



Greenwich Decorative Arts &lt;greenwichdecorativearts@gmail.com&gt;

**Re: GDAS Cancellations March/April 2020**

1 message

**Greenwich Decorative Arts** <greenwichdecorativearts@gmail.com>  
To: Greenwich Decorative Arts <greenwichdecorativearts@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 20, 2022 at 2:54 PM



GREENWICH  
*Decorative Arts*  
SOCIETY

Dear Members,

Our April 6 lecture on "Celebrating Self-Taught Genius: the American Folk Art Museum in New York City" by Director Jason Busch is canceled.

Also canceled is the March 31 visit to Yale for the private tour of the Hume American Furniture Study Center with Curator of American Decorative Arts Patricia Kane.

The [Bruce Museum](#) will be closed through Monday, April 6, 2020. They will assess the situation on an ongoing basis; we will keep informed through our liaison Managing Director Suzanne Lio.

The spread and impact of COVID-19 are being closely monitored in our community

and we will update you on future developments. Please feel free to email us at [greenwichdecorativearts@gmail.com](mailto:greenwichdecorativearts@gmail.com) or me personally at [kyhandal@gmail.com](mailto:kyhandal@gmail.com).

Your health and safety are paramount. We cherish our members.

The GDAS Board looks forward to gathering with you again to share our study and appreciation of the decorative and fine arts. We will update you on our May and June lectures.

With best wishes for good health and much gratitude for your supportive membership,

Karen Handal, President  
Greenwich Decorative Arts Society



*Sunrise*, Frederic Edwin Church (1826 - 1900)



*Moonrise*, Frederic Edwin Church

In the Connecticut born painter Frederic Church's time the pervasive 'coronavirus' was diphtheria, spread between people, contaminated surfaces or through the air. Some people carried the bacterium without any symptoms and spread the disease. Tragically, Isabel and Frederic Church's young son and daughter died of diphtheria in 1865. The grief-stricken parents were able to start a new family and had four more children.

Church's panoramic canvases, *Sunrise* and *Moonrise*, painted to commemorate the births of the two children, hang in the Sitting Room of the Church's home, Olana, now the Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, New York.



*Niagara*, Fredrick Edwin Church, 1857  
National Gallery of Art

Despite tragedy, Church wanted his landscape paintings to express an optimistic world-view, reconciling the latest discoveries in science with what he saw as the divine in nature. He celebrated the splendor of nature as a source for spiritual renewal.

For Americans in the New World, Niagara Falls represented the grandeur and promise of the United States. Church wanted to paint a highly naturalistic work and at the same time present the soul and spirit of Niagara. The painting is an iconic metaphor for purification and rebirth. The rainbow, a sign of the "God of Nature's covenant with man," transfixes the beholder and is a revelation of hope.\*

The painting was an instant and stunning success in America and Europe, where it was regarded as the finest painting ever executed by an American artist.

Famed art critic John Ruskin wrote he saw effects in it which he had been waiting for years to find. He marveled at the technical brilliance of the rainbow - at first he thought it was a play of light shining through a window onto the canvas.



Church brings the viewer to the lip of the falls. The vantage point is dramatic and unique, a perspective which was a revelation before the advent of photography. Viewers felt they could feel the mist and hear the roar of the falls.

In May, 1857, tens of thousands paid 25 cents to view the painting in a darkened Manhattan gallery in which only the painting was illuminated.

Some would spend an hour in front of the painting: "Spectators forgot that they were looking simply at pigment ... The painting became the surrogate of a visit in person to the site." \*

Church wanted his painting to convey spiritual optimism. Perhaps in this time of "social distancing" in which we do not have access to our cultural institutions and activities, we too can find in nature, art and books a surrogate experience which brings insight, confidence and hope. Stay safe and well everyone.

(David C. Huntington: *The Landscapes of Fredrick Edwin Church: Visions of an American Era*)

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