



# BOSTON ATHENÆUM

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2017

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness...  
 ...swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease...

—John Keats, "To Autumn" (1819)

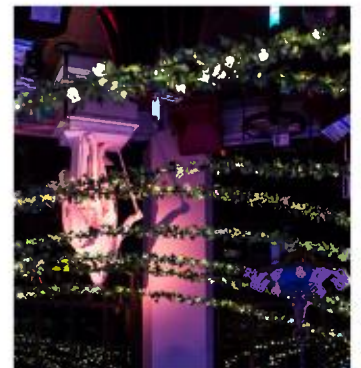
As autumn's abundance fades into memory, the Athenæum offers welcome opportunities to harvest insight and distill knowledge. New discussion groups, timely lectures, a groundbreaking exhibition, the latest publications and time-honored masterpieces await you in a sanctuary that seems almost to glow with welcome as the days grow short. We look forward to seeing you here soon.

**Elizabeth E. Barker, Ph.D.**  
*Stanford Calderwood Director*

Wed, November 22, early closure at 1 pm  
 Thu, November 23 (Thanksgiving)  
 Fri, December 1, early closure at 1 pm  
 Mon, December 18, early closure at 5 pm  
 Mon, December 25 (Christmas Day)  
 Mon, January 1 (New Year's Day)

### CLOSED

MEMBER HOURS	Mon-Thu 9-8 Fri-Sat 9-5
VISITOR HOURS	Tue 12-8 Wed-Sat 10-4



To register for an upcoming event, contact us at  
 617-720-7600 or [events@bostonathenaeum.org](mailto:events@bostonathenaeum.org).

Boston Athenæum  
 10½ Beacon Street  
 Boston, MA 02108





## THREE CHEERS FOR **Stanley Cushing**

*On the eve of his retirement after 47 years of service, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts Stanley Cushing shares his recollections—and his hopes for the future.*

### **How did you come to work at the Athenæum?**

I was trying to do some family history, and was given the name of a woman I had never heard of—middle name Cushing. I wrote her a letter while I was in college at BU. She wrote back on very nice stationery suggesting we meet at the Ritz for tea. When she found out I was a history major, she asked if I wouldn't like to have a ticket to the Athenæum, and I had never heard of it, so I said, "Sure!" And so I came here, and was totally intimidated.

When I graduated from college with no practical skills to speak of (I had been a gardener during the summers), I decided I would work at the Athenæum because I liked books. They didn't want me. I came and knocked on the door of the Athenæum every day for a month until they finally hired me as a temporary employee in the fall of 1970 to handwrite membership cards. The conservation department looked very interesting to me, and I began to

volunteer there once all of my tickets had been written. In January, I was offered a full-time position in conservation.

### **What has been your philosophy for building the rare books collection?**

From my years in conservation, where I had been charged with protecting and preserving rare works, I became a very traditional book person. Once I had the opportunity to expand the collection, I began to realize that an awful lot of creative thinking was going into artists' books. It seemed like a perfectly natural progression to go from collecting beautifully made books to interestingly bound books and interestingly printed books. It happened that I was doing this when the artists' book field was beginning to burgeon. But by then I also knew where our collection had gaps, and I was able to build retrospectively where I felt that we had missed the chance to do so before. With the support of the Trustees, I was able to build an important and reputable collection. I'm very proud of what we own.

### **How has the Athenæum changed over the course of your career?**

I've watched the Athenæum change in numerous ways physically, but I've also witnessed a change in attitude. There was a time when it was a very formal and conservative place, and it has become much more welcoming and easier for a variety of people to come in and experience all it has to offer, which is satisfying to me.

### **What should come next?**

I hope that the next curator of rare books will continue to build upon our strengths and perhaps think of new areas for expansion or ways to emphasize areas of the collection that I didn't. I hope that future members and visitors will come in and really use the books that I've purchased and conserved. There's no satisfaction in this work if no one engages with the material. There's so much here that stretches the brain. I hope these works intrigue other people as much as they intrigue me.

The Athenæum is conducting a national search for Mr. Cushing's successor, who will hold the title Curator of Rare Books and Head of Special Collections. We are grateful to the dedicated members of the search committee: book collector and Trustee emeritus **Dr. Alexander Altschuller**, Stanford Calderwood Director **Elizabeth E. Barker**, book collector and Trustee **Earl M. Collier, Jr.**, Harvard University Librarian emeritus and Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor emeritus **Robert Darnton**, Boston College Burns Librarian and Associate University Librarian for Special Collections **Christian Dupont**, Isabella Stewart Gardner William and Lia Poorvu Curator of the Collection and Exhibition Program **Christina Neilsen**, and art collector and Board Vice President **Susan B. Weatherbie**.

