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Stripped and Exploited Blackness: Black Nude Men in the Art of F. Holland Day and John Singer Sargent

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AND JOHN SINGER SARGENT

BY

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B.A., Art Studio, University of New Mexico, 2014

THESIS

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DEDICATION

For my grandparents: Perfie Segura, Ernest Segura, Ramona Saiz, and Luis Saiz (1928–2020).

Thank you all for your love and acceptance.

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At the beginning of my second year at UNM, my life changed in a huge way. Before the fall of 2019, I was steeped in all things contemporary Queer-Latinx art. Over the summer of that same year, I devoted my time to work on an essay for my class—Art of the United States, 1876–1945— with Dr. Kirsten Pai Buick. The center of my art-historical analysis was John Singer Sargent and his watercolors of Black male nudes in Florida. I never extensively researched or wrote about artists from the nineteenth or early twentieth century, but I found myself consumed by this work. I read voraciously and produced an essay I anticipated using as my symposium paper for that term. When I went to discuss my paper with Dr. Buick, the conversation was one any student would dream to have with their professor. Dr. Buick was thrilled by my work and, much to my surprise, asked me to work with her. The most sought-after professor in the department and well-respected Americanist today asked me to work with her! I was beside myself but then realized I had a critical decision to make.

Torn between Latinx art and U.S. art, I thought the former made the most sense. Since I invested a lot of time and energy into my work on Latinx art, I made the difficult decision to stick with my original research. This was a choice I thought seemed best for me, even though everything in my body was telling me to make the jump to U.S. art. Later that same semester, as I was writing my thesis on queer New Mexican artists, the issue of me establishing a peripheral canon became too hard to ignore. I emailed Dr. Buick to talk to her again because I knew the scholarship I was writing was wrong. After many stress-filled days and restless nights, I knew I needed and wanted to become an Americanist. Thankfully, Dr. Buick still agreed to take me as her mentee. Without Dr. Buick, I would still be lost. She helped me realize I am already free. I just needed to trust myself and be fearless. These paragraphs have turned into a sort of dedication

as well, but I told Dr. Buick her official "thank you" will be on the pages of my first book. This is only the beginning of our journey together. From one unintended reader to the other.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Buick for helping me select a stellar thesis committee. Dr. Kevin Mulhearn and Dr. Maureen G. Shanahan, you have each been outstanding committee members. I thank you both for your patience and brilliant advice on my chapters. It has been an absolute honor working with each of you. Dr. Mulhearn, your expertise in the history of photography in the U.S. and particularly in Africa added an essential new dimension to my work on F. Holland Day. Dr. Shanahan thank you for taking the time to talk to me over the phone and Zoom about my chapter on Sargent. You really pushed me to be concise with my history of labor in Florida and you have provided invaluable pieces of information that I will take with me into my dissertation research. Moreover, your recommendation to read a piece on Camille Pissaro by Natalia Ángeles Vieyra, who I reached out to, ended up becoming a tremendous professional connection for me. Ms. Vieyra, soon-to-be PhD, agreed to chat with me over Zoom and helped connect me to two other emerging Americanists, with the addition of providing me valuable sources for my own work. Surprisingly, Zoom culture during the Covid pandemic has been an unexpected positive for me as I wrote my thesis. I would also like to thank future PhDs, Layla Bermeo and Marina Tyquiengco.

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Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me throughout all my various pursuits. Whether it was acting, painting, teaching, or museum work, my family and friends have always supported me in any way they could. I may not have officially dedicated this thesis to my parents, Yvonne and Marty, but every success and accomplishment I have achieved in my life is dedicated to you both. Even if you do not fully understand the work I do, you have always been right at my side. I love you both so very much, and thank the universe everyday for being gifted with such wonder parents.

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ABSTRACT

Black representation in late-nineteenth to early-twentieth-century U.S. art and visual culture is primarily dominated by racist depictions produced by white elite (usually male) artists. Exploiting Black male nude subjects in their art production, F. Holland Day and John Singer Sargent are inextricably tied to this complicated legacy. For Day, his *African* series featuring U.S.-born model, J.R. Carter, extracts the subject from his time and place to present him as an exotic African subject/object. On the other hand, Sargent encounters Black Bahamian laborers at Miami's Villa Vizcaya where he then documents his subjects in watercolor as bathers in the surrounding subtropical landscape. Day and Sargent each viewed Black male nude subjects as subservient, foreign, and abnormal entities that were exclusively admired for their beautiful physiques and unchallenged transactional availability. The subjectivities of these men were swept into the process of social, class-based, racial, and nativist differentiation used to mask Day and Sargent's homoerotic desires and fantasies.

Through two case studies, I analyze Day's *African* series and Sargent's watercolors of Black Bahamian laborers as evidence of their ambivalent racial interactions, which oscillate between sexual admiration and ideological debasement. I argue that these bodies of work expose Day and Sargent's anxious conformance to U.S. racism in ways that deflect attention from their

own anti-normative identifications. Through this process, their artistic genius and white masculine positions are sustained but, most importantly, their American identities remain intact.

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"'I liberate a slave! God forbid that I should ever be guilty of such a crime. Ah, you know little of my character, if you believe me capable of doing so much wrong to a fellow-creature.'"[1]
—John C. Calhoun, 1859

Introduction

Sociologist Karen E. Fields and historian Barbara J. Fields, in the introduction to their book *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2014), bring into context the pernicious praxis and process of racism in the United States. Fields and Fields state, "Racist concepts do considerable work in political and economic life; *but*, if they were merely an appendage of politics and economics, without intimate roots in other phases of life, their persuasiveness would accordingly diminish."[2] This thesis will bring into light some of the "intimate roots" that lie beneath the surface of systemic racism that, since our nation's founding, have been edified through "American" art. Specifically, examining the way blackness, as a socially-constructed weapon of differentiation, translates into an irrational fear, hatred, and threat to white nation formation, masculinity, class structures, and hetero-normative sexuality.

Through two case studies, I will focus on specific artworks by two early U.S. artists: F. Holland Day (American, U.S. Norwood, Massachusetts 1864–1933 Norwood, Massachusetts) and John Singer Sargent (self-identified U.S. American, born Florence, Italy 1856–1925 London).[3] Each of these artists were white elite men who contributed significantly to the formation of "American" art but were simultaneously sidelined by it for various reasons that will be explored in the chapters that follow. The problem with "American" art is that it is a doctrine structured to serve a very specific portion of the population. It is the product of ideological

[1] Grattan, Thomas Colley, *Civilized America*, vol. 1 (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1859): 158. https://www.loc.gov/item/02002416/.
[2] Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London and Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2014): 11.
[3] The "tombstone" label information for each artist was taken from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I made the addition of "U.S." to address the fact that "American" does not exclusively imply the United States.

nationalism that has been controlled for centuries by white men whose needs and desires are dependent on taxonomical and relational "Othering" influenced by economic, class-based and sexual exploitation. If a large majority of the population is non-white, non-masculine (or female), same-sex oriented, or non-Protestant then they automatically need to undergo vicious processes of "Othering" so that power remains in the hands of the supreme. Moreover, art is a tool of persuasion that authenticates and embeds ideologies into societal consciousness that is later made real through institutional and everyday enactments. U.S. artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries bred new epistemological, ontological, political, and social realities created through various artistic endeavors. This is what makes art dangerous and continually constructs and preserves the center. Writer, feminist, womanist, librarian, and civil rights activist Audrey Lorde calls the center "the master's house" and asks, "What does it mean when the tools of a racist [hetero-]patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of the same [hetero-]patriarchy."[4] Meaning, the ways scholars have approached such topics as racism, nationalism, and sexism usually reinforce these narratives in ways that still give power to the center. The tools we use to dismantle and threaten a racist hetero-patriarchy are typically ineffective in the way they do not look beyond the exterior structure. The only way to dismantle the master's house is to break it from its very foundation and to expose what lies underneath.

The field of "American" art is a product of the mid to late twentieth century.[5] Now well established, scholars today are still working to correct its long and complex history. I, as an emerging Americanist, wanted to critically examine the lives and work of F. Holland Day and

[4] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007): 111.

[5] "In an overview of the field published in 1988, the art historian Wanda Corn noted that the study of American art began to flourish only in the late 1960s. Before this time, scholars were primarily 'self-trained, motivated by love for the work or curiosity about the development of the field.' Many were artists turned historians, freelance writers, or librarians." See, Frances K. Pohl, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art,* Vol. 1 (New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2017): 12.

John Singer Sargent, not because of their reputable names, but for their divergence and differentiation within the canon. Moreover, narrowing in on artworks where Day and Sargent exploit Black male nude subjects, the most revealing evidence of their anxious conformance to U.S. racism and white (sexual) domination can be revealed. For Day, his *African* series was created early in his career in Boston at the turn of the century, *c.*1896–1897. The model was a U.S.-born man named J.R. Carter, whose life and name in nearly all scholarship up until 2008 was lost, confused, or obscured. In Pictorialist photographs taken in Day's private studio, Carter is staged as an African subject/object barely visible against a darkened backdrop. Carter's blackness, cast against a darkened background, becomes a technical feat for Day to demonstrate his artistic genius. Underneath this technical prowess, visual discourses of ethnography and orientalism come to the surface. Day uses Carter as an object of African authentication, economic exchange, and homoerotic fascination stripped of U.S. origin and narrative. Similarly, Sargent in 1917 encounters Black Bahamian laborers at Miami's Villa Vizcaya. As the private estate of James Deering, Sargent took advantage of this visit as an opportunity to paint in watercolor the villa, its exotic flora and fauna, and, most importantly, its laborers who were constructing the home and gardens. Historically erased from Miami history, Black Bahamians were crucial to the development of Vizcaya and the city due to their geologic familiarity with the landscape. Sargent, ignoring this context, secretly documented nude Bahamian laborers bathing away from the site of Vizcaya. These particular watercolors of the nude male bathers segregate the laborers from the villa, and dematerialize and collapse the subjects into the untamed tropical landscape. The nude laborers thus become entangled within the discourse of the female nude and are reductively exoticized, feminized, and sexualized for the pleasure of the white male creator/observer. Day and Sargent each viewed Black male nude subjects as subservient, foreign,

and abnormal entities that were admired for their beautiful physiques and their unchallenged and transactional availability.

Day and Sargent each get their own chapter to understand the social context of their time and place when the works discussed were created. I will attempt to flesh out historical, social, economic, cultural, place-based, and, when possible, biographical details related to the models—a project that will continue into my dissertation research. Each of the models are confined to a sexual economy that is supported by their (imagined and actual) geographical foreignness, non-whiteness, lower-class status, state of undress, and forced feminization. The artists each arrange and record Black male nude subjects as objects of homosexual fantasy and secret desire. I will be arguing that Day's *African* series and Sargent's series of watercolors of Bahamian bathers concede to legacies of U.S. racism and engage with a homoeroticism that complicates the white artists' identification in terms of masculinity, authority, and, nationality.

In the case of Day and Sargent, their success in U.S. culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was well recognized and documented in their time, but later riddled with long periods of posthumous obscurity. Each of the artists was hit with artistic and social skepticism, competition, and scandal that challenged their position as true "American" artists. Day's life and legacy survived in letters, memorabilia, and photographs that were locked away in his family's former estate. The artist's life would only later resurface as a happenstance research project conducted by historian of photography, Estelle Jussim. In 1981, Jussim published the first monograph, *Slave to Beauty: The Eccentric Life and Controversial Career of F. Holland Day Photographer, Publisher, Aesthete,* detailing Day's biography, social networks, career, and legacy in the U.S. and abroad. As a pioneer of American Pictorialist photography Day's presence in U.S. narratives and the history of photography was often overshadowed by that of

photographer, art promoter, and rival, Alfred Stieglitz. For Sargent, a different story played out. Art historian Trevor Fairbrother opens his 2001 essay, "*Man Screaming* by John Singer Sargent," by revealing:

> …the Paris-trained, London-based portraitist remained tainted by American nativist and modernist biases, and his oeuvre, or large parts of it, [were] met with skepticism and neglect… In 1969, when Barbara Novak published the period's most thought-provoking new survey of nineteenth-century American art, she proposed that we excuse Sargent's more superficial portraits and remember those with 'Eakins-like profundity.'"[6]

The artists' controversial same-sex orientation and engagement with "degenerate" explorations of Pictorialism and realism established their varied marginalization from American art. Day and Sargent left behind complicated legacies that have left generations of scholars working to either deny or confirm their same-sex sexualities and uncover their racial outlooks during their time. I hope this thesis will introduce new insights to each of the artists' lives and oeuvres.

THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES

Interweaving Marxist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, gay and lesbian studies, and social history throughout my arguments, I first expose the elements of the artists that place them at a social advantage. In a 2005 book, *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture*, visual culture studies scholar Martin A. Berger suggests, "those of us motivated by a vision of racial justice should begin an analysis of race by assessing how white identity affects the lives of both white and nonwhite peoples."[7] Day and Sargent's whiteness and elitism (in terms of financial, cultural, and educational opportunity) placed these men at the apex of American life. They each were able to navigate social and cultural landscapes in the U.S. and Europe without barriers. This allowed the artists to engage and participate in same-sex, subcultural networks

[6] Trevor Fairbrother, "*Man Screaming* by John Singer Sargent," *American Art* 15, no. 1 (2001): 84.
[7] Martin A. Berger, *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005): 4.

because their elite whiteness padded them with the freedom to explore such intimate desires. I write the previous sentence with derision because for Day and Sargent, their violation of the status quo has been merely labeled or coded with language such as dandyism, aestheticism, childishness, or bachelorism. For the non-white subject, such transgressions would have resulted in punitive measures ranging from imprisonment, to exile, to lynching. These are the stark differences that arise when elite whiteness is placed in conversation with Black male nude subjects. The pressures of masculine gendering and hetero-normative mingling impressed upon Day and Sargent in their daily lives, is nothing in comparison to the struggles of the Black subject in the United States. In fact, it is through these inequities that Day and Sargent found transcendent inspiration and fascination. Black male nude subjects became the material necessary to sexually and economically assert a masculine, heteronormative, and racial dominance.

Chapter 1

Reflections on Black Representation in U.S. Art

Considering American art's begrudgingly discursive appropriation and attachment to English cultural and social paradigms, I begin with a watercolor by British artist John Boyne. Boyne's *A Meeting of Connoisseurs* (*c.*1790–1807), presents a nude Black male model in a partial *adlocutio* (or orator's) pose (fig. 1). The man's grip on the shaft of a broom stick stymies the full physicality and power of the pose, but also functions as a reminder of his lower-class status and uncontrollable sexuality. Set inside an artist's studio, the left of the image presents a clustering of white men who observe a Black subject in various states of shock, wonder, and admiration. One spectator, presumably the artist since he holds a painting palette, orally fixates on the padded head of a maulstick. A tiny white man stands in front of the model as he more closely studies the figure's facial profile and intentional allows the man's exposed buttocks to face the viewer.[8] At the right margin of the scene, there appears a woman, potentially a (Black) wetnurse, turned away from the nude model as she sits holding an infant. Kneeling on the floor, behind the woman's chair, is a young boy cowering behind a bassinet as he looks upon the nude man in fear. The background has an arrangement of erect sculptures on a shelf and one perched on top of a large metal cage, which the Black subject directly overlaps. To the left of the image, a casement window allows sunlight to bathe the scene as an assortment of backwards-facing artworks lean against the shadowed wall. A dog urinates on the failed paintings. Historically, the Black subject as muse and fetish was quite popular in England. Abolitionism was sweeping the

[8] "The recognition of beauty or ugliness in others might also imply an assessment of their relative civility. If the beautiful, whether in human beings, nature or objects, was assumed by philosophers to be morally good, and the ugly or deformed to be bad, then an aesthetic response could validate the moral elevation or denunciation of others… Travellers' judgements of 'beautiful' or 'ugly' peoples were also often reinforced in physical images, in engravings and sometimes paintings, which provided a generally accessible pool of stereotypes, allegories and personifications… the idea of a generic 'African' physiognomy might well have existed in visual form before its assumed characteristics were expressed in words." See, David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002): 20.

English nation as enslavement of Africans in the newly independent United States of America remained egregiously profitable. Boyne's artwork suggests that the Black male subject is an aesthetic marvel and curiosity. Additionally, this watercolor is a clear example of whiteness' imbalanced and non-consensual fascination with blackness. A relationship marred by inequity and gaping disparities in regard to perpetuating and performing diametric oppositions: civil vs. uncivil, clothed vs. unclothed, proper vs. improper, masculine vs. feminine, creator vs. subject, superior vs. inferior, artist vs. model, whiteness vs. blackness, human vs. animal, and adult vs. child.

Black representation, specially the visual embodiment of blackness, is divisively and wrongly broken up into two art-historical *modus operandi*: Black artists depicting Black subjects and white artists depicting Black subjects. Although this division is not cut and dry, it is important to acknowledge the ways Black representation is presented, authenticated, and commodified in U.S. society by the individuals who have worked to make race deceivingly codifiable. This is a process of Black (in)visibility that is heavily informed by the context of the creator, their race and place, and intention in actively making the non-white subject (un)real. Art historian Kymberly N. Pinder in her 1999 review, "Black Representation and Western Survey Textbooks" examines the way art created by Black artists in "general art historical surveys, through selection and omission, construct different identities for African American art that often employ negative stereotypes. Inadvertently this treatment frames this art within the confines of racialized attitudes and makes the discussion of African American art in these books a discourse about African Americans."[9] Alternatively, Black subjects in the art of white artists stages, "the

[9] Kymberly N. Pinder, "Black Representation and Western Survey Textbooks," *The Art Bulletin* 81, no. 3 (1999): 533.

struggle over the image… and who owns *it* (emphasis added)."[10] I explore the way white artists specifically exploit Black male nude subjects to maintain and feed stereotypes that are then weaponized to economically secure social strata.

