsea Embankment. Whistler altered some of the details in his etching, not least the name of the tavern, which does not appear on the balcony in the photograph. However, as the Glasgow catalogue notes, he might also have been influenced here by other views of the subject made by his contemporaries Edwin Edwards and Walter Greaves. The print was published in this edition in 1879 by Messrs Hogarth & Son.

Lochan notes that Whistler himself understood this print "as a transitional work in the evolution from the realist style of the Thames etchings of 1859 to the "impressionist" style of the Venice etchings of 1879-80 ... In *The Adam and Eve, Old Chelsea*, Whistler's concern was not so much to express the physical nature of the structure but to create a feeling of air and atmosphere, and a composition based on oriental principles of balance and placement. In this work the eye is no longer drawn to a specific area of the composition; instead it is drawn to different areas wherever details congregate. By drawing only the shadow and the light within the shadow, Whistler created a new sense of aerial perspective which is not found in the etchings of 1859" (p.178).

This is a fine impression of the final state of the print, with touches of burr seen especially on the boats and sails at the left and on the crumbling porch of the Adam and Eve. In many impressions in this edition, the details have become less readable; however, in this one, perhaps due to the very thin paper, all the elements are vibrantly printed.



[32] NOCTURNE, 1878

Lithotint, signed in pencil *Whistler*, lower right, printed in grey ink on chine applique, mounted on white plate paper, apparently an early proof between the first and second (final) states, before the edition published in *Notes* by Boussod, Valadon and Co. in 1887  
6¾ × 10¼ inches (17.2 × 25.9 cm)  
sheet 10½ × 14¼ inches (26.8 × 36.4 cm)  
Reference: Chicago pp.63–66, no.8

John Ruskin's derisive review of Whistler's paintings in 1877, and the artist's subsequent decision to sue the critic for libel, were pivotal events in Whistler's life and career. As a printmaker whose etchings of the Thames had first established his reputation in London, it was natural for him to express himself with ink as well as paint. The opportunity to show his *Nocturnes* beyond the walls of the Grosvenor Gallery where his paintings had been hung was an obvious course of action, given the adverse publicity they had received.

Whistler's introduction to Thomas Way, who owned a lithographic printing company, provided a new medium with which to work. Lithography offered the possibility of creating tonal effects which etching or drypoint could not. Working with brushes on an area of half-tint prepared by Way, Whistler was in effect painting on the stone.

In the spring of 1878 he made this, his second lithotint of the Thames. T.R. Way, Thomas's son and the first cataloguer of Whistler's lithographs, recalled in 1912 that *Nocturne* was drawn at one sitting from memory in the company's printing offices in Wellington Street, Covent Garden.

It was Way's idea to publish a series of Whistler's lithographs under the title *Art Notes* but the project attracted only a handful of subscribers. The idea was revived in 1887 and an edition published but it appears that some, if not all, of the prints had been pulled in 1878, and the pencil signature *Whistler*, rather than the butterfly he adopted for his Venice etchings and thereafter, would suggest that this is an early printing.

The view which Whistler recalled for this work was, of course, very familiar to him. The Battersea side of Chelsea Reach was opposite the windows of both the houses he occupied on Lindsey Row, and he had painted the subject repeatedly over a period of nearly twenty years. The peace which descended on the river at nightfall attracted the artist for many reasons, not least of which was the absence of boat traffic. But the mist, combined with the smoke from domestic and industrial chimneys, shrouded the spire of Battersea Church, the Morgan Crucible Company and the surrounding buildings in mystery and magic.





[33] OLD PUTNEY BRIDGE, 1879

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a large, elaborate shaded butterfly, lower right, printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper, watermark 1814, an impression in the seventh (final) state, published by The Fine Art Society, probably printed in 1881 7 7/8 x 11 3/8 inches (20 x 29.6 cm) sheet 12 1/4 x 17 7/8 inches (31.3 x 45.5 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 178; Glasgow 185

The Fine Art Society's relationship with Whistler began with the new etchings of the Thames he made in 1879, following a visit from Ernest Brown who had joined the staff of the gallery. The plate is on a large scale and shows the change in the artist's approach to the Thames since the etchings he had made in Wapping and the docks in the summer of 1859. The central motif is the old bridge, by this stage somewhat dilapidated. It was shortly to be demolished and replaced by the new bridge of Cornish granite which was opened in 1886.

Whistler's instinct for preservation and his interest in Japanese art combine in this work, which successfully incorporates both the Western tradition and the influence of Japan. This impression was probably printed in 1881 or earlier and is printed on a full sheet signed with a large butterfly with veined wings. The printing of the edition was not completed until 1889. The Fine Art Society received 21 impressions in 1885, twelve in 1887 and a further six in 1887. The cancelled plate was delivered to The Fine Art Society in 1889, after Whistler had taken a print showing the cancellation, but the plates current whereabouts are unknown. The work was first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1879 (no.1233).

[34] LOBSTER POTS – SELSEA BILL, 1880–81

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a butterfly and inscribed *imp.* on the tab; printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper, watermark partial Strasbourg lily, trimmed by the artist on the platemark at upper margin and with the platemark still just visible on the other three sides; in the fourth (final) state

4 3/4 x 8 inches (12 x 20.3 cm)

Provenance: B. Bernard MacGeorge, Glasgow (Lugt 394); Henry Harper Benedict, New York (Lugt 1298); Charles C. Cunningham, Jr., New England (Lugt 4684)

Reference: Kennedy 235; Glasgow 241

The etched inscription at lower right locates the scene in Selsea Bill, a small town on the south coast of England where Whistler was visiting Charles Augustus "Owl" Howell, a flamboyant Anglo-Portuguese dealer and collector with a shady reputation. He had been introduced to Whistler by the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

There is a wistfulness in this slight composition showing lobster pots on a curving beach, suggesting that the print was made right after Whistler's return from his first trip to Venice. While, as Robert Getscher remarks, "even the Venetian subjects are never this inconsequential" (p.76), to twenty-first century eyes, this makes the print all the more intriguing. The lobster pots, sketchily described as groupings of parallel stripes and tumbled together, are not immediately identifiable; their curious forms establish a peculiar and charming kind of abstraction. Walter Sickert would soon afterwards move similarly close to pure abstraction in some of his beach-related etchings like *Scheveningen, Bathing Machines* of 1887 (Bromberg 95) and, especially, the small *Scheveningen, Wind-Chairs and Shadows* of the same year (Bromberg 91).

The plate was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in London in 1883. In 1886 it was published as part of the Second Venice Set.





[35] DRURY LANE, 1880-1881

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* lower left, printed in blackish-brown ink with a light veil of print tone on eighteenth-century laid paper; a proof aside from the edition published in *A Set of Twenty-six Etchings*; in the only state 6 3/8 x 3 3/8 inches (16.2 x 9.8 cm) sheet 11 x 8 3/4 inches (28 x 22.2 cm) Reference: Kennedy 237; Glasgow 243

This was one of four London scenes published in 1886 by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau as part of the Second Venice Set. Drury Lane was known in Whistler's day, as now, for its theatres. In the late nineteenth century, however, it was also notorious for its squalor and poverty. While the entry to the passageway and the tiled wall above it seem slightly dilapidated, the area's sordid reputation rather than the details of the etching itself seems to have largely informed a critic's description of the print in 1883 as "a curious vista view, seen through a gateway, of the dirty, dismal, but not unpicturesque-looking houses of Drury-lane" (Anon. "The Studio. An Arrangement in White and Yellow," *The Queen*, February 24, 1883; quoted in the Glasgow catalogue).

[36] SKETCH AFTER CECIL LAWSON'S 'SWAN AND IRIS', 1882

Etching and drypoint on antique laid paper, watermark Strasbourg Lily, with sewing holes at the right; in the fifth state (of six) 5 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches (13.3 x 8.2 cm) sheet 7 x 4 1/2 inches (17.8 x 11.4 cm) Reference: Kennedy 241; Glasgow 247

This exquisite, slightly Japoneseque river scene, viewed through the arch of what is probably one of the London bridges, was made after a painting by Cecil Gordon Lawson (1851-1882). His widow, Constance, was the elder sister of Beatrice, soon to be Whistler's wife. The etching (this one still with its sewing holes) appeared in this state and the previous one in editions of *Cecil Lawson: A Memoir by E.W. Gosse*, published by The Fine Art Society in 1883. The image is not signed in the plate but the iris flower looks almost like a variation on Whistler's butterfly.



[37] ST JAMES PLACE, HOUNDSDITCH, 1887

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, on the tab; printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper; trimmed to the platemark; marked on the verso with two tiny circles in pencil by the artist (indicating that Whistler considered this a particularly distinctive impression); in the second (final) state 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (82 × 17.8 cm)

Provenance: R.M. Light and Co., Santa Barbara, California;  
Dr. H. Malcolm Hardy, Shawnee Mission, Kansas (not stamped)  
Reference: Kennedy 290; Glasgow 255

Of the greatest rarity. The Glasgow catalogue accounts for merely eight known impressions, all of them in museum collections (to which our impression must now be added). The print is first recorded as having been sold by the artist in November 1887. It was exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists the same year during Whistler's brief presidency. As noted in the Glasgow catalogue, Whistler "must have thought highly of it, and sent it to an international exhibition in Brussels in the following year." The print was, however, never properly published since a "Houndsditch Set" that was planned by the artist remained unfinished. This ultimately accounts for the print's rarity.

During 1887–88, Whistler worked on a series of etchings of the East End of London. This is one of several prints in which he depicts some of the many small businesses then operating in Houndsditch, one of the city's Jewish quarters. His image of a busy street scene with modest shops, including that of M. and E. Levy at no.2 St James's Place (a fruit shop run by the brothers Moss and Eleazor Levy), was made at a significant moment in London's Jewish history. From 1881–84 a new influx of Eastern European Jews had arrived in the city in the wake of a wave of pogroms after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II (for which they had been scapegoated). The new immigrants, typically desperately poor, settled in the East End in areas like Houndsditch, Whitechapel, and Spitalfields where there were already existing Jewish populations, and began to work in tailoring, cigarmaking, cabinetmaking, shoemaking, and other crafts and trades. Around the corner from St James's Place was the grand synagogue in Duke's Place, built in 1692, which had long been the principal place of worship for London's well-to-do Ashkenazi Jews by the time Whistler made this print. (It was destroyed in a German air raid in 1942.)



