JOHN LA FARGE:
AMERICAN ARTISTIC GENIUS
AND RENAISSANCE MAN
(1835-1910)

AN EXHIBITION AND SALE OF OVER ONE HUNDRED JOHN LA FARGE
PAINTINGS, WATERCOLORS, DRAWINGS, PRINTS,
PHOTOGRAPHS, LETTERS, BOOKS
AND OPALESCENT LEADED GLASS WINDOWS
TO BENEFIT THE ACQUISITION AND CONSERVATION OF
THIRTEEN JOHN LA FARGE OPALESCENT GLASS WINDOWS
TO BE INSTALLED IN A NEW CHAPEL & SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER AT
SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

AUGUST 28 - NOVEMBER 30, 2009

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John La Farge is one of the most interesting and influential characters in the cultural history of the United States. He was a friend and mentor to a generation of many of the leading figures in the worlds of art, architecture, literature, science, exploration, business, government, academia, and religion. He made significant and often revolutionary contributions in the fields of landscape, flower, and figure painting, mural decoration, stained glass window design and production, travel journalism, book illustration, and art teaching, writing, and criticism. Cultural tastes often change through time, and John La Farge’s artistic reputation, along with that of many of his contemporaries, suffered a sharp decline during much of the twentieth century. However, ninety-nine years after his death, I can predict with certainty that his unique imprint on civilization is lasting and permanent. His curious and enduring impact on my career and life is also noteworthy.

My interest in La Farge began in 1971 during the one art history course I took as a sophomore prelaw major at Boston College. For the bulk of our grade, the professor allowed us to choose between an independent research paper or a final exam; it was through this choice that I would first discover the artistic genius of John La Farge. While working part time at the Boston Public Library, I was using my lunch break to practice my daily ritual of transcendental meditation in nearby Trinity Church, the site of renowned La Farge ceiling and wall murals and opalescent glass windows. My post-meditative revelation, while gazing on La Farge’s ceiling, was a particularly poignant and transformative event in my life, for it was on that day that I realized I was ill-prepared. The subsequent La Farge term paper was sufficiently well received that the art history professor encouraged me to change my major to his field. Still planning to attend law school, I declined, explaining that I hoped to devote my life to public service in order to “change the world.” I was convinced, however, to continue my study of La Farge, who was still relatively unknown to the public and even many in the art world. I undertook a senior thesis project based on the art of John La Farge, and in 1974 this research brought me to Newport for the first time, to explore the historic seaside city where the artist lived off and on from 1859 until his death in 1910.

As destiny would have it, immediately upon arriving in Newport I was thrust into a battle to save an endangered historic church building with murals and opalescent glass windows by La Farge. This effort appealed to the idealism of my youth and era, the influence of my Jesuit educators, and my newfound obsession with La Farge. Naively, I volunteered to lead the effort to save and preserve the church before heading to law school. The case subsequently lingered in the courts for six years and my career plans changed. Among the jobs that helped support me during this time were a stint as the part-time janitor at the Newport Art Association and Museum and working as a “picker” of artworks, the most modest level of art dealing, for which I unexpectedly appeared to show some promise. After one year of study in the graduate program of American Civilization at Brown University, supported by my ongoing art “picking,” I was recruited to join the staff of an established art business and worked briefly in galleries on Cape Cod and on Madison Avenue in New York, continuing to spend available free time in Newport. After several years, I returned full-time to Newport to begin my own private art dealing business in my small carriage house residence, one block from John and Margaret La Farge’s Sunnyside Place home. My first major art inventory purchase was a small La Farge watercolor of the sea, which I later sold to the National Gallery of Art. My dealing specialization in artworks by important American artists, who, like La Farge, had been attracted to Newport and the Narragansett Bay region in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1987, newly married, my wife Alison and I opened a large gallery at our present location on Newport’s historic Bellevue Avenue in order to mount public exhibitions to support our thesis of the importance of Newport and the Narragansett Bay region in the development of the arts in the United States. From the start, we also pledged to utilize the appeal of our exhibitions to raise public consciousness and funds to support charitable causes with which we were involved in the community. Our first major project of this type was the 1989 exhibition “John La Farge: An American Master,” which supported the restoration of the La Farge murals and stained glass windows at the Newport Congregational Church, which I had come to Newport to save. Over the past twenty years, our gallery has used exhibitions to contribute and raise millions of dollars in support of a wide range of charitable organizations in the areas of the arts, education, the environment, health care, land and historic preservation, social services, and animal welfare.

A vital Newport institution, Salve Regina College was founded under the sponsorship of the Sisters of Mercy and chartered by the State of Rhode in 1934, with the mission of seeking wisdom and promoting universal justice. In 1947 the college acquired the Richard Morris Hunt designed Ochre Court mansion and welcomed its first class of fifty-eight students. In 1991 an amendment to the Charter changed the name to Salve Regina University. Today, the student body numbers around 1,600 undergraduate and graduate students. Bordering Newport’s famed Cliff Walk, Salve Regina University’s beautiful 75-acre campus offers visitors what the National Trust for Historic Preservation has described as a “tour of the great architectural works of the Gilded Age.” Twenty-one of the University’s forty-four buildings comprise seven contiguous 19th century estates by such notable architectural firms as Henry Hobson Richardson, McKim, Mead & White, and Peabody & Stearns. The University sees itself as steward of this heritage and actively engages in preserving the splendor of its Gilded Age properties for future generations of students, members of the community, and visitors to Newport. Among its efforts are annual conferences on Cultural & Historical Preservation, and its keystone academic program in Cultural and Historic Preservation, an interdisciplinary major encompassing architectural history, archival research, historical archaeology and preservation planning that makes extensive use of the living laboratories of the Salve Regina University campus and the City of Newport. The University has received recognition and awards for its cultural and historic preservation programs, including becoming the first New England institution to receive a Getty Grant Program Award to develop a Campus Heritage Preservation Plan. The resulting plan includes a detailed review of the campus as “a living museum, a learning laboratory of American architectural styles, technical accomplishments, social patterns and economic history.”