The process of forming a white hegemony is only achievable through violent and debasing acts of differentiation. White artists visually, ontologically, and ideologically exert a sexual and proprietary ownership over Black subjects in order to shape and define whiteness. Without socially constructed perceptions of blackness, whiteness would not exist. Therefore, politically, socially, economically, and culturally (i.e. visual culture), visual idioms of blackness are replicated and distributed as edifiers of Black representation's supporting, inferior, and antagonistic role in the broader social schema. Regardless of racial or gender-/class-based identifications, Black subjects are never truly free from the anxious and para-judicial gaze of white authority. British artist Thomas Williamson recreated Boyne's watercolor as a copper engraving in 1807 and nearly exactly replicated the image (fig. 2). Two subtle but noteworthy differences come into focus. The canvas that sits on the centralized easel now has an image of a figure. The figure is that of a classical white god with European facial features, which establishes a clear racial contrast to the physiognomic profile of the Black "African" model. Moreover, Williamson's version of this image communicates that this Black model was hired for the explicit use of his toned and powerful physique and not for his blackness (or sexual consumption). This last point is further emphasized by the conspicuous covering of the man's buttocks in Williamson's version—a detail that tames Black sexuality yet preserves white sexualization (i.e. the man still sucks on the maulstick). The model's blackness undergoes a metamorphosis that elevates the subject through an aesthetic classical whiteness, while actively

[10] Pinder, "Black Representation," 533.

erasing and using the parts of the man that were deemed most appropriate. In shaping an ideal white masculinity, the connoisseurs in this scene look to the working-class and exotic physique of the model, yet deny him socially of any such public masculinity. For a Black subject to engage and perform white masculinity would be grounds for judicial and violent punishment, therefore, the man is only allowed to exist as the submissive model who is privately ogled in the artist's studio. This image by two British artists is a useful segue into the ways Black representation plays into American art. White U.S. artists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see the Black subject as not an equal or an ideal entity, but as a solution and scapegoat to cure societal and personal anxieties.

Art historian Frances K. Pohl's most recent fourth edition of *Framing America: A Social History of American Art c. 200BCE–1900* (2017), stands as one of the leading survey texts for American art. In this survey, Pohl does an effective job discussing the complicated formation of Black stereotypes, and how they were employed in art during the years of the Civil War and Reconstruction period in the chapter, "A Nation at War *c.* 1830–1900." In attempts to maintain the institution of slavery in the U.S., "the image of the black man and woman in American culture [became shaped by] stereotypes of black men [as] silent servants, situated on the margins of the composition… [and of] Black women [as] 'mammys,' protective of their white charges and proud of their place as servant, maid, and nanny within the white household." Such constructions were used to mitigate the atrocities of enslavement of African people and produce a narrative that such an institution is for the greater good of the nation—a much debated topic of the time. Once the text moves into the Gilded Age, Pohl's discussion of African Americans is less expansive. Given the large span of historical time Pohl had to cover in two volumes, there was bound to be significant edits that nearly removed Black visibility from the text.

Omission and suppression of Black representation in U.S. society is all too common. U.S. history mentions Black citizens most during the years of the Transatlantic trade of Africans in the Americas, Abolitionism, Reconstruction and Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement, but the axiomatic reality is Black people are tightly woven into every fiber of American life. With the turn of the century being a critical timeframe for the chapters that follow, I was unsurprised that art historian Sarah Burns, in her 1996 book, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*, left out any discussion of Black representation or subjectivity. Burns discloses the limitations of her own examination stating, "The absence of race … should not be inferred as an evasion but rather a reflection of its *nonexistence* in cultural discussions of the Gilded Age, when there was little or no question that only whiteness counted in building, defending, and advancing civilization (added emphasis)."[11] This statement is correct in terms of there being an absence, or rather suppression, of non-whiteness in U.S. culture, but I disagree with Burns' claim of its "nonexistence." Race, or rather racism toward non-white populations, became a necessity in the development of the U.S. Despite Burns' lacking critical race lens, the book was still extremely beneficial in understanding the development of the white artist in the twentieth century, especially along the lines of white nation formation and the cult of masculinity. With the rise of the cult of the celebrity, the art critic and artist established new ways of valuation that made both aesthetic objects and the artist a marketable commodity. Moreover, Burns' chapter "Sickness and Health" provides an insightful look at the medicalization and formation of stereotypes surrounding invert (i.e. homosexual) men. The invert male was viewed as a corruptive and degenerative force in American society. One who heightened levels of gender anxiety that reactively inspired new perceptions of masculinity,

[11] Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996): 3.

which modernism complicitly helped shape. Although discussion of Black representation was absent, the rhetoric of degeneration surrounding the medicalization and denigration of invert subjects was all to similar to discourses on race. Thus, as Burns reveals, white masculinity and (white) democracy were viewed as the necessary remedies for a corroding American culture—one that was seeing an unsettling surge in an immigrant, non-white cultural landscape.[12]

In American historian John F. Kasson's 2001 book, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America,* perceptions of masculinity and its alignment with "pure" whiteness augments Burns' work. Closely examining three turn-of-the-century white "heroes," Kasson wrestles with the ways U.S. society began to reimage its sedentary bourgeois men into classical figures of physical manly perfection. Eugene Sandow, Harry Houdini, and Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan are critically examined as case studies in the book's three chapters. Kasson early in his introduction brilliantly assesses,

> [These men] contributed to a new popular interest in the male nude as a symbol of ideals in peril and a promise of their supremacy, as a monument to strength and a symbol of vulnerability, as an emblem of discipline and an invitation to erotic fantasy. In the guise of entertaining, they reasserted the primacy of the white male body against a host of challenges that might weaken, confine, or tame it… They repeatedly dramatized the transformation from weakness to supreme strength, from vulnerability to triumph, from anonymity to heroism, from the confinement of modern life to the recovery of freedom.[13]

Such an apotheotic transformation is a process of liberation only available to white male subjects. The white male body was constructed to be an unshakable monolith in popular culture of the time, one that cannot be contaminated by nature, by femininity, or by race. Instead, white

[12] "For American art to stay healthy, the pattern of European decay—its aesthetic corruption, perversion, and immorality—had to be maintained to serve as a standard of degeneration, as benchmark and warning… Henry Loomis Nelson, stating that the literature of a true democracy had 'never been decadent,' prescribed democracy as the only sure cure for cultural disease… Optimistic diagnosticians of America's social health more often than not ignored, or pretended to ignore, a highly visible parallel discourse centering on the nation's rotting social fabric. Society in late-nineteenth-century America was riven with unsettling problems—the effects of immigration, massive urban poverty, corrupt government, class warfare, anarchism—that turned once-solid ground into quicksand." See, Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist,* 83-85.

[13] John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001): 8.

masculinity had permission to play within all of these realms and come out unscathed. Most interesting and insightful for my own chapters was Kasson's exploration of Tarzan. The literary wild man lives in the jungle and is raised by gorillas, but, with his white exteriority, he was able to readily shed off the savagery of the animal world and take on the influence of Jane—a symbol of his heteronormative, intra-cultural acceptance into white civility. Tarzan represents a performative desire that whiteness summons in order to both recognize racial and class superiority, but also exert a dominance that is sexual. The homoerotic desire for the perfect male figure is only one dimension to the cultural hypocrisy that Kasson exposes. The jungle and gorillas as metaphor for non-white savageness becomes a commentary on white man's inability to be changed by the subjects his embodied masculinity constantly fights. White masculinity can live with savageness, play with it, breed with or rape it, but always remain deceivingly uninvolved.

Nineteenth-century and even early-twentieth-century Black representation, as Pohl and Burns discuss, either existed as stereotype or was omitted all together from fine-art contexts. Art historians Adrienne L. Childs and Susan H. Libby, in their introduction to the edited collection *Black and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century* (2014), hold,

> The black [subject] was a fascinating source of visual inspiration for European artists over the long nineteenth century. From political print culture, academic history painting and portraiture, to Orientalist genre and ethnographic imagery, advertising, and photography, the black figure was a familiar sight in the nineteenth-century visual panoply. These representations were reminders of conquest, romanticized mediations on the exoticism and eroticism of dark-skinned peoples and distant lands, caricatures, and objects of beauty that used blackness—at times literally—as an aesthetic tool or novelty.[14]

[14] Adrienne L. Childs and Susan H. Libby, *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016): 2-3.

Although this statement is applicable to a U.S. context, it was rare to see Black subjects represented in elevated modes of history painting or portraiture as in Europe. Allowing a Black person this level of individualism, autonomy, and dignity in the U.S. represented a direct threat to class structures. Rather, Black representation would be more readily inserted into genre or picturesque scenes where racial fictions could more easily be narrativized. For example, when scholars try to defend Day's depictions of Black male models as dignified celebrations of Blackness, I am quick to rebuke such claims. Yes, Day produced very Neoclassical explorations of nude Black subjects, but there is always a deeper underlying motivation and agenda. As Childs and Libby state, blackness is an aesthetic tool—an ideological one that works to magnify the power of the white artist. Black representation in this case continues to perform a racial disunification and validate that blackness in the U.S. is not truly "American." With this in mind, further critical exploration of the female nude in art needed to be explored in order to truly understand the messages Day and Sargent were each trying to convey in their explorations of Black male nudes. It was through the female nude that Day and Sargent collapsed their subjects further into the metaphysical left and denied them masculinity.

Day and Sargent needed a way to subjugate the Black men in their work beyond racial lines. By stripping them of their clothes and posing them as feminized nudes in the manner of odalisques and bathers, the men underwent both emasculation and objectification. Through this process, Black men are denied claims to white civility and masculinity, and instead become the antithesis of a white U.S. hetero-patriarchy. In order to understand the cultural and social dynamics of Black representation/embodiment, particularly of Black male nude subjects, I needed to flesh out misogynistic visual constructions of the female form. Lynda Nead's critical feminist examination of the nude, in her 1992 book *Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*,

has guided my analysis and resultant discussion of performative gender inversions. Nead discusses the female nude as a framework designed to contain and control female savageness and sexual obscenity. It is through the white male artist's genius that he is able to domesticate the nude (i.e. her degenerate femininity), making her into an emblem of submissiveness and sexual desire. Through blackness, maleness is compromised and degenerately transformed into the lowest type—at all metaphysical levels. Day and Sargent each took advantage of this sexism to invert the gender of the models and cast them in the passive female role. This is a way in which to deflect blame, or self-criminalization, and readily communicate, through the Black male subjects that blackness is salaciously at odds with U.S. society. In other words, Day and Sargent debase their subjects and mask them in discourses of the female nude to distract audiences from their own anti-normativity.

This thesis in no way encompasses all of the social, political, economic, medical, or visual cultural understandings of Black representation in the U.S. Rather, this is an imperfect beginning. Black representation is never just about Blackness, but goes beyond the surface and pigmentation of racialized subjects. Douglass J. Flowe, in his 2020 book *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York*, posits, "The solidification of whiteness as a racial category in [the Progressive era] hinged upon delineating blackness as separate, indelible, and criminal. Long before the 'culture of poverty' debate of the 1960s and beyond, the black criminal emerged as a mutant-like creature birthed from black pathology and white anxieties about race."[15] Thus, as Flowe indicates, Black representation in the U.S. was and still is a compromised mode of existing. Black representation in U.S. art is a performative act of racism solidified, preserved, and elevated by white artists who, through the

[15] Douglas J. Flowe, *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020): 9.

act of making and fashioning blackness, contradictorily assert white supremacy and anxious miscegenal interventions.

"Fashion is not confined to dress; but extends to philosophy as well—and it is fashionable now, in our land, to exaggerate the differences between the negro and the European. If for instance, a phrenologist, or naturalist undertakes to represent in portraits, the difference between the two races—the negro and the European—he will invariably present the highest type of the European, and the lowest type of the negro."
—Fredrick Douglass, *The Claims of the Negro, Ethnology Considered: an address before the literary societies of Western Reserve College*, 1854

"The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim."
—Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891

Chapter 2
Beautiful Blackness: F. Holland Day's Staging of J.R. Carter as African *Objet d'Art*

In a 1902 platinum print by Clarence H. White, entitled *F. Holland Day with Model*, the Pictorialist photographer Fred Holland Day emerges from a nearly blacked-out photograph (fig. 1).[16] The light in the studio emanates from the right of the image, causing Day's long hair to have a hazy glow. The structure and whiteness of Day's face is revealed as the soft light traces its right side before sweeping back into smoky shadows. Loosely pinching a diminished cigarette, Day stands dressed as a Whistlerian dandy in this half-length portrait.[17] The artist's white high-collared shirt and cravat necktie starkly contrast from his dark-colored smock with large sleeves. Wearing his signature *pince-nez* and Van Dyke beard, Day is positioned in front of a barely visible, anonymous model. With downcast eyes, the nude model emerges from the

[16] A native Ohioan and family man, Clarence Hudson White and Fred Holland Day met in 1898 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts—the first time White showed his work on the east coast. In 1899, White helped judge the important second Philadelphia Salon, which presented only work by photographers. Day was a heavy influence on White's art practice. See, Verna Posever Curtis, "Clarence H. White in the Light of F. Holland Day," in *Clarence H. White and His World: The Art & Craft of Photography, 1895-1925*, eds., Elizabeth Anne McCauley (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Art Museum, 2017): 146-147.

[17] "…the cigarette seems to be an accessory in a system of cosmetic bohemianism. With a cigarette in hand the artist could play at deviance of some sort without necessarily subscribing to it, could sow a little doubt about his morals while remaining eminently respectable." See, Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996): 37.; "Through his metaphoric and metamorphic investigations of hands, Sargent attempted to grasp the nature of identity, perception, and artistic creation, to master the hand's capacity both to represent and to betray. In so doing, the painter was sharing in the widely held notion that hands were especially important sites of identity formation and signification, to be carefully watched or observed." See, Alison Syme, *A Touch of Blossom: John Singer Sargent and the Queer Flora of Fin-de-Siècle Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010): 71.

velvety darkness of the background. Dim light filters upon the toned physique of the Black man whose left hand gently caresses the underside of his face. Intended to remain obscured in sensual robes of blackness, the model's nakedness and racial differentiation are used to foreground Day as divine genius. Recognizing this imbalanced engagement, in terms of race, class, and state of (un)dress, it is critical to understand the way Day constructed nude racialized subjects in his own photographic corpus. As found in two of Day's early collections of work, nude Black models took center stage in his artistic visions: J. Alexandre Skeete in the *Nubian* series and J.R. Carter in the *African* series.[18] Examining the *African* series, created *c.*1896–97, which presents Carter as an aesthetic "African" object, I argue that Day's photographic exploitation of blackness sublimates the artist's homosexual desires through processes of racial reductivism that continue to tie the model to legacies of African slave trade.[19]

F. Holland Day (1864–1933) is an anomalous figure in the history of art. In the earliest monograph of Day's work, *Slave to Beauty: The Eccentric Life and Controversial Career of F. Holland Day, Photographer, Publisher, Aesthete* (1981), historian of photography Estelle Jussim reveals:

> As a photographer, F. Holland Day ranked among the very first, most influential, and most successful American proponents of photography as fine art. Lauded both here and in Europe, recognized as an equal to Alfred Stieglitz, and one of the first American members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, Day was more famous by far than most of his competitors. He enjoyed a brief decade of great achievement—essentially from 1895 to 1905 … Then his reputation plummeted to the depths of […] obscurity.[20]

[18] Some scholars have tried to claim the model in White's image is J. Alexandre Skeete, model for Day's *Nubian* series (*c.*1897). I refute this on the basis that there is not enough evidence to support Skeete's use as a model after 1900 with the addition that the model was no longer a student and was employed as an illustrator for *The Colored American Magazine*.

[19] The titles of artworks used for this chapter are dependent on individual art institution and organization records. Additionally, F. Holland Day's dates for the *African* series are used as *c.*1896–97 due to inconsistencies in scholarship.

[20] Estelle Jussim, *Slave to Beauty: The Eccentric Life and Controversial Career of F. Holland Day, Photographer, Publisher, Aesthete* (Boston, MA: David R. Godine, Publisher, 1981): 4.

Such an erasure of Day's participation is partially due to tension with Stieglitz's hetero-normative and masculinist conceptualization of modernism, which Day defied with his involvement in antinormative, subcultural networks and his continued use of Pictorialism.[21] Expanding on this, Day's aestheticism and dandyism, a coded refined dress and effeminate performativity, clashed with Stieglitz's "masculinist politics."[22] Despite Day's "Othering" in the U.S., especially in Stieglitz's modernist circle, the photographer still pushed to garner recognition for U.S.-American photographers overseas. While in London in 1900, Day went to organize the "New School of American Photography" at the Linked Ring, a renowned British photographic society. Stieglitz, disapproving of Day's influence in the photographic community, stymied Day's plans. Instead of completely canceling the pioneering exhibition, Day instead pulled his resources and exhibited the show at two other venues: the Royal Photographic Society (1900) and the Photo-Club de Paris (1901). This attack on Day's influence unquestionably strained the artist's personal and professional relationship with Stieglitz, which was already precarious due to the latter's bigotry.[23] The context of Stieglitz dislike of Day was not entirely due to his homosexuality but male effeminacy. The masculinist Stieglitz sternly expressed his disproval of male femininity and considered people of this type as "defective men." Later, when

[21] "…because [Day's] books and photographs are equally linked to the Decadent and Symbolist movements, they connote perverseness and immorality to some historians. Then there is abundant circumstantial evidence, from Day's art to his circle of associates, to indicate that he was emotionally attracted to, and perhaps personally intimate with men… Third, successive generations of professionals who advocate 'pure' photography and renounce manipulation have discounted Pictorialism as a sham: in their intransient modernism they have spoken against darkroom maneuvers, experimental approaches, and expressive attempts to alter external appearance." Trevor J. Fairbrother, *Making a Presence: F. Holland Day in Artistic Photography* (Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012): 12.