[38] FISH SHOP, CHELSEA, 1886

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with butterfly on the tab and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on ivory laid paper, trimmed by the artist at the platemark leaving a signature tab; in the first state (of two)

5¾ × 8½ inches (13.6 × 21.5 cm)

Provenance: Colnaghi, London (their stock no. c10570 on the verso)

Reference: Kennedy 264; Glasgow 267

*Fish Shop, Chelsea* shows Mrs. Elizabeth Maunder's fish shop at 72 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, close to the artist's home. The shop was torn down in 1892 and Whistler himself lived in the building that replaced it (one designed by the great C.R. Ashbee and destroyed in World War Two). Indeed, Whistler's preoccupation with this site seems almost prescient—the same row of houses, including the fish shop, appears in his painting *A Street in Old Chelsea* from the early 1880s and the fish shop was again the subject of the etching *Little Maunder's* (1887; K. 279; G. 273) and the lithograph *Maunder's Fish Shop, Chelsea* (1890; Chicago 37).

The streetscape is characteristically intimate; the artist's restriction of the horizontal view to the three shops and the truncating of the buildings at the second-floor level serve to concentrate the focus of the scene. Picturesque quotidian details like the awnings and signs and the locals in the street enliven the façade, as does the rhythm of doors and windows. Together, as Lochan suggests, these elements nonetheless create an overall effect of two-dimensional patterning, one evident in the streetscapes of this period that "demonstrate the successful application of Whistler's Venetian synthesis of occidental and oriental influences to a London subject" (p.224).

A limited edition of 50 impressions of this etching in the first state was published for the benefit of the Society of British Artists in 1886. This impression may well be one of them, although it is also possible that it is one of five impressions of the state that the artist reserved for himself.





[39] BARGES, DORDRECHT, 1886

Copper plate  
2 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 3 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (6.7 × 9.9 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 244; Glasgow 262

The print is known in only one state. The small size of this copper plate suggests that it was one of those that Whistler sometimes carried in his pocket to use in the manner of a sketch sheet whenever he found a suitable view. This was one of several etchings and watercolours that he made of Dordrecht, a port on the Dutch coast.

The Glasgow catalogue, which states that the plate has “not been located,” further notes that it was probably printed posthumously by Mortimer Luddington Menpes. Joseph Pennell, in his draft catalogue of the artist’s etchings, noted that Menpes owned the plate and he is also marked in the Glasgow catalogue as the “perpetrator” of the damage by corrosion or acid along its lower edge.



[40] CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, 1886

Copper plate  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (4.6 × 13.8 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 260; Glasgow 268

This etching plate shows a view from the Chelsea Embankment looking over the Thames towards Battersea. The Glasgow catalogue states that the plate “has not been located.” As one of the artist’s smallest surviving plates, like that for *Barges, Dordrecht* [cat. 39] it may well have been used as a pocket-size “sketch sheet” by the artist as he wandered around the streets and waterfront of Chelsea in search of subjects. Six impressions of the print from this plate were sold in 2004. They appear to have been printed between the 1920s and the 1960s (Glasgow).

[41] J.H. WOODS FRUIT SHOP, CHELSEA,  
1887–88

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* on the tab, signed again on the verso with the butterfly and numbered 1, printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper, watermark partial arms of Amsterdam (cf. Spink/Stratis/Tedeschi, watermark nos. 12ff.); trimmed by the artist at the platemark leaving a signature tab; in the second state (of four) 3¾ × 5½ inches (96 × 13.2 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 265; Glasgow 327

After Whistler's return from Venice at the end of 1880, the streets and houses of London again became the subjects of many of his paintings and etchings. Among his streetscapes of the city, sometimes made in Chelsea where he lived as well in less salubrious parts of town, the artist produced a large number showing rows of shopfronts, a subject that had clearly fascinated him since he had made *Fruit Stall* in Venice in 1879–80 (G.225). His views of them often share the same characteristics: unposed figures going about their daily business; the facades set parallel to the picture plane; and an asymmetrical imbalance in the overall composition that creates a certain visual movement and counters the spatial parallelism. The modest scale and delicate, fluid handling of his etched vignettes like this one reflect not only the artist's admiration for Rembrandt's etchings, as Lochnan notes, but also Whistler's habit of carrying around small grounded copper plates in his pocket and using them to jot down impressions of the urban scene on the spot as if recording them in pencil in a sketch-book (p.223).

According to the Glasgow catalogue, Joseph Henry Wood had a greengrocer's shop at 1 Park Walk (off the Fulham Road) in Chelsea in 1887 and moved to nearby 391 Fulham Road the following year. Since Whistler is thought to have made the print in either 1887 or 1888, it is not clear which of the two locations he depicted here.

This plate was never published. Impressions are of utmost rarity. The Glasgow catalogue has not been able to trace more than four impressions in public collections (plus two whose whereabouts are unknown). Our print must be added to this small number.





## WOMEN

When Whistler moved from America to Paris in 1855 after following in his father's footsteps by attending West Point Military Academy, it was clear that his natural *milieu* was among bohemian artists not soldiers. He soon embarked on a relationship with a young Parisian milliner called Héloïse, known as 'Fumette', and she was the first in a series of women with whom he lived until his marriage in 1888.

Fumette was the model for an etching published in the *French Set* and for the unpublished nude study, *Venus*. While their relationship continued, Whistler was able to combine the freedom of bohemian Paris with the comforts of his sister Deborah's home in London's Sloane Street, where he frequently stayed. His relationship with her was important to his artistic development. Deborah was married to Francis Seymour Haden, a surgeon who was also a gifted etcher and who encouraged Whistler in his early career. Haden had an important print collection, including many fine Rembrandt etchings, which Whistler was able to study. Deborah was the sitter for *Reading by Lamplight*, and is also seen in *The Music Room*.

In about 1860 Whistler met Joanna Hiffennan, and she became his muse and moved in with him. Their relationship lasted six years and she was the model for one of his finest prints, *Weary*. Jo suffered Haden's disapproval and had to move out of her home with Whistler in Lindsey Row when Whistler's mother arrived from America.

Through Dante Gabriel Rossetti, at about the time that Jo and he parted, Whistler was introduced to Frederick Leyland. For ten years his patronage was central to Whistler's career. The artist formed a close friendship with Leyland's wife who was the subject of one of his finest portraits *Symphony in Flesh Colour and Pink: Portrait of Mrs Frances Leyland*. There is no evidence that she and Whistler were lovers, but her marriage ended in divorce in 1879. She was the model for *The Velvet Dress*.

Frances became ill during the summer of 1872, and progress on her portrait was interrupted. It may be that Whistler's new model, Maud Franklin, posed in her dress so that he could continue with the painting. Maud swiftly became established as mistress and muse, and she posed for more than 60 works. Like Jo before her, she was the model for one of Whistler's finest etchings, *Maud, Standing*.

When Whistler went to Venice in 1879, Maud came to join him, and their relationship continued after his return to London. In 1886 E.W. Godwin, the architect of both the White House, which Whistler had commissioned and owned briefly until his bankruptcy, and the front of The Fine Art Society, died. Two years later his widow, Beatrice, and Maud accompanied Whistler on a trip to Paris. Within a few months Whistler abandoned Maud and became engaged to Beatrice. They married in St. Mary Abbots, on the corner of Kensington High Street and Kensington Church Street in London on 11 August 1888. *The Sisters* and *The Duet* show Beatrice and her sister Ethel, who was also the model for *Gants de Suède*.

It was a happy marriage and they had a great deal in common. They went to France on honeymoon, and moved to Paris in 1892. But two years later Beatrice became ill and was diagnosed with cancer. She died in 1896, leaving Whistler overwhelmed with grief. In a letter she had written to him the year before, she said "I think I've loved you always, even from the Peacock Room days."

[42] FUMETTE, 1858

Etching, printed in black ink on *chine appliqué* by Auguste Delâtre, published in the French Set, in an edition of 70; in the fifth (final) state

6 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 4 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (16.3 × 11 cm) sheet 8 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 7 inches (22.4 × 17.6 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 13; Glasgow 12

'Fumette', or Héloïse, was Whistler's first partner and they lived together, first in the Hotel Corneille in Paris. She was a *grisette*, or working girl, probably a milliner or a dressmaker. She had a jealous nature and tore up many of Whistler's early drawings in a rage after they had moved to rue St. Sulpice. The relationship lasted for two years. *Fumette* was first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1859 (no.3674).



[43] READING BY LAMPLIGHT, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on laid paper; in the third (final) state: there was no published edition

6 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 4 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches (16 × 12 cm) sheet 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (22.1 × 18.2 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 32; Glasgow 37

A study of Deborah Haden (1825–1908), Whistler's half-sister, at her home at 62 Sloane Street, London. She is reading by the light of a table lamp, the book close to her face. Deborah had poor eyesight and eventually became blind. Her husband, Francis Seymour Haden, sat beside his brother-in-law as Whistler made this etching and made one of her also, *A Lady Reading*. The two artists then probably went to the top of the house where Haden had a press and took proof impressions from both plates. The interior is dramatically lit from within the picture area with intricate work throughout both the shaded part of the wall behind the figure and where the pool of light falls. Whistler was a guest at the Haden's house for Christmas 1858; after his return to Paris in January 1859, he wrote a letter to Deborah on 12th January asking for a proof "of the one of yourself".

There was no published edition of *Reading by Lamplight*, but 40 impressions are recorded in the Glasgow catalogue as being in public and institutional collections. An impression was not shown in an exhibition until 1874 when the collection of James Anderson Rose, Whistler's lawyer, was shown in Liverpool.





[44] VENUS, 1859

Etching and drypoint, printed in black ink on laid paper, an impression in the second (final) state: there was no published edition

6 × 9 inches (15 × 22.6 cm) sheet 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (18.8 × 30.3 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 59; Glasgow 60

A study of Héloïse, 'Fumette', asleep in bed, her head pressed into the pillow and the bedclothes covering her lower legs. This is one of three portraits Whistler made of Fumette in 1859: one of the others shows her standing and in the third only her head and shoulders are depicted. *Venus* is a work in the Realist tradition, and may be compared with Courbet's nudes of the same period. The artist may also have had in mind Rembrandt's study of Antiope in his etching *Jupiter and Antiope*.

*Venus* was never published and there is no record of it being shown until 1898 when it was included in an *Exhibition of Etchings, Drypoints and Lithographs by Whistler* at H. Wunderlich & Co., New York (no.53).

To have been overlooked for exhibition until so late in Whistler's life might suggest that the subject was considered improper. Frederick Wedmore, whose catalogue of Whistler's etchings was published in 1886, certainly disapproved of the image and described it as 'the nude seen by Mr Whistler with rather common eyes, for once – an animal, whom sleep has overcome'.

[45] WEARY, 1863

Drypoint and roulette, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on thin japan paper, mounted on a second thin sheet, in the fourth state (of six)

7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (19.8 × 13.1 cm) sheet 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (23.5 × 17 cm)  
Provenance: Harris G. Whittemore; John P. Elton, a gift from Whittemore; by descent  
Reference: Kennedy 92; Glasgow 93

A study of Joanna Hiffennan, with whom Whistler had a relationship which lasted six years. She was his model and mistress, and the sitter for *Symphony in White, No.1: The White Girl*, painted in Paris during



the winter of 1861–62; the painting was bought by Harris Whittemore, who also owned this impression, and bequeathed by his descendants to the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. Joanna later posed for Courbet's painting *Le Sommeil*.