Our gallery has supported Salve Regina University throughout the years by participating from the inception in the Conference on Cultural and Historic Preservation, providing gallery talks to art history classes, sponsoring student gallery internships, and funding scholarships for students interested in the field of the arts and public policy. In 2001 I was contacted by the University President, M. Therese Antone, RSM and her colleague and Treasurer of the Sisters of Mercy of America, Marypatricia Murphy, RSM with shocking news: the Sisters of Mercy Convent at St. Patrick’s Church in Fall River, Massachusetts would be razed for a parking lot. As there were no longer any nuns residing in the Convent and the church was absorbing parishioners from two closed neighboring churches, additional parking spaces would be created where the Convent was situated. This was particularly alarming because I knew that the convent housed thirteen John La Farge stained glass windows originally designed by the artist around 1890 for a private chapel and music room within a Newport residence owned by two sisters, Mary Gwendolyn Byrd Caldwell and Mary Elizabeth Breckenridge Caldwell. The house was demolished in 1931 and during the following year the La Farge windows, along with wood choir stalls, altar rail, and figural water font from the Caldwell House chapel and music room, were secured by the far-sighted Fall River Bishop James Cassidy and re-installed in the St. Patrick’s Convent. Now the Convent faced the same dire fate. The question of what would happen to the precious La Farge decorative scheme evoked an eerie déjà vu memory of my 1974 preservation fight. My instinct was to mobilize an effort to ensure that the historic Caldwell House artifacts in St. Patrick’s Convent be saved intact. This work of art had survived the demolition of the Great Depression – for it to be broken up forever and disbursed piecemeal throughout the art market to the highest bidders, possibly ending up in secular venues like a restaurant or residence in a far away land, would amount to the loss of a national and sacred treasure, a tragic calamity with implications far beyond Fall River and Newport.
It was clear to me from the start that the solution to this preservation crisis must involve Salve Regina University. Several unique characteristics about this institution made this strategy apparent to me. First, Newport, the University’s home, was the original site of the chapel and is internationally known for her rich artistic and architectural heritage. Hundreds of thousands of annual visitors enjoy the City’s cultural and historic treasures. Second, John La Farge had a strong connection to Newport; he first came here in 1859, maintained a home here until his death in 1910, and produced much of his finest work in the local environs. Third, the Sisters of Mercy operate Salve Regina University and have had a long history with St. Patrick’s Parish and the Diocese of Fall River. Fourth, Salve Regina University offers the rare and special environment where the La Farge chapel artworks would receive the appropriate spiritual use by students, faculty, and visitors to the campus, as well as the proper conservation, attention, and scholarly recognition. Fifth, the University’s aforementioned focus on American art and architectural history attracts hundreds of scholars working in these fields to the campus each year. Sixth, the leading scholar on the subject of John La Farge and the former director of the La Farge Catalogue Raisonné Project, Dr. James L. Yarnall, is on the faculty. He has lectured widely and published numerous books, articles, and catalogues on the subject of La Farge.

Once I recognized the imminent danger that the collection of La Farge windows faced, and that Salve Regina University would need to be involved in the solution, I organized a small ad-hoc committee to address the problem and develop a strategy. Many were skeptical that such an undertaking was realistic, but we quietly and patiently persevered. Out of this small group emerged a proposal to purchase intact all of the decorative items within the convent that had come from the Caldwell House. In 2004, after much delicate negotiation with representatives of St. Patrick’s Parish and the Diocese of Fall River, terms were reached by which Salve Regina University would acquire the windows and they would be returned to Newport. At that time, along with others, I made a pledge to help raise funds for the acquisition and to have the windows professionally restored so that they would subsequently be displayed in various academic buildings throughout the campus. But soon the project took on a life of its own and grew into something much larger than even I had envisioned. Gaining momentum through the active support of the University’s many generous and enthusiastic patrons who recognized the special significance of the situation, the project expanded into a building campaign for a chapel and spiritual life center to house the La Farge windows and other saved artifacts. The distinguished architect Robert A.M. Stern was commissioned to design the new building which is scheduled to be dedicated in the autumn of 2010.

This storybook finale reflects the ideal standard within the Catholic Church regarding the disposition of sacred treasures from dismantled churches. In the August 9-22, 2009 issue of the National Catholic Register, the article “When Churches Close” explores this subject. One expert states the case: “There’s a moral obligation to reclaim…When parishes close, the church needs to be a good steward … and make sure the (objects) are maintained in the service of the Catholic Church.” A second commentator noted that restoring and reclaiming sacred art objects and blending new works seamlessly with them is not an end in itself, noting that: “The whole purpose…is to draw the faithful into a restoration of the faith…Importantly, it leads to reintroducing the beauty of the liturgy, the full splendor…”

As La Farge rarely appears on the art market today, in order to curate the show, I have appealed to a number of clients who have purchased pieces from me over the past twenty-five years or acquired them elsewhere, to loan their prized artworks to this special exhibition. Accordingly, not all of the works displayed are for sale. However, in keeping with our gallery’s founding mission, a percentage of the proceeds from works which are sold will be donated to support the Salve Regina University La Farge project.

Eight windows from the Caldwell House-Salve Regina University collection are included in the exhibition. Six of these have been restored by the well-known Serpantino Stained Glass studio of Needham, Massachusetts. Two of the windows are displayed prior to treatment in order to dramatically illustrate the need for conservation; five windows remain in the studio and continue to undergo restoration. A PowerPoint presentation will be running during the exhibition to demonstrate the intricate practice of preserving the windows on display, a laborious process that has been ongoing.

A number of the artworks featured in the current exhibition have been in one or more of my earlier La Farge exhibitions. For me to see these “old friends” in person again after many years is a rare and special gift. As one who has spent a career specializing in American art, it is a great thrill to have accumulated such a large selection of La Farge works in one room. Each new glimpse offers an opportunity for fresh and sometimes changing insights into the oeuvre of this American artistic genius and Renaissance man.

