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Thomas Buford Meteyard – A Retrospective

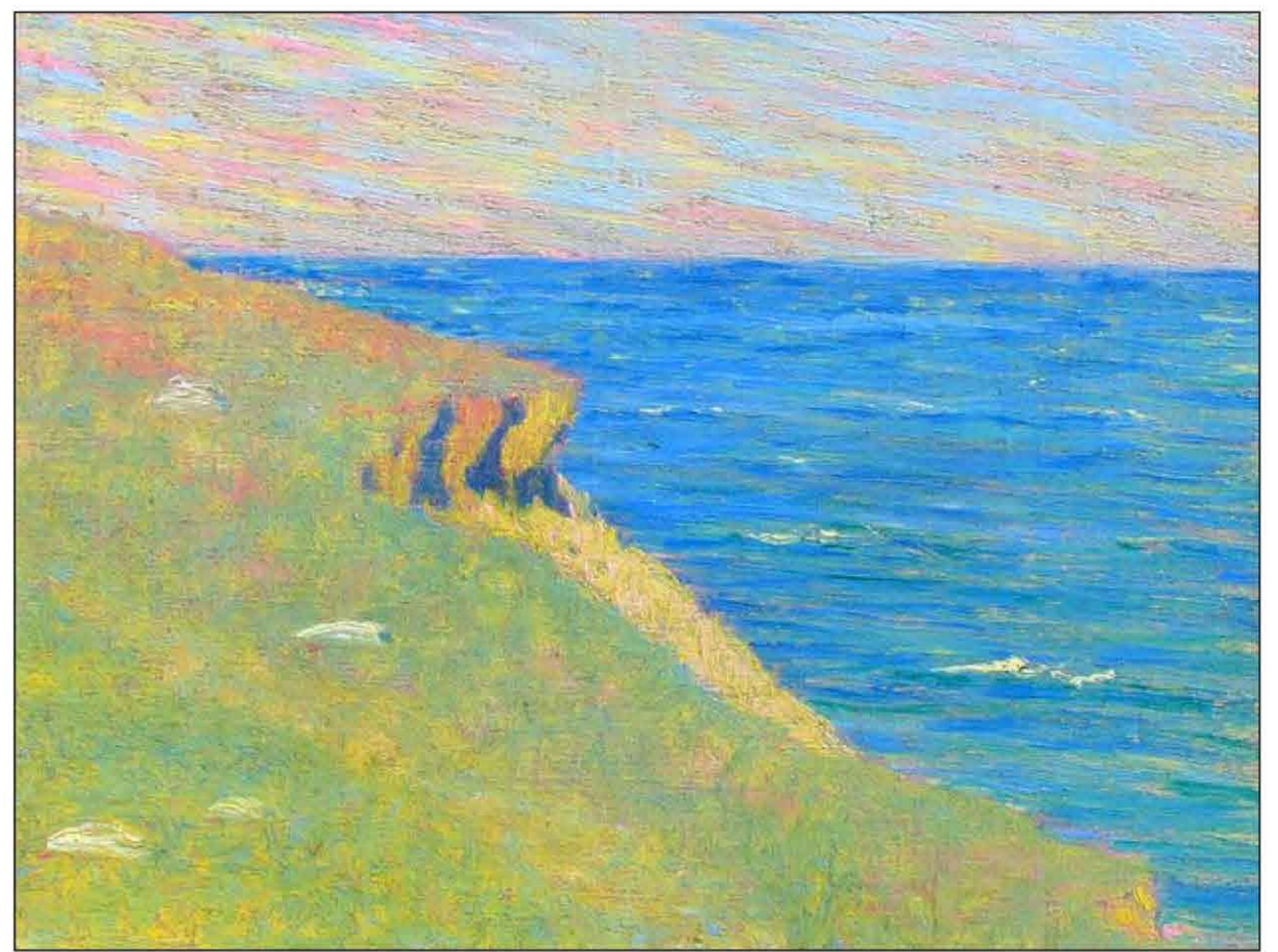
BY MARK MURRAY

NEW YORK CITY — This spring, Mark Murray Fine Paintings is presenting for sale a selection of 55 paintings and watercolors that span the peripatetic, international career of the American artist and aesthete Thomas Buford Meteyard (1865–1928). Many of these works, which belong to the estate of the artist, were on view at the Boston Athenæum in 2017 in an exhibition dedicated to Meteyard titled “Travels through Impressionism.”

These works serve as an intimate travelogue of Meteyard’s itinerant life — ranging from the coast near Scituate, Mass., to Washington, DC; from Giverny to Arcachon; from Carrara to Venice; from St Ives to Boscombe; and returning frequently to his favorite cities, Paris and London.

Meteyard was born in Rock Island, Ill., to parents who had immigrated to America from Dorset, England. After the early death of his father, he moved with his gregarious and independent mother, Marion Meteyard, to Chicago. She immersed herself in the artistic and social circles of that city and involved her young son in many of the cultural and intellectual activities in which she participated. An early highlight occurred when they met Oscar Wilde after a lecture he gave in 1882. In a note thanking Mrs Meteyard for the flowers she had sent him afterwards, Wilde wrote, “I am glad that there is something in the world that the world cannot harm, nor the reporter interview.”

In 1888, Meteyard enrolled at Harvard, where he studied Florentine art with Charles Eliot Norton and philosophy with William James. At Harvard he met and began lifelong friendships with the poets Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, with whom



“The Cliff, Scituate,” 1894, oil on canvas, 13 by 16 inches.

“Self-Portrait, Arcachon,” 1892, oil on canvas, 13 by 10 inches.

he later collaborated on their illustrated volumes.

But it was to be in London and Paris, following his time at Harvard, that Meteyard was able to fully immerse himself in the riches of those cities’ collections and artistic circles and begin to accrue the multifarious enthusiasms and influences that ensued. Turner was “his first love and true master.” There were visits to the studios of the Pre-Raphaelites — Burne-Jones was a friend of his Harvard professor Norton — and the work of Whistler was also to be a profound influence.

Meteyard endured some early formal training in Paris with the academics Bon-

nat and Roll at the École des Beaux-Arts in the late 1880s. However, the true flowering of his art derived from his exposure to the work of Puvis de Chavannes (“a wonderful man and a true artist”); his interaction with the members of the Nabis circle of artists, admirers and followers of Gauguin; and from his extended stays in Giverny in the company of Claude Monet and fellow expatriate artists and friends such as John Breck and Philip Leslie Hale.

Success came relatively early for Meteyard with his works being included in many of the major international exhibitions of his time from 1893 onwards, from Paris and London to Chicago, Boston and Phila-

delphia. Multiple solo shows were held at major galleries throughout his life and beyond.

But, for all this, Meteyard was, according to Morton Fullerton, “a man of a singular modesty.” In his obituary for Meteyard in *Le Figaro*, Fullerton continued, “He was utterly unconcerned with the arts of self-promotion, showing in his personal demeanor the same tact, the same taste, he put into his paintings... he was charming and extraordinary, and an unfailing friend.”

Mark Murray Fine Paintings is at 159 East 63rd Street. For information, 212-585-2380 or visit www.markmurray.com.

www.AntiquesandTheArts.com

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