



Biographies

Martin Lewis, N.A. 1881-1962.

Martin Lewis was born in Castlemaine, Victoria, Australia on 7 June 1881. He was the second of eight children and had a passion for drawing. At the age of 15, he left home and traveled in New South Wales, Australia, and in New Zealand, working as a pothole digger and a merchant seaman. He returned to Sydney and settled into a Bohemian community outside Sydney. Two of his drawings were published in the radical Sydney newspaper, *The Bulletin*. He studied with Julian Ashton at the Art Society's School in Sydney. Ashton, an English-born Australian artist and teacher, known for his support of the Heidelberg School and for his influential art school in Sydney. In 1900, Lewis left Australia for the United States. His first job was in San Francisco, painting stage decorations for William McKinley's presidential campaign of 1900. By 1909, Lewis was living in New York, where he found work in commercial illustration. His earliest known etching is dated 1915. However, the level of skill in this piece suggests he had been working in the medium for some time previously. It was during this period that he helped Edward Hopper learn the basics of etching. In 1920 Lewis traveled to Japan, where for two years he drew and painted and studied Japanese art. The influence of Japanese prints is very evident in Lewis's prints after that period. In 1925, he returned to etching and produced most of his well-known works between 1925 and 1935 Lewis's first solo exhibition in 1929 was successful enough for him to give up commercial work and concentrate entirely on printmaking.

Lewis is most famous for his black and white prints, mostly street scenes of New York City. During the Depression, however, he was forced to leave the city for four years between 1932 and 1936 and move to Newtown, Connecticut. His work from this period includes dramatic rural, night and winter scenes. Lewis returned to Manhattan in 1936, where he continued to etch and paint. He taught printmaking at the Art Students League of New York from 1944 until his retirement in 1952. Martin Lewis is considered one of the most important American printmakers of the twentieth century.

Pablo Picasso. 1881-1973.

A significant influence on 20th-century art, Pablo Picasso was an innovative artist who experimented and innovated throughout his career. He was not only a master painter but also a sculptor, printmaker, ceramics artist, printmaker, and writer.

The *Vollard Suite* comprises 100 etchings made at a critical point in Picasso's career between 1930 and 1937. Exploring themes of mythology, identity, creativity and sexuality, the *Vollard Suite* is etched in a neoclassical style that Picasso adapted from his studies of classical sculpture and traces his artistic development throughout the 1930s. In the series, Picasso eroticizes the relationship between the artist, model, and art, casting himself in the role of the sculptor pictured throughout.

Set primarily in the artist's studio, Picasso mixes images of artistic repose and reflection with sexual fantasy and conquest. The set shifts from works of serene contemplation of beauty drawn with a graceful, simple line to images of aggression, animalistic desire, and torment that are aggressively etched and heavily work. An unresolved drama between tranquility and agony, power and impotence, classical harmony and the irrational forces of the human psyche, create dramatic tension in the series.

Sir Frank Short, R.A., P.R.E. 1857-1945.

Sir Francis Job "Frank" Short PRE was a British printmaker who revived the practices of mezzotint and pure aquatint, while expanding the expressive power of line in drypoint, etching and engraving. Short also wrote about printmaking to educate a wider public and was President of the Royal Society of Painter Etcher & Engravers (now named the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers) from 1910 to 1938. Short was elected to the Royal Academy in 1911, the same year he was knighted, and served as the R.A.'s Treasurer from 1919-1932. He was also President of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Head of the Engraving School of the Royal College of Art, where he taught from 1891-1924.

According to his friend and colleague, Martin Hardie: "Physically strong, with a powerful frame, a massive head, and large and benevolent eyes, Short was a man of quiet manner and kindly impulse, but of firm character and great strength of will."

John Sloan. 1871-1951.

John French Sloan was an American painter and etcher. He is considered to be one of the founders of the Ashcan school of American art. He was also a member of the group known as The Eight. He is best known for his urban genre scenes and ability to capture the essence of neighborhood life in New York City, often observed through his Chelsea studio window. Sloan has been called "the premier artist of the Ashcan School who painted the inexhaustible energy and life of New York City during the first decades of the twentieth century" and an "early twentieth-century realist painter who embraced the principles of Socialism and placed his artistic talents at the service of those beliefs."

Jacques James Joseph Tissot. 1836-1902.

As one of the greatest technical virtuosos in art history, Tissot was the quintessential celebrator of his era. James Jacques-Joseph Tissot was born in 1836 in Nantes. In 1856 he moved to Paris and it was here that he established close ties with both Whistler and Degas.

Etching was an integral part of Tissot's work. After 1875, he pursued the medium with vigor. This was most likely due to the influence of Whistler's etchings and the encouragement of Seymour Haden, who with the printer, Auguste Delâtre, had a profound influence on Tissot's etching style. Many of Tissot's etchings are based upon, but not copied, from his paintings, as he viewed etching as a, independent art technique.

Tissot was heavily influenced by Japanese art and 'exoticism'. Oriental fascination reached a grand scale at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Tissot was a connoisseur collecting Japanese woodblock prints as well as *objects d'art* that adorned his home. Tissot combined traditional style with contemporary subjects. His insight beneath the elegant surface lifts his work into the world of great art.

Tissot's paintings and etchings continue to 'speak to' collectors, and his work is featured in many of the world's finest museums.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler. 1834-1903.

One of the most significant figures in American art and a forerunner of the Post-Impressionist movement, James Whistler is celebrated for his innovative style and eccentric personality. His paintings, etchings, lithographs, and pastels epitomize the modern penchant for creating "art for art's sake," an axiom celebrated by Whistler and others in the Aesthetic movement. They also represent one of the earliest shifts from traditional representational art to abstraction that is at the heart of much of modern art. Whistler was a serious and innovative printmaker, producing some 450 etchings and about 180 lithographs. His imagery and the technical means that he developed for etching and for printing plates influenced not only his fellow printmakers in Europe and America but also those who followed.

Anders Leonard Zorn. 1860-1920.

Anders Leonard Zorn was a Swedish painter known for his depictions of nude bathers, country festivals, and portraits. Born on February 18, 1860 in Mora, Sweden, he was admitted into the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm at the age of 15. The artist worked primarily in watercolor and etching until 1887, and then concentrated on oil paintings. Over the following decades, the artist gained international acclaim for his skillfully executed portraits and became known for his ability to capture the character of his subjects. His works are held in the collections of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Museum in Stockholm, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and numerous others.