# Thomas Buford Meteyard (1865–1928): Travels Through Impressionism

Through February 24, 2018

Our fall/winter exhibition is the first in any American institution to showcase the work of this important American artist and illustrator—an associate of Oscar Wilde, Edvard Munch, Claude Monet, and Henry James, who worked across a range of artistic movements, from Arts and Crafts to Symbolism to Impressionism. The Boston Athenæum owes a debt of thanks to scholar and collector Nicholas Kilmer for generously donating a substantial portion of the paintings, watercolors, and books presented here.



1. *Self-Portrait*, ca 1894. Watercolor, 12 x 9 inches. Boston Athenæum; Gift of Nicholas Kilmer, 2017. 2. *Marshes*, 1893. Watercolor, 7 x 5 inches. Private collection. 3. *Iris near Giverny*, ca 1891. Watercolor, 7 x 5 inches. Meteyard Family Collection.

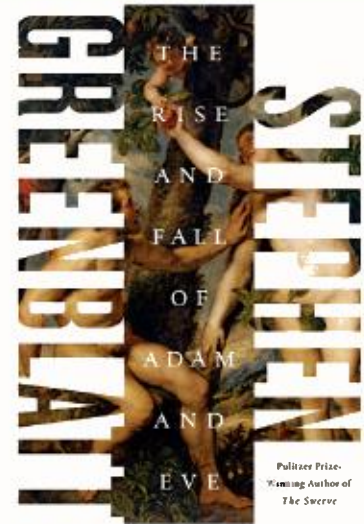
## The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve

Tuesday, November 14, 6–7 pm

Registration begins October 31, 9 am

Members \$15

With the insight, eloquence, and erudition that have thrilled hundreds of thousands of readers, Harvard University's Stephen Greenblatt breathes new life into the ancient story of Adam and Eve. His latest book argues that the biblical origin story is a model for what the humanities still have to offer: not an exposition of the scientific nature of things, but rather a deep encounter with timeless problems that continue to fascinate and trouble us today.



## SPOTLIGHT ON SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

### UP CLOSE TOURS

November 1, 8, 15, 29

December 6, 13, 20

11–11:30 am

Call Visitor Services at 617-720-7612 to register

Members Free, Non-members Free with admission

Up Close Tours encourage visitors to look closely at materials from the Athenæum's unparalleled collections and consider them within a particular context.

### CURATOR-LED GALLERY TALK

Thomas Buford Meteyard (1865–1928): Travels through Impressionism

Tuesday, November 14, 2:30–3:30 pm

Registration begins October 31, 9 am  
Members Free

Tuesday, December 12, 2:30–3:30 pm

Registration begins November 28, 9 am  
Members Free

Join David B. Dearing, the Athenæum's Director of Exhibitions and Susan Morse Hilles Senior Curator of Paintings & Sculpture, for a guided view of the current exhibition.

### EYE OF THE EXPERT

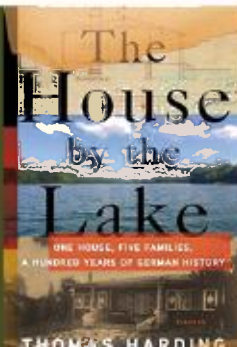
*It's Complicated*

Tuesday, December 19, 5:30–7:30 pm

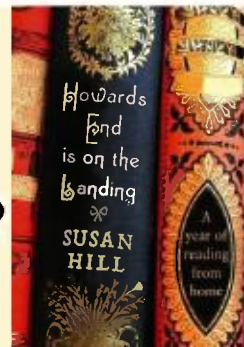
Registration begins December 5, 9 am  
Members \$35

What complex—and contradictory—histories are embodied in the artworks we see daily on the walls and in the stacks at 10½? This content-rich, open-ended conversation guided by Stanford Calderwood Director Elizabeth E. Barker, Assistant Curator Casey Riley and Director of Education Hannah Weisman seeks to find out.

## STANLEY'S BOOK PICKS



The End of Your Life Book Club  
Will Schwalbe



# NEWS

## YOU CAN USE

### NEW CIVIL RIGHTS DISCUSSION GROUP

This new group will explore issues pertinent to racial equality in our country: historical and theoretical perspectives on racism; enslavement; Jim Crow laws; abolitionism; biographies of notable civil rights leaders; and other topics. How may we use this information, teased out through transformative discussion, to propel our country toward equality once and for all? All members are welcome to attend the inaugural meeting on Thursday, November 9 at 6 pm at the Union Club.

### BASED ON THE BOOK

Based On The Book (formerly Film & Text Seminar) now meets on first Wednesdays from 6–7:30 pm in the Seminar Room to discuss a book of fiction and a movie based on that book. Join us on November 1 to discuss Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist* and the 1988 movie. Other pairings might include Mark Helprin's *Winter's Tale* (1983) and the 2014 movie or Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) and the 1995 movie *Clueless*. For more information, contact Grant Schaumburg at [gs@athmovies.org](mailto:gs@athmovies.org).