*Weary* is one of Whistler's most ambitious subjects and one of the last prints he made before he gave up etching in 1863. It is a romantic and poetic image, both a departure from his previous subjects and perhaps the culmination of his printmaking over six years, showing Jo in a pose described in the simple but expressive title. At this time Whistler was closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and the influence of Rossetti is apparent. The two artists had first met in July 1862 and they were close neighbours after Whistler moved to 7 Lindsey Row, near Rossetti's house on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea. There is a tradition that *Weary* was inspired by lines from Rossetti's poem *Jenny*:

*Why, Jenny, as I watch you there  
For all your wealth of golden hair  
Your silk ungirdled and unlaced ...*

This is one of Whistler's most celebrated works, made entirely in drypoint and later reinforced with roulette work in the fifth state as the burr on the plate showed signs of wear in printing. Although it was never published, *Weary* was exhibited widely, first at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1863 (no.941). The critic F.G. Stephens wrote in his review that: 'in the dismal Octagon Room are placed some of the exquisite drypoint productions of Mr. Whistler, whose fame the Royal Academy ignores by placing the marvellous plates that measure five inches by eight or so, at the top of the room, one (941) where the sun comes to ruin its delicacy, even if it could be seen at all'. He wrote later that 'they deserve noble places and will reward pains taken to obtain a sight of them ... a drypoint, styled *Weary*, a lady resting back in her chair, has exquisite tone and "colour".'

[46] THE VELVET DRESS (MRS LEYLAND),  
1873–74

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a butterfly and inscribed *imp.*, printed in black ink on Japan paper; in the fifth/sixth state (of seven)  
9 1/8 x 6 1/4 (23.2 x 15.7 cm) sheet 1 1/2 x 8 inches (29.2 x 20.3 cm)  
Provenance: B. Bernard MacGeorge (with his stamp, Lugt 394); H.H. Benedict (with his stamp, Lugt 1298); C.W. Dowdeswell (with their stamp, Lugt 690); M. Knoedler, New York (with their stock number MK 17115); Kennedy Galleries, New York (with their stock number a 46675)  
Reference: Kennedy 105; Glasgow 120

This is one of three drypoints Whistler made showing Frances Leyland in three of her favorite dresses and it is one of the first in which he used his butterfly monogram. The prints may have been intended to help her decide which of the dresses to wear for her painted portrait, *Symphony in Flesh-colour and Pink: Portrait of Mrs. Frances Leyland*. This is perhaps the most successful of the etchings; in it, Whistler effectively suggests the weight and texture of the dress as well as his sitter's contemplative expression in a series of spare lines. The Glasgow catalogue notes that this print "in its elegant simplicity, [is] as much an icon of the Aesthetic Movement as Whistler's oil portrait of the same sitter ..."

A fine, delicately printed impression of this rare etching, with burr from the drypoint work highlighting Mrs. Leyland's face.



[47] MAUD, STANDING, 1876–78

Drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark leaving a signature tab: in the eleventh state (of sixteen)

Provenance: Henry Harper Benedict [Lugt 2936], stamp verso, and with his hand-written initials in pencil in two places, verso; Harris G. Whittemore; John P. Elton, a gift Christmas 1925; and by descent

8<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 5<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (22.6 × 14.9 cm)

Reference: Kennedy 114; Glasgow 169

Maud Franklin was Whistler's model and mistress from 1873 or 1874 until he married in 1888. She posed for some of Whistler's finest etchings, including this study, *The Letter (Maud, seated)*, *The Desk* and several lithographs. Maud was also the model for some of his finest paintings, pastels and drawings, in which the emotions between artist and model are evident. She is said to have stood in for Mrs Leyland for the portrait *Symphony in Flesh Colour and Pink: Portrait of Mrs Frances Leyland*, first exhibited in 1874. Maud was also an artist and her paintings were exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery and the Society of British Artists.

Whistler probably started work on *Maud, Standing* in 1876 and then reworked and completed it in 1878. It ran to sixteen states; one or two of each state exist, although they have not all been located. The print was never published and rarely exhibited. The first certain record of it in a show is of an impression lent by Charles Lang Freer to an exhibition in Chicago at the Caxton Club in 1900. The plate is in the collection of the University of Glasgow, bequeathed by Rosalind Birnie Philip.



[48] GANTS DE SUÈDE, 1890

Lithograph, signed in pencil with a *butterfly*, lower left, printed in black ink on laid paper, watermark IV countermark to Strasbourg Lily, one of 28 impressions printed by Thomas Way, aside from the edition of 3,000 published in *The Studio*, 1894; in the only state 8½ × 4 inches (21.6 × 10.3 cm) sheet 12½ × 8¼ inches (31.7 × 20.5 cm) Reference: Way 26; Chicago 35

A study of Ethel Whibley (née Birnie Philip), the artist's sister-in-law, wearing the "winged hat" which gave his first lithographic portrait of her its title. She was also a model for *The Duet* and *The Sisters*.

The Fine Art Society ordered twenty impressions of *Gants de Suède* for their 1895 exhibition of Whistler lithographs and the Ways record a further fourteen sent to Paris in two batches in 1892 and 1894, so it is possible that the total of 28 is too low.

In 1893 the artist was approached by Gleeson White about the publication of one of his lithographs in *The Studio* magazine which had been launched earlier that year. Whistler agreed to let the journal have "the second drawing I did from my sister in law ... the one standing with a pair of gloves drawn out in the two hands." Whistler received ten guineas as payment for the publication rights. The edition was printed by the Way firm from retransfers, and appeared as a special feature in *The Studio* published in April 1894.





[ cat.49 ]

[49] THE DUET, 1894

Lithograph, signed in pencil with a *butterfly*, lower left edge of sheet, printed in black ink on old laid paper, one of 39 impressions printed by Thomas Way; a further 12 were printed posthumously by Frederick Goulding in 1904; in the only state  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  inches (24.6 x 16.5 cm) sheet  $11 \times 7\frac{1}{8}$  inches (28 x 19.6 cm) Provenance: Rosalind Birnie Philip (her stamp on the verso; Lugt 406) Reference: Way 64; Chicago 104

*The Duet* is a casual, intimate scene showing Beatrice Whistler and her sister Ethel Whibley playing a four-hand piano piece in the Whistlers' comfortably appointed Paris home at 110 rue du Bac. It is based on a rather sketchy drawing and lithograph of the same subject made a few weeks earlier (Chicago 96). This print, a much more elaborate version of the scene, is one of Whistler's most successful lithographs.

Rosalind Birnie Philip was Whistler's sister-in-law and the executrix of his will. She used two stamps on the lithographs in her collection, both designed by Whistler himself: Lugt 406, showing the initials RBP in a square, indicated a lifetime impression; Lugt 405, showing the initials in a circle, denoted a posthumous impression.



[ cat.50 ]

[50] THE SISTERS, 1894–95

Lithograph with scraping, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* at lower right, printed on ivory laid Japan paper, one of 50 impressions printed by Thomas Way in the second (final) state; 58 in all 6 × 9 inches (15 × 23 cm) sheet 9¼ × 11¾ inches (23.4 × 29 cm) Provenance: Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock nos. in pencil on the verso twice *a37149* and *a91584*); Pace Prints, New York Literature: Robert H. Getscher, *The Stamp of Whistler*, exhibition catalogue, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College/ Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1977–78 (9) Reference: Way 71; Chicago 109

The print was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1895–96. It was never titled by Whistler himself but in all likelihood it shows Beatrice Whistler (Whistler's wife, known as "Trixie") and her sister, Ethel Birnie Philip, in the drawing room of the Whistlers' Paris home at 110 rue du Bac. The artist had received the first proof impressions from his London printers, Thomas and Thomas Robert Way, in October of 1894 but was not satisfied with the results. The authors of the catalogue raisonné of the artist's lithographs write that "Whistler did eventually make numerous small corrections to the image ... either when he and Trixie visited London between December 1894 and March 1895 ... or when he returned to England for good in September 1895." They further note that "when the artist's estate was inventoried in 1903, forty-six impressions of *The Sisters* were found, more than half of them signed ... Whistler seems to have withdrawn the image from circulation and sale, possibly because of its painful association with his wife's illness" (Spink/Stratis/Tedeschi, vol. 1, p.340).

Beatrice is seen reclining in her chair; she was soon to be diagnosed with the cancer of which she died in May of 1896 at the age of 38. The composition is dominated by the dark dresses of the two women. The details of the interior are only hinted at with the most delicate touch of the crayon. While the personal tragedy surrounding the scene is only obliquely referenced in this lithograph, it nonetheless evokes a slightly haunting stillness.

[51] GIRL WITH BOWL, 1895

Lithograph, signed in pencil with a *butterfly*, lower left, and annotated *no.10*, verso, printed in black ink on laid paper, watermark Arms of Bollo Reale Toscano with Fleur de Lys countermark, from the edition of 12 impressions printed by Thomas Way; there was also an edition of 600 printed by Lemerrier in Paris and published in *L'Ymagier* in October 1895 and a posthumous edition of 45 printed by Frederick Goulding in March 1904 5¼ × 2½ inches (13.6 × 6.7 cm) sheet 8¼ × 5¾ inches (21 × 14.5 cm) Reference: Way 82; Chicago 1998 pp.361–64 no.118

In December 1895 The Fine Art Society held the last exhibition of Whistler's work at the gallery during his lifetime, *A Collection of Lithographs by James McNeill Whistler*. The catalogue had a preface by Joseph Pennell and the show ran through December and January 1896. There were 75 works in the exhibition and this subject was no.36. A note in the catalogue reads 'In the case of sale the Society does not guarantee that the copy delivered will be the one Exhibited, but it will be one which Mr. Whistler has signed as being of equal quality. In no case will the issue of proofs exceed one hundred.'

Whistler defended *Girl with Bowl* in letters to the New York dealer Edward Kennedy, who had taken exception to the quality of the image when an impression reached him in February 1896. In March the artist responded to Kennedy's criticism: "And as to the 'Girl with the Bowl', I may content myself with telling you that it is one of the prettiest drawings of the lot – a great success in Paris where it first appeared. In London [at The Fine Art Society] the draped and nude figures were the most sought after in the whole exhibition."

In October 1895 *Girl with Bowl* was published in *L'Ymagier*, a quarterly edited by Rémy de Gourmont and Alfred Jarry. It was described in the table of contents as "petit nu tenant un bol". The edition of about 600 had been printed, the stone was sent to Thomas Way in London, who printed his twelve impressions, probably in anticipation of the coming exhibition.





## VENICE

The Fine Art Society's commission for a series of etchings in Venice was the pivotal event in Whistler's career. Coming in 1879, shortly after his bankruptcy, the hollow victory in his libel action against Ruskin and the loss of the White House, it provided him with an escape from London and the humiliations he had suffered.