Many individuals have been instrumental in supporting the drive to save the La Farge windows and to ensure that they have a permanent home at Salve Regina University. Notable among these are: Thomas A. Rogers, Jr., the late great trustee and benefactor of the University; Bernard A.G. Taradash, Mr. Rogers’s financial advisor, parent of two Salve Regina University graduates, and supporter of good causes; David Wallace, trustee, and with his wife Jean, major longtime supporters of the University; M. Therese Antone, RSM, former President and current Chancellor of Salve Regina University, who is responsible for the meteoric rise in the institution’s stature; and Mike Semenza, Vice President of the University and masterful fundraiser. Dr. James L. Yarnall provided important historical background information about the Caldwell family and the La Farge commission at their Newport home; additionally, his long-term scholarship on the subject of John La Farge and his generous offering of knowledge and information from his files about the artist over the past twenty-two years have helped me immensely in each of my four La Farge exhibitions and catalogues, and my on-going interest in the subject. Roberto Rosa and his staff at Serpantino Stained Glass took on the restoration project with great enthusiasm, knowledge, skill and passion because of his admiration for the work of John La Farge and his appreciation for the quality and importance of the Caldwell-Salve Regina University windows. Dr. Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, and Paul Miller, Curator of the Preservation Society of Newport County, gave support and academic credibility to the project.

Regarding the exhibition and catalogue, many lenders and supporters helped our gallery assemble a noteworthy collection of rare, beautiful and important artworks. These include: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College; Newport Art Museum; the Honorable and Mrs. Joseph P. Carroll of New York; my colleagues Michael Altman, Thomas Colville, and Ira Spanierman; as well as several anonymous collectors. My gallery partner and wife Alison and I sincerely thank our talented formal and informal staff – Donna Maytum, Christine Haverington, Olivia Smith, Stephen Federico, Christian Vareika, Hope Vareika and Timothy McGarry – who all worked long hours to make the show and catalogue a reality.

A well-known quote by John La Farge’s friend William James has served as an inspiration to me many times in my life: “The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.” It is my hope that future generations will find joy and meaning in the conserved John La Farge stained glass windows that will grace the new Our Lady of Mercy Chapel and the Mercy Center for Spiritual Life at Salve Regina University long after I am gone.
The Caldwell House was built by William Shakespeare Caldwell and his wife in 1866 as a summer home at the corner of Kay and Ayrault Streets in Newport, Rhode Island. Upon Mr. Caldwell’s death in 1874, his young daughters, Mary Gwendolyn Byrd Caldwell and Mary Eliza Breckenridge Caldwell, inherited the house under the care of guardians. In 1890 the Caldwell sisters commissioned a private chapel and music room in their home by local architect John Dixon Johnston, with windows designed by John La Farge. The artist created opalescent glass windows depicting the Madonna and Child, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint John the Evangelist, religious symbols, and decorative motifs. The Caldwell House was demolished in 1931. In 1932 the far-sighted Fall River Bishop James Cassidy secured the contents of the chapel and music room and had them re-installed in a convent of the Sisters of Mercy at St. Patrick’s Parish in Fall River, Massachusetts. Prior to the recent demolition of the convent, Salve Regina University acquired its precious contents. In addition to the thirteen John La Farge opalescent glass windows, these objects include wood choir stalls, altar rail, and figural water font, all of which will be incorporated into a Chapel and Spiritual Life Center to be built at the University’s historic Newport campus. Dedication of the Chapel is scheduled for the autumn of 2010.

“He has created in all its details an art unknown before . . .”
Statement of Paris 1889 Exposition Jury honoring La Farge’s opalescent glass career
In conversation La Farge’s mind was opaline with infinite shades and refractions of light, and with color toned down to its finest gradations. In glass it was insubordinate; it was renaissance; it asserted his personal force with depth and vehemence of tone never before seen.

— Henry Adams
This window, a gift of the Boynton family, was dedicated on September 21, 1903 to the memory of Judge Albert Grenville Boynton, who died in 1898. It is one of four La Farge designed windows erected as memorials to the founder and trustees of the First Unitarian Church of Detroit. The Good Knight was the last of these windows to be installed, in the center of the north wall of the church, in 1899. The subject is that of a knight removing his armor as emblematic of service accomplished, and stepping through the portal of everlasting life. The inscription is from Sir Edwin Arnold’s After Death in Arabia: “In enlarging Paradise lives the soul that never dies. When ye come where I have stepped ye will wonder why ye wept.”

Boynton was born in Bangor, Maine in 1837. He moved to Detroit in 1859 to study law. By 1868 Boynton was actively pursuing public service as Police Justice, and for a brief time as Assistant City Attorney. In 1878 Judge Boynton retired from the bench to devote himself to his other love, journalism, assuming the editorship of the Detroit Free Press, a position he held for more than twenty-five years. Boynton was a member of the Old Detroit Light Guard, President of the Veteran Corps, and chair of the committee that oversaw the building of the Detroit Armory. He was also active in many literary, social, sports and business organizations. He traveled extensively. Shortly after arriving in Detroit, Boynton became affiliated with the Unitarian Church and was involved in the construction of a new church at Woodward Avenue and Edmund Place. He was a friend of John La Farge, and was instrumental in having three of the artist’s stained glass windows placed in the west façade of the church. As a judge and as an editorial writer, Boynton devoted himself to serve and protect the rights and freedoms of the city’s populace, thus making the Good Knight a fitting choice of theme for his memorial.

The four La Farge windows were removed from the First Unitarian Church in 1936 during the widening of Woodward Avenue. In 1959 three of the windows were donated to the Detroit Institute of Arts. The fourth is included in the current exhibition and comes from a private collection in Virginia.
La Farge’s glass . . . led him back to the twelfth century and to Chartres where La Farge not only felt at home, but felt a sort of ownership.

— Henry Adams
La Farge alone owned a mind complex enough to contrast against the commonplaces of American uniformity.

— Henry Adams
Angel in Roundel and Roundel Ornaments  circa 1896
Study for stained glass window
Watercolor and graphite on paper
9 15/16 x 14 inches

Angels Upholding Crown over Casket  circa 1888
Study for stained glass window
Watercolor on paper
7 x 5 3/4 inches
Inscribed on mount: “G2040”
Inscribed on mount, lower left: “To Mrs. Peter Emslir, To be returned to John La Farge, 51 West 10th Street.”
Exhibition: Newport, Rhode Island, William Vareika Fine Arts, John La Farge: An American Master, 1989, plate 41, no. 83

Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, Or what’s a heaven for?

— Robert Browning, “Andrea del Sarto,” A poem important to La Farge, as quoted in Royal Cortissoz John La Farge: A Memoir and a Study, 1911
**Circular Floral Design**
circa 1882-1885
Watercolor and graphite on paper
9 1/2 x 12 inches
Inscribed on mount lower center: “G2099”

In all of the greatest artists there is a humble workman who knows his trade and likes it.