### WRITERS' WORKSHOP: NEW TIME

Please join the Writers' Workshop in its new time slot—third Saturdays from 2:30–4:30 pm in the Trustees' Room. Different time, same great group!

### BEYOND OUR WALLS

Visitors to the Cape Ann Museum will find 15 lithographs from the Boston Athenæum featured in the special exhibition *Drawn from Nature & on Stone: The Lithographs of Fitz Henry Lane* (on view through March 4, 2018). Our association with the luminist painter's work dates to 1841, when the young artist first exhibited his work at the Athenæum.

## AUGUST *by the* NUMBERS

### ACQUIRED

182 new items

### ANNUAL FUND

\$1,027,444, 976 donors (5% increase from FY16)

### ATTENDANCE

3,531 total entrants:

2,548 members (22% increase over past 5 years)

799 visitors (37% increase)

184 guests (14% decrease)

# JUST *for* KIDS

*For a complete calendar of regularly scheduled children's programs, please visit our website. Program fees are for participants ages 5+ and include first floor admission.*

### NOW OR NEVER! 54TH MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY'S WAR TO END SLAVERY

Saturday, November 18, 1–2:30 pm

Registration begins November 2, 9 am

**P** Members and Non-members \$5

Educator and publisher **Ray Anthony Shepard's** work of nonfiction gives young adult readers a deeper understanding of why the Civil War evolved from a war to save the Union to a war of emancipation. *Now or Never* is the story of two Civil War freedom fighters, journalists, and abolitionists who answered Frederick Douglass' clarion call:

Men of Color  
To Arms! To Arms!  
Now or Never

### WINTER CRAFT-MAKING

Saturday, December 16, 1–2 pm

Registration begins November 30, 9 am

**P** Members and Non-members \$5

Join us for a fun afternoon of winter-themed crafts, cookies, and cocoa. Make a snow globe and take home a winter wonderland of your own creation.

## CATALOGED

160 new circulating items

31 new special collections materials

76 circulating item records updated

22 special collection records updated

## CONSERVED

2 circulating books

1 archival item

3 special collections books

3 works on paper

## PROGRAMS

5 adult programs

18 children's programs

20 special tours

# MEMBERS' CORNER

Opportunities to engage with others in our curious community

## DIRECTOR'S COFFEE HOUR

Monday, November 6, 2:30-4 pm

Registration not required

All are welcome to join Stanford Calderwood Director **Elizabeth E. Barker** and other colleagues for this informal discussion over coffee and pastries in the Long Room. As the Athenæum plans for the years ahead, we are eager to learn more about our members' needs and desires.

## STUDENT MEMBER COFFEE BREAK

Thursday, November 9, 10-11 am

Thursday, December 14, 3-4 pm

Registration not required

Take a break from your work! Join Director of Education **Hannah Weisman** and other colleagues for a coffee break in the Seminar Room on 1G and meet other student members, learn about resources available to you, and offer feedback on your experiences at the Athenæum in a relaxed setting.

## THE CULTURE OF AMERICAN WOMANHOOD

*A four-part series exploring women's roles in American society and culture*

### ABOUT ABORTION

*Terminating Pregnancy in Twenty-First Century America*

Thursday, November 2, 6-7 pm

Registration begins October 19, 9 am

🅑 Members Free, Non-members \$15

Columbia Law professor **Carol Sanger**'s new book explores the connections between abortion law and American culture and politics, demonstrating how widespread societal stigma and hostility have stifled women's willingness to talk about the private decision to terminate a pregnancy, which in turn distorts public and political discourse.

### CODE GIRLS

*The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of WWII*

Tuesday, November 7, 12-1 pm

Registration not required

🅑 Members Free, Non-members Free with admission

Journalist, political commentator, and *New York Times* bestselling author **Liza Mundy** reveals in her new book the riveting story of courage, service, and accomplishment of a group of remarkable young women who were recruited to work as cryptographers during World War II—a story nearly erased from history due to a strict vow of silence.



## AUTUMN PROPRIETORS' MEETING

Tuesday, November 28, 3:30-6 pm

By invite only; kindly RSVP by November 21

This seasonal gathering—one of three such meetings offered annually—offers Proprietors the opportunity to engage with Trustees and administrators on issues important to our community. This year, we have partnered with the New England Historical Genealogical Society to present the history of share number twenty-eight, which was previously held by mathematician and Athenæum member **Nathaniel Bowditch**.



## NAKED AMONG THE KARMA EATERS

*The Politics of Women's Lands*

Tuesday, December 5, 12-1 pm

Registration not required

🅑 Members Free, Non-members Free with admission

This author's talk with cultural anthropologist **Keridwen N. Luis** (Brandeis) examines how the "body politics" of women's lands—communal living spaces created by and for women—shape individual experiences and larger expectations about gender, identity, and community.