Whistler had struggled to interest the public in his most recent work, and the critical reaction to his painted Nocturnes had set in train the events which halted his career at its mid point. Venice offered a source of new subjects which developed naturally from the recent etchings he had made of the Thames. The water, the atmosphere and the distinctive architecture of Venice must have had an immediate attraction for an artist who had committed to memory scenes on the Thames at night and returned to the studio to paint what he had seen.

His commission was to make a set of twelve etchings which he was to deliver in three months. The set which The Fine Art Society finally published in December 1880 included views of the Riva, the Piazzetta and other places which would be familiar to tourists. But the longer Whistler spent in Venice, the more he found subjects in little-known corners of the city and he felt that he had discovered aspects which no other artist had found. As Richard Dorment wrote, he was the first major artist to stray off the Grand Canal. In the stagnant backwater canals, the secret cortiles and the impoverished palazzos, Whistler found inspiration. The night offered tranquil views of the lagoon and canals for which his Thames Nocturnes were the perfect preparation.

Whistler was seized by the work he was doing and prolonged his stay to fourteen months. When he finally returned to London he had made 50 etchings, 100 pastels and seven or eight paintings. The exhibition *Venice: Whistler: Twelve Etchings* opened at The Fine Art Society at 148 New Bond Street, in December 1880 to a mixed critical reception and sales from the editions of 100 were

slow. The artist introduced a new factor into the process, because he insisted on printing or supervising the printing of every impression himself. The Fine Art Society's core business was to buy the reproduction rights to a popular contemporary painting from the artist, engage an engraver to make a print from it and to have a professional printer produce the edition. The company was then only four years old and its officers were not used to dealing with artists on a project of this sort.

Ernest Brown, who had introduced Whistler to The Fine Art Society, was not a director of the company, and the managing director, Marcus Huish, clearly found Whistler difficult to handle. The artist had developed a novel approach to printing an edition which was to have a long-lasting effect on the print market. The first innovation concerned presentation: Whistler trimmed the sheet to the platemark, leaving a small 'tab' of paper at the lower edge on which he signed with his butterfly monogram in pencil and the abbreviation 'imp.', to indicate that he had printed it himself. The etched work on the copper plate was minimal and the effect was to make it appear that the work 'floated' in its mount and frame.

At the time of his death in 1903, Whistler had still not completed the printing of the 1,200 impressions of the First Venice Set, as it was known. His insistence on doing it himself (although he engaged Walter Sickert and Mortimer Menpes as assistants) and his constant reworking of the plates in drypoint in the course of printing, extended the process, as new projects took his attention. The most significant change with past practice, however, was the way Whistler printed each impression. Instead of a uniform edition, he produced one in which each proof was different and, in the case of an etching such as *Nocturne* [cat.63 and 64], radically so. In effect the First Venice Set was the first edition in which every print was signed in pencil by the artist. Previously signed prints were more expensive than those unsigned.

Not only did Whistler change the print market, he also changed exhibition practice. Following the exhibition of the First Venice Set, The Fine Art Society mounted a show of 53 *Venice Pastels* in January 1881 and these sold well. Then on 17th February 1883 a third show of Venice work opened at The Fine Art Society and included the etchings which remained unpublished, those which were to be published in the Second Venice Set (*A Set of Twenty-Six Etchings by James A. McN. Whistler*) in 1886 and a handful of London subjects. The artist called the exhibition of 51 prints *Arrangement in White and Yellow*. He transformed the gallery by covering the walls in white felt and using white frames for the etchings. The skirting board and picture rail were painted bright yellow, there was yellow matting on the floor, yellow tiles in the fireplace, yellow curtains, couches and chairs. A yellow fabric ceiling diffused and coloured the light and the guard was dressed in white and yellow. The décor caused a sensation, but the hanging of the prints was equally revolutionary, widely spaced in a single row at eye-level. When the Venice prints were shown in New York at Messrs. H. Wunderlich & Sons later that year, a similar scheme was installed in the galleries.

The Venice prints marked Whistler's re-entry into the centre of the London art world after the reverses he had suffered in the late 1870s. Their importance extends beyond the history of printmaking, to the broader context of nineteenth century art and exhibition design. Invaluable research by Alastair Grieve, published in *Whistler's Venice* (New Haven and London 2000), has identified the sites of each etching and pastel.

#### [52] THE BEGGARS, 1879–1880

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with an early *butterfly*, lower left, and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on sturdy laid paper, watermark Strasbourg Lily with a W, in the seventh state (of seventeen). Published by The Fine Art Society in *Venice, a Series of Twelve Etchings* (the First Venice Set), 1880 (no.3): 84 of the 100 impressions in the edition were delivered to The Fine Art Society during the artist's lifetime.

12 1/8 x 8 1/4 inches (30.7 x 21.2 cm) sheet 13 x 9 1/4 inches (33 x 23.5 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 194; Glasgow 190

Margaret MacDonald notes that: "*The Beggars* is the closest Whistler came to the genre tradition of his contemporaries, evoking exotic Italian characters and costume, in a detailed and carefully observed setting, to create a controlled illusion of authenticity" (*Palaces in the Night*, p.20). The winter of 1879–80, during Whistler's first stay in Venice, was particularly harsh. In *The Beggars* he conveys a sense of the cold, damp waterways in his depiction of the emaciated old woman and young girl huddling in a dark passageway that leads from the tiny, enclosed Corte de le Carozze through a dark *sottoportico* to the brightly lit Campo Santa Margarita in the distance (Grieve 1996, pp.24 f.).

Whistler worked extensively on this plate, refashioning shadows, figures, and architectural elements. The young woman holding a baby next to a small child in the first state was replaced in the third state by an old man and in the fourth by the old woman and child seen here as well as the man in the broad-brimmed hat shown in silhouette behind them. In this seventh state he added patches of shading to the wings of the butterfly signature at the upper left.

Whistler printed proofs of *The Beggars* in Venice and in London. According to the Glasgow catalogue, he delivered five impressions of the first seven states to The Fine Art Society on February 16, 1881; thirteen on April 6, four on August 25; and six on December 31. Ours is clearly one of these early impressions. The Fine Art Society begged Whistler to print the additional promised impressions during the years up to about 1894 when the bulk of the edition was finally printed in the last state.



[53] THE DOORWAY, 1879–80

Etching, drypoint and roulette, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on laid paper, watermark foolscap, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab, also signed twice with the butterfly, verso, and annotated *Selected for E.G. Kennedy and W.P.*; an impression in Glasgow's nineteenth state (of twenty). Published by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.5): 84 of the 100 impressions in the edition were delivered to The Fine Art Society during the artist's lifetime.

11½ × 7⅞ inches (29.4 × 20.1 cm)

Provenance: Kennedy Galleries; R.E. Lewis (bought Sotheby's 1974)

Reference: Kennedy 188; Glasgow 193

*The Doorway* was most likely started in the spring or early summer of 1880, when Whistler explored the area around San Marco for subjects. It shows a young woman on the steps in front of an older woman, with a carpenter's shop in the interior beyond the elaborate Renaissance façade. The building is the Palazzo Gussoni, near Ponte San Antonio on the Rio de la Fava.

This is one of the most complex of the Venice prints and went through twenty states; the edition was not completed until after the artist's death. Drypoint and then roulette work were added to the etching, and Whistler used inking and wiping to achieve the effect of water in the canal. The work was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in December 1880 in *Etchings of Venice* (no.5).

Although the etching was published in the First Venice Set in 1881, Ernest Brown wrote to Whistler from The Fine Art Society in 1894 asking for more proofs. Frederick Goulding printed the last sixteen impressions in 1903 on the instructions of Rosalind Birnie Philip, Whistler's executrix.



[54] THE GARDEN, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp* on the tab; also annotated by the artist in pencil on the verso *ox* and *no.23*, printed in brown ink on cream laid paper, watermark arms of Amsterdam; trimmed with the platemark visible all round, leaving a signature tab; probably eighth state (of fifteen), before the figure of the woman at the right in the doorway turns toward her right; published in an edition of 42 by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in *A Set of Twenty-six Etchings*, 1886 (no.20)

12 × 9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (30.4 × 24 cm)

Provenance: Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock no. in pencil on verso *a6410*)

Reference: Kennedy 210; Glasgow 194

*The Garden* was among the subjects from the Second Venice Set published in twelve extra impressions in addition to the edition of 30. On July 16, 1887, the copper plates for this image and *The Balcony* (Kennedy 207) were the last two from the set to be cancelled and turned over to the Dowdeswells, Whistler's publishers (the plates are now in the Art Institute of Chicago).

"How do you like the proof?" wrote Whistler to Walter Dowdeswell of his early work on this print in September 1886. "Isn't 'The Garden' lovely?" Here Whistler successfully captures a series of contrasting textures and tones. While the wall appears to be all but crumbling, its stone-framed entrance nonetheless provides a secure support for the boy sitting against it with one leg dangling in the water below. Each state was intended to clarify the significance of the woman holding the child (often a superfluous motif in Whistler's etchings) in the doorway of the house behind the wall. The darkness surrounding these figures is echoed and reinforced by the film of dark tone in the water, especially evident in fine, subtle impressions like this one.

Ruth Fine describes the print as "one of Whistler's most beautifully etched 'landscapes' ... nowhere else in etching does he so successfully articulate trees and shrubs in their individual diversity and in their capacity, pictorially, to function as a foil for architectural form" (p.109).





[55] THE LITTLE MAST, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint on *chine*, signed in pencil with an early shaded *butterfly* and annotated *imp.*; annotated on the verso in pencil with Whistler's two tiny circles (indicating that he considered it a superior impression); an impression in the third state (of eight): published by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.7)

10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (26.9 × 18.9 cm)

sheet 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 8<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (13.4 × 22.5 cm)

Provenance: Charles C. Cunningham (his stamp on the verso; Lugt 4684); James Lawrence Claghorn (his stamp lower right; Lugt 555c); Kennedy Galleries (with their stock number on the verso a94365)

Reference: Kennedy 185; Glasgow 196

In both this etching and *The Venetian Mast* [cat.61], Whistler deployed a compositional device that may have been inspired by Japanese prints, installing a vertical object that asymmetrically bisects the image. It was one that he had first used in *Rotherhithe* [cat.23] in 1860 and in *Shipbuilders Yard* (1875; K. 146; see Lochnan, p.193). *The Little Mast* shows the view west down the Via Garibaldi to the Ponte de la Veneta Marina and the quayside in the Castello area of Venice. This site was close to Whistler's

lodgings at the Casa Jankowitz and was also depicted by fellow artist-resident Otto Henry Bacher and by Frank Duveneck, another American artist friend.

This elegant if somewhat eccentric composition, developed by the artist in etching and drypoint over eight states, was published in the First Venice Set in 1880. However, it was printed by Whistler up until 1889.