— John La Farge

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**Cornelius Vanderbilt II House, New York**

Built 1881-1882
Demolished 1927

**Stylized Floral and Urn Motif**
circa 1880-1883
Study for glass transom
Cornelius Vanderbilt II House, New York
Waxed watercolor on paper
15 x 15 inches
Inscribed on mount, lower center: “G10181”

Cornelius Vanderbilt II, 1843-1899, was the grandson of “Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt and the son of William Henry Vanderbilt, 1821-1885. His house faced south at the northwest corner of 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, New York.

**Floral Panel with Roses in Geometric Frame**
circa 1881
Watercolor and graphite on paper
6 5/16 x 4 3/8 inches
Inscribed lower left: “Sc 1 = 1 ft.”
Inscribed center left: “prepared for J.P. Morgan”
Inscribed and numbered on mount: “9057 Gi”
For us there can be no details that are unimportant; there can be no art without a craft.
— John La Farge

Decorative Sketch for Stained Glass Window at a Staten Island Tomb
circa 1880s
Watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on board
5 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches (sight size)
Inscribed: “Tomb at Staten Island”
Inscribed and numbered on board: “G 9077”

Apple Blossoms and Butterfly
circa 1879
Design for a porcelain plate
Watercolor and paper laid down on board
4 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches
Sketch for Ceiling Panel  
1880  
Watercolor on paper  
1 7/8 x 1 7/8 inches  

La Farge employed Oriental carpet designs for his painted decoration of the five 15-by-33-foot panels on the ceiling of the sanctuary of the Newport Congregational Church. This sketch is one of two known for that commission. The other is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  

Collection: William Christian Kensett Vareika  

Mosaic Floor with Classical Geometrical Design  
circa 1884  
Study for Potter Palmer House, Chicago  
Watercolor and graphite on paper  
7 x 10 3/4 inches  
Inscribed, lower left: “1/2 inch Scale”  
Inscribed, left center: “Sketch of Marble Mosaic Vestibule Floor for P. Palmer Esqr., Chicago”  
Inscribed, left center: “Sketch showing some proposed changes in color due to use of glass mosaic”  
Inscribed, lower right: “inch squares”  
Inscribed on mount: “G2024”  

John La Farge is considered the Father of the American mural movement in the 19th century.  

Coffered Ceiling Panels  
circa 1882-1885  
Study for decoration of Moritz Bernard Philipp House, New York  
Watercolor, gold leaf and graphite on paper  
4 1/4 x 7 7/8 inches
**Library Door with Wreaths, Ribbons and Shell**  
circa 1882-1885  
Study for stained glass  
Watercolor and graphite on paper  
6 x 3 inches (sight size)  
Inscribed upper left: “Return to Jno Lafarge, 33 East 17”  
Inscribed upper right: “B 17”  
Inscribed lower center: “Library door”  
Inscribed on mount: “G9019”

**Romanesque Interior**  
circa 1882-1885  
Sketch for a building in Chicago  
Watercolor and graphite on paper  
11 1/8 x 7 inches  
Inscribed lower center: “set of windows for a  
Romanesque Building, Chicago,  
one of Richardson’s not built I think.”  
Inscribed on mount: “G10190”

Henry H. Richardson, the originator of the so-called Richardsonian Romanesque style, was one of America’s leading architects during the latter part of the 19th century. He and La Farge collaborated on many projects, including Trinity Church, Boston.
In her hand, the Wise Virgin holds an oil lamp, a reference to the parable in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (25:1-13). In this metaphor of the elect and the damned, the Wise Virgins carefully conserve the oil in their lamps in order to be ready for the coming of Christ.

This painting relates to the Gertrude Parker Memorial Window, Parish House of Trinity Church, Boston, installed April, 1885 and to the Mary Mackie Paine Memorial Window at St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, Rhode Island. It is one of only two extant large cartoons for a stained glass window by La Farge. The other is in the collection of the Worcester Art Museum.
Colossal Statue of Ananda, near the Ruined City of Pollanarua, Ceylon
1891
Watercolor and gouache on paper laid down on board
10 x 7 inches
Inscribed with title on reverse

Exhibition:
New York, Macbeth Gallery, John La Farge, 1907

_He was completely and restfully at home in the lands of the lotus-eater, amongst long-robed, suave Japanese priests or amongst the stalwart chiefs and laughing maidens of the Pacific._

— Royal Cortissoz
In 1886 John La Farge traveled to Japan with his friend, the writer Henry Adams. In 1890 they also voyaged to the South Seas, arriving in Tahiti one week before the French artist Paul Gauguin. In these exotic lands, La Farge produced a large number of sketches of the places he visited and the people he encountered. These artworks and his written journals and commentary from the travels resulted in the publication of two fascinating and popular books on the subject.

**Taupo with Arms Outstretched**  
*Preparing for the Dance*  
1890  
Watercolor on paper  
12 3/4 x 10 inches  
Inscribed with title and signed, on backing

The “taupo” was the Samoan ceremonial virgin of the village who served as the official greeter of visitors. In La Farge’s *Reminiscences of the South Seas*, published in 1912, he describes and illustrates a ritual involving a “taupo” and her warrior attendants “dancing in open air.”

In Samoan culture, La Farge saw the lost Golden Age of Greece. In *Reminiscences of the South Seas*, he wondered why “No one had told me of a rustic Greece still alive somewhere, and still to be looked at . . . Had I only known years ago.”

**The Great Pali**  
(Hawaii)  
1890  
Watercolor and gouache over graphite on white watercolor paper mounted on cardboard  
13 1/4 x 17 1/4 inches (sheet)
Study of Surf Breaking on Outside Reef, Tautira, Taianapu, Tahiti  1891
Watercolor and gouache on paper
10 1/2 x 13 3/4 inches

Samoa. Sail by Moonlight  circa 1891
Watercolor and gouache on paper
7 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches
Evening Study (Priest’s House, Nikko, Japan)
1886
Watercolor on paper,
14 x 10 inches.
Signed with initials and dated “J.L.F. 1886” lower right in ink
Inscribed on in black ink verso:
“Later gorgeous sunset
Blue green at places
And reddish
Orange clouds
Roof runs into background
Nikko Japan
July 1886.”