# SELECT FALL–WINTER EVENTS

Visit our website for a complete calendar of upcoming programs.

## YOUNG PATRONS SPONSORED ART AND WINE NIGHT

**Wednesday, November 8, 6–7:30 pm**  
Registration begins October 25, 9 am  
Members \$40

Experience art with all the senses through carefully crafted pairings. Come prepared to learn about four artworks from the Athenæum's collection and use your skills of deduction to decipher the pairs.

## HOUSE STYLE

*Five Centuries of Fashion at Chatsworth*

**Wednesday, November 15, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 1, 9 am  
Members \$30

Chatsworth has been home to the Cavendish family and the hereditary dukes of Devonshire since the original Elizabethan house was built on the site purchased by Sir William Cavendish in 1549. Former model and *Harper's Bazaar* editor **Laura Cavendish**, Countess of Burlington, will offer a personal perspective on the famous house, renowned as much for its fashionable history as for its unrivaled collection of art. Presented in conjunction with the Royal Oak Foundation.

## VINCENT YOUMANS

*Great American Songwriter*

**Thursday, November 16, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 2, 9 am  
Members Free, Non-members \$15

Hailed during his lifetime as a great songwriter, Vincent Youmans had a disastrous personal life. This biographical lecture by **Fred Broer, Ph.D.**, will focus on Youmans' wildly successful 1927 musical *Hit the Deck*. Using rare photographs and printed materials, an antique recording, and recent performances, Boer will illuminate Youmans' significant contributions to American music.

## OUR FUTURE WITH BEES

**Wednesday, November 29, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 15, 9 am  
Members Free

If you eat food, you need bees. As pollinators, bees bring us more than 100 fruit and vegetable crops, and provide food for livestock. Yet bees are dying at an alarming rate. In this lecture, TED speaker **Noah Wilson-Rich, Ph.D.**, explores why bees are doing better in cities, and how urban beekeeping can save these vitally important creatures.

## POP-UP HOLIDAY BOOKSTORE

**Saturday, December 2, 1–3 pm**  
Registration begins November 16, 9 am  
Members Free, Non-members Free with admission

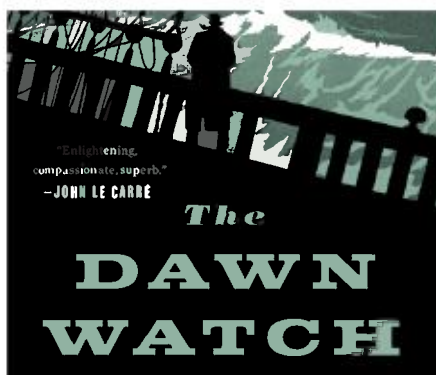
Books make perfect holiday gifts! Join Athenæum librarians **Dani Crickman, Carolle Morini, Elizabeth O'Meara, and Mary Warnement** for a review of this season's best. Enjoy tea, cocoa, and cookies while you shop. Gift wrapping will be available.

## THE DAWN WATCH

*Joseph Conrad in a Global World*

**Monday, December 4, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 20, 9 am  
Members Free, Non-members \$15

Joseph Conrad described the beginnings of globalization in a literary oeuvre of prophetic power. In her most recent book, prizewinning Harvard historian **Maya Jasanoff** considers four of Conrad's greatest works through the lenses of history, biography, literary criticism, and travelogue.



**R** Reception to follow

**P** Open to the public

## RED FIGHTING BLUE

*How Geography and Electoral Rules Polarize American Politics*

**Monday, December 11, 12–1 pm**  
Registration not required  
Members Free, Non-members Free with admission

Boston College political scientist **David A. Hopkins'** new book places the current partisan political era in historical context, revealing the critical role that American political institutions play as intermediaries between the behavior of citizens and the outcomes of public policy-making.

## THE NEW COLOSSUS

*A Poets' Theatre Presentation on Immigration and Its History in Boston*

**Tuesday, December 12, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 28, 9 am  
Members \$20, Non-members \$30

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ..." Emma Lazarus penned her famous sonnet amidst a virulent anti-immigration movement that started in Boston. Actors from the **Poets' Theatre** explore that heated moment in this newly commissioned work inspired by the Athenæum's collections.



## PIANIST FREDERICK MOYER IN CONCERT

**Wednesday, December 13, 6–7 pm**  
Registration begins November 29, 9 am  
Members \$25, Non-members \$30

Equally at home with Bach, Rachmaninoff, and Duke Ellington, **Fred Moyer's** recitals are creative, engaging, and entertaining. In this program combining time-honored with less familiar classical piano masterpieces, Moyer's delightful commentary from the stage will bring the audience into the heart of the musical experience.