[22] "Stieglitz's critique of [Charles] Demuth, however, went beyond subject matter. He and others in the second circle shared a party line that found Demuth too much the 'aesthete,' a criticism that asserted the group's masculinist politics in the coded language widely used at the time to identify homosexuals who were flamboyantly mannered. The circle's repeated use of anti-aesthete rhetoric not only served to keep Demuth [and individuals like Day] on the margins of the circle but also damned his art with faint praise, making it clear today why he never earned full membership." See, Wanda M. Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999): 197.

[23] See, "Zaida Ben-Yusuf," MET Museum, n.d., https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/267547.

asked to again feature work in *Camera Work*—the leading American photography journal published and developed by Stieglitz—Day refused to participate.

Utilizing classical allegory and religious motif, Day recognized Pictorialist photography's capacity to marry his cultural, social, and political interests, especially in literature and print mediums, with private desires.[24] British writer and photographer Peter Henry Emerson, considered the founder of Pictorialism, set the framework for this new -ism turned transnational movement. As a major force within *fin-de-siècle* American art production, Pictorialism was often labeled as degenerate.[25] As a movement, Pictorialists renounced the documentary realism of the mechanical medium to produce an anti-mimetic naturalism. By manipulating the photographic process, before and after image development, Pictorialists employed esoteric approaches to printing that worked to align their efforts more with that of a "fine" artist.[26] Unlike Stieglitz, who later turned back to realism expressed in "straight" photography, Day latched on to Pictorialism and unapologetically infused it with Neoclassical and theatrical arrangements. Day's staged naturalism was heavily indebted to the aestheticism movement which, as a philosophy and style, heighted the "degenerate" qualities of Day's artistic enterprises.

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[24] "Day's pursuit of creative photography accompanied his interest in literature and fine printing. By 1898 he was nearing the end of a six-year partnership with the Bostonian Herbert Copeland in Copland and Day, their Arts and Crafts publishing house inspired by the Kelmscott Press, established in England by William Morris in 1891. See, Posever Curtis, "Clarence H. White in the Light of F. Holland Day," 146.

[25] "The aesthetics of optical aberration emerged in a climate of controversy, set off by the brutal debate between champions of soft-focus and those of sharp definition. Throughout the 1890s, each side accused the other of regression: technical regression, for those who lauded the virtues of corrected lenses and modern photography as applied to knowledge; aesthetic regression for the pictorialists who judged that 'sharp' photography, restricted to documentary uses of the medium, ensured the permanence of the mimesis condemned by artistic modernity. These mutual accusations even created the idea that photography was degenerating." See, Michel Poivert, "Degenerate Photography?: French Pictorialism and the Aesthetics of Optical Aberration," *Études photographiques* 23 (2009): 3.

[26] "The aim of the Pictorialist movement was to fundamentally redefine ongoing debates about photography's scientific status and its artistic standing. 'Science versus art,' notes [Peter C.] Bunnell, 'became the conspicuous issue underlying pictorialism and the most critical concept behind this modern movement." See, Wendy A. Grossman, "Race and beauty in black and white: Robert Demachy and the aestheticization of blackness in Pictorialist photography," in *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Adrienne L. Childs and Susan H. Libby (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016): 205.

Before understanding Day's engagement with ethnographic and orientalist discourses, it will be useful to further expand on aestheticism as a movement that participated in these colonialist forces. Aestheticism is an extension of orientalist fantasy constructions that, in Day's *African* series, labor to transform Carter from model, to feminine African object, and finally to tradable commodity—a process that will be untangled throughout this chapter. As another transnational movement, aestheticism spread rapidly in the U.S. in the late 1890s.[27] The rise of aestheticism was the doing of British aesthete and author Oscar Wilde, who lectured across the U.S. establishing this style as a doctrine of "beauty as truth." Wilde positioned art and beauty as a religion that had the potential to uplift a downtrodden (white) American populace.[28] In a 1998 book, *Oscar Wilde's America: Counterculture in the Gilded Age*, historian Mary Warner Blanchard continues, "American women found in aestheticism an alluring, even dangerous mode of transformation. This was the subversive underside of aestheticism that would awaken deep anxieties in many Americans"—anxieties that attempted to upturn Victorian gender spheres and allowed space for (white) "invert" existence to become more visible and codified.[29] Extending beyond these dimensions of whiteness, I believe aestheticism racially and economically became a movement that functioned as an instrument of policing culture in terms of who can and cannot have access to its revelatory powers. Cropping up at a time in U.S. history when Black citizens were no longer legible as enslaved people, white Americans turned to the luxuries of decoration

[27] Emphasis on "transnational" contradicts turn-of-the-century efforts to dissociate American culture from European influence. Rather, "American" identity and art was in constant negotiation with and negation of European art.
[28] "Day maintained his devotion to Wilde, particularly to his view of beauty as an end in itself, as a letter to Copeland confirmed: 'I believe there never existed the smallest particle of *real* beauty that did not perform its mission of good. Beauty does not work for compensation and is therefore so much surer of its reward. The greatest compensation I know for beauty or anything else is in our inner consciousness. Beauty cannot beget foulness upon this soil, nor foulness beauty." See, Patricia Fanning, *Through an Uncommon Lens: The Life and Photography of F. Holland Day* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008): 52.; Mary Warner Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America: Counterculture in the Gilded Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998): xii-xiii.
[29] Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America*, xiii-xiv.

and art to render their private homes as sites of respite from a tainted public realm.[30] This renewal through beauty trickled into all aspects of Victorian culture and transformed the ways space and body where visualized in all social spheres.

By 1885, Day fully embraced aestheticism before he established himself as a leader of the Pictorialist movement.[31] Aestheticism and its corroborative dandy style permitted increased ability of upper-class, white, and often "invert" creatives, like Day, to rebel against constraints that American modernism pushed to administer. From a lifelong obsession with English poet John Keats (also Wilde's influence) and French writer Honoré de Balzac, to his involvement with the English-inspired Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston (SACB), Day's artistic formation sprang forth from elitist white groups of men and women who all engaged within subcultures at various capacities.[32] For example, SACB was one of Day's early involvements with an anti-modernist society aligned with English writer Edward Carpenter's, "advoca[cy] for social equality, art, and a 'holistic outlook on nature, [with the addition of] the 'organic unity of

[30] "In the aftermath of the country's splintering, bloody Civil War and its almost equally divisive Reconstruction, Americans were eager for a new truth, for a reform that would improve private as well as public life. Oscar Wilde's persuasive preaching to follow a new religion of beauty focused the attention and the creative energies of thousands of Americans in the years following the Civil War. The Gilded Age would become quite simply the golden age of American Aestheticism." See, Mary Warner Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America*, xii.

[31] "By 1885 [Day] was a devotee of exoticism and orientalism. Infatuated particularly by the Aesthetic movement's chief spokesman Oscar Wilde, Day was decorating rooms in his Norwood home to look 'oriental and was saving his money to buy 'a real antique lamp from Persia, one that was used for centuries in a Mosque.'" See, Fanning, *Through an Uncommon Lens*, 4.; "Boston's aesthetic scene provided a supportive milieu for [Day's] interests. In the 1890s his group of friends was a virtual who's who of the city's up-and-coming intellectual elite, including art critic Bernard Berenson; painter Thomas Meteyard; poets Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey; designers and printers Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Bruce Rogers, [Aubrey Beardsley], and Francis Watt Lee; architect Ralph Adams Cram; [poet, mentor and confidant Louise Imogen Guiney], and publisher Herbert Small… Day's myriad literary and artistic activities challenged Boston's cultural mainstream." See, Kristin Schwain, "F. Holland Day's Seven Last Words and the Religious Roots of American Modernism," *American Art* 19, no. 1 (2005): 35.; "In England the ideals of Pictorialism were promoted by the Linked Ring," a Brotherhood Day was invited to join in 1895 before Stieglitz. See, John Hannavy, *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography* (New York and London, Routledge, 2008): 76.

[32] "Keats may have been a sensualist, but Balzac was an open admirer of male beauty." See, Jussim, *Slave to Beauty*, 21.

mankind,' and a commitment to individualism.'"[33] Carpenter's ideals paralleled Day's Unitarian upbringing in Norwood, Massachusetts where both parents' families held prominent influence in the area since early colonial settlement. Philosophically, each emphasized altruism and egalitarianism as their centers but, later in life, Day would find an affinity with the more hedonistic and bohemian influence of Carpenter.

Such Bohemian indulgences for Day manifested in his paternalistic explorations of the male, working-class nude subject. Day's mentorship of young men was "influenced by Carpenter's advocacy for male-to-male mentoring relationships that would cut across class divisions and encourage social mobility," a homosocial relationship where "disadvantaged youths could benefit from the power, privilege, and experience of older, successful men."[34] This classical-sense of mentorship, with its uncomfortable levels of pederasty, did not cross racial divisions for Day. There is no documentation of Day ever taking a Black U.S. citizen under his artistic tutelage, which explains the almost complete obscurity of Day's Black male models.[35] Shedding light on the man named J.R. Carter, Day's male model for the *African* series, it is important to note that Carter is the least discussed in scholarship about Day and is often

[33] "As such, [Carpenter] defended women's rights, homosexual rights, and sexual freedom. Many of Day's acquaintances embraced Carpenter's socialist views, including Louise Peabody Sargent, who in 1899 had encouraged Day to read Carpenter's *Towards Democracy*." See, Fanning, *Through an Uncommon Lens,* 178.; The Arts and Craft movement began in England and was an extension of Aestheticism that was, "Seeking an alternative to the existing factory system that had eliminated the artistic elements of production at the time [and] sought to restore creativity, beauty, and fulfillment to the workshop… [Day's exit from the society may have been due to] 'Arts and Crafts ideology [as] intertwined with the class and racial anxieties common among affluent Americas." See, Fanning, *Through an Uncommon Lens*, 97.

[34] Fanning, *Through an Uncommon Lens*, 179.

[35] Attention is brought to this detail because many of Day's subjects benefited from his mentorship and/or were part of his artistic and intellectual circles. For example, Day photographed and mentored Lebanese immigrant, Kahlil Gibran and financially supported Italian immigrant, Nicola Giancola. Each of whom Day seemed to have an intimate relationship with. These young boys were discovered as street urchins before being brought under the guidance of Day and later transformed into muses. Day had no such relationship with Skeete or Carter, even though the former was attending art school in Boston and later became an illustrator for the *Colored American Magazine*.

unfortunately misidentified as J. Alexandre Skeete, Alfred Tanneyhill (Day's family chauffeur), or an anonymous model.

DAY'S PICTORIALIST VISIONS OF THE ALMOST UNKNOWN J.R. CARTER

J.R. Carter, born in late June of 1875 in Danville, Virginia, was used in the *African* series when he was around 22 years old.[36] Supposedly, Carter was a model for other well-known artists in the Boston area, but visual evidence has yet to surface to validate this claim.[37] As quoted in a 1902 issue of the *Colored American Magazine*, an early twentieth-century all-Black publication, Carter was described as, "a young man of grand physique, as straight as an arrow, and as graceful as a dancing master."[38] This was the first instance that Carter was ever properly identified and not confused with Alfred Tanneyhill.[39] Despite Day's exhibition of works from the *African* series in London, Boston, and Philadelphia, and publishing *Ebony and Ivory* in the Camera Club of New York's July 1898 issue of *Camera Notes*, Carter remained consistently nameless or misidentified (fig. 2).[40] It was clear that Day never troubled himself to attach the name or biography of his model to his masterworks, which was a common practice at the time.[41] Moreover, professional male models in the U.S. were not as easy to find as in Europe, therefore

[36] J.R. Carter's birth month and year were properly documented in a 1900 U.S. Census record when the model was living in Boston and working as a "day laborer."
[37] I have not found examples of J.R. Carter in work by any other artists to validate this claim made in *The Colored American Magazine*, April 1902 issue. This may remain an unsolved mystery considering how artist/model relationships would tend to erase the lives of the model. See, Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens*, 82.
[38] Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens*, 82.
[39] Day's *Ebony and Ivory* image of Carter was featured in *The Colored American Magazine* in April, 1902, and was the first instance the model was not thought to be Alfred Weems Tanneyhill, Day's family servant and chauffeur, or J. Alexandre Skeete, the U.S. immigrant from British Guinea, model, trained artist, illustrator for *The Colored American Magazine*, and muse for Day's *Nubian* series. See, Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens*, 82 and 223.
[40] "…the masterwork of this series was unquestionably the extraordinary *Ebony and Ivory*, which Stieglitz reproduced in photogravure for *Camera Notes* in July 1898." See, Jussim, *Slave to Beauty*, 108.; Estelle Jussim was one of the first scholars to write extensively about Day and is responsible for misidentifying the models in the *African* and *Nubian* series as Alfred Tanneyhill. Unsurprisingly, Tanneyhill is still labeled as the model for these images in institutions in the U.S. and London even today. "The photographer, of course, F. Holland Day; the model, young Alfred Tanneyhill, Day's chauffeur and servant… the model for all of them." See, Jussim, *Slave to Beauty*, 107.
[41] This did not prove to be entirely true with his white sitters, who were a who's who in Day's life. Many were close friends, artists, writers, etc. who were more privileged and active in society.

modeling became "a working-class occupation often populated by immigrants, the poor, or retired and needy military men from the ranks."[42] Employment was for the explicit use of a model's body, leaving the subject shrouded in obscurity since often times the model would be a sex worker.[43] I cannot declare that Carter was a prostitute, or even same-sex oriented, but based on how and where this series was produced I question the almost unknown life of Carter.

The location of Day's private studio, located at 9 Pinckney Street in a brick Federal-style building, can be imagined in this description by historian Douglass Shand-Tucci, from his 1995 book *Ralph Adams Cram: Life and Architecture*:

> Pinckney Street, precipitate and Dickensian, cuts steeply down through the blocks of old brick houses and narrow courts that crowd the southwestern slope of Boston's Beacon Hill, where every street, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, 'leads downward to the sea.' … Picturesque architecturally, [late-nineteenth-century] Beacon Hill was also diverse socially…Pinckney has always been rather a Bohemian street, mediating as it does between the socially ambiguous north slope and the much grander quarter of Louisburg Square and Mount Vernon Street—and, beyond that, Beacon Street itself, 'street of the sifted few,' as Oliver Wendell Holmes has somewhere called it (Fig. 3).[44]

This was no longer the Boston Day knew as a schoolboy attending Chauncey Hall School. After 1890, the city became more ethnically diverse and inundated with working-class residents. Beacon Hill by this time became the older part of Boston with the upper-classes, including Black Brahmins, moving to South End after 1880.[45] It is important to acknowledge the neighborhood's

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[42] Nathaniel Silver, et al, *Boston's Apollo: Thomas McKeller and John Singer Sargent* (Boston, Mass.: Isabella Gardner Museum, 2020): 108.

[43]"The fantasy of absolute possession of women's [and men's] naked bodies—a fantasy for men [and women during the mid-nineteenth century] was partly based on specific practice in the institution of prostitution or, more specifically, in the case of artists, on the availability of studio models for sexual as well as professional services … lies at the heart of such typical subjects of Orientalist representation…" See, Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989): 43-44.

[44] Douglass Shand-Tucci and Ralph Adams Cram, *Ralph Adams Cram: Life and Architecture* (Amherst, MA.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995): 5.; Born in 1863 in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, Ralph Adams Cram moved to Boston in 1881. A well-regarded architect, Cram organized an informal social group known as the Visionists, which Day was a member. The group shared similar interest in arts and literature and experimented with outlandish costumes and rituals. See, Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens*, 25-7.

[45] "The exodus from Beacon Hill came about as longtime residents of the West End—white, black, and ethnic Americans alike—were displaced by new waves of European immigrants [and poorer African-American laborers]."

correlative patterns to what historian George Chauncey, in his 1994 book *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*, would identify as a developing "gay world."[46] Although it is incorrect to use the contemporary use of "gay" in the context of the 1890s, it is correct to highlight Beacon Hill as a flourishing site of subcultural, same-sex, bohemian networks—consisting of both clandestine and coded public interactions. This poor, ethnic, urban enclave functioned as a space for people to escape the problems of their own lives and latch on to a new sense of "freedom."[47] Being Black and poor in Virginia, and possibly homosexual, Carter's relocation to the city seemed an all too necessary attempt for survival, especially given the increase in widespread lynching practices in the 1890s.[48] As a white elite, Day did not need to take the same precautionary measures as Carter. Rather, the artist's whiteness and status permitted his same-sex interactions to qualify as "bohemian" living (the equivalent of "slumming")—a lifestyle the artist fully embraced while at the Pinckney studio from 1893–1901.[49]

See, Lorraine Elena Roses, *Black Bostonians and the Politics of Culture, 1920–1940* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 2017): 32.

[46] "But the most visible gay world of the early twentieth century, as the headlines in the *Baltimore Afro-American* suggest, was a working-class world, centered in African-American and Irish and Italian immigrant neighborhoods and along the city's busy waterfront, and drawing on the social forms of working-class culture." See, George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994): 10.

[47] "…Du Bois and new negroes considered self-assertion the crucial ingredient [for freedom]. That recipe often required the mobility of relocation, especially for those who lived in the South. 'The negroes are leaving the South because life to them has been made miserable and unbearable,' … 'These migrating thousands are not seeking money, but manhood rights.'" Douglas J. Flowe, *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020): 11.