[56] THE FISHING BOAT, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab: an impression in the sixth (final) state, published in an edition of 30 by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in the Second Venice Set, 1886 (no.18)

6 × 9 inches (15.5 × 23.1 cm)

Provenance: Albert Roullier [Lugt 170], stamp verso

Reference: Kennedy 208; Glasgow 198

A view of the lagoon, with the cemetery island of San Michele in the distance. The work was exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* (no.38) before publication in the Second Venice Set in 1886.



[57] THE RIALTO, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with an elaborate shaded butterfly, and inscribed *imp.* printed in black ink on laid paper, trimmed to the platemark, leaving a signature tab, in the first state (of three); published in an edition of 42 by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in the Second Venice Set, 1886 (no.21)  
11¾ × 8 inches (29.9 × 20.2 cm)  
Provenance: Albert W. Scholle [Lugt 2923A];  
Harris G. Whittemore [L.1384A], stamps verso  
Reference: Kennedy 211; Glasgow 199

Only two other impressions of *The Rialto* in the first state are recorded (The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Freer Gallery of Art). The artist's vantage point has been identified as a first-floor window above the Sottoportico Pirieta in the Campo San Bartolomeo, San Marco.

The pencil signature of a large butterfly with veined wings would also indicate that this is an early printing of the etching, first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* (no.41) before publication in the Second Venice Set, in 1886.





[58] THE BRIDGE, SANTA MARTA, 1879-80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* printed in warm black ink on antique laid paper, trimmed to the platemark, leaving a signature tab; published by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in the Second Venice Set, 1886, in an edition of 42; in the ninth (final) state  
 11 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 7 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (29.5 × 20 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 204; Glasgow 201

Joseph Pennell described *The Bridge* as 'Probably the finest plate, in its simplicity and directness' in his *Life of James McNeill Whistler*. It was originally intended for inclusion in the First Venice Set, but was replaced by *The Little Mast*, a more conventional view.

The print shows the Ponte de l'Arzere or delle Terese, seen from the first-floor window of a house on the Fondamenta Corte Mazar looking along the Rio de l'Arzere to the Campo di Marte in Santa Marta. From this high viewpoint Whistler created a striking design, carefully composed with the bridge spanning the centre of the picture area. Although there is a crowd beyond the bridge, the foreground is empty but for the gondolas and a few figures; the neighbouring buildings and the *fondamente* are cut off by the edges of the plate.

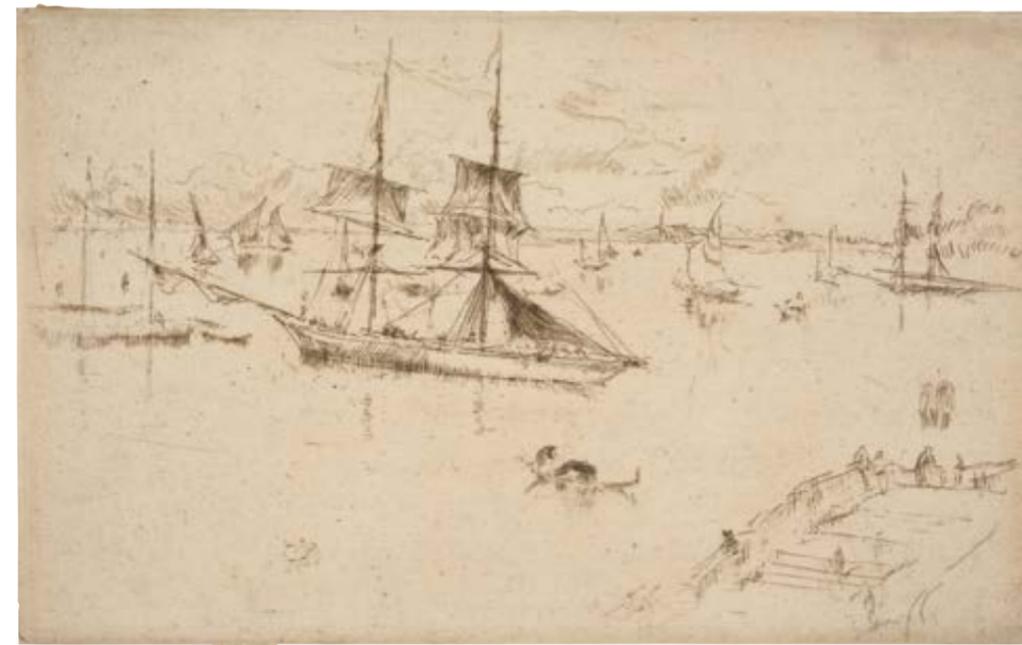
The work was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1880 with the First Venice Set (no.7) before publication in the Second Venice Set in 1886.

[59] LAGOON: NOON, 1879-80

Etching and drypoint, signed with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper; trimmed to the platemark by the artist, leaving a signature tab; in the third (final) state; published by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in the Second Venice Set, 1886, in an edition of 30  
 4 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 7 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (12.7 × 20.4 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 216; Glasgow 209

A fine impression with very little tone; the butterfly, however, usually very faint, is clearly defined in this impression (Kennedy makes special note that an impression like this, with the clearly visible butterfly, was in the collection of John H. Wrenn).

This print, as no.51, was the final work in the 1883 exhibition at The Fine Art Society. The view is taken from the upper floor of a house near the Casa Jankowitz looking south-east toward the Public Gardens and across the water to the Lido. The bridge in the foreground is the Ponte de la Veneta Marina over the Rio de la Tana (Glasgow catalogue). It was published as part of the Second Venice Set in 1886.



[60] THE LITTLE LAGOON,  
1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab: an impression in the fourth (final) state, published in an edition of 100 by The Fine Art Society, in 1880 in the First Venice Set 9 × 6 inches (22.7 × 15 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 186; Glasgow 216

*The Little Lagoon* was the smallest work in the First Venice Set, and the artist's minimal use of line illustrates the difficulty many contemporary critics had with Whistler's work. The *Daily News* reviewed the exhibition at The Fine Art Society and commented 'In the "Little Venice" and "The Little Lagoon" Mr Whistler has attempted to convey impressions by lines far too few for his purpose.' However these two works seem to describe the vastness of the open water using plate tone, wiping and the forms which caught his eye.

The work was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in December 1880 (no.8) and published in the First Venice Set. Whistler delivered a total of 66 impressions of the etching to The Fine Art Society, the last four in April 1889, followed by another from the cancelled plate (now in the Cincinnati Art Museum, a gift from Frank Duveneck).



[61] THE VENETIAN MAST,  
1879–80

Etching, signed with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in black ink on ivory laid paper, watermark Fellows 1804 (Stratis 119), trimmed to the platemark by the artist, leaving a signature tab; with Whistler's two tiny circles on the verso (indicating that he considered this a superior impression); in the eleventh state (of twelve), published in an edition of 100 by The Fine Art Society, in 1880 in the First Venice Set (no.10) 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (34.4 × 16.6 cm)  
Provenance: P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London (their stock no.in pencil verso: C.28658)  
Reference: Kennedy 195; Glasgow 219

The print shows a view looking west up the Calle Larga dello Stendardo, featuring a mast surmounted by the Lion of St. Mark, in the San Marta area of Venice. The extreme verticality of the plate's format here seems to have been extended to accommodate the mast but also serves to counterbalance the foreshortening of the row of houses, preventing the viewer's eye from being drawn into the distance. Instead, all the focus is on the group of figures in the foreground, one more closely described than those in most of the artist's Venetian views. Published as part of the First Venice Set in 1881.





[62] THE TWO DOORWAYS, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed on laid paper, trimmed to the platemark by the artist, leaving a signature tab; also signed and inscribed verso, with another inscription *Whistler's special mark denotes quality of impression* in Harold Wright's hand; an impression in the thirteenth (final) state, published in the First Venice Set (no.2) 8 × 11½ inches (20.2 × 29.2 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 193; Glasgow 221

A view of the intersection of the canals where the *sestieri* of San Marco, Cannaregio and Castello meet, between Miracoli and the Rialto. It is close to the site of *The Doorway*, Palazzo Gussoni. The view was taken from a boat; Whistler drew the stonework, set off by the dark recess beyond the doorway, in great detail. He made

radical changes to the plate while he was still in Venice and continued the process back in London, working on the plate through thirteen states.

*The Two Doorways* was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in December 1880 (no.2) and published in the First Venice Set. Whistler delivered a total of 67 impressions to The Fine Art Society between February 1881 and April 1889, and six or seven further prints later in 1889.

An impression was also included in the *Venice Pastels* exhibition at The Fine Art Society in 1881, in a major show of etchings in 1883 and in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* in 1883 (no.28). An impression was selected from his own collection for a special panel of Whistler's etchings organised by Howard Mansfield for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

[63] NOCTURNE, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab: an impression in the eighth state (of nine) published by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.4) in an edition of 100 7¾ × 11¾ inches (20 × 28.9 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 184; Glasgow 222

Whistler's patron, Frederick Leyland, had first suggested the word "Nocturne" to describe Whistler's paintings of the Thames at night, and the word was equally appropriate to the most poetic of his Venice etchings. With *Nocturne: Palaces*, this view of the Bacino at the end of the day, looking toward the entrance to the Giudecca Canal from the Riva del Schiavoni, is among the most dramatic and exquisite of the Venice prints. As Ruth Fine notes, "Of all the Venice etchings, *Nocturne* is printed with the greatest kind of variation between impressions. Indeed, depending upon the quality of the tonal wiping, the time of day appears to range from dusk to midnight to dawn" (p.133). The etching work on the plate seems to have been finished in one stage; later developments in the image were to a large extent devised solely through the use of plate tone and drypoint.

*Nocturne* was also exhibited in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* in 1883 (no.8). Between February 1881 and May 1889 Whistler delivered 97 impressions to The Fine Art Society, and the cancelled plate in April 1889.

[64] NOCTURNE, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*; also signed in pencil on the verso with the butterfly and inscribed *selected proof* and *Ex-*; another early pencil annotation on the verso: *Marked by Whistler "selected proof" and signed by him. His "Ex." means extra fine.*; printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab; in the ninth (final) state, published by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.4) in an edition of 100 7¼ × 11¼ inches (19.9 × 29 cm)  
Provenance: Frederick Keppel & Co., New York (his code in pencil on the verso);  
Kennedy Galleries, New York (their stock no.in pencil on the verso a44254)  
Reference: Kennedy 184; Glasgow 222

A first-state impression at the University of Glasgow inscribed *Venice 1879* establishes that the print must have been made within the first months after Whistler's arrival in the city in September 1879 (cat. Oberlin, p.95).