Mountain in Fog,
From Our Garden, Nikko
1886
Watercolor on paper
10 7/8 x 8 1/4 inches

When La Farge and Adams detrained in Omaha [on the cross-country leg of their journey to the Orient], they surprisingly found reporters waiting. Their luxurious train car had set tongues wagging that they were bound for Japan on a major business venture for the railroad company. La Farge glibly attempted to put the story to rest by joking with a reporter that they were going in search of “Nirvana.” Somewhat prophetically, the youth looked up like a meteor and rejoined: “It’s out of season!”

—Henry Adams
Swans

Swans is a very unique watercolor produced by La Farge about 1865 while he was living part of the time with his family on a farm on Paradise Avenue near Newport. In 1860 he had married Margaret Perry of Newport, grandniece of Commodore Matthew Galbraith Perry who had earlier opened trade borders with Japan. The Perry household was no doubt decorated with Japanese art and objects. Therefore it is not surprising that La Farge was among the earliest Western artists to exhibit a Japanese influence in his art. In its asymmetry, flatness, absence of horizon line, calligraphic brushstrokes, and the subject matter of swans (which represents "eternal love"), Swans is a striking example of this Japanese influence.
The pleasure given by art is not a passive one. We give it to ourselves . . . what we call taste is a real art. The work of art may remain silent to many; even to those who understand it more or less. It is an appeal to another mind, and it cannot draw out more than that mind contains. But to enjoy is as it were to create; to understand is a form of equality, and the full use of taste may be a work of genius.

— John La Farge

Portrait of the Artist’s Wife, Margaret La Farge
circa 1865
Watercolor over graphite on watercolor paper
18 3/4 x 13 inches
Signed with cipher, lower right
In this rare portrait of the artist’s wife, she wears a Japanese robe similar to one appearing in an 1869 oil portrait that was destroyed by fire before 1911. She appears pregnant, probably with her second son Bancel, who was born in 1865.
Paradise is a picturesque, rugged, coastal, one-square-mile section of Middletown, Rhode Island on the southeastern tip of Aquidneck Island. John La Farge worked and lived with his family in Paradise off and on from 1861-64 and from 1865-71. Later, he occasionally painted in this area throughout the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. It was there that the artist produced some of his most original works and some of the most important of this period in American art history.

**Rocks by Path in the Sacred Grove at Paradise**
circa 1865
Watercolor over graphite on paper
16 x 24 inches
Signed with cipher, lower right

**The Sakonnet River Near Flint Point**
circa 1875
Watercolor on paper
8 3/8 x 19 inches

**Paradise Farm and Nelson’s Pond**
circa 1875
Watercolor on paper
12 1/4 x 18 15/16 inches

**Nelson’s Pond from the Peninsula, Paradise**
circa 1875
Watercolor on paper
9 1/4 x 19 1/2 inches

**Third Beach and Flint Point at Paradise**
circa 1875
Watercolor over graphite on heavy off-white paper
9 1/4 x 13 1/2 inches
The Visit of Nicodemus to Christ circa 1883-1884
Watercolor and gouache 7 5/8 x 6 1/8 inches Signed on verso

Exhibition:
Moore’s Gallery, New York, 1885, no. 62
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, La Farge Memorial Exhibition, 1911
Kennedy Galleries, New York, John La Farge: Oils and Watercolors, 1968, no. 10 illustrated
Kennedy Galleries, New York, American Master Painting, 1830-1984, 1988, no. 30
Newport, Rhode Island, William Vareika Fine Arts, John La Farge: An American Master, 1989, plate 19

In the 1885 Moore’s Art Gallery exhibition catalogue, La Farge wrote the following descriptive note for the painting:
“Visit of Nicodemus to Our Lord. Study of moonlight and lamplight;
also a study of one of the decorative groups in Trinity Church, Boston.”

There is a well-known La Farge oil painting of the same subject in the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. La Farge also used this image for the John Cotton Smith Memorial stained glass window in the Church of the Ascension, New York and for one of the nave mural panels in Trinity Church, Boston (completed 1878). In an 1882 Scribner’s Monthly article the Trinity version was critically ranked as “one of La Farge’s masterpieces.”
The artist can hope that in his fullest development he may become again as a child; and that as he looks, or we look, at his work, it may seem impossible to discriminate between what is the ingenuous statement of ignorance, and the consummate synthesis of knowledge; what is the frank and fresh record of a momentary impression, and what is the deliberate cumulative statement of choice.

— John La Farge
Watercolor on paper 10 3/4 x 9 inches

Exhibition:
Doll and Richards, Boston, Catalogue of Drawings, Watercolors, and Paintings by Mr. John La Farge
on Exhibition and Sale, January 25-February 6, 1890, no. 12;
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, La Farge Memorial Exhibition, January 1-31, 1911
Who thinks of the science of the horticulturalist, or pauses to taste, weigh, or price flowers and fruit as La Farge paints them? His violets and lilies are tender and true suggestions of flowers - not copies - as nature ever grew, and affect our senses in the same delightful way. Their language is of the heart, and they talk to us of human love and God's goodness.

— James Jackson Jarves, 1864
Thinking again about the pictures of flowers which I used to paint, there were, besides the paintings that were studies of flowers, and those that were painted as pictures, certain ones in which I tried to give something more than a study or handsome arrangement. Some few were paintings of the water lily, which has, as you know, always appealed to the sense of something of a meaning - a mysterious appeal such as comes to us from certain arrangements of notes of music.

— John La Farge
I painted flowers to get the relationship between the softness and brittleness of the flower and the hardness of the bowl or whatever it might be in which the flower might have been placed. Instead of arranging my subject, which is the usual studio way, I had it placed for me by chance, with any background and any light, leaving for instance the choice of flowers and vase to the servant girl or groom or anyone.

— John La Farge
Bowl of Flowers
Study of Late Afternoon Light
1883
Oil on mahogany panel
7 3/8 x 10 1/8 inches
Signed and dated on verso at upper left
Inscribed on verso: “Study of light late afternoon.”

Many critics and art historians consider John La Farge’s flower paintings to be the finest produced by an American artist and among the most masterful to emerge from any culture.