[48] "The 1890s was the [U.S.'s] worst decade for lynching, when it claimed an average of 139 lives a year. Virginia, which took pride in having fewer lynching deaths than other southern states, recorded 40 in the 1890s. Most of what we know about lynching comes from white newspapers, but these sources are problematic. They not only reported racial violence, they also helped create it, especially with the rise of spectacle lynching in the 1890s. These public events drew hundreds of spectators (sometimes more) and were reported in news stories that usually framed lynching as a righteous act of vigilante justice." See, Dolores Flamiano, "'Virginia's Shame': The 1891 Lynching of Three Black Miners in Clifton Forge," *Racial Terror: Lynching in Virginia, James Madison University*, 2020, https://sites.lib.jmu.edu/valynchings/virginias-shame/.

[49] "[What] most slummers were suitably scandalized by what they saw, many were also titillated. Slumming gave men, in particular, a chance to cultivate and explore sexual fantasies by opening up to them a subordinate social world in which they felt fewer constraints on their behavior. It allowed them to escape the norms of middle-class

Unsurprisingly, archival information about Carter's life is nearly nonexistent. After approaching constant dead ends in research, I found Carter's name in a 1900 U.S. Census for Boston. It was documented that the literate man once lived at 125 Dartmouth Avenue—a building located minutes away from Copley Square and less than two miles from Pinckney Street. For occupation, Carter had "day laborer" listed as his primary source of income, an ambiguous category that could have encompassed a variety of jobs around the city. Since Carter was merely one lodger out of many at the Dartmouth location, the census provides a full list of its residents—none of whom seemed to be potential relatives of Carter.[50] The other residents consisted of fourteen Black, working-class individuals—both U.S.- and foreign-born. Carter's landlords were a married bi-racial couple consisting of a Black U.S.-born man and an Irish-immigrant woman. The lodgers were mostly men ages 19 to 45 with occupations ranging from laborers, bellhops, waiters, and elevator operators. It is my hope to one day uncover the interaction between Carter and Day, and further constitute the former's time in Boston. It is unknown if their interaction was through a chance encounter in the streets, an acquaintance made through one of Day's contemporaries, or even a possible solicitation by Carter, who was trying to survive in a new city.

Day's Pinckney Street studio became the space where the artist's experimentations, unmediated by stuffy Victorianism and his mother, culminated into some of the most well-regarded Pictorialist works of the time. Unless guests to the studio were written about in Day's

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propriety and, in particular, to shed the constraints they felt imposed on their conduct by the presence of respectable women of their own families or class." This of course is most alluring to bachelors, like Day. See, Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 36; As revealed by Fanning, "By the 1890s, … young [white] Bohemians moved into what had once been single-family structures, now newly transformed into affordable roominghouses, bachelor apartments, and studios" that were most commonly inhabited by black citizens, moving away from the south, and Irish and Italian immigrants, living and working near the waterfront. See, Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens*, 83-84.

[50]The census record does not list anyone else with the last name Carter. There were three other men born in Virginia. This could potentially mean that one or more of these men could have known Carter before moving to Boston with the possibility they left together or were coupled as friends or lovers.

letters or staged in front of his camera, they would remain completely obscured from the artist's biography. Looking at two lesser-known platinum prints of Carter, the artist's theatrical experimentation with the model comes into light. These images function as a pendant, where Day separates Carter's gender roles into masculine and feminine binaries. *Young man with headband and necklace* (*c.*1897), displays Carter in front of a pale-colored studio backdrop with soft lighting (fig. 4).[51] Gazing at the viewer, this front-facing headshot of Carter presents the man in a way where he appears uncomfortably masculine and warrior-like. Pressed against Carter's bare chest are his crossed arms with one hand tucked away and the other clenched in a fist. The dark value of Carter's skin is dramatically cast against the light-toned background and the necklace. The animal-tooth necklace and the headband are meant to add to the performativity of Carter as an African warrior "type," one that contrasts from his passively feminine construction in *Young man in African costume with turban* (*c.*1897) (fig. 5). In this latter headshot, Carter is more closely cropped and backdropped by a hanging damask fabric. Wrapped around Carter's head is a white turban, which is overexposed and compliments the image's harsh lighting on the left side of the model's face and his right shoulder. As Carter's body turns into shadow, the subtle glisten of an earring adds to the femininity of his costume, and conjures a colonial harem scene where the model is presented as a eunuch (a castrated male). Draped upon Carter's nude chest is a leopard skin, which becomes a significant motif throughout the *African* series for its indication of African exoticness and savage sexuality.

Day's studies of Carter as masculine African warrior and feminine African concubine establish two essentializing and colonialist "types." Although Day worked to ameliorate photography's relationship with realism, especially related to ethnography, the *African* series is

[51]These titles were not given to these images by Day. Rather, based on their descriptive quality, were likely produced by the collector or archivist.

inseparable from this history. I argue that the construction of "type" is directly aligned with Day's presentation of blackness as an *objet d'art* (art object, collectable curiosity) that functions as a non-threatening site for the artist to dispose of his romantic and homoerotic fantasies. This transformation will be discussed further in the next section, but it is important to understand what "type" means and how it functions in relation to photographs of African/Black subjects. In curator Christraud M. Geary's book, *In and Out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885–1960* (2003), she details the formation of "types" in photographic history:

> Photography assumed a particularly important role in physical anthropology, which was used to classify and ultimately control colonial subjects. Based on Darwinian theory, scientists from the 1860s onward believed that human physical and cultural forms were the end products of a long chain of evolution. They classified races according to this scheme of thought and placed Africans at the lowest level of human evolution and Caucasians at the top. To create these schemata, they relied on scientific recordings of the physical characteristics they had assigned to each race. This effort culminated in the creation of the 'type,' an individual that combined traits characteristic to each race.[52]

This construction is demonstrated in Jean Audema's *c.*1900 postcard *Kamba "type," Niari River region, French Congo,* which presents an isolated frontal view of a male African subject (fig. 6). The U.S. counterpart to this approach was replicated in Louis Agassiz's commissioned daguerreotypes of enslaved Africans, such as *Jack (driver) Guinea. Plantation of B.F. Taylor, Esq., Columbia, S.C.* (1850)—photographed by J.T. Zealy (fig. 7). Day takes control of his subject in this colonialist manner and ensures that Carter sustains this lower metaphysical role, as a "type" rendered subordinate by African costume, nakedness, and blackness. Day's pendant of Carter constructs the model within each gender category but never realizes the subject as a participant in modern-day society. Instead, Carter's headshots remain trapped in the realm of Africanness, "Otherness," and exoticness which performs to help whiteness realize its own social

[52]Christraud M. Geary and Krzysztof Pluskota, *In and out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885-1960* (London: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in association with Philip Wilson, 2003):17-19.

progress, while blackness remains distant and primitive. For Day, this contentious relationship played out in his own advancement as an artist, a role designated for the highest racial type.

Briefly backtracking, this duplicitous relationship was most clearly played out in Clarence H. White's aforementioned photograph of Day posed with a nearly illegible Black model. Although taken in 1901, White visually placed Day as the white (sexually) dominant master in control of his Black (sexually) enslaved subject.[53] Connected to widespread visual lexicons of racial differentiation, these stark, romantic couplings have been complicit in the formation of whiteness as scientifically and moralistically superior. This side-by-side staging of white and Black subjects can be seen in abolitionist imagery as early as the seventeenth century. An example being Swedish artist Carl Frederik von Breda's oil painting, *Portrait of a Swedish gentleman instructing a negro Prince* (*c.*1789), which portrays the typical imbalanced power dynamics between a white and Black subject (fig. 8).[54] This relationship is markedly different in the photographs of White and Day because the Black subject is not yet freed from the shackles of his master's rule. For abolitionist imagery, the black subject looks to a white master for liberation. Whiteness thus embodies the role of savior and blackness that of supplicant and childlike subordinate awaiting freedom from an oppressor who is also the liberator.[55] This engagement does not directly align with White's image of Day, where the artist noticeably stands

[53]"The photographed, measured, and eroticized [racialized] body was a site in which authority and rebellion, restraint and freedom, norm and deviance could be reconciled for a new breed of colonizer who inhabited—and maintained—the clearing. It marked the emergence, in tandem with that colonizer, of a new breed of savage: an object of fantasy and erotic contemplation that was neither a mythical cannibal nor a historical enemy." See, Satadru Sen, "Savage Bodies, Civilized Pleasures: M.V. Portman and the Andamanese," *American Ethnologist* 36, no. 2 (2009): 365.

[54] Also titled, *Half-length portrait of Carl Bernhard Wadström (1746–1799) and the African prince Peter Panah, son of the king of Mesurado (Liberia)*.

[55] "…classical art abounds with representations of the vanquished, fettered and kneeling or prone, with their victors standing above them, often planting a triumphant foot on the conquered. As the historian André Grabar explains, 'the official language of the Empire saw these representations of victory as images of the 'liberation' of the vanquished, who were thought to have been torn from the tyranny of their leaders by the Roman emperors.'" See, Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989): 17.

in front of and separate from his almost invisible subject. I argue that the portrait of Day is more aligned with Victorian obsessions with Africa as a place enveloped in darkness, a place that awaits the enlightenment of a white explorer.

White's photograph and Day's depictions of Carter align more with the visual staging of English explorer and writer Henry Morton Stanley (1841–1904) with his young enslaved companion, Ndugu M'hali (*c.*1865–1877), later renamed Kalulu.[56] From a collection of image's taken with the London Stereoscopic Company, *c.*1880, Stanley sits posed in one instance in a heroic posture on a rock with one leg propped up, his gaze averted out of frame, and his rifle diagonally protruding from between his legs toward M'hali (fig.9). Stanley, who wears a white explorer pith helmet, tropical uniform, and boots with gaiters, rests next to a half-naked M'Hali who stands guard in a *sarong* with a spear and shield in one hand and a bow and arrow in the other. With eyes fixed upon the viewer, M'Hali is posed as the "savage" warrior-type who serves as the protector, guardian, and obedient subordinate to his master.[57] As a prominent colonizer of Africa, Stanley used brutal and murderous tactics to conquer land and people for the Belgian Empire. As a result of his conquest, Stanley established the literary trope of "Darkest Africa," a

[56] "Kalulu joined Stanley in Tabora (on his way to find [Dr. David] Livingstone), a young slave given as a present by an Arab merchant. Not finding his original name, Ndugu M'hali ('my brother's fortune'), attractive, Stanley asked for help selecting another name. One African, 'after looking at his quick eyes, and noting his celerity of movement, pronounced the name Ka-lu-lu [the name for the young of the blue-black antelope]." See, Robert Aldrich, "The sex life of explorers," in *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2003): 42.; "Ndugu M'Hali (*c.*1865–77), known as Kalulu, was the personal servant and companion to explore Sir Henry Morton Stanley. He was given to Stanley as a 'slave' by an Arab merchant … [M'Hali] was educated in London and accompanied Stanley on his travels to Europe, America and the Seychelles." See, "Ndugu M'Hali (Kalulu) with H.M. Stanley," *Autograph: ARB*, 2017, http://themissingchapter.co.uk/portfolio_page/ndugu-mhali-kalulu-with-sir-henry-morton-stanley-london-1872-2/.

[57] Stanley wrote a book entitled, *My Kalulu: Prince, King and Slave*, published in 1873. This book was written after the rescue of Livingstone and after the acquisition of Stanley's slave, Kalulu. Although the Kalulu character in Stanley's book is much older, the author undeniably eroticizes and sexualizes the subject's beauty. The book is a homoerotic love story that takes place in an exotic destination. Stanley writes, "Kalulu was one of the best specimens which the ancient sculptors would have delighted to imitate in stone. His face or head may not, perhaps, have kindled any very great admiration, but the body, arms, and limbs were unmistakably magnificent in shape. He had not an ounce of flesh too much… he was a perfect youthful Apollo in form." Aldrich, "The sex life of explorers," 38.

Victorian literary romanticization of the continent as geographically isolated, primitive, dark, and exotic. In his 1878 two volume book, *Through the Dark Continent*, Stanley recounts his journey through Africa and comes to the conclusion that, "…the savage only respect force, power, boldness, and decision; and that [the savage] is totally ignorant of the principles which govern the conduct of Christian man to man."[58] Through this example and passage, I do not mean to contend that Day agrees with this statement. Rather, I argue that Day is tied to this colonialist legacy through processes of supersession that cast him as a conquering force who sees Carter's body as unexplored and dangerously exciting territory to travel.

THE UNMAKING/MAKING OF CARTER INTO AFRICAN *OBJET D'ART*

Throughout this section, I will keep in mind a 2014 essay by art historian Wendy A. Grossman, titled "Race and beauty in black and white: Robert Demachy and the aestheticization of blackness in Pictorialist photography." Grossman explores the metaphysical trappings and racialized tropes at play in French Pictorialist Robert Demachy's *Contrasts (A Study in Black and White)*, (*c.*1901–03) (fig. 10). Directly influenced by works in Day's *African* series, Demachy produced studies of a Black female subject contrasted with a white plaster bust of a classical male allegory. Each are youthful, ephebic, and androgynous subjects. Despite the fact that one subject was living and the other was inanimate, Demachy's placement of human as object reminds the viewer "of the cultural, racial, and sexual commingling that … reflected new paradigms of racial discourse at the *fin de siècle*" and underrides Pictorialist practice.[59] Moreover, conceptualizing these photographs as "studies" again continues to position blackness

[58] Henry Morton Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent: The Sources of the Nile Around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and Down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean*, vol. 1 (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1878): 277-78.; Stanley's other book, *In Darkest Africa* (1890), the explorer "brought home the 'darkest continent' to armchair travelers, recounting battles against cannibals and fierce warriors, tsetse flies and leeches, raging rivers and murderous waterfalls, malaria and smallpox, almost unbearable fatigue and gut-wrenching scarcities of food and water." See, Aldrich, "The sex life of explorers," 37.
[59] Grossman, "Race and beauty in black and white," 203.

as a subject that requires scientific observation and codification—a way for whiteness to understand how to negotiate and practice relational "Othering." Expanding upon the examination Grossman provides, I will turn my attention exclusively to Day's work and expound the ways Carter's reduction into an object of beauty works to diminish his humanity in a way that makes him into exchangeable and consumable aesthetic property. In labeling Carter as property, the model thus ideologically and ontologically becomes the literal "slave to beauty," à la Estelle Jussim, with Day taking on the role of divine creator and metaphorical slaveholder.

Gazing upon the exposed backside of Carter, with his face in profile, Day's *c.*1897 platinum print, *Africa,* presents the model sinuously perched on a chair draped in a leopard skin (fig. 11). Facing the left side of the image plane, with his hands erotically gripping the crest rail of a Georgian-styled chair, Carter hides his genitalia but leaves his unblemished lustrous back, buttocks, and thigh on full display inviting a fantasized anal penetration. Light sparkles upon a pinky ring worn on the model's left hand, which rests on his upper thigh. With closed lips and opened eyes, Carter gazes out of frame conscious of and acquiescent to his objectification. The nudity, the jewelry, the animal skin all work to produce what American studies scholar Shawn Michelle Smith, in her chapter "The Politics of Pictorialism: Another Look at F. Holland Day" (2013), would claim to be, "Day's fascination with ethnic and racial 'types' [with] his penchant for 'exotic' dress [being] understood as his attempt to signal codes of sexuality through his association of race, to map himself sexually through racial performance."[60] It is through the appropriation and use of costume that Day produces an imagined corporeal connection to his exotic subject. Carter's costume (or lack thereof), contrasted from the dining chair in Day's

[60] Smith, "The Politics of Pictorialism," 63. "There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces." See, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994): 19-20.

studio, functions as the contentious elements that conjure *l'effet de réel* ("the reality effect").[61] Such an authentication of Carter works to ensure the subject's submissiveness, savageness, and mysteriousness are easily collapsed into Africa as site and symbol. The denial of Carter's civility and coevalness is further illuminated in the scene by the model's incongruity from the chair—itself a marker of elitism and feminine domesticity. In addition to projecting homoerotic desire upon his model, Day intends Carter's nudity and choreography to be tied to the literal and metaphysical left, a position that places the model firmly within a colonialist discourse that centers Day's own learned civility, (fluid) masculinity, and nationalism as the elements of imperialist triumphalism. Thus, the role that Carter is given in this photograph is requisite to Day's (homo)sexual domination and conquest of Africa (i.e. Carter).[62]

The act of assigning Carter the status of property is accomplished first through the construction of the model as feminine object. Instead of realizing Carter with a masculine civilized subjecthood, Day chooses to abase the model as an act of white power that works to regurgitate racist exclusionary practice. Reengaging Day's associated Whistlerian and Wildean dandyism, a luxurious clothing style and effete social performativity, the artist navigated the public realm with a strategic social coding that Carter would never be able, or allowed, to take on.[63] Hypothetically, if Day portrayed Carter as a man of equal standing it would further

[61] Linda Nochlin brings up Roland Barthes' theories on the "reality effect," stating, "Such details, supposedly there to denote the real directly, are actually there simply to signify its presence in the work as a whole. As Barthes points out, the major function of gratuitous, accurate details like these is to announce, 'we are the real.' They are signifiers of the category of the real, there to give credibility to the 'realness' of the work as a whole, to authenticate the total visual field as a simple, artless reflection—in this case, of a supposed Oriental reality." Nochlin, "Imaginary Orient," 38.

[62] "…the stylistic experimentation of modernism works to revitalize and extend the tradition of the female nude and, on the other hand, the representation of the female body in [modernist] images functions as a critical sign of male sexuality and artistic avant-gardism." See, Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 44.

