



T.

New York (City) Macbeth gallery

Chambers

Active 1820-1840

E  
N48  
M12 c35

Box

FIRST AMERICAN MODERN

NOVEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 12, 1942

MACBETH • GALLERY

11 EAST 57th ST., NEW YORK CITY



## COMMENTS

THOMAS CRAVEN (*Author, Art Critic, Lecturer*):

"... here is a painter who had control of what may well be called an American idiom, a healthy and happy combination of an inborn and developed sense of design with a true love of native landscape. He may well be a discovery: he may be important; it doesn't matter — he is an artist, and an authentic American Artist."

CARL W. DREPPERD, (*Author of "American Pioneer Arts and Artists"*):

"... here is the impossible thing, a great reassembly of the works of a pioneer American painter, achieved over a century after their painting. Here are pictures painted by a man who had more than mere colors on his palette — he had also the secret pigments of courage, verve and lusty appreciation of the scenes. He drank them before he painted them. Hence his work is direct, fresh, and natural. Only two of the pictures — obviously of his later period — show the emasculating influence of formalized technique and restraint."

T. Chambers painted, I am sure, as the Hudson River School wished they could paint. For Chambers had the rare gift of ability to paint spontaneously. You know he enjoyed throwing the color on canvas and then saying to a cloud in the sky, "there, I got ye!"

Chambers was — and remains a "modern" — if by modern you mean freedom from the prissy, pragmatics of schools and galleries which, in teaching how to paint, teach the painter how not to see straight and clearly. In avoiding this T. Chambers was a Modern. That is every pioneer's way. Pioneering is modern, too."

MARGARET BREUNING, (*Art Critic, Lecturer*):

"... this exhibition adds an amazing chapter to the annals of American art, not only because the artist, T. Chambers, has been previously unknown, but even more because in his work there are qualities not usually associated with our pioneer landscape painters. In the paintings shown here there is none of the literal, painstaking descriptions of natural forms which characterize the work of his contemporaries, for all these landscapes are distinguished by a directness, a boldness and a power of simplified statement which may well be termed "modern." It is remarkable how these almost panoramic landscapes with their abundance of finely-observed detail have been held to a harmony of unified statement. The dramatic does not become theatrical nor does the majesty of these scenes degenerate into the grandiose. The brilliant color patterns of pure, lucent hues, the variety of rhythms and the elimination of non-essentials all contribute to the vitality and vigor of these paintings."

R. G. McINTYRE (*President, The Macbeth Gallery*):

"... though I can claim no part in the discovery of the still unknown T. Chambers, since credit for this must go to Mr. Albert Duveen, I yet felt a sort of pioneer thrill when I first saw two of the pictures now in this exhibition. Instinctively I recognized that here was an artist who had not only a new personal way of looking at nature but a dash and independence in his manner of interpreting whatever it was in nature that inspired him. Consciously or otherwise, he certainly was a master of design, — and how he loved the curved line!"

Now there were many artists at this time whose painting habitat was the Hudson Valley but if Chambers knew them at all he most certainly was not influenced by them. There is an aloofness about his work, especially in his landscapes, that adds to its fascination." Who was T. Chambers?

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View of the Hudson from Kingston

## CATALOGUE

1. NATURAL BRIDGE 25 x 18  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Larremore + Jamaica, L. I.
2. NIAGARA FALLS 25 x 18  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Larremore
3. COVE ON THE HUDSON 14 x 18 + owned by Mr. Richard Loeb Hampton, N. Y.
4. GENESEE FALLS, ROCHESTER 22 x 30 + owned by Mr. Albert Duveen
5. STEAMBOAT WITH PASSENGER-TOW OPPOSITE WEST POINT 22 x 30  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Larremore, + Jamaica, L. I.

Esopus Creek, Rondout, N. Y. 22x30  
Fantasy

44787

6. SUNSET, WEST POINT 22 x 30
7. "UNDERCLIFF," COLD SPRING, NEW YORK 22 x 30 + Ex. Coll. Mr. Hirschel how "of Rhode Island School of Design"
8. ESOPUS CREEK, RONDOUT, NEW YORK 15 x 18 + Duveen; sold through Macbeth
9. VIEW OF THE HUDSON FROM KINGSTON 22 x 30 owned by Mr. Loeb
10. EVENING CALM ON THE HUDSON 22 x 30 + owned - Mr. Hirschel
11. "UNDERCLIFF," seat of General George P. Morris, Cold Spring 22 x 30
12. WEST POINT 22 x 30  
Lent by Miss Catherine McAuliffe
13. LOOKING NORTH TO KINGSTON 22 x 30 + owned by Mr. Loeb
14. CONSTITUTION AND GUERRIERE (the only signed picture) 25 x 34 + owned by Mr. Loeb
15. CASTLE GARDEN 18 x 24 + owned by Mr. Loeb
16. TARRYTOWN (Inscribed on back of canvas, "Tarrytown, where Major Andre was captured") 25 x 36  
Reproduced in Carl W. Drepperd's "American Pioneer Arts and Artists"
17. VIEW OF NEW YORK FROM WEEHAWKEN 25 x 36 + owned by Mr. Loeb
18. VIEW OF NEW YORK FROM THE BAY 24 x 32  
Lent by Miss Elaine Hirschel + not by Chambers!

+ Mr. Albert Duveen, Feb 1943 (as B.)



The presentation of the paintings by T. Chambers represents one of the thrilling stories that are so often associated with the romance of the Art World. Over a period of six years, two New York dealers, Albert Duveen and Norman Hirschl, have been gathering material for one of the most fascinating chapters in American Art — a chapter headed, "T. CHAMBERS, America's First Modern."

To Mr. Duveen goes the thrill of finding the first example by Chambers. An unsigned landscape, in the home of an upstate friend so impressed him with its broad, dramatic quality, fine sense of composition and style, and simplicity of form, that he began a one-man search for further examples.

Two years passed until a second landscape emerged from a Lake George farmhouse, revealing again a spontaneous vitality, thoroughly American and completely devoid of foreign influence. Another dealer, Norman Hirschl, had meanwhile acquired two similar paintings and had come to the same realization that the approach of the artist was essentially modern although he painted over 100 years ago. One of these paintings has furnished the key picture as T. Chamber's signature was found after cleaning.

The two dealers compared notes one day and set about combing the countryside for more dramatic creations by their discovery. Examples began to appear from farmhouse, country antique dealers, and private collectors. That so bold and dramatic an artist should have remained so long in obscurity still presents a puzzle to those who have already seen his work.

Who was T. Chambers? Nothing is known of the man himself. His work has furnished clues to his "active" period as well as the locale for his subjects. There are views up and down the Hudson River and into the backwaters of the River — scenes of New York Harbor, and New York as it looked from the Narrows — the first Cunard Liner coming into Boston Harbor — Natural Bridge, Niagara Falls, Washington's Tomb, and the Notch House, Franconia (these latter may have been inspired by contemporary prints). A steamboat with "trailer," the subject of one canvas, which plied the Hudson about 1825, and the architecture of certain houses, also help date the pictures.

Now for the first time this obscure, First American Modern, is shown to the public.