My painting of flowers was in great part a study; that is, a means of teaching myself many of the difficulties of painting, some of which are contradictory, as, for example, the necessity of extreme rapidity of workmanship and very high finish. Many times in painting flowers I painted right on without stopping, painting sometimes far into the night or towards morning while the flower still remained the same shade, which it was sure to lose soon. This obliged me also to know the use of my colors and the principles of the use of the same, for the difference between daylight and lamplight is very great, and the colors as one sees them in one light are not the colors of another. That we all know, as even the ladies do who wear different colors for night from what they do for the day.

— John La Farge
Wood Interior (In the Forest) 1864
Oil on panel 9 3/4 x 12 inches
Signed and inscribed with title in artist’s handwriting on old label on verso

Provenance:
Peirce & Co., The Paintings of Mr. John La Farge, to be Sold at Auction, 19-20 November (1878), Second Day, no. 2
Dr. Arthur Tracy Cabot, Boston (purchased at the above)
His wife, Mrs. Arthur Tracy Cabot, Boston, 1912
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1914-2006 (gift of the above)

Exhibition:
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, La Farge Memorial Exhibition, January 1-31, 1911 (titled In the Forest)

Literature:
Catalogue. The Paintings of Mr. John La Farge, to be Sold at Auction, Peirce & Co., 20 November (1878), Second Day, no. 2
listed on p. 182, no. 695 as In the Forest

The site of this precocious painting is probably in “Paradise” in Middletown, Rhode Island, near Newport.
La Farge lived and worked in “Paradise” off and on during the 1860s and early 1870s.
Many believe that he created among his most experimental, important and memorable works in this locale.

Out of ten persons who look at this picture
there will hardly be one who will
see in it anything but a muddle of color . . .

— Art critic commenting on John La Farge’s painting at the National Academy Exhibition of 1864
Rocks - Newport Landscape (Brenton’s Cove) circa 1866
Oil on board  8 3/4 x 12 inches

Oil on board  7 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches

...the influence of Newport, of its skies, its field tints and sea hues, have been as unmistakably powerful (on La Farge) as in the lasting effects produced on Titian by the rocks and slopes of his native Cadore. — A. Bowman Dodd, “The Art Journal,” 1885
Commenting on La Farge’s early experimental landscapes, a critic from the New York Tribune put it this way: “Just what Mr. La Farge is doing would be puzzling to tell . . . If he says that there is at Newport neither sky nor light nor air, that the clouds are basted on to the sky, and that the sea is made up of soup that is not eaten at the hotels, we shall give an incredulous assent because we have never been to Newport . . . All we could object to this statement would be, a mild wonder that, Newport being such a place, Mr. La Farge should waste his time painting it, when there are places, as we do know, that present a different aspect.”

Windmill
(Newport, Windmill, Near Easton’s Pond. Early Spring, Southeast Wind)
1864
Oil on canvas  12 x 10 inches

Literature: Pierce & Co., Boston, Catalogue. The Paintings of Mr. John La Farge, to Be Sold at Auction, November 19th and 20th at 3pm, 1878, no. 13, Second Day
La Farge also painted a slightly larger version of this Newport landmark.

In 1859 and throughout the 1860s, John La Farge painted a series of unpretentious plein air oil studies “copying” an honest view of nature in which every element in the landscape and the exact effects of time of day, season, light, and weather are carefully represented, no matter how “absolutely ‘everydayish’” the product may be. His stated intent was to make a painting look “as if it had done itself, and had not been done by an artist.” These paintings are among the most original, experimental and important of his career.

Photograph of Newport windmill by Charles F. McKim, 1874
Published in
Old Newport Houses, 1875
Evening Study, Newport, Rhode Island
(From Hazard’s Farm, Paradise Valley)
1871
Oil on panel
12 1/4 x 16 1/2 inches
Signed and dated, lower left
Provenance:
John Chandler Bancroft
Born the same year as La Farge, John Chandler Bancroft (1835-1901) was the son of George Bancroft, the well-known historian and Ambassador to England. John Bancroft was a very good friend of John La Farge, beginning in 1862. They painted together in the Newport area and shared an interest in Japanese art and the study of optics and color theory. In 1895 Bancroft built a large residence on Tuckerman Avenue along the rocky coast of Middletown, Rhode Island in the area known as Paradise, not far from the setting of this painting. The Bancroft house, once famous for its Japanese gardens, still stands.

I shall give the dates of all the works sent and then places where they were painted, as all but a few are painted directly from nature. Indeed if one could tell what was painted from nature and what was art I should feel that the aim of my work had not been reached.

— John La Farge
The Shepherd and the Sea. Aesop Fable
1875; reworked 1879-83
Oil on canvas
30 x 25 inches
Exhibition:
Carnegie Institute, 1901
Whitney Museum, 1932
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1936
World’s Fair, New York, 1940

The peasant sun-tanned and wiry
limbed, is stretched concealed behind
a rock overlooking the sea, where the
figure of a Mermaid arises from the
water. The delicate sky and summer
sun are given with exquisite sense of
tone and rare appreciation of color.
The flesh is pure and rich and the
greens harmonious and well-lighted.
Altogether, it is a picture dignified in
general aspect, full of feeling and
beautiful in color.

— Boston Daily Advertiser, 1879
Regarding The Shepherd and the Sea

The Serpent Charmer, Study in Yellow Tone
1864
Oil on panel
12 1/2 x 9 3/8 inches
Signed and dated, lower right

The Enchantress
1867
India ink on uncut woodblock
6 3/4 x 5 1/2 inches
Here is no question of truth to nature, or of decorative properties; we are in the presence of the soul of the artist, amusing itself with fancies of sweet color, delicate expression, and the beauty of line. The green grass flies from under the swift feet; we feel the cool breeze and smell the morning fragrance; we smile with the innocent child, and join in the affection which fills the movement of the ancient brute. It is poetry in color, the work of pure imagination, using, but transforming, the materials which it receives from the outside world.