It is worth noting that English critics of the time were not ready for such a radical interpretation of what a print (and one that was ultimately topographically conceived) could be. A review of the show at The Fine Art Society, published in the *British Architect* on 10 December 1880, reads: "'Nocturne' is different in treatment to the rest of the prints, and can hardly be called, as it stands, an etching; the bones as it were of the picture have been etched, which bones consist of some shipping and distant objects, and then over the whole plate ink has apparently been smeared. We have seen a great many representations of Venetian skies, but never saw one before consisting of brown smoke with clots of ink in diagonal lines" (quoted in Getscher, p.97).

The critic's objections might easily have been directed to an impression like this one. It is an exceptionally richly inked example of the final state in which the drypoint work has lost most of its burr. The artist did not consciously remove it, however, but instead allowed it to fade away. The result is a very high level of abstraction, further enhanced in our impression by the strong plate tone. The composition as a whole does indeed "appear to have dissolved in nocturnal mist" (Glasgow catalogue).

The artistic intentionality of this effect is also made clear by Whistler's own careful annotations, marking this impression as an outstanding example.



[ cat.63]



[ cat.64]

[65] THE TRAGHETTO, NO. 2, 1880

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, with Whistler's three tiny circles in pencil on the verso (indicating that he considered this a particularly fine impression), printed in black ink on laid paper; trimmed to the platemark by the artist leaving a signature tab; in the seventh state (of nine); published by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.11) in an edition of 100  
9½ × 12¼ inches (24.3 × 30.7 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 191; Glasgow 233

*The Traghetto No. 2* shows a scene in the courtyard of the Ca' da Mosto, north of the Rialto Bridge, with men in broad-brimmed hats seated around a table to the right of the darkened archway and a standing young woman holding a child to the left of it (a recurrent motif in the artist's work). Three slender trees with spreading foliage dominate the foreground of the image. This was, in fact, Whistler's second etching of the subject. *The Traghetto, No. 1* was never published and is known only in a few proof impressions. According to the account of

Otto Henry Bacher, a German printmaker with whom Whistler formed a friendship during the summer of 1880 (and whose portable press and technical expertise he relied on), Whistler had overworked the first version of the image (Otto Bacher, *With Whistler in Venice*, New York, 1908). He thus transferred the image to a new plate and began to selectively replicate its details. But while he worked hard on this new version, he was not satisfied with it and ultimately reworked the plate almost entirely between the second and third states. However, Margaret MacDonald notes that the plate proved unsuitable for a larger edition. "After ten or twenty impressions the quality of the delicate lines deteriorated, particularly around the lamp in the shaded arch. When he got back to London Whistler had trouble printing the plate" (p.92).

Again according to Bacher, the earlier version was probably made immediately after Whistler's arrival in Venice in September 1879, making it one of the first in the set. *The Traghetto No. 2* was published as part of the First Venice Set in 1881.



[66] FRUIT STALL, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab: an impression in the fourteenth state (of twenty-one), published in an edition of 30 in the Second Venice Set, 1886 (no.6)  
8⅞ × 5⅞ inches (22.5 × 15 cm)  
Reference: Kennedy 200; Glasgow 225



The weather in Venice in the winter of 1879–80 was very cold, so it appears likely that this print was etched in the summer or autumn of 1880, when doors were open and it was warm enough to sit outside. The site has not been identified but it was probably drawn near the Via Garibaldi, near where Whistler lived toward the end of his stay. This is Whistler's first depiction of a fruit shop; he went on to make three prints of London fruit shops in about 1887, the year he completed the printing of the Venetian fruit stall.

The work was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* (no.9) before publication in the Second Venice Set in 1886. The edition was completed by February 1887 when Whistler sent Dowdeswell 28 impressions and one of the cancelled plate.



[67] RIVA, NO. 2, 1879–80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in dark-brown ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab: in the first state (of two) from the edition of 42 published in the Second Venice Set, 1886 (no. 15)

8 × 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (20.7 × 30 cm)

Provenance: Charles H. Parker

Reference: Kennedy 206; Glasgow 230

A view looking down on the Campo San Biagio, probably done from a first floor window at the Casa Jankowitz, where Whistler moved in the summer of 1880. In the distance is the Riva degli Schiavoni, leading to the Piazzetta and San Marco.

The work was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 in *Arrangement in White and Yellow* (no. 24) before publication in the Second Venice Set in 1886.



[68] SAN BIAGIO, 1880

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in dark brown ink on tan laid paper, trimmed at the platemark, leaving a signature tab; in the sixteenth state (of seventeen), from the edition of 42 published in the Second Venice Set, 1886 (no. 3)

8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 11 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches (20.8 × 30.3 cm)

Provenance: Henry Harper Benedict (his stamp on the verso; Lugt 1298)

Reference: Kennedy 237; Glasgow 197

When San Biagio was exhibited with the rest of the Second Venice Set at the Hogarth Club in 1887, an anonymous newspaper critic was prompted to observe that it “would be generally accounted to have the greatest variety of subject. It represents a quarter of Venice in which elegance battles bravely with squalor” (“Mr Whistler’s Etchings,” *The Standard*, March 3, 1887; quoted in Glasgow catalogue). He was presumably referring to the

fact that the seventeenth-century warehouse depicted here, in front of the Calle and Corte de le Colone in the Campo San Biagio in the Cannaregio district, now housed impoverished workers; indeed, the inhabitants’ laundry can be seen hanging from the windows and even right down over the archway. The artist was living in the Casa Jankowitz on the Riva San Biagio with several American art students in the summer or fall of 1880 and his room looked onto the Campo San Biagio.

The composition was largely complete in the first state, which Whistler began in etching; in subsequent states he employed additional shading and lines in both etching and drypoint to further define the details and figures. San Biagio was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 and the eighth state of the print was published as part of the Second Venice Set in 1886.

[69] THE LITTLE VENICE, 1880

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark by the artist, leaving a signature tab: in the second (final) state, published in an edition of 100 by The Fine Art Society in the First Venice Set, 1880 (no.1)

7¼ × 10¼ inches (18.5 × 26.3 cm)

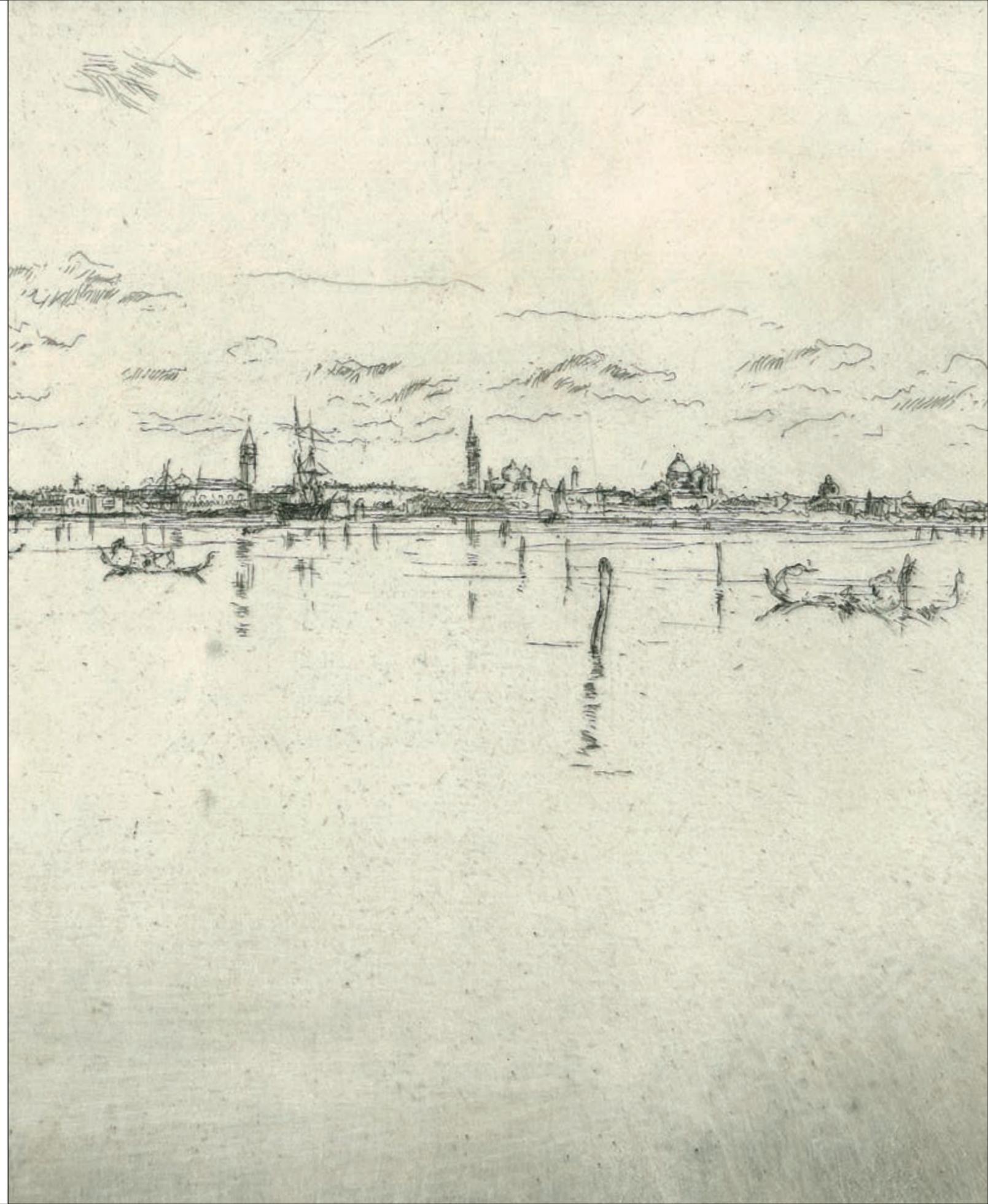
Reference: Kennedy 183; Glasgow 238

Venice is seen here from the Lido, showing the Public Gardens, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, San Giorgio dei Greci, San Zaccaria, San Marco, the tower of San Giorgio, and in the distance the Redentore, the Zitelle, the domes of Santa Maria della Salute and the

Giudecca. Alastair Grieve, who has made a close study of the sites where Whistler drew his etchings and pastels in Venice, wrote: 'The accuracy of his draughtsmanship shows him ... to have been a topographical artist of genius.'

According to the printer Thomas Way, this copper plate was drawn in Italy but brought back to London to be etched and printed. Thus it was probably one of the last plates etched in Venice before Whistler's return in November 1880.

*The Little Venice* was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in December 1880 (no.1) and published in the First Venice Set. It was also exhibited at The Fine Art Society in *Arrangement in White and Yellow*, 1883 (no.20).





## AMSTERDAM

In the years between his return from Venice in 1880 and his arrival in Amsterdam in 1889, Whistler made about 180 etchings. He found many of the subjects in London or elsewhere in England, in Brussels and in France. However the work he did during this period did not approach the ambition or inventiveness of the Venice prints which were published in two sets in 1880 and 1886.

