



Layton's Legacy: A Historic American Art Collection, 1888–2013

John C. Eastberg, Eric Vogel

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Frederick Layton (1827–1919) was among the very first art collectors in America to fund a purpose-built civic art gallery for the public's use and enjoyment. Second only to the 1874 Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the 1888 Layton Art Gallery in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, presented a new model for the single-patron art museum in America, one significantly different from the established museums of Boston and New York. Frederick Layton and his British architect George Audsley developed a new vision for a more intimate art museum experience. They drew upon their knowledge of English precedents to create a refined, single-story, top-lit, urban gallery that would influence the development of the American art museum well into the twentieth century.

Layton's Legacy draws on a recently discovered archive of Layton family papers, travel journals, and vintage photographs and on five years of extensive archival research in the United States and Great Britain. John C. Eastberg traces the trajectory of the collection's development from its English origins through its grand European acquisitions, Gilded Age art auctions in New York, Progressive-era renovations, postwar deaccessions, and demolition of the original gallery, all leading to a new era of curatorial innovation and major American art acquisitions at the end of the twentieth century. Eric Vogel looks more closely at the architectural history of the original Layton Art Gallery and its influence on the continuing lineage of the single-patron art museum.

Layton's Legacy also includes the first fully illustrated documentation of the entire 125-year history of the Layton Art Collection, demonstrating its formative place in the development of the American art museum. It includes object entries from more than twenty scholars of American and European painting, furniture, and decorative art and features the works of artists Eastman Johnson, Winslow Homer, Frederick Church, Thomas Cole, Bastien Lepage, William Bourguereau, James Tissot, Frederic Leighton, and Alma Tadema, among many others. Eminent scholars of nineteenth-century art, Dianne Macleod and Giles Waterfield, contribute forewords.

Gold Medal, Best Nonfiction, Independent Publisher Book Awards

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