[63] "[I]n Western high culture, dandies are best known not only as snappy dressers, but also as beings whose self-presentation identifies them as outrageous—everything from morally-bankrupt do-nothing aristocrats, aesthetes in the Byronic or Baudelairean vein, flamboyant sartorial or conversational Wildean wits, to über fey and fashionable

problematize Day's status—one that was already under question due to his same-sex proclivities. Comparing the staging of Carter to that of Caribbean-born Black boxer Peter Jackson, drastic existential differences occur. In a rare professional portrait, from a collection photographed in London in 1889, Jackson appeared dressed in his best dandy attire: consisting of a top hat, buttoned vest, tailcoat, pocket watch, and overcoat trimmed with fur (fig.12). The boxer's right hand holds up a cane while the left hand clutches a pair of leather gloves and displays a large pinky ring. Unlike Carter's depiction, Jackson's dress exudes a sense of comfort, confidence, and power that, in the 1890s, would undeniably agitate a white U.S. citizenry for its rebellious nature, excessive luxuriousness, "degenerate" potentialities, and public presentation.[64]

Although it may seem hyperbolic to juxtapose Jackson's photograph with Carter's, it does provide strong evidence that Day found the explicit "Othering" of Carter to be the only possible avenue for his own self-aggrandizement as a Pictorialist. Discussing the dandy aesthetic further, each article of clothing used to construct this style is essential in producing a boisterous fashion coded with messages that drastically shift in relation to place, class, gender, sexuality, and race. Clothing acts as a signifier and taxonomizer of one's identity. One's access, or lack thereof, is determined as much by attire as skin color. Since clothing works to conceal the naked body, the site of private sexual fantasy, it also reveals the body as a barometer of class and culture-based sociality—a matrix of public negotiations or condemnations. In an 1882 platinum print by Canadian-born American photographer Napoleon Sarony, a portrait of Oscar Wilde is presented (fig. 13). This *carte de visite* of Wilde was taken in New York briefly after his arrival

sexual outlaws." See, Monica L. Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009): 7-8.

[64]"…throughout history black men have used fashion as a tool of rebellion. When self-styled, the African disaporan man in the West has relied upon his innate sensibilities to express his masculinity, his humanity, and his individuality." Shantrelle P. Lewis, "Fashioning Black Masculinity: The Origins of the Dandy Lion Project," *Journal of Contemporary African Art* no. 37 (2015): 56.

in Boston for a U.S. tour. Day, a teenager at the time, actually met and received Wilde's autograph in Boston.[65] Posed on a chair, Wilde intensely gazes at the camera as his body sits at rest. Wilde leans his left arm on his thigh with a gesture of contemplation and interest folding his body forward. Dressed in nearly identical dandy attire to Jackson, Wilde, in his right hand, holds a cane and gloves and, on his left, sports a pinky ring. Zooming in on the pinky ring worn on the left hands of Jackson, Wilde, and Carter, I see the strongest and most revealing symbolism. As a small portion of the (un)making of Carter, and the self-making of Peter Jackson, the ring is an indicator of social nonconformity for all of these subjects.

This small detail would be a disservice to Carter not to discuss more thoroughly as part of his representation in Day's *Africa* photograph. This piece of jewelry in the Victorian era had concise connotations that firmly placed its racialized wearer in a decidedly subversive social, economic, and sexual role. For Jackson, the large ring on his left hand is an indication of the boxer's unintended upper-class status and his professionalism in boxing—each of which violated racial and class lines.[66] Nicknamed "the Black Prince," the binary opposite of the Black slave, Jackson caused an uproar in the U.S. as a man who's physique, intelligence, and distinguished accent became elements that fascinated white audiences. Douglas J. Flowe in his 2020 book *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York,* would identify Jackson's dandyism as a, "method of securing power when restrained, [a type of]

[65]Day's initial encounter with Oscar Wilde in Boston in 1882 [was later recounted by Day.] 'The then preacher of Aestheticism was discovered placidly waiting, with the crowd, in a railway station, for the gates to open. My friend … approached the Unapproachable, and in the sweetest tones his changing voice could assume requested of the Sun's God his autograph. The Great One looked down upon the youth with that sunny smile so often and so cruelly maligned as 'incubating' and taking the pencil, slowly traced his name in a calligraphy rather more curious than his appearance. No words escaped the lips of the 'lilies' apostle.'" See, Fanning, *Through An Uncommon Lens,* 32.
[66] "With race as a major determinant of resource allocation and inclusion for the length of American history, black crime often represented decisions made under duress and habits formed in response to the absurdity of historic injustice." This is an important point in the case of Jackson, who used the professionalization of violence (i.e. pugilism) to become the self-made man. See, Flowe, *Uncontrollable Blackness,* 16.

performed manhood even when denied its normative properties."[67] At a time when blackface minstrelsy was experiencing its golden age, Black people had the expectation of being performatively ignorant and/or romantic stereotypes.[68] Jackson, a lover of Shakespeare, renounced and countered any such associations. Alternatively, I believe Carter's use of the pinky ring functions subversively as well, but with the addition of possibly confirming same-sex orientation. For Carter, this ring is an indication of his bachelor status and engagement in homosocial networks. During the Victorian era, wearing this ring on the fifth finger of the left hand would indicate elitism and bachelorhood for a white wearer. For Wilde, the ring was a symbol of subcultural coding, an outright denial of monogamous (heteronormative) coupledom and affirmation of same-sex desire. For Carter, this ring may function as a protest to societal expectations of a Black man's role at the turn of the century. The ring in this instance becomes not an indicator of union but rather of disunion; an individualism disentangled from the restraints of a hetero- and Anglo-centric U.S. society.

THE VIEW OF CARTER'S NUDE ARTISTIC BACK

With the inclusion of a pinky ring, Day maintains Carter as the antithesis of white American, hetero-patriarchal culture while also establishing a distance from his model. Through this process of distancing, Day yokes Pictorialism to Orientalism. Even though Grossman argues that Pictorialists "inverted" the goals of Orientalist visual discourses, I contend that Day's photographs of Carter align with visual discourses of Orientalist painting despite conflicting

[67] Flowe, *Uncontrollable Blackness*, 9.

[68] "'…It was the Africanism, deployed as rawness and savagery, that provided the staging ground and arena for the elaboration of the quintessential American identity.' [Toni] Morrison argues that these authors project their own undesirable attributes onto black people and define their identities in opposition to these constructed Africanisms." See, Robert Nowatzki, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2010): 141.

praxes and ideological foundations.[69] *Africa* as title, object, place, and subject, is designed to be ontologically, as well as aesthetically, constitutive of an imaginary escape from reality. A way to exit the convoluted stressors of modern civilization and find respite in the beauty and intrigue of the uncivilized—a white colonialist privilege. Art historian Linda Nochlin in a chapter titled "The Imaginary Orient" (1989) states, "for [Orientalist] painters … the Near East [and Africa] existed as an actual place to be mystified with effects of realness, for other artists it existed as a project of the imagination, a fantasy space or screen onto which strong desires—erotic, sadistic, or both—could be projected with impunity."[70] The making of Carter into an allegorical and metaphorical embodiment of Africa(nness) is all part of a project of Day's own fantasy. Nearly Ovidian in terms of Carter's metamorphosis into *objet d'art*, Day's manipulation of living subject into controlled and curated object of blackness undergirds my use of the French term. In identifying Carter as an aesthetic curiosity, one that can be collected, displayed, and controlled, Day reductively casts his subject into a market economy. By aligning Carter with this economic and sexual valuation, the model thus exists to replicate the history of exploitation forced upon Black U.S. citizens by white observers.[71]

This project for Day is carried out further by Carter's integration within the discourse of the female nude. With blackness operating as the negation and outright threat to white masculinity, Carter's nude body and odalisque posing operate as markers of Carter's sexual

[69] "By masking the descriptive or documentary quality of the medium with the marks of artistry, Pictorialist photographers, paradoxically, inverted the goals of many nineteenth-century academic painters, particularly those working in the Orientalist tradition such as Jean-Léon Gérôme. Unlike the Pictorialists, who strove to make their photographs appear like paintings, these artists made their canvases look photographic to give them a 'reality effect.'" Grossman, "Race and beauty in black and white," 213.
[70] Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," 41.
[71] "In England, black boys and black men were sometimes luxury items, collected like any other signifier of wealth and status. Peter Fryer uses the word 'vogue' to describe the period of their celebrity in British history, approximately 1650 to 1800, evidencing the fact of their status as commodities subject to the whims of fashion." Monica Miller, *Slaves to Fashion*, 48.

femininity and degeneracy. Of course, the feminine subject in art functions as the receptacle and site of male sexuality and performance. This gendered hierarchical relationship extends to nature as object, space, and idea that needs to be controlled and tamed by white man. Femininity's association with nature culminates in a chance for the white masculine subject to, "strip off civilization with one's clothes and … experience primitive life firsthand in contact with nature … a masculine Romantic impulse."[72] Such a break from modernity allowed the white masculine subject, or the same-sex subject in Day's case, to revel in unmediated sexual fantasy.[73] For example, Jean-Léon Gérôme's *The Bath* (*c.*1880–85) presents a pairing of black and white female nudes in an Orientalist bathing scene (fig. 14). Revealing what Nochlin calls the "artistic back," the white female subject, the center of focus, is turned away as the Black attendant with exposed chest washes the mistress. Art historian Richard Leppert in his 2007 book, *The Nude: The Cultural Rhetoric of the Body in the Art of Western Modernity*, describes this pose as one that "exists to be naked … to excite, and subsequently realize, the [artist's] desires" with the nude backside "rarely found in the history of [American and] European painting, as if in acknowledgment that the sex for which [the subject] patiently waits will itself be perversely degrading."[74] It is more common to see the female nude in this over-the-shoulder arrangement in bathing scenes, but for the white male counterpart this would be unacceptable.

Further discussing Carter's artistic back, the model is intended to function as a vessel of aesthetic sexuality that is amplified by the intimacy of the photographic medium. Highlighting

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[72] John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man*, 190.

[73]"Like many other art works of his time, Gérôme's Orientalist painting managed to body forth two ideological assumptions about power: one about men's power over women the other about white men's superiority to, hence justifiable control over, inferior, darker races, precisely those who indulge in this sort of regrettably lascivious commerce." See, Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," 45.

[74] This excerpt is used in discussion of Francois Boucher's *Reclining Nude (Mademoiselle O'Murphy?)*, 1752. A painting of King Louis XV's mistress. See, Richard Leppert, *The Nude: The Cultural Rhetoric of the Body in the Art of Western Modernity* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2007):130-1.

the private exchange qualities of Day's photograph, author Malek Alloula in his book *The Colonial Harem* (1986), brings into critical focus postcards of women (and girls) in "imaginary" colonial harems. Alloula discusses the postcard format as a window into a private exotic world that becomes a device of trade and transportation.[75] Furthermore, the figure confined in the harem is an, "ideal figure above all others, the odalisque is the very symbol of the harem, its highest expression. She fills it with a presence that is at once *mysterious* and *luminous* (emphasis added). She is its hidden, yet available, core, always throbbing with restrained sexuality."[76] I believe Carter's nude presence in Day's private studio becomes comparable to the sexual dynamics at play in a colonial harem, which was hinted at earlier in the chapter. The model slowly comes into light as the only nude sexual object of desire awaiting both spatial and bodily infiltration and exploration at the hands of wealthy, white, male travelers. Sitting in an erect position inside a dimly lit, private, non-descript space, Carter's uncommon pose art historically would be deemed too submissive to be forced upon (white) male subjects. Carter thus becomes charged, much like the mistress in Gérôme's aforementioned painting, with levels of sodomitical imaginings that, with a black male subject, fall directly in line with perceptions of racial degeneracy.

Discussing the ways Day's *Africa* aligns with Orientalist and colonial discourses is key to understanding the private (homo-)sexual nature of his photograph in the context of the *fin de* siècle. Moreover, informed by a dense visual culture in Boston, Day unquestionably encountered images of enslaved people growing up in Dedham, Massachusetts. The artist's family was

[75] "The [Colonial harem] postcard is ubiquitous… Travel is the essence of the postcard, and expedition is its mode. It is the fragmentary return to the mother country. It straddles two places: the one it represents and the one it will reach." See, Malek Alloula, Barbara Harlow, and Myrna Godzich. *Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986): 4.
[76] Alloula, *Colonial Harem*, 74.

involved with the Universalist Church with his mother taking part in abolitionist activities. With this knowledge, what can *Africa* reveal if it is compared to the mass-distributed *carte de visite* created by McPherson and Oliver in 1863? Titled *The Scourged Back* (1863), I argue that Day's image of Carter and the image of a runaway slave named Gordon surfaced as projections of sentimental visual lexicons of passive blackness. (fig. 15).[77] It is important to recognize that these two images have entirely divergent functionalities but potentially proffer insight into the way Day conceived of race in his time. Day's image centers Carter as a subject that has been aesthetically "rescued" from the ravages of modernization and the horrors of enslavement. Instead, Day stages the model as an idealized (racialized) male nude who is now, upon contact with whiteness, undergoing the scientific process of observation and study (i.e. discovery).[78] In the case of Gordon, the heavily scarred back of the formerly enslaved subject violates aesthetic idealizations of blackness and rather exposes the true extent of U.S. racism. The *carte de visite* of Gordon unapologetically reveals the violence of industrial capitalism and centuries of African slave trade used for the benefit of white nation formation. The theatricality and staging of each of the subjects contribute to avenues in which the viewer is transported: Carter, with fixed lighting and props, is constructed to represent a private encounter with an object of fascination, whereas Gordon, with hand on hip plopped on a wooden chair, is presented to evidence the traumas of colonial encounters and slavery. The latter, authenticated by the textuality of his keloid scarring,

[77] "[Gordon] had escaped from Mississippi, reached the Union camp at Baton Rouge, enlisted in the Union Army, and was photographed by itinerant photographers McPherson and Oliver in March 1863. Abolitionists circulated copies of the image and *Harper's Weekly* published a woodcut version on 4 July 1863. A journalist for the New York *Independent* demanded that 100,000 copies of the photograph be distributed across the USA, because it 'tells the story in a way that even Mrs. Stowe cannot approach, because it tells the story to the eye.'" See, Zoe Trodd, "Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 2 (2013): 342.

[78] "Day's 'Nubian' and 'African' photographs celebrate and idealize the black male body so feared by lynch mobs. Through several acts of transgression and transposition he situates the African American male body at the pinnacle of perfection, challenging and disrupting a Eurocentric measure of beauty that celebrated the Greek Body as ideal." Smith, "The Politics of Pictorialism," 54.

is made visible and legible for white audiences who wish to consume Gordon as a subject of empathic projection.

Historian Robert Nowatzki in his 2010 book, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy*, discusses the cartographic qualities of blackness. Nowatzki assesses that, through the enslaved subject's body, "Like gender, blackness (and, by association, slave status) was inscribed onto the […] body, a site that was represented as natural or essential but was always constructed. The status of enslaved people was literally scripted onto their bodies in the shape of branded letters, whip scars, and other markings and mutilations that were displayed and 'read' at antislavery meetings."[79] Thus, when white upper-class audiences would view blackness in images or on stage, (of course maintaining a safe distance,) the spectator would be able to project their emotions and desires on to the subject. An empathy equal to that of a cathartic sexual release with the Black (enslaved) subject acting as receptacle for whiteness's emotional discharge. Although the photographs of Carter and Gordon each communicate strikingly different messages, contexts, and purposes, their staging is nearly identical. Day's photograph of Carter ensures the subject is disengaged from U.S. society and historicized within an African cultural context by way of his solicited nudity, the leopard skin, and engulfing darkness. Each of the subjects, collectively, remind white Americans that blackness lacks the right racial type and disallows the opportunity for said subjects to truly metamorphize from savageness to civility. Rather, the indelible pigmentation of Black skin produces a metaphorical encasement that in its own way functions as the shackles of egregious exclusion from society.[80] The artistic representation of Carter is meant to evoke beauty—a way

[79] Robert Nowatzki, *Representing African Americans*, 25.
[80] Compare to Kasson's discussion of Tarzan's metamorphosis, a wild jungle man whose whiteness provides him the ability to traverse savage and civilized boundaries. See, Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man*, 210.

in which Day omits the history of African slave trade with the "removal" of scars—but the subject's ideological transportation and mapping back to Africa maintains the subject's inability to be viewed as an equal in white U.S. society.

Carter and Gordon each have a stage presence meant to become sources of consumable fascination for the white observer. One that complicates private and public boundaries. For Carter, his seductive body seeps into the realms of photography's more unmediated and private use. The homo-eroticism encoded upon his body assert projections of, not pity or idealization, but of fantasy and domination over the model's enticingly feminized subjectivity. Gordon is meant to generate a spectaclization of violence that also positions his body as a fetishistic object. American and Canadian studies scholar Zoe Trodd, in her 2013 article, "Am I Still a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture," states, "[*The Scourged Back*] was the latest and most widely circulated in a long line of abolitionist imagery [distributed in] pamphlets and newspapers, abolitionists published prints of ritual violence, which … Karen Halttunen has termed an abolitionist 'pornography of pain.'"[81] Gordon's story was only readily told through the whip scars on his back, with no firsthand accounts from the man himself, which, in its own way, becomes a commentary on how the exteriority of blackness, with its physical transformation (or mutilation) by whiteness, only permeates the public sphere to further validate a lower hierarchical ordering. The staging of the black models, in the case of Carter and Gordon, becomes a commentary on the economic trade of blackness that actively works to position the subject as commodity of economic, emotional, and sexual tradability.