— American Architect and Building News, 1878

Regarding Centaur
The Solitary 1864
Wood engraving on paper 3 15/16 x 3 7/16 inches
Initialed and dated, lower right
Engravers: Anthony and Davis
Published in Alfred Lord Tennyson,
Enoch Arden (Boston, 1865)

The Island Home 1864
Wood engraving on paper 3 7/8 x 3 1/4 inches
Artist’s mark, lower left
Engraver: P. F. Annin
Published in Alfred Lord Tennyson,
Enoch Arden (Boston, 1865)

Enoch Alone 1864
Wood engraving on paper 3 7/8 x 3 1/4 inches
Artist’s mark, lower right
Engraver: P. F. Annin
Published in Alfred Lord Tennyson,
Enoch Arden (Boston, 1865)

Enoch Alone circa 1883
Watercolor and gouache on a mechanical reproduction of woodblock drawing 8 3/4 x 7 inches
Note: The background of this work is Second Beach and Purgatory Rocks, Middletown, Rhode Island
The Seal of Silence  1864
Wood engraving on paper
3 15/16 x 3 9/16 inches
Initialed, center right and dated, center left
Engraver: Henry Marsh
Published in Alfred Lord Tennyson, Enoch Arden (Boston, 1865)

The Giant (The Giant and the Travelers)  1868
Wood engraving on paper
7 x 5 1/2 inches
Initialed and dated, lower left
Engraver: Henry Marsh
Published in The Riverside Magazine for Young People, May 1869

The Wise Men Out of the East  1868
Wood engraving on paper  5 1/2 x 7 inches  Engraver: Henry Marsh or W. J. Linton
Published in The Riverside Magazine for Young People, December 1868
Note: The background for this biblical view is Second and Third Beaches in Middletown, Rhode Island
Sanguine Nude circa 1856-1857
Red chalk on paper
11 x 14 1/4 inches

A copy by La Farge after a LEDA AND THE SWAN composition probably from the artist’s study at Thomas Couture’s Studio, Paris. One of the few known drawings by La Farge from the Couture period.

Male Nude 1864
Graphite on paper
12 3/8 x 8 1/4 inches (sight size)
Iniialed and dated, lower left

Portrait Study of Miss Howell of Philadelphia
Pencil on paper
9 3/4 x 13 inches (sight size)
Stamped with the artist’s chop, lower left;
Inscribed “Miss Howell of Philadelphia playing,” lower left, and “while playing,” lower center right

1841 Receives first drawing lessons from his maternal grandfather, Louis Binse de Saint-Victor.

1843 Graduates from Mount Saint Mary’s College, Emmitsburg, Maryland.


1856 Travels in Europe. French relatives introduce him to artistic and literary worlds. Studies briefly in studio of Thomas Couture, who perceives a special talent and who advises him to copy in the Louvre. Impressed by paintings by Eugene Delacroix and Theodore Chassériau.

1857 Travels and copies and sketches throughout Europe. By end of the year, returns to U.S. because of father’s illness.


1859 Moves to Newport, Rhode Island, in the spring to study painting at studio of William Morris Hunt. Fellow students at studio are William and Henry James. Experiments with "plein air" sketching of landscapes and still lifes. Paints important self-portrait at family estate at Glen Cove, Long Island (Portrait of the Painter, Metropolitan Museum Collection).

1860 Visits Bayou Teche, Louisiana, courting Margaret Mason Perry (1839-1925) of Newport. Returns to Newport. Marries Margaret Perry, granddaughter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry and grandniece of Commodore Matthew Galbraith Perry.

1861 Purchases Newport property at Bull Street and Mt. Vernon Court; house later moved to 24 Kay Street. Rents summer residence on Paradise Avenue in Paradise Valley, one mile from Newport.

1862 Starts exhibiting at the National Academy of Design, New York. Birth of first son, Christopher Grant, who later becomes an architect. Paints important still life, Agathon to Erosanthe, Votive Wreath.

1863 Birth of first daughter, Emily.


1865 Moves back to Newport. Resides on Paradise Avenue. Birth of son, Bancel, who later becomes an artist and his father’s studio assistant.

1866 Begins major landscape, Paradise Valley (Terra Foundation for the arts Collection), completed in 1868, which some art historians have called the first impressionist painting created on American soil. Sells part of his extensive library to raise funds. Paints second major wreath still life, Wreath of Flowers (National Museum of American Art).

1867 Begins second major landscape The Last Valley – Paradise Rocks (the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Birth of daughter, Margaret. Starts to prepare illustrations for Riverside Magazine for Young People, including the famous Wolf Chumner.

1868 Paints third major landscape Autumn Study. View over Hanging Rock, Newport, RI. (Bishop Berkeley’s Rock, Metropolitan Museum Collection). Elected Member of American Society of Painters in Water Colors.

1869 Serves on committee to found the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Elected member of the National Academy of Design. Birth of son, Oliver Hazard Perry, who later becomes an author.

1870 Writes “Essay on Japanese Art” for Raphael Pumpelly’s Across America and Asia. This is one of the first works on the subject by a Western author.

1871 Appointed lecturer on composition in art at Harvard.


1873 With an inheritance, Margaret La Farge purchases house at 10 Sunnyside Place, which remains the family home. Trip to Europe. Visits with the English Pre-Raphaelites. Exhibits The Last Valley and other paintings with the London Society of French Artists.

1874 The Last Valley is exhibited at the Salon in Paris. Designs first stained-glass window for Memorial Hall, Harvard, which was never completed. Birth of daughter, Frances Aimée.

1875 Creates important illustration for the frontispiece to a book of poetry published by the Lotos Club. At 40 years old, makes first stained-glass window. Birth of daughter, Aimée, who dies in infancy. Helps to found Museum School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

1876 The Last Valley awarded medal at Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Paradise Valley exhibited at the National Academy of Design; later sells for $3,000 at Doll and Richards in Boston, La Farge’s primary dealers. Important decorative commission for Trinity Church, Boston. Collaborated with the architect Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) on the Edward King Tomb, Island Cemetery, Newport. (Vandalized about 1980 and later restored.)

1877 Completes major phase of Trinity Church decorations, collaborates with Augustus Saint-Gaudens on St. Thomas Church, New York, chancel decorations. Experiments with stained glass.


1880 Decorates the interior of the Congregational Church, Newport. Awarded patent for his “opalaceous glass.” Awarded contract for the decoration of Cornelius Vanderbilt II House, New York, and for the dining room of the Union League Club, New York. Contracts with the important New York decorating firm of Herter Brothers to provide stained-glass windows. Birth of son, John, who later becomes a well-known Jesuit priest and writer.


