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TITLE: **Drawn by New York**
Six Centuries of Watercolors and Drawings
at the New-York Historical Society

AUTHOR: **Roberta J.M. Olson**

IMPRINT: **GILES** in association with the New-York Historical Society

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SPECIFICATION: 292mm x 229mm (9" x 11 1/2"), 448 pages, printed in 4 colours, hardback

ILLUSTRATIONS: 235 colour and 30 mono illustrations

TEXT: 90,000 words, including Director's Foreword; Acknowledgments; Main Essay by Dr. Roberta J.M. Olson; Reader's Guide; Catalogue; Bibliography; Photo Credits and Index

MARKET: Students, scholars and generalists with an interest in American art from the earliest colonial times to the present day; American social and economic historians; and all those with an interest in New York City life between 1600s and 2000

SALES POINTS:

- The first extensive catalogue of the Society's vast holdings of original works on paper
- Includes major works by John James Audubon, Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Albert Bierstadt, George Catlin and John Singer Sargent, among many others
- An essential acquisition for every serious library, gallery, and museum interested in American art and the artistic exchanges between Europe and America

CONTENTS: The New-York Historical Society's drawing collection is one of the earliest assembled in the United States, yet its trove of over 8,000 sheets and 44 rare sketch-books is surprisingly little known. The collection spans six centuries, from 215 sixteenth-century avian watercolors and a Dutch view of New York City (1650), then known as New Amsterdam, to a complex view of the façade of St. Patrick's Cathedral captured from inside Rockefeller Center by Richard Haas (2002) and representations of the World Trade Center, both before and after September 2001.

This new major volume has two key components; the first is the main catalogue, which features highlights of the most historically and artistically significant works. These are organized chronologically by the artists' birth dates, and

advance information



each includes a biography and selected bibliography devoted to each individual. These precede full technical entries on each work, which include the work's title, date, media, measurements, inscriptions, provenance, and a selected bibliography. Finally, an entry with footnotes discusses each work's artistic importance, its historical and contextual significance, and its role in material culture.

The other component of this volume is an interpretive historiographic essay on the collection and the major forces behind its evolution. Setting the scene, this discussion also studies the larger sociological and historical phenomena that influenced the art produced, as well as changes in media and technology used by artists over the two centuries of the collection's growth.

Drawn by New York presents over 200 highlights of the Society's vast holdings, many of which are clustered around individual artists. In addition to the cache of nearly 500 original watercolours by Audubon (including his spectacular bird watercolours, together with studies for his *Quadrupeds of North America*, 1844-48), there are many other jewels in the Society's crown. Works by key luminaries, such as Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt, feature alongside works by lesser lights, such as the 123 sheets by the Baroness Hyde de Neuville that preserve the face of a bygone America, its landscape, people, and customs. Other hoards include sheets by members of the Hudson River School, the first indigenous American group of landscape painters—among them sheets by Cole and John Frederick Kensett, as well 29 sketchbooks and 310 individual drawings by Asher B. Durand, the largest collection of Durand material in the world.

As one would expect, the collection encompasses many extraordinary views of the New York urban scene, most of which depict the city's landmarks, many no longer standing. Among these are seven large gouaches by Nicolino Calyo illustrating the Great Fire of 1835, and Archibald Robertson's early topographical views, including a 1798 watercolour of Federal Hall (demolished), which became the first home of the New-York Historical Society from 1804 to 1809. There are over 100 drawings that intimately document the Civil War, and newly-discovered works which include the ten earliest known portraits of John Singer Sargent by James Carroll Beckwith, who shared a studio with Sargent in Paris, as well as six drawings by Sargent himself. Other concentrations include over 200 "Outline drawings" by George Catlin recording long-vanished Native American cultures, silhouettes, folk art and watercolours by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Tiffany Studios.

These offerings reflect America's evolving self-image – initially, as a dependent colony maturing into a still-young country with a seemingly limitless frontier, and ultimately to a world power with great urban centres.



AUTHOR:

Roberta J.M. Olson is Curator of Drawings at New-York Historical Society

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

President's Foreword by Louise Mirrer

Director's Foreword by Linda S. Ferber

Acknowledgments

Sharing One of the Best-Kept Secrets: The Drawing Collection of the Historical Society of the New-York Historical Society by Dr. Roberta J.M. Olson

Reader's Guide

Main catalogue

Bibliography

Index