Whistler had first visited Amsterdam at the end of his Rhine journey in 1858, and had returned on a number of occasions. In August 1889 the opportunity came to make a series of etchings in Amsterdam, an idea he had thought about for some years. He received an invitation to participate in the Third Exhibition of the Netherlands Etching Club in The Hague. He bought some copper plates from his supplier in London, Hughes & Kimber, and attended the opening of the exhibition with his wife Beatrice, the widow of E.W. Godwin, architect of the White House; they had married a year before, in August 1888.

At the same time as his etchings were exhibited in The Hague, three of Whistler's paintings and ten further etchings were on display in the Exhibition of Living Masters in Amsterdam, and he was awarded the gold medal of the city of Amsterdam for his entry. He and his wife spent about two months in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam they stayed at Brack's Doelen Hotel and during this period he made a series of twelve etchings of the city.

Whistler considered his Amsterdam etchings to be "the best work he had ever given to the public." He said that he divided his work into three periods: the Thames, Impressionism and, in the third, he endeavoured to combine stages one and two. He wrote to Marcus Huish of The Fine Art Society on 3rd September suggesting the publication of an Amsterdam Set:

I find myself doing far finer work than any that I have hitherto produced – & the subjects appeal to me most sympathetically – which is all important ... The beauty

and importance of these plates you can only estimate from your knowledge of my care for my reputation – and from your experience of myself in the Venice transaction. Meanwhile I may say that what I have already begun is of finer quality than all that has gone before – combining a minuteness of detail, always referred to with sadness by the critics who hark back to the Thames etchings ... with greater freedom and more beauty of execution than even the Venice set.

As he had done on the Thames in London and in Venice, Whistler found old buildings on the back canals which he could transform into creations of his own, making of old stones and bricks, peeling paint and splintered wood, exquisite patterns which rise from the still waters. The buildings are seen frontally and the picture area is covered with drawing in blocks of dense work set against lighter passages. The surface reads as a two-dimensional pattern from which the features of the buildings emerge.

Although an exhibition of the Amsterdam etchings at The Fine Art Society was planned for 1890, it was postponed, and then Whistler cancelled it. Instead they were exhibited at Robert Dunthorne's gallery in London. However the set was never published in an edition and the prints are, as a result, rare. George Bernard Shaw saw the exhibition, and Joseph Pennell recorded that he remarked: "The most exquisite renderings by the most independent man of the century" and added that "Had Mr Whistler never put brush to canvas, he has done enough in these plates to be able to say that he will not altogether die."

As Whistler said, the Amsterdam etchings combine the qualities and themes of his earlier published sets and they were his finest achievement as a printmaker. The sustained invention of the series of prints he made in Paris, London, Venice and Amsterdam reveal his creative abilities at their most inspired.

[70] BALCONY, AMSTERDAM, 1889

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark leaving a signature tab: a proof in the fourth (final) state; there was no published edition  
10¾ × 6¾ inches (27.5 × 17.3 cm)  
Provenance: Thomas Neilson Brown, bought from P. & D. Colnaghi & Co  
Reference: Kennedy 405; Glasgow 446

The drawing of the shadows beneath the central balcony, the laundry hanging from a washing line at the top of the picture and the window convey the projection of these features from the flat surface of the building. The glass panes in the windows are merely suggested and the dark reflection in the canal provides balance and contrast to the architecture above. Whistler has used the repetition of parallel lines, both verticals and horizontals, to organise the space. Comparison with his approach to a similar subject a decade earlier, *The Balcony*, published in the Second Venice Set, shows an artist who is confident that he can dispense with architectural detail and context and move in closer on his subject.

The etching was done on the Oudezijds Achterburgwal, then known as the Rottenest. It shows the back of Zeedijk no.48. There was a print-run of more than 30, most of these in the fourth state; the Glasgow catalogue records 27 impressions.

*The Balcony, Amsterdam* was first exhibited at Dunthorne's Gallery in London in 1890, but like the Amsterdam Set itself, was never published.



[71] THE BRIDGE, AMSTERDAM, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.* and signed again, on the verso, with the butterfly and annotated in the artist's hand *first proof pulled*, printed in warm black ink on buff "antique" (pre-1800) laid paper; trimmed with the platemark still just visible all round, leaving a signature tab: a proof in the first state (of five); there was no published edition

6½ × 9½ inches (16.5 × 24.1 cm)

Provenance: P. and D. Colnaghi, London; H. Wunderlich & Co., New York (stock no.a 33940); George Washington Vanderbilt (his sale, Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., New York, May 14–16, 1974)

Reference: Kennedy 409; Glasgow 447

Whistler made two views of bridges while he was in Amsterdam: this one, showing the Boltensgrachtje, and *Little Drawbridge, Amsterdam* (G. 448). In these prints he revisited a subject with which he had experimented in 1879 in etchings of such wooden bridges (subsequently demolished) as *Old Putney Bridge* [cat. 33] and *Old Battersea Bridge* (G. 188) in London, both images inspired by Japanese woodcuts. Lochnan notes that the Amsterdam bridges similarly "recall the truncated

views of slightly arched bridges found in Hiroshige and Hokusai, and have a poetic and ethereal aspect as they traverse the shimmering surface of the canal" (p.251). In this print, Whistler created the carefully modulated areas of light and dark that establish the overall richness of the surface by etching numerous minute lines into the copper. Not only did this mean that in some cases the plates seem to have been underbitten, but the lines also wore down very quickly and only a few impressions were printed before the plates began to deteriorate in places.

This is a fine atmospheric impression of this exceedingly rare work (only nine lifetime impressions have been located, with all but this impression in institutional collections), with a light veil of plate tone, slightly stronger in the watery foreground and lighter beyond the bridge and in the sky.

This impression has very little etched work in the water in the central part of the print, consistent with Whistler's note on the verso that this is the first impression pulled, and with Glasgow and Kennedy's

description of the first state of this print. Instead of the line work, Whistler has left waves of carefully wiped plate tone to represent the movement and shading of the water.

In this early state, the bridge railing in the center and shadow work in the buildings at the left have not yet been completed. In the later states Whistler gradually added complex lines of additional shading and cross-hatching to the water and across the sky and further defined the figures and other details. In this state the lines are drawn with an exquisite delicacy that appears to describe a sophisticated surface abstraction as much as a specific city scene.

[72] BRIDGE, AMSTERDAM, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*; also signed in pencil on the verso with a *butterfly* and numbered 11, printed in brown ink on thin laid paper; trimmed on the platemark, leaving a signature tab; there was no published edition  
6½ × 9½ inches (16.5 × 24.1 cm)

Provenance: Vivian and Meyer P. Potamkin, Philadelphia; sale, Sotheby's, New York, May 11, 1989, lot 302 (the catalogue entry mentions a note on the mat which identifies this impression as formerly owned by Walter Steuben Carter and illustrated in the Kennedy catalogue; comparison with Kennedy's plate for his third state and this impression, however, shows that the illustrated print is not identical with the present sheet)

Reference: Kennedy 409; Glasgow 447

This impression is included in the Glasgow inventory, K.4090301; only about eleven lifetime impressions in all states are known (three were also printed posthumously by Nathaniel Sparks). Ours is a very fine, shimmering impression of this great rarity.

Although the structure of the composition was established in the first state, Whistler's reworking of the plate through all five states, with the addition of the vigorous lines in the sky and water and more densely shaded figures and buildings, ultimately produced a darker, stormier version of a scene that initially seemed quite peaceful.





[73] THE PIERROT, 1889

Etching and drypoint, signed with a *butterfly* and annotated *imp.*; also signed on the verso in pencil at lower right with a *butterfly* and annotated at lower left 1. Feb. 23 (presumably the date of printing) and *For Wunderlich* (H. Wunderlich & Co. exhibited this print and others from the Amsterdam Set in New York in 1898), printed in brown ink on laid paper, watermark Pro Patria; there was no published edition

9 1/16 × 6 3/8 inches (23.1 × 16.2 cm)

Provenance: J. Caldwell; Arthur H. Harlow and Co., New York; Lucien Goldschmidt, New York; R. Garton and Co., London, February 15, 1990

Reference: Kennedy 407; Glasgow 450

This extraordinary image, its various details and textures vividly represented by the artist in etching and drypoint, shows a young man standing in the doorway of a crumbling building and a woman rinsing a cloth in the water of the canal to his right. They are probably dyers at work. As in *La Vieille aux locques* [cat.7] and *La Marchande de Moutarde* [cat.5], among many subsequent examples (not least in the Venice sets), here the artist depicts a working figure in a doorway set against a dark interior. The sophisticated chiaroscuro effects are, characteristically, extended to his nuanced description of the watery reflections below.

The tragi-comic Pierrot pining for his lost love, a stock figure of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, was the subject of renewed interest in nineteenth-century theater and cabaret as well as among artists and poets. Whistler himself had made a caricature showing the celebrated Bohemian-French mime, Jean-Gaspard Dubureau (1796–1846), as Pierrot in a lithograph titled *Dubureau entraînant Mme Ristori à son théâtre des Bouffes* published in 1857 in *Les Gallois*; he had also made sketches of clowns during his student days in Paris (see Glasgow catalogue).

This one must be added to the 33 impressions of this print in all states recorded by the Glasgow catalogue.

[74] THE EMBROIDERED CURTAIN, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in brown ink on laid paper, watermark Pro Patria; trimmed by the artist on the platemark all round leaving a signature tab; in the first state (of seven); there was no published edition

9 3/8 × 6 1/4 inches (24 × 15.9 cm)

Provenance: Robert Rice, his mark (not in Lugt) on verso of backing sheet; David Tunick, Inc., New York (his code in pencil on verso of backing sheet DT ...); Gordon Cooke Ltd., London; private collection (acquired in 1989)

Reference: Kennedy 410; Glasgow 451

The print depicts a group of late-seventeenth century buildings at 52–54 Palmgracht, a picturesque canal in the Jordaan district of Amsterdam (the canal was filled in in 1895). Whistler and his wife Beatrice stayed in a hotel near there during their two months in the city between August 24th and October 20th, 1889. This is one of two scenes the artist etched here; the other is *The Steps, Amsterdam* (G.452). He also made an oil study of the view seen in *The Embroidered Curtain* (*The Grey House*, 1889; Freer Gallery of Art) but it was never completed. In this print, several figures stand in the doorways while children play on the steps and on the street; in the doorway under the curtain, a woman is seen bending over a bucket as she squeezes out a cloth. A shop sign on the left offers “Water and Fire” (a bucket of water or glowing coals).

The strictly frontal view and the absence of any perspectival foreshortening, as well as the cropping of the image, together create a highly abstract effect. The overall ornamentation of the embroidered curtain in the window to the right of the center, to which Whistler's title refers, can be transposed onto the composition as a whole. What we see is a carefully structured interplay of light and dark areas filled with an intricate web of lines. The squares of the window panes are the predominant geometric forms in this scheme, encased in the upright rectangles of the windows that themselves become encased in the similarly proportioned vertical rectangle of the plate.