1882 Battle Window reinstated at Memorial Hall, Harvard. Dissatisfied with his original 1879 product, La Farge reconstructed the window using opalescent glass. Stained glass for Frederick Lothrop Ames House, Boston, including Holyhocks window. More decorative contracts for the Cornelius Vanderbilt II House, New York.


1884 Begins decoration of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, a project which lasts off and on for fifteen years.

1885 La Farge Decorative Art Company folds due to dispute among partners. La Farge is arrested due to legal claim concerning designs and photographs taken by him after dissolution of the company. Case is settled out of court. Contract for decoration of the Church of the Incarnation, New York. Arrangement with Thomas Wright and John Calvin to manufacture stained-glass windows from La Farge designs.

1886 Travels to Japan with Henry Adams. Receives commission for major mural for Church of Ascension, New York.
1887 Completes Helen Angier Ames window, Unity Church, North Easton, Massachusetts. Purchases studio on Champlin Street in Newport; Begins mural decorations for Whitelaw Reid House, New York.

1888 Completes Ascension mural, at Church of the Ascension, New York, one of the most important in U.S.

1889 Completes Watson window, Trinity Church, Buffalo, NY, which is exhibited at Paris Universal Exposition, winning first-class medal. La Farge awarded Legion of Honor from French government.

1890 Travels to the South Seas with Henry Adams; Receives honorary L.L.D. degree from Mount Saint Mary's College. Visits Hawaii and Samoa, produces many paintings of native life and tropical scenery. “An Artist’s Letters from Japan” is serialized in Century magazine.

1891 Visits Tahiti (one week before Paul Gauguin), Fiji, Australia, Ceylon, and Java with Henry Adams. Returns to U.S.

1893 Receives Metropolitan Museum appointment as instructor in color and composition. Delivers “Considerations on Painting” lecture series at Metropolitan Museum.

1894 Visits Italy.

1895 “Considerations on Painting” lectures published. Exhibition of “Records of Travel” from Japanese and South Seas journeys organized and shown at Doll and Richards, Boston; Durand-Ruel, New York; and Salon du Champs de Mars, Paris. Mother dies.


1897 “Records of Travel” exhibited at Art Institute of Chicago. An Artist’s Letters from Japan published.

1898 Athens mural installed at Bowdoin College.

1899 Trip to France with Henry Adams, visiting Chartres Cathedral. Delivers commencement address at Yale. Designs windows for Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Providence, RI.


1902 Completes Fortune window for Frick Building, Pittsburgh.

1903 Delivers the Scammon Lectures on the Barbizon School at the Art Institute of Chicago, serialized in McClure’s magazine. “One Hundred Masterpieces” serialized in McClure’s magazine. Great Masters published.

1904 Receives honorary L.L.D. from Princeton. Awarded medal at the St. Louis Exposition.


1908 Higher Life in Art (1903 Scammon Lectures) published.


1910 Suffers nervous breakdown. Dies, November 14, Butler Hospital, Providence, RI. Burial, Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY.

1911 Major exhibition held at Vose Gallery, Boston, Exhibition of Paintings, Water Colors and Drawings by the Late John La Farge. Publication of John La Farge: A Memoir and A Study, written by Royal Cortissoz (Boston & NY: Houghton Mifflin Co.).

1912 Publication of John La Farge’s Reminiscences of the South Seas (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co.).

1914 Exhibition of 60 works at Vose Gallery, Boston, Works of John La Farge.

1931 Exhibition of oils and watercolors held at Wildenstein & Co., New York. Loan Exhibition of Paintings by John La Farge and His Descendants.

1936 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, mounts extensive exhibition including 4 stained glass windows, An Exhibition of the Work of John La Farge.

1948 Exhibition at Macbeth Gallery, New York, John La Farge, 1835-1910, Loan Exhibition.


1966 Multi-medium exhibition held at Graham Gallery, New York, John La Farge.

1967 Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, exhibition, John La Farge, Drawings and Watercolors.


1978 Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, hosts Exhibition of Paintings, Watercolors, and Drawings by John La Farge (1835-1910) from His Travels in the South Seas, 1890-1891.


1989 Large exhibition and sale, including stained glass windows never before shown publicly, at William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport, Rhode Island, John La Farge: An American Master, to benefit the restoration of the La Farge murals and stained glass windows of the Newport Congregational Church.


1990-2006 Major restoration project of 15 important La Farge glass windows, Judson Memorial, New York.

1995 Comprehensive still life exhibition held at The Jordan-Volpe Gallery, New York, Nature Vivante: The Still Lifes of John La Farge (James Yarnall authors catalogue); William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport, RI, hosts an exhibition at the Union League Club, New York, John La Farge at the Union League Club; Exhibition of work created in the Paradise region near Newport held at William Vareika Fine Arts, John La Farge in Paradise: The Painter and His Muse, including many works never before shown (James Yarnall authors catalogue).

1996 Christie’s, New York, May 23, Paradise Valley sells for $2,202,500. at auction.

1998 Restoration of important “Wisdom” window at Unity Unitarian Church, North Easton, MA; Exhibition of South Seas art at Vance Jordan Fine Art, New York, Recreation and Idleness: The Pacific Travels of John La Farge. (James Yarnall author catalogue).

2000 Christie’s, New York, November 29, The Last Valley - Paradise Rocks sells for $2,096,000. at auction.

2001 Restoration of important “Angel of Help” window, Unity Unitarian Church, North Easton, MA.

2004-05 Major restoration of La Farge murals and glass windows at Trinity Church, Boston, MA.

2010-11 Planned exhibition: Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; and Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, John La Farge’s Second Paradise: Voyages in the South Seas 1890-91.

NOTE: This chronological sketch was adapted from the William Vareika Fine Arts 1989 catalogue chronology which was based on various sources, primarily the chronology prepared by Henry A. La Farge for the catalogue John La Farge: Oil and Watercolors to accompany the 1968 Kennedy Galleries, New York, exhibition and the chronology prepared by James L. Yarnall and Mary A. La Farge, published in John La Farge (Adams, Henry et al., The Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, and National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1987). Posthumous exhibitions and other notes of interest were added for this publication.