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE, POACHING, AND HOMOSEXUAL DESIRE

[81] Zoe Trodd, "Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother?," 342.

Looking at one of two photographs Day entitled, *Ebony and Ivory* (*c.*1897), I will further discuss Carter as an African commodity entangled within homosexual visual discourses (fig. 16). As the most well-known and circulated version of *Ebony and Ivory*, Day presents a cropped view of a barely visible left-facing Carter. Displayed against a blacked-out background, Day faintly illuminates the scene so trace amounts of light sheen off Carter's skin—allowing the subject to slowly appear in dim halftones. Sitting upright with a slightly hunched posture, the viewer is again offered the whole left profile of Carter's nude body. Although Carter's genitals remain hidden from sight, the ultra-white statuette, with its upright figure and staff, function as the image's phallic substitute. Carter's thigh, closest to the foreground of the image frame, rests upon the leopard skin which helps define the form of the model's derrière. The model's opposite leg, drawn up by bent knee, creates an "M" configuration with his overlapping arm. Holding up the reverse-facing statuette, Carter grips the base of the object as he gazes upon the white male nude. With this photograph, Carter is forced to come face to face with his own relational objectivity and subservience to white culture.

Unsurprisingly, only one previous scholar took notice of the significance of Day's title. Art Historian Barbara L. Michaels, in her essay "New Light on F. Holland Day's Photographs of African Americans" (1994), was the first to note the complexity of Day's title, in mentioning, "no one seems to have remarked that by naming a picture of a []nude black man on a leopard skin after African products, ivory and ebony, Day symbolized the sitter's Africanness."[82] Michaels lightly hints at the economic contention established in transubstantiating Carter's body and the plaster statuette into precious imported African commodities, but fails to provide an in-depth analysis of what this exactly signifies. First, the white plaster replica of a late-Hellenistic

[82] Barbara L. Michaels, "New Light on F. Holland Day's Photographs of African Americans." *History of Photography* 18, no. 4 (1994): 336.

dancing faun with a pinecone-topped thyrsus mimics the visuality of creamy ivory tusks, commonly extracted from African elephants.[83] The figurine becomes the stark contrast, the foil, to the engulfing blackness of the photograph that deliberately labors to preserve whiteness—visually and hierarchically. Carter, who is nearly lost in the darkness of the image, exists as if to solely support the statuette. This position counters Smith's analysis of the model, which states, "Day's … photographs celebrate and idealize the black male body so feared by lynch mobs… he situates the African American male body at the pinnacle of perfection, challenging and disrupting a Eurocentric measure of beauty that celebrated the Greek body as ideal."[84] I believe this claim works to mask turn-of-the-century racism and rather concedes to formalistic obfuscation. Imagining Carter's subjectivity as polished ebony—a dense and sinkable wood prized for its black color—Day brings to light his conformance to white U.S. racial preeminence. Rather than situating blackness at the apex of culture in the photograph, Day renders Carter as an extension of the statuette's pedestal.[85] For Day to fold Carter into the history of European and American despoilment of African luxury products (highest-type of economic valuation) and labor assets (lowest-type of social valuation), the artist metaphorically participates in imperialist romanticization and commodification of African exports.[86] Moreover, collapsing Carter's

[83] The other *Ebony and Ivory* photograph of Carter "the statuette was a plaster copy of the late Hellenistic bronze from Herculaneum (Museo Nazionale, Naples) of a dancing fawn with thyrsus decorated with a pine cone, which Day had used in other photographs of black as well as white models, notably *The Honey Gatherer* and *in Tanagra*." See, Verna Poseover Curtis, "F. Holland Day: The Poetry of Photography," *History of Photography* 18, no. 4 (1994): 309.

[84] Smith, "The Politics of Pictorialism," 54.

[85] "[Abolitionist] image[s] thus anatomizes the humanity of its subjects while dramatizing his black skin… the treatment of hair and of facial features insists that this athletic young male figure, beautifully rendered in neoclassical style and shown in what appears to be a religious pose is not Greek, but African." See, Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989): 8.

[86] Documented early in the tenth century, it was "in the nineteenth century that the great development of the East African ivory trade took place. An increased demand for ivory in America and Europe coincided with the opening of East Africa by Arab traders and European explorers, and this led to the intensive exploitation of the ivory resources of the interior." See, R.W. Beachey, "The East African Ivory Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 2 (1967): 269. "Ebony has long been one of the most desirable tonewoods among makers of

subjectivity into the materiality of ebony, the model himself becomes the raw material that, in connection to transatlantic slavery, is captured, exported, sold, and violently reconfigured through physical, social, cultural, and aesthetic means.

It is through white man's exploration, discovery, and dominance that these "unknown" and exotic materials are bestowed value, meaning, and existence. The similarities of the harvesting and poaching practices used to claim authentic ebony and ivory mirror the hunting practices inflicted upon African populations for slave trade. Each of these acts of forceful domination and claim of land, resources, and bodies, labor to keep buoyant the institutions that sustain whiteness. For example, big-game hunting expeditions in Africa became opportunities for white, rich men to assert their power and display taxidermy catches as trophies of their impenetrable masculinity. As evidenced in the 1896 mass-circulated photograph of American taxidermist Carl Akeley (1864–1926), entitled *Mr. Akeley and the Leopard that he Killed Bare Handed*, the hunter's impossible feat is memorialized as he and the hanging leopard come into view in front of his tent. (fig. 17).[87] With one arm in a sling and the other with a bandaged hand,

stringed musical instruments, tracing all the way back to the ancient Egyptians. Its density, durability, and dark color uniquely suit it for fingerboards on guitar and violin-family instruments. It's also used for piano keys, pool cues, and smaller artisanal sculptures." See, Bob Taylor, "Why Ebony Matters," *The Ebony Project*, 2018, https://www.taylorguitars.com/ebonyproject/why-ebony-matters/.

[87] "In March 1909 Theodore Roosevelt went to Africa to hunt big game. In his copious baggage was a double-barreled rifle, suitable for shooting elephants and rhinoceros, presented to him by British friends and acquaintances. The inside of the case was inscribed with a dedication 'in recognition of his services on behalf of the preservation of species by means of national parks and forest reserves, and by other means,' and a list of those who had contributed to the gift. The names engraved there included Lord Curzon, the former viceroy of India, Sir Harry Johnston, the explorer and colonial administrator, Frederick Lugard, the governor-general of Nigeria, and, turning up in distinguished company as he was fond of doing, Moreton Frewen. This gift, [for] the former American president symbolizes the way in which the pursuit and conservation of big game linked upper-class men together across national borders." See, Monica Rico, "A White Man's Country: Elite Masculinity, Racial Decline, and the Frontier Stories of Theodore Roosevelt," in *Nature's Nobleman: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013): 164.; "Carl Akeley, considered the father of modern taxidermy, was not only a taxidermist, but also a naturalist, sculptor, writer and inventor. Over his long career, he worked for several different museums, including The Field Museum from 1896 to 1909 as Chief Taxidermist. He made a total of two expeditions to Africa to capture its beauty and bring back specimens for display. His famous piece, the *Fighting African Elephants*, is still on display in Stanley Field Hall. A man of vision, Akeley's dream was to 'give a dignity and fineness to taxidermy which should lead men of great genius to be attracted to it.'" See, "Carl Akeley," *Field Museum*, 2020, https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about/history/carl-akeley.

Akeley, like Day, develops a Darwinist production of white man's superiority in the animal world and modern-day society. Day's complicity in this narrative is not an attempt to mythologize his masculinity but rather sustain the master/slave paradigm so that he can claim (sexual) authority over the objects of his desire. For Day, this authority most readily comes into play through Carter's staging and renaming. Enslaved people that were taken to the Americas and Europe were first thrown onto auction blocks and later theatrical stages during the Abolitionist movement—each were sites for whiteness' economic, social, sexual, and empathetic consumption. In these contexts, the Black subject was then reidentified as property—relinquishing all rights to agency and/or imbued with a reductive black authenticity. Day engages Carter in both narratives.

Day symbolizes empire and whiteness with the statuette, but also subversively utilizes it as a source of literal and figurative (same-)sex enlightenment. Upon closer examination, the statuette has its own layers of cultural subversion. Curator Verna Curtis Posever in her article, "F. Holland Day: The Poetry of Photography" (1994), supposes, "Careful placement, lighting, and printing allowed Day to take control of powerful perceived dichotomies in [*Ebony and Ivory*]: natural size versus miniature; black versus white; deep tone versus dazzling light. He at once emphasized and erased them, achieving in this photograph a universal synthesis of human form, nature, art, and beauty." Alternatively, I argue that Day is coding his image with more esoteric symbols and messages that do not speak universally, but rather sub-culturally. Working with counter-cultural devices, Day employs the racist, classist, and sexist "Othering" of Carter as a means of simultaneously conceding and subverting American idealism. Carter is a subject of Day's white, hetero-patriarchal oppression and object of dangerous, miscegenal homosexual liberation. Day presents Carter as a passive, feminine object that exists as a site of degenerate

homosexual fantasy, with the Black model responsible for whiteness' immoral titillation.[88] Reinforcing racial binaries of the late nineteenth century, Day remains the dominant, public force and Carter the submissive, private entity available for use and disposal. Moreover, in asking Carter to interact with a reproduction of a late-Hellenistic Dionysian artwork, Day is expanding the possibilities of signification by engaging hedonistic discourses of sexuality emphasized by the Greco-Roman figure. The nude statuette appears to be a warrior upon first examination but is in fact a follower of Dionysus. A detail that further makes clear Day's own sexual interests.

Upon discovering that Day's statuette is a plaster copy of a bronze Herculaneum *Dancing Faun*, found in 1754 at the site of Villa dei Papiri, Italy, I knew that this selection was aligned with, "the 1890s (also called the 'Gay Nineties')" development of more expansive gender and sexual identity spectrums (fig. 18).[89] Art Historian James Smalls in his 2003 book, *Homosexuality in Art*, notes, "Dionysian art … has as its subject a variety of mythological creatures such as satyrs, fauns, female bacchants, centaurs, nymphs, and Pan [who] are all followers of Dionysus … what most of them have in common is that they are wild, frolic outdoors in wooded areas, and have a lustful nature. Their sexuality was oftentimes excessive and sometime ambiguous."[90] Day, being the well-read, studious, and travelled individual that he was, unquestionably was aware of the U.S.'s and Europe's visual discourses of same-sex male

[88] Women were at the forefront of aesthetic style at the end of the nineteenth century and, "in the aftermath of the country's splintering, bloody Civil War and its almost equally divisive Reconstruction, Americans were eager for a new truth, for a reform that would improve private as well as public life." Through beauty, comes reform for a higher spiritual connection and liberation that worked to break up gender barriers and "normative" sexual practice. See, Warner Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America*, xii-xiii.

[89] "In the cultural jungle of the Eighties and 'Gay Nineties," aesthetes and realists flourished side by side, their opposite approaches producing complementary blooms of gay sensibility. Realism documented the prose life of urban dancehalls and brothels as well as sporting country lads, while aestheticism imagined the poetic refinements of the elite; its rank offshoots, the symbolist and decadents, added to that hothouse epicureanism an obsession with the most occult, even fatal pleasures, a morbid Gothicism." See, James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999): 185-86; James Smalls, *Homosexuality in Art*, 175.

[90] Smalls, *Homosexuality in Art*, 27.; Day's image, *The Marble Faun* (1896), is another overt reference to Dionysian art. The nude androgynous child stands in a landscape and takes on the stoic nature of a marble Pan figure. This image is also a nod to Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1859 novel, *The Marble Faun*.

desire and engagement. Oftentimes depicted as an androgynous ephebe, Dionysus was the god of agriculture, virility, wine, and ecstasy, and known for drunken debauchery and excessive ritual practices—including orgies with all gendered sex partners. Brought in connection to a *c.*220 B.C.E. Greek satyr, later called the *Barberini Faun* after being looted from Greece and taken to Rome, Day positions Carter as one of the mischievous Roman god's subhuman followers (fig. 19). The faun is the embodiment of humanness and animality commonly associated with degenerate same-sex desire. Similar to the *Barberini Faun* sculpture, Day places Carter on a draped leopard skin—a motif and symbol associated with Dionysus. Although Day keeps Carter less erotically posed than the Hellenistic sculpture, I contend that Day restrained his desires to arrange Carter in such a lascivious manner due to photography's more shocking accuracy that would inevitably result in criminalizing retributions for the artist.

In the second *Ebony and Ivory* (*c.*1897) photograph, Day maintains the dialogue between Carter and the statuette, but this time makes overt art-historical reference to Jean Hippolyte Flandrin's 1835 oil painting, *Figure d'Etude* (figs. 20 and 21). Flandrin's ephebic model is differentiated from Day's image through racial and place-based dynamics that—as a young, beautiful, white male—give the subject entitlement to a more public exposure. Centralized outdoors in a sublime landscape, Flandrin's nude, arranged in a fetal-like pose, dominates the composition. With a body orientation referential to the embryonic phase, a life awaiting (re)birth, Flandrin perpetuates the myths of melancholia and isolation thought to inflict invert/same-sex oriented men in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even though, as evidenced by Day and his public navigation, this was a complete fallacy.[91] Art historian Michael Camille in his 1994

[91] "*The myth of isolation* holds that anti-gay hostility prevented the development of an extensive gay subculture and forced gay men to lead solitary lives in the decades before the rise of the gay liberation movement … [rather] Gay men had to take precautions, but, like other marginalized peoples, they were able to construct spheres of relative cultural autonomy in the interstices of a city governed by hostile powers." See, George Chauncey, *Gay New York:*

essay, "The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body: Flandrin's *Figure d'Etude*," connects Day's unquestionable knowledge of Flandrin's same-sex yearning in stating, "[the Flandrin nude] encodes a moment of power in which the artist's eye and paintbrush [or camera lens] inscribe themselves upon the paid body in order to create a timeless ideal … making this an image of loss and disempowerment in a culture where pederastic longings had to be totally effaced and submerged."[92] Thus, by modelling Carter exactly after Flandrin's painting, Day engages *Ebony and Ivory* in a discourse of the male nude that is inarguably meant to excite and affirm same-sex arousal and observation.

In making Carter into a feminine, tradable, and passive object, Day sustains his active role as a masculine American consumer, creator, and master. The relationship played out in this chapter between Day and Carter is one encoded in racial, sexual, and economic ideologies that labor to keep Day's homosexuality and racism obscured by aesthetic. This was an endeavor that clearly evidenced and preserved Day's manipulation of Pictorialism and his own white male privilege. From a racial standpoint, Carter by default was positioned to be the passive receiver of Day's artistic genius. As a working-class, Black model, Carter was condemned in all realms of U.S. society as a subject unworthy and unintended to acquire the power of white U.S. citizenship. Even as a free U.S.-born citizen, Carter faced a society that constantly rationalized his existence as a source of differentiation—one set to abide to the legal terms of "separate but equal."

Siobhan B. Somerville in her book, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*, opens with an introduction discussing the 1896 supreme

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Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940 (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994): 2.

[92] Michael Camille, "The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body: Flandrin's *Figure d'Etude*," in G*ay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, ed. Whitney Davis (New York and London: Harrington Park Press, 1994): 168.

court ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Somerville states, "…the 1896 ruling formally and explicitly hardened racialized boundaries in new ways. This legalized system of segregation recalled slavery's racialized distinctions between 'slave' and 'free' … [this also] ushered in a nationwide and brutal era of 'Jim Crow' segregation."[93] Therefore, Carter was cast into the role of "slave" by U.S. society and forcibly rendered sexually and socially passive to Day. In realizing that Day's role in this relationship remains active and controlling, the artist, in regard to nineteenth-century conceptualization of sex, remains the masculine and properly nationalistic force that historically tethers processes of racialization with the medicalization and criminalization of same-sex, invert subjects in U.S. society. By employing demeaning processes of racial reductivism, in regard to transforming Carter into African object, Day proves his work and social existence were products of his own time. Through the artist's conformance and practice of segregation, he was able to express his "degenerate" desires through the ethnographic and racist staging of Carter. It was through Carter's imagined savageness and beautiful blackness that Day simultaneously countered and sustained white U.S. nationalism.

[93] Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000): 1.

"I'm only painting mountains and niggers."
—John Singer Sargent, 1916

Chapter 3

Into the Forbidden Mangroves with "Nassau Negroes": John Singer Sargent's Watercolors of Bahamian Laborers in Florida

In February 1917, U.S.-American artist John Singer Sargent traveled to Florida for the first time. During this sojourn, the artist created oil paintings of two prominent U.S. businessmen: a portrait commission of John D. Rockefeller and an informal *plein air* portrait of Charles Deering.[94] The latter was the then-director of International Harvester Company and Sargent's longtime friend.[95] Sargent's *Portrait of Charles Deering* (1917) captures the aging industry magnate outdoors near the coastline of his Brickell Point Estate (fig. 1).[96] As discussed in a 2018 exhibition catalog, *John Singer Sargent and Chicago's Gilded Age*, curator Annelise K. Madsen observers:

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[94] "Sargent traveled to Florida in February 1917 to fulfill a commission for a portrait of *John D. Rockefeller* (Kykuit, Pocantico Hills, New York), soon after arriving in Miami for an extended stay with [Charles] Deering at Brickell Point [Estate]. It was here that Sargent again painted his friend, now in his sixties…" See, Annelise K. Madsen, Mary Broadway, Richard Ormond, and Art Institute of Chicago, *John Singer Sargent & Chicago's Gilded Age*, 1st ed. (Chicago, Illinois: Art Institute of Chicago, 2018): 100.; "Charles Deering and John Singer Sargent became friends in 1876 in Newport[, RI] during the latter's first trip to the States. Sargent's trip was for the artist to meet his American family and attend the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Deering was an amateur artist and became a collector of Sargent's work. Deering was married to Admiral Augustus Ludlow Case's daughter, Annie. The Case's were longtime friends of the Sargent family and had met early on in Europe. Sargent painted a portrait of Deering in 1876 and he also painted a posthumous portrait of Annie in 1877. See, Stephanie L. Herdrich, "Tracing Connections between Sargent and Charles Deering," The MET Aug. 18, 2015, https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2015/sargent-portraits-of-artists-and-friends/blog/posts/sargent-and-charles-deering.