Fine states that “*The Embroidered Curtain* ... is probably the best known of the Amsterdam etchings. Fully composed and showing no evidence of the artist's tendency toward a vignette image, it is also the most intricately worked of the group and, in its use of surface



[ cat.74 ]



[ cat.75 ]

manipulation, possibly the most fully developed of all of Whistler's etchings." She further observes that the print "is best seen in the earlier states ... the later ones displaying a coarsening of line from repeated exposure to the acid" (p.181).

This impression is one of the earliest pulled from the plate. The artist's deft handling of the drypoint needle a decade earlier has now given way to a most delicate touch that can only fully be appreciated in fine impressions like this one. Since none of the Amsterdam plates were ever published, they are rare and highly sought-after; the Glasgow catalogue lists a total of only 27 impressions. *The Embroidered Curtain* was first exhibited at Dunthorne's Gallery, London in 1890, but like the Amsterdam Set itself, was never published and is thus rare and highly sought after. The print-run is uncertain: in one studio stock-taking 22 impressions were recorded. The Glasgow catalogue records 27.

#### [75] THE EMBROIDERED CURTAIN, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper; trimmed by the artist at the platemark leaving a signature tab; there was no published edition 9 3/8 x 6 1/4 inches (24 x 15.9 cm)

Provenance: Thomas Neilson Brown, bought from

P. & D. Colnaghi & Co

Reference: Kennedy 410; Glasgow 451

This state is illustrated as an addendum to Kennedy's catalogue. Here Whistler has removed most of the shading on the pilings and the reflections in the water and burnished the area in the foreground.

#### [76] THE DANCE HOUSE: NOCTURNE, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a butterfly and inscribed *imp.*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark leaving a signature tab: a proof in the fourth state (of six); there was no published edition

Provenance: Otto Gerstenberg [Lugt 2785], stamp verso; Private

Collection, bought from Paul Prouté, Paris 1996

Reference: Kennedy 408; Glasgow 455

This work is the culmination of the night pieces Whistler etched over a period of 30 years. It is a work of extraordinary power and beauty in which darkness is not created by the wiping of ink, as with the Venetian Nocturnes, but with lines built up across the surface of the plate. They are cross-hatched, drawn in groups at angles to one another, scratched, burnished and thrown into relief. He has reverted to a technique used in the earliest night study, *Street at Saverne* [cat.2], and pushed it to the limit, using the lighted windows and the lamp shining in the centre of the plate to provide a sense of distance and scale. Whistler has created an image which he could not have made in any other medium and used the medium as no other artist had done before.

This is a view of the Oudezijdsdijk, showing the back of the buildings of Sint Olofsteeg, in Amsterdam's red light district.

*The Dance House: Nocturne* was first exhibited at Dunthorne's Gallery, London in 1890, but like the Amsterdam Set itself, was never published. The Glasgow catalogue records 17 impressions.



[77] THE MILL, 1889

Etching, signed in pencil with a *butterfly* and inscribed *imp.*, inscribed *Wunderlich* and *1st state* (twice) and signed again with a *butterfly*, verso, printed in warm black ink on fine laid paper, trimmed to the platemark by the artist, leaving a signature tab; there was no published edition

6¼ × 9¾ inches (16 × 23.9 cm)

Provenance: H. Wunderlich & Co., New York; Louis B. Dailey, New York (Lugt 4500); Sotheby's, New York, October 31, 2003, lot 69

Reference: Kennedy 413; Glasgow 457

A very fine impression of a print that is extremely rare in every state (Fine calls it “little known because of its rarity,” p.179); to our knowledge this is the only impression to have reached the market in the past 30 years. Some patches of fresh drypoint work with burr surrounding the figure on the right stand out against the overall subtle tonality of the image. These accents differentiate our impression (Glasgow’s new second state) from the first-state impression in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., in which they are absent.

The impression is annotated in pencil by Whistler himself *1st state* (twice) and signed again with a small butterfly. Below this, the artist wrote *Wunderlich*, designating this impression for Hermann Wunderlich, the founder of H. Wunderlich & Co. in New York. Wunderlich was Whistler’s first and most important dealer in the United States.

This late Amsterdam interior echoes the realism of Whistler’s earlier work. The composition was complete in the first state; he then merely added further shading, mainly to strengthen areas of wear. Within the scope of this catalogue *The Lime-Burner* [cat.22] provides an intriguing comparison. Similarities are the standing figure to the right—now, however, blending much more into the shadow of the workshop; another is the view through a passageway as well as the various framing devices. Yet these now feel much less intentional; they have become “broad, spatially fluid networks of line,” creating the “abstracted structuring” characteristic of these late works (Fine, p.179). The effect of this is an immediacy that, while highly calculated, conveys something of the spontaneity of a photographic snapshot.

Early on, the windmills in the far distance made the obvious comparisons with Rembrandt all but irresistible for commentators. Mansfield praises “flat landscape with its calm canals and busy windmills” that are “expressed with a delicacy and charm which the older master never surpassed” (quoted in Fine, p.179). One wonders whether Whistler might also have been thinking of the etchings of Adriaen van Ostade, particularly those such as *The Barn* showing shadowy interiors (Godefroy 23).

What Whistler himself once called the “exactitude of outlines” in his Thames views has now absorbed the lessons learned in his impressionistic Venetian prints, creating a synthesis out of, in Whistler’s words, “the elaboration of the first state, and the quality of the second” (quoted in Fryberger, p.71).





[78] ZAANDAM, 1889

Etching, signed with a butterfly and annotated *imp.*, also signed in pencil on the verso with a butterfly and inscribed *3rd proof printed*, printed in warm black ink on laid paper, trimmed at the platemark leaving a signature tab; there was no published edition  
 5¼ × 8½ (13.1 × 22.1 cm)  
 Reference: Kennedy 416; Glasgow 458

This rare first-state impression of the etching “can be considered a tribute to *The View of Amsterdam from the Northwest* (1640; B.110) by Rembrandt” (Glasgow catalogue). Whistler’s etching shows a canal in the foreground with a wide stretch of meadow beyond. A long

line of windmills and the church tower and buildings of the small town of Zaandam punctuate the horizon.

The print, like the Amsterdam Set, was never published. When Joseph Pennell, the printmaker and later Whistler’s biographer, saw this print on view in 1890 at Robert Dunthorne’s gallery in London he was moved to observe that “no one since Rembrandt could have done it, and in his plate the greatest of modern etchers has pitted himself against the greatest of the ancients and has come through only too successfully for Rembrandt” (quoted in Glasgow catalogue).

This one must be added to the sixteen impressions in all states recorded in the Glasgow catalogue.

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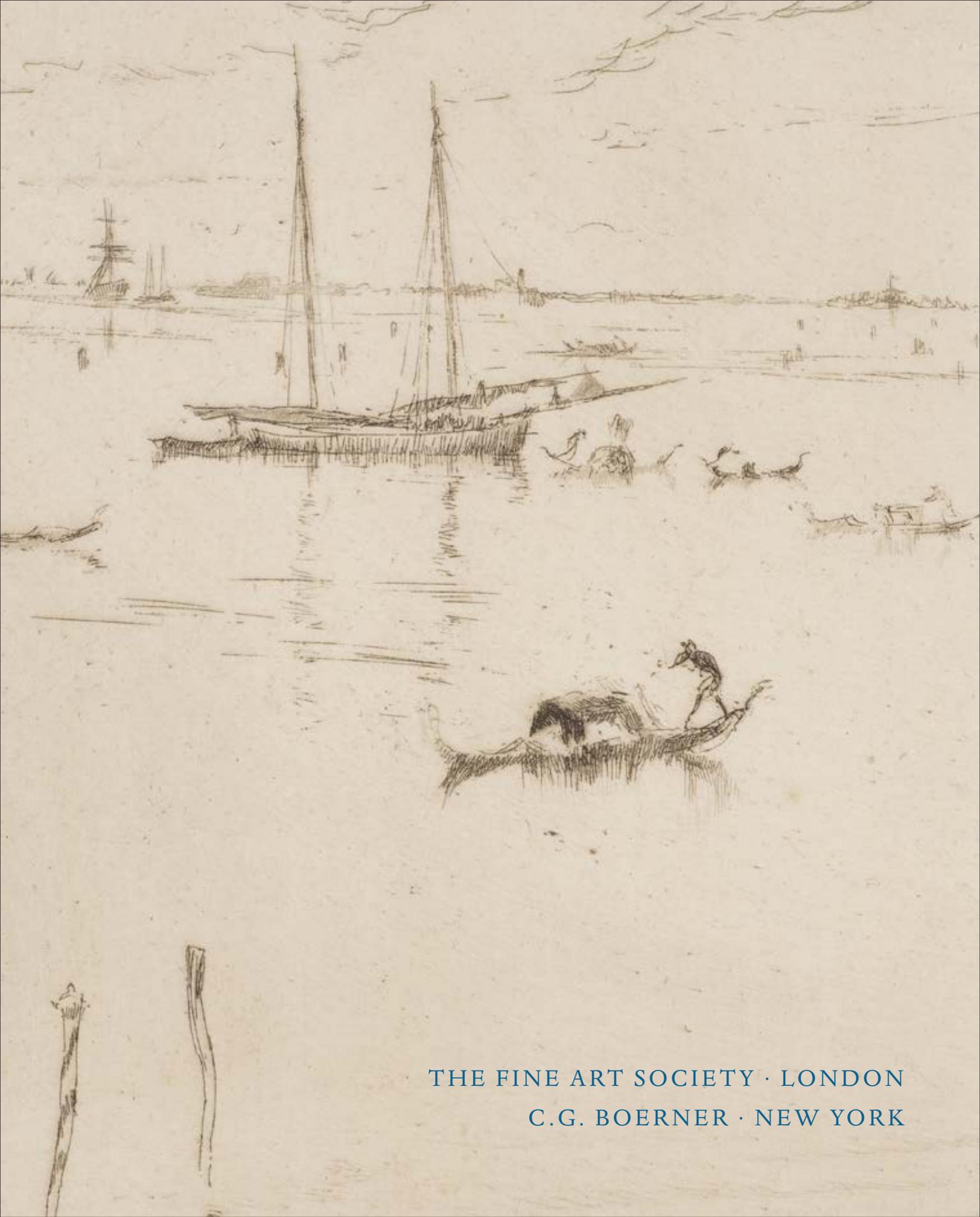
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## The Fine Art Society

148 NEW BOND STREET · LONDON W1S 2JT  
+ 44 (0)20 7629 5116 · gc@faslondon.com  
www.faslondon.com

## C.G. Boerner

23 EAST 73RD STREET · NEW YORK NY 10021  
+ 1 212 772 7330 · armin@cgboerner.com  
www.cgboerner.com



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