[95] "In 1881 [Charles] Deering retired from the Navy, relocating to Chicago [Newport, RI] to join his father, William, and his younger half-brother, James, in the management of William Deering & Company (later Deering Harvester Company), which manufactured equipment supporting the region's vast farmlands … in 1902 when Deering Harvester Company merged with McCormick Harvesting Machine Company to form International Harvester, a large-scale deal brokered by financier J.P. Morgan. Deering served as a director of the newly formed company (1902–19), then as Chairman of the Board from 1904 until 1916, when he retired from active management." See, Madsen, *John Singer Sargent & Chicago's Gilded Age*, 92.

[96] "Nestled along the coast in South Dade, the Deering Estate [consists of] [t]he oldest existing buildings … built by the Richmond family and Charles Deering. In 1896, Samuel H. Richmond built a pioneer home for his family on the estate as part of the settlement of the Town of Cutler. In 1900, an addition to the home was built and then opened to the paid public as The Richmond Hotel—the first hotel between Coconut Grove and Key West. The graceful Mediterranean revival-style Stone House, built by Charles Deering to showcase his valuable art collection, was constructed in 1922. From 1913–1918, the wealthy industrialist Charles Deering purchased hundreds of acres of land where the high ground of the Atlantic Rock Ridge and the fresh water of the Everglades meets the Biscayne Bay. Before Deering's arrival, this remarkable place had already hosted 10,000 years of nearly continuous human occupation including Paleo-Indian shelters, Tequesta settlements, Seminole hunting grounds, Bahamian and Florida Cracker homesteads and the town of Cutler. Cutler, established around the Perrine Land Grant Township, had an

> In sun-dappled light, Deering sits casually in a cane chair, his body facing right with his legs crossed, his left hand firmly holding the armrest, and his head facing the viewer with his eyes closed slightly due to the surrounding light. Dressed in a white suit, shirt, and shoes, and wearing a boater hat, Deering appears calm and relaxed in his element… [Sargent] weav[es] Deering into a tapestry of swift brushstrokes, warm and cool hues, and the area's rich vegetation.[97]

Madsen's formal analysis overlooks Deering's representation in juxtaposition to the modernizing landscape. Deering's centralized and firmly planted position in the painting presents the subject as a force of white U.S. elitism and twentieth-century industrial imperialism. The subtropical foliage of Florida lurks in the shadows and provides a visual contrast that establishes binary oppositions: dark vs. light; nature vs. man; and primitive vs. civilized. The fallen brown coconut fruit and fronds arranged around Deering's cane chair evoke a sense of nature's fleetingness in the face of modernization. Moreover, the pools of light that drip along Deering's white suit and trail off toward the horizon line with ships at port indicate the sitter's historical and economic role in Florida's transformation into a modern tropical paradise. Despite Deering's leisure clothing and age, he sits in the landscape as a monument of white, elite, masculine nationalism and, more critically, as a colonial authority.

Sargent, the son of white U.S. Anglo-Protestant parents raised in Europe, is tied to similar colonialist narratives. As a privileged, white, male artist, Sargent's artistic authority in Florida was specifically dictated by his desire to aesthetically control and capture "untamed" and "untouched" subjects. For Sargent, this time became an opportunity to reconnect with his friend and unexpectedly indulge in exotic, racialized, nude male subjects. Although Sargent's small-scale portrait of Deering is a testament to their friendship, it was also the last instance the artist

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infrastructure including a post office, coastal road and docks, but failed to thrive when in 1903 [Henry M.] Flagler's East Coast Railroad plans were relocated further inland. In 1916, Deering purchased and renovated the Richmond Inn, the area's only lodging facility, and established it as a winter home for himself and his wife Marion, adding additional support structures to establish a self-sustaining homestead." See, "About the Deering Estate," *Deering Estate*, n.d., https://deeringestate.org/history/.

[97] Madsen, *John Singer Sargent & Chicago's Gilded Age*, 100.

employed the oil painting medium during his stay in Florida. In fact, ten years before, Sargent almost entirely renounced the medium and portraiture out of frustration and dislike for his white sitters.[98] Instead, he turned to charcoal and watercolor and, in a 1909 letter to an unidentified friend, stated: "I have an entirely different feeling for sketches and studies than I have for portraits which are my 'gagne-pain' + which I am delighted to get rid of … Sketches from nature give me *pleasure to do* & *pleasure to keep* (emphasis added)."[99] In this chapter, I will exclusively examine Sargent's encounters with Bahamian laborers who, in 1917, were constructing the surrounding gardens for the new Miami estate—Villa Vizcaya. Sargent's subject matter reflects a Confederate legacy that positions the Florida landscape and its laborers as indistinguishable objects of (homo-)sexual and proprietary exchange. With this in mind, and paired with an evaluation of the discourse of the female nude bather in art, I argue that Sargent's medium and subjects not only complicate the hetero-patriarchal economy of art but serve as evidence of Sargent's conformance to narratives of U.S. white supremacy. Additionally, by feminizing and sexualizing racialized male nude subjects, Sargent aesthetically documents and preserves his improper miscegenal, same-sex desire and complicates his position in the American art canon.

Sargent ventured out into the "primitive" Florida landscape to engage in a process that cultural historian Mary Gluck, in her 2005 book *Popular Bohemia: Modernism and Urban*

[98] "Sargent himself professed the desire to cast off whiteness entirely, writing in a letter of 1908: 'My hatred of my fellow creatures extends to the entire race, or to the entire white race, and when I escape from London to a foreign country my principle is to fly from the species. To call on a Caucasian when abroad is a thing I never do." See, Sarah Burns, "Under the Skin: Reconsidering Cecilia Beaux and John Singer Sargent," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 124, no. 3 (2000): 328.

[99] *"Gagne-pain*," is French for "livelihood." See, Greg Cook, "Tired Of Painting The One Percent, John Singer Sargent Hit The Road," *The ARTery*, Oct. 21, 2013, https://www.wbur.org/artery/2013/10/21/john-singer-sargent-watercolors.; Watercolor was the main artistic medium employed by Sargent in 1917 during his travels, with the exception of a few oil painting commissions he did for friends and later President Woodrow Wilson. The watercolors discussed in this chapter by Sargent also utilized the more opaque and water-based gouache medium but, for the sake of clarity, will be only referred to as watercolor.

Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris, would argue functioned as, "part of an evolutionary narrative of self-affirmation through which European [and American] middle-class culture defined its place in the historical and natural worlds."[100] For Sargent, the tropical landscape and nude non-white Bahamian subjects were inseparable and constitutive of each other. *Man and Trees, Florida* (1917) speaks to this relationship (fig. 2). Backgrounded by an entanglement of tree branches, leaves, and grass, the subject sits erect with his body facing right and his gaze locked on the viewer. The musculature of the nude man's shoulders, pectorals, arms, and legs are well defined, with his right arm propped out to one side and the other phallically positioned over his groin. Denied the luxury of sinking into a chair, the nude man was forced to hold his position on the ground for the length of Sargent's request. Of all of Sargent's watercolors depicting nude Bahamian laborers, the presentation of this subject offers the most articulated facial features, yet the young man's name and biography remain completely unknown. Compared to the *Portrait of Charles Deering*, Sargent's watercolor of the anonymous man brings into focus whiteness' equivalence to progress and blackness' restriction to atavism (i.e. nature). Moreover, despite comparatively similar poses, Sargent presents two entirely different levels of artistic and personal connections to each subject: one has a platonic and enduring tone, and the other an unequal and sexualized subjectification. For Deering, his treatment is casual but respectful, with his body framed within itself and indicative of his status. In contrast, the laborer's nude body sits on top of the ground with his legs open to straddle a tree root covered in sand. Unlike the background in Deering's portrait, the chaotic and overgrown foliage behind the nude Black man confines the figure to a very limited and natural space. The way Sargent chooses to depict and

[100] Mary Gluck, *Popular Bohemia: Modernism and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 173.

compositionally place the nude male subject in his watercolor becomes a process of dematerialization that will be examined throughout this chapter.

Before exploring and painting these nude Black subjects in Florida, Sargent first had to meet Charles Deering's younger half-brother and owner of Villa Vizcaya. James Deering's estate became a cultural legacy for the industry tycoon, who moved to Florida to remedy his failing health and prepare for retirement from his position as vice president of International Harvester.[101] Following the lead of his father and brother, who also resided in Florida, James Deering purchased land in the temperate hammock of Coconut Grove to erect his extravagant winter residence.[102] Situated on a plot of 130 acres of the subtropical Biscayne Bay, the neo-baroque, Italianate-inspired mansion was started in 1910 and was not fully completed until after James Deering's death in 1925 (fig. 3).[103] For Sargent, his visit to Vizcaya proved to be an experience that was a source of great inspiration and pleasure. After staying two months at Vizcaya, leaving on May 10, 1917, Sargent's watercolors preserved aspects of the estate's history that were never meant to survive.

Sargent's watercolors of Bahamian laborers evidence Vizcaya's homo-sociality and class-based and racial comingling. Historian Julio Capó, Jr. in his 2017 book, *Welcome to*

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[101] "Nor had James Deering built for the sake of his heirs: there was no one to follow him at Vizcaya, no wife or children… No one in the family, as James Deering was aware, could have been induced to take on this costly estate." See, Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya: Annals of a Great House* (Miami, FL: Banyan Books, Inc., 1985): 2.

[102] Charles Deering had his Brickell Point Estate and, "William Deering, with his wife Clara Hamilton Deering, retired to Coconut Grove, an old established settlement some four miles south of Miami on Biscayne Bay, where he build a modest winter home, deliberately shunning, as foreign to his Puritan taste, the social atmosphere saturating Palm Beach." See, Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 3.

[103] Although a known Francophile, James Deering and Paul Chalfin, Villa Vizcaya's artistic director, began to travel Europe and envisioned an Italian-styled structure that was named after the Spanish explorer, Vizcaino. "James Deering settle on the name for his new estate after learning about the Spanish merchant Vizcaino, who was said to have explored the region in the seventeenth century… The caravel, a sailing ship associated with Spanish exploration, became the estate's emblem." See, Madsen, *John Singer Sargent & Chicago's Gilded Age*, 105 and 107.; Flaminia Gennari-Santori, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida: Paul Chalfin, Vizcaya and the International Market from Italian Decorative Arts in 1910s," in *Dealing Art on Both Sides of the Atlantic, 1860-1940*, ed. Lynn Catterson (Studies in the History of Collecting & Art Markets. Boston: Brill, 2017): 205.

Fairland: Queer Miami before 1940, expands upon the development of homosocial networks in Miami among Bahamian laborers who would come to Florida for work. Capó, Jr. reveals,

> It was common for men without families 'to get together and build a shack…' These men often shared a bed, too. While these circumstances could easily turn sexual, they more generally facilitated an intense closeness among men… Miami's Bahamians often lived in these homosocial environments, which facilitated the construction of a distinct [same-sex] erotic in the city. One particularly vivid account of the homoeroticism bred by the intimate and homosocial spaces of the urban frontier took place in [Vizcaya].[104]

Such levels of homosocial same-sex engagement, whether situational or not, have become an important aspect of Vizcaya's undiscussed history. Of course, the villa became a major draw for Bahamians in search of work with decent pay, but Miami itself presented many additional opportunities.[105] Free and removed from the restraints of marriage and family, many of the Bahamian men could now fully engage in a working-class bachelor subculture.[106] For James Deering, himself a well-known bachelor, along with Villa Vizcaya's unmarried visionary American architect, Paul Chalfin, Vizcaya became a private haven. Chalfin was homosexual and would frequently stay at the villa with his partner.[107] This detail leads into speculation that

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[104] Julio Capó, Jr., *Welcome to Fairland: Queer Miami before 1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017): 73-74.

[105] "Everyone had heard about the Deerings and their big farm machinery factories in Chicago, same as they knew about Flagler and the oil business [with Rockefeller]. One thing sure: anyone who had a trade, could pound a nail straight, or swing a pick had a job. And the pay was all right. A blacksmith, garage helper, teamster, barn man, or plain laborer could get anywhere from $2.25 a day to $2.50." See, Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 33.; "American dollars had a bewitching charm for a [Bahamian] lad who worked for wages ranging from 36 to 50 cents a day [and doing much of the same work]." See, Raymond A. Mohl, "Black Immigrants: Bahamians in Early Twentieth-Century Miami," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (1987): 275.

[106] "The bachelor subculture, as several historians have shown shared many of the characteristics of working-class male culture as a whole, but it also had certain distinctive elements that made it particularly amenable to the presence of fairies. The dominant working-class ideology made the ability and willingness to undertake the responsibility of supporting a family two of the defining characteristics of both manliness and male 'respectability.' But many of the men of the bachelor subculture, either because their irregular and poorly paid work made supporting a family difficult or because they had deliberately chosen to avoid such family encumbrances, forged an alternative definition of manliness that was predicated on a rejection of family obligations. Although many of the men would eventually marry, they tended to remain isolated from women and hostile to the constraints of marriage during the many years they were involved in the bachelor subculture." See, George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994): 78-79.

[107] "Artist, interior decorator, and architect Paul Chalfin—who proved central to Vizcaya's aesthetic—lived openly with his male lover, Louis Koons, in the mid-1910s and early 1920s." See, Julio Capó, Jr. "Locating Miami's Queer

Chalfin and Deering had their own contentious relationship, which will be discussed in the following sections. With these details, it is hard not to question Vizcaya as a site of same-sex exploration and homo-sociality which brings new dimension to Florida's paradisiacal allure.

FRAMING THE RACIAL AND SEXUAL LANDSCAPE OF FLORIDA

Florida in 1917 was dictated by segregationist Jim Crow laws, white authoritarian policing and violence, nativist discrimination, robber-baron capitalism, and sodomy laws, which proliferated after Miami's founding in 1896.[108] This historical context fleshes out a racial and sexual ambivalence in the state that will aid in understanding Sargent's position in relation to the landscape and its Bahamian subjects. On one side, the Black (U.S.-born and Bahamian) presence in Miami was explicitly promoted to serve demands for cheap yet experienced labor but, on the obverse side, the resultant visibility of blackness in Miami incited the establishment of a Black-only neighborhood.[109] The nascent city found the hands and backs it needed for construction, but white residents grew perturbed by developing Black communities. Thus, a 1916 City Council Ordinance was passed to restrict Black residents to only live in Miami's northwestern sector.

History," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, ed. Megan E. Springate (National Park Foundation and National Park Service: Washington, DC, 2016): 7.

[108] "At the time of Miami's incorporation in 1896, the fortunes of [B]lack Americans [and foreign Blacks residing in the U.S.] had declined to their lowest level since the Civil War. The heady illusions and notable accomplishments of the freedmen during Reconstruction had succumbed to the harsh realities of economic dependency and the restoration of white Democratic rule in the South. Increasingly, [B]lacks found themselves scapegoats for political and economic tensions and targets of virulent new doctrines of racial inferiority, resulting in widespread disfranchisement, segregation (Jim Crow) legislation, and increasing white intimidation and violence in Florida." See, Paul S. George, "Colored Town: Miami's Black Community, 1896–1930," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1978): 432.; "Not only were the Bahamians discriminated against because of their race, but also because of their foreign citizenship… No issue stirred as much anger and hostility among the Bahamians in Florida as conflict with local police. The Bahamians were unaccustomed to the racial segregation of America's deep South. By nature and practice, Miami historian Paul S. George has written, 'these British subjects were less obsequious toward whites than native blacks. Many Bahamian black preached racial equity, causing a majority of whites, including the police, to regard them as troublemakers.'" See, Mohl, "Black Immigrants," 288.

[109] "After incorporation, the city upheld state segregation statutes, passed its own Jim Crow ordinances, and consigned blacks to cramped quarters with inadequate municipal services. Miami's white citizens vigilantly resisted black movement into their neighborhoods, administered a dual system of justice, and countenanced white terrorism of blacks." George, "Colored Town," 432.; Blackness in Miami is more diverse than just U.S. African American and Bahamian. For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus most readily on the Bahamian experience but do not wish to erase additional Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latinx experience and culture in Miami.

Miami's color line for poor, Black, working-class residents was drawn and degradingly named, Colored Town.

Colored Town became the physical manifestation of racial and class-based divisions, and functioned as a stark contrast to Miami's extravagant resorts, hotels, and mansions. As demonstrated in a photograph from the Historical Association of Southern Florida, titled *A home in Colored Town* (*c.*1900), the level of poverty and lack of municipal services kept conditions in Colored Town bleak (fig. 4). Two wooden homes stand high off the underdeveloped ground, indicating that this was an area that experienced recurrent flooding. The landscape's rough quality also reveals hurried and rapid development reflective of overpopulation with individuals and families in need of fast and temporary shelter.[110] The homes were placed in close proximity and built with materials that were not likely to withstand the Floridian climate. Personal garments and work clothes hang strewn across a clothesline in the background. Shoddy homes and unsafe living conditions overall communicate Colored Town's purpose. It was meant to be a dumping site for Black residents to stay in close proximity to their work locations, but remain unseen. It was designed, as a whole, to be disposable and unremembered, much like the men, women, and children who lived in its confines. Finally, Colored Town was supposed to function as the antithesis of Vizcaya, operating as a compromised space in regard to its racialized residences and a flourishing "degenerate" social subculture. Although the image with the man and the two young girls next to wheelbarrows does not have the same signification as Sargent's watercolors of nude Bahamian bathers, the level of surveillance inflicted upon Black residents in Miami is too difficult to overlook. Surveillance, whether to monitor criminal activity or serve

[110] "The most glaring deficiency in the private sector was the severe shortage and low quality of housing. Most dwellings were cramped and rickety, vulnerable to heavy rains, winds, and fire. Few homes possessed electricity or indoor plumbing." See, George, "Colored Town," 436.

predatory (white) desires, charges these images in a way that constantly secures social order. For Sargent, his watercolors of Bahamian nude bathers concede to this context and transform his touristic Florida adventure into an ideological assertion of the artist's unchallenged power.

For Bahamians in Florida, the racism upheld in Colored Town would have seemed to be a more exaggerated and overt practice of segregation than that experienced on the British-ruled islands, but this was not entirely true. Although Black Bahamians were able to maneuver around the islands a little more freely, Bahamian society as a whole remained in favor of white "Conch" residents (Bahamian residents of European descent) and tourists.[111] Art historian Dana E. Byrd in a 2018 exhibition catalog essay called, "Trouble in Paradise?: Winslow Homer in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida, 1884–1886," brings into focus Homer's influence on tourism in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida with his photography and watercolor. The Bahamas and Florida each underwent extensive modernization post-1896 with Byrd noting, "the lodging and main tourist enclaves had to be modern and ensure comfort [for white tourists], yet the overall landscape of the islands needed to stay sufficiently pristine and untouched." Although Byrd lightly hints at the connection between land and human subject, the processes of preserving and sustaining a picturesque (anti-modern) illusion is best achieved when the non-white, local population is denied modernity. Black Bahamians, as subjugated "primitive" subjects, needed to be kept "pristine and untouched" in order to perform and authenticate an exotic tropical experience. Moreover, such power dynamics became an important part of Bahamian tourism with colonist narratives of domination fueling paradise as a strategy of social differentiation. For Black Bahamian residents of the island, leisure, as praxis and privilege, was denied—especially in

[111] Dana E. Byrd, "Trouble in Paradise? Winslow Homer in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida, 1884–1886," in *Winslow Homer and the Camera: Photography and the Art of Painting* (New Haven and London: Bowdoin College Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2018): 108.

regard to access to beaches.[112] Rather, as an invaluable labor source in the Bahamas and Florida, Black Bahamians were destined to only live out a life of service and exercise themselves as invisible mechanisms that sustained projections of a tropical escape. In the case of Sargent, the nude Bahamian subjects were unquestionably viewed as part of his Florida experience and functioned as amenities made available during the artist's stay.

Enduring the U.S. south's racism and nativism for the opportunity of economic survival was unfortunately the reality for many Black Bahamians. Continuing to build on this Florida history, urban historian Raymond A. Mohl's 1987 article, "Black Immigrants: Bahamians in Early Twentieth-Century Miami," reports, "Miami had only a few hundred people when it was incorporated as a city in 1896. By 1900, the population had increased to 1,681, including a sizable number of black immigrants from the Bahamas" and, with the addition of the developing railroad system and tourist resorts, these migrant workers were guaranteed jobs that would pay significantly more than anywhere in the Lucayan archipelago.[113] Therefore, the only hope for economic mobility and (relational) freedom for Bahamians at this time came through manual labor and service industry jobs easily found in Florida. As Black U.S.-born and migrant workers began moving to Miami in droves, amendments to city policy continued to change as well. In a

[112] "…the Bahamas were segregated spatially, politically, and economically. Political representation was limited to landowners, who were primarily white, while the growing black middle classes were disenfranchised. Through law and custom, black Bahamians were barred from enjoying tourist sites, including beaches and landmarks. Access to these sites was restricted by race, as segregation was a key element of the tourism development 'plan' enforced by elites and development investors. The historian Peter Wood has likened the deep racial divide of the Bahamas to the conditions of the bitterly segregated Reconstruction South [i.e. Florida]. In a practice that continued until the 1940s, white staff at Nassau hotels were brought to work in publicly visible service positions. Hotel guests were able to interact with black Bahamians in the capacity of servants, minstrels, and the occasional 'locals'…non-white Bahamians were unable to access the resorts without performing these roles." See, Byrd, "Trouble in Paradise?," 114.

[113] Mohl, "Black Immigrants, 271.; "In 1915, according to the local white newspaper and city directory, Miami was developing in to an important city for tourists. . . Successful operation of this industry relied on support labor, a black workforce to build and maintain the transportation system, hotel accommodations, and amenities available only to white residents on the east side of the railroad tracks." See, Dorothy Jenkins Fields, "Colored Town, Miami, Florida, 1915: An examination of the manner in which the residents defined their community during this era of Jim Crow," (Ph.D. diss., The Union Institute, 1996): 1.

2000 article by author and LGBTQ activist Allan H. Terl, "An Essay on the History of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Florida," it is noted, "The American colonies imported their sodomy laws from English common and statutory law. Florida's original sodomy law, phrased in terms of 'crimes against nature,' dates back to 1868. In 1917, the legislature modified the statutes to include an additional prohibition against 'unnatural and lascivious' acts."[114] It is no coincidence that these changes were implemented after the establishment of Colored Town, which rapidly became a hub for various subcultural networks, including a "vice district."[115]

JAMES DEERING'S PRIVACY AND BACHELORHOOD

As part of the white section of Miami, James Deering's wealth and whiteness allowed Vizcaya to function as a site of overindulgent culture generated to serve various purposes. Firstly, the estate's subtropical climate was ideal for the "unremarkable businessman" Deering, whose "health for some time had been noticeably declining. He had retired from business on advice of doctors, [and was] a victim of various ailments including a debilitating pernicious anemia."[116] Secondly, Deering had no heirs to acquire his wealth, power, or name; therefore, Vizcaya functioned as the ideal surrogate for Deering's legacy. Finally, the unshakable influence of Paul Chalfin, Vizcaya's interior designer, self-named architect, and consultant to Deering, filled the estate with a pastiche that was ostentatious and subcultural.[117] In a 1985 book, *The Lives of*

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[114] Allan H. Terl, "An Essay on the History of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Florida," *Nova Law Review*, 24, no. 3 (2000): 794.

[115] "Colored Town quickly became an impoverished, congested quarter, abounding with disease and crime. Most white Miamians heard or read of it only in a criminal context or during periods of unrest and many were ignorant of a subculture there which contained enterprises, institutions, and activities characteristic of many black settlements. It included a bustling black business community, vice district, a variety of entertainment, and numerous churches." See, George, "Colored Town," 435.; "The construction and agricultural jobs that attracted Bahamian men to Miami created homosocial spaces that facilitated queer expressions, desires, and acts. Prior to 1905, or when Miami's port remained largely inaccessible, Bahamian patterns of migration to southern Florida were largely family-oriented. This quickly changed as Miami's labor needs shifted and the port became cheaper and easier for Bahamians to access. After that, Bahamian migration to Miami was largely male." See, Capó, Jr., *Welcome to Fairyland*, 66-67.

[116] Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 1-2.

[117] "[Chalfin] had started out as a New England painter of some promise. He was a graduate of Harvard, had lived abroad, and for three years had been a Prix de Rome student at Rome's American Academy, studying also in Paris,

Vizcaya: Annals of a Great House, free-lance writer and former Villa Vizcaya tour guide, Kathryn Chapman Harwood, outlines the early moves by Deering to develop his estate, where she records:

> [Deering] began casting about for an agent [in 1910], while he was at it someone … with enough talent … to assist him in getting the estate under way, with enough knowledge of the arts to advise him on furnishings and save him from being victimized by unscrupulous dealers, as had formerly happened—someone, on the whole, sophisticated and wordly [*sic*], free to travel and to devote himself full time… One was the celebrated Elsie De Wolfe, the New York and Paris decorator, who had done work for Deering in his New York apartment and his Chicago house. She had sent as her representative a youngish man named Paul Chalfin, an associate of hers. Amazingly, he seemed to fit Deering's large order, and she recommended Chalfin for the post.[118]

Chalfin entered the project with a lot to prove and with the mentality that Vizcaya would be his magnum opus.[119] Deering, continually described as reserved and unpretentious, did not have the same vision for Vizcaya as Chalfin, but continually forfeited creative authority to the designer. Chalfin, from the inception of Vizcaya, controlled who was selected to work on every aspect of the estate, a dynamic that indicates the homo-social relationship with Deering was more complex than once believed.

James Deering's same-sex, homo-social intimacy has been largely based on speculation and his "bachelor" status but, I argue, it can be readily identified in coded messages found in letters and the décor of his estate. Disclosed in a 1916 handwritten letter from Deering to Chalfin, the apologetic sender writes:

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at one time under James McNeill Whistler… Chalfin left his post with [MFA Boston] in 1905 to accept the Jacob H. Lazarus scholarship for the study of mural painting in Italy. Considerably later, after his return to New York from Rome and Paris, serious eye trouble developed, involving an allergy to oil paint that rudely cut short his painting career." See, Chapman Harwood, 9-10.

[118] Harwood Chapman, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 7.

[119] "[Chalfin was] an educated, well-traveled, personable bachelor, onetime curator of Chinese and Japanese art in the Boston Fine Arts Museum… [Chalfin] was cut from far different cloth than James Deering. He was flamboyant, expensively but rakishly turned out; he wore a French beret, was elegant in his tastes, and his social manners were impeccable. His association with Deering from early 1911 had something rather mystical about it, almost as though he manipulated Deering, who seemed only too willing [to concede to Chalfin]. Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 7-9.

> Do you realize that it will soon be five years since you and [I] hitched our horses together? In all that time except for intervals for food, water and flirtation you have given your time, labor and thought to me… I know that the work you have done has been very well done and that you have given your whole soul to it. We really understand each other pretty well. I know that you are likely to be hurt when I don't mean to hurt you and you know I am likely to be irritated when you don't mean to irritate me—this among other things. But for something that can hardly happen *our* house is going to be a triumph—mostly your triumph (emphasis added). In my mind (opinion) there is much sympathy between us. We ought to have even more.[120]

Deering alludes to the first time he met Chalfin, and nonchalantly implies it was a moment of partnership. Chalfin dedicated years of his time and energy to Vizcaya, alongside Deering, as the two men traveled all through Europe together beginning in 1910. Deering tries to mask the letter's amorous touches in commending Chalfin for his work on the estate, but also directly reveals his enjoyment of his mutual sympathy with the designer. Chalfin is referred to as giving his soul to Vizcaya (and to Deering) to create a work of art that belonged equally to both men—a way to immortalize their union. In another letter to Chalfin, dated March 23, 1917, Deering wrote:

> [Sargent] is visiting my brother. They had luncheon with me yesterday and went over to the house… He understands and appreciates better than anyone else who has been in the house what our property is and evidently took, as he certainly expressed, much pleasure in it… So far as I know Mr. Sargent's stay is indefinite and you are very likely to see him here. He stated that ever since he has been in America he has been hungering for some architectural painting and asked permission to come here and do a lot of work. This, of course, I granted…[121]

Deering makes note of Sargent's understanding and appreciation of Vizcaya, which I do not believe merely means a knowledge and valuation of the estate's aesthetic and design. Rather, I think Sargent was quick to realize more esoteric symbols strewn throughout the home and gardens. For Sargent, living "his youth in peregrination between European resorts and cultural capitals," he would be highly attuned to sexually coded messages expressed through

[120] Chapman Harwood, *The Lives of Vizcaya*, 9.
[121] Madsen, *John Singer Sargent & Chicago's Gilded Age*, 108;

mythological and classical motifs.[122] Messages that would communicate a sense of solidarity among white, elite bachelors who could more readily participate in same-sex networks due to their social positions and privilege to afford privacy.[123]

Subcultural, same-sex networks early in the twentieth century were visible only to those who knew how to look for particular signs. For the well-traveled and flamboyant Chalfin, he desired to decorate the estate and its gardens with, as he wrote in a 1917 article about Vizcaya, "a partial evocation of the city of Tiepolo, careless pompous, and gay."[124] In a 2017 chapter titled, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida: Paul Chalfin, Vizcaya and the International Market for Italian Decorative Arts in 1910s," expert on museum history and American collecting of European art Flaminia Gennari-Santori contends, "the beginning of [Deering and Chalfin's] relationship [was one] that lasted until Deering's death in 1925 and it was as personal as professional, slightly abusive and very co-dependent."[125] Together, the designer/architect and Deering bought fountains and sculptures in Europe featuring Bacchus, Ganymede, and other homo-erotic mythological figures.[126] One example, photographed in 1916 and titled *Bacchus Fountain, Entrance Loggia*, documents a monumental statue of a semi-nude Bacchus in a contrapposto stance (fig. 5). Flanked by two *putti* riding grotesque seahorses and nestled among Tuscan columns, Bacchus stands over a marble tub scantily clothed. It is objects like this

[122] Trevor Fairbrother, *John Singer Sargent: The Sensualist* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2000): 16.
[123] "*The myth of invisibility* holds that, even if a gay world existed, it was kept invisible and thus remained difficult for isolated gay men to find. But gay men were highly visible figures in early-twentieth-century New York, in part because gay life was more integrated into the everyday life of the city in the prewar decades than it would be after World War II…" See, Chauncey, *Gay New York,* 3.
[124] Gennari-Santori, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida," 208.
[125] Gennari-Santori, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida," 208.
[126] Gennari-Santori, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida," 208.; "In several plays by Euripides, Ganymede is frankly identified as the bedfellow or plaything of Jupiter, usually in a ribald or satirical context… Eventually Ganymede became virtually eponymous with male homosexuality, particularly the love of an older man for a youth…" See, James M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986): 4.

fountain that shaped Chalfin's vision for Vizcaya and made it an index of same-sex symbols. Sargent would have felt a great deal of comfort by these details, the luxuries of the villa, and the complex architecture but it seems too convenient for Sargent to only express interest in the latter subject.

For Sargent to say he had been hungering to do architectural painting in the U.S. seems to have been the artist's pretext for staying at Vizcaya, but in reality I believe it was a chance for him to continue to explore the estate, gardens, and its laborers. As Deering states in his letter discussing Sargent's stay, it seems the architecture of the villa was both an attraction for the artist but also a distraction from other points of interest. Sargent, in 1917, was still working on site-specific murals for the Boston Public Library (1890–1919) and the rotunda of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (first-phase, 1916–1921), therefore his work was entirely steeped in site-specific projects responsive to the architecture of two of Boston's most prestigious cultural institutions. In addition to the murals, Sargent would often visit his dear friend, art collector, and museum founder, Isabella Stewart Gardner at Fenway Court—the Italian-inspired home and partial inspiration for Vizcaya.[127] Deering, alongside Chalfin, asked Gardner's expertise and council while developing Vizcaya so I argue that Sargent's interest in merely the architecture of the estate works to mask ulterior motives.

BAHAMIAN MALE BATHERS AND SARGENT'S LEISURE WATERCOLORS

Sargent's watercolor, *The Bathers* (1917), presents a group of three Bahamian laborers gathered in a shallow ocean water pool (fig. 6). This watercolor is unique from Sargent's other solitary

[127] "Throughout the estate, [Chalfin] combined the most varied references to Italian villas with the American interiors that had shaped his sensibility: Fenway Court and the interiors of Stanford White and Elsie de Wolfe." See, Gennari-Santori, "An Imaginary Italy on the Shores of Florida," 221; Sargent was the painter-in-residence, in 1903, at Isabella Stewart Gardner's museum. In 1914 she completely remodeled a space to display Sargent's *El Jaleo* (1882). See, Nathaniel Silver, et al. *Boston's Apollo: Thomas McKeller and John Singer Sargent* (Boston: Isabella Gardner Museum, 2020): 14.

nude subjects, especially since a glimpse of Vizcaya's tea house and bridge appear in the distance. The inclusion of the tea house is significant, since it is a space of civility and refinement meant to be enjoyed by (white) guests. Sargent visually disconnects and segregates the bathers from this luxury, even though they were the individuals who presumably built it. Further amplifying the bathers' exclusion, Sargent contextualizes these men as ornaments in the untamed subtropical landscape. Located off site across the Biscayne Bay, the luminous seascape surrounding Sargent's bathers peeks through vignettes framed by the branches of shady mangrove trees. To the left of the image sits a man with his feet crisscrossed and soaking in the water. This subject is drenched in sunlight and, in relation to the dark landscape behind him, almost racially passes as white. As the subject gazes to the left, he seems to survey the landscape as if to ensure privacy is sustained. Sargent, as clandestine voyeur, disrupts the scene and captures Florida's midday sunlight and heat with luminous washes of color. Offset by intricately webbed tints and shades in the middle ground, Sargent places the two remaining figures in the cool shadows and sun-kissed sand. The centralized prostrate man, with a dramatically silhouetted head, lays horizontally on his stomach as the profile of his body stretches across the ground. With his right leg bent at the knee and tucked over the back of his extended opposite leg, the man seems to touch the left bather's backside with his foot. The final figure to the right spills out of the foreground. As the most visually active bather, the subject looks as though he is in the act of rising or reclining, with the lower portion of his body submerged in water and a turtle at his backside swimming across the scene. As the man moves, the water undulates around his legs and thighs, as is implied by the frenetic application of blue brushstrokes ticking the water's surface. Compositionally, Sargent crops the right figure so both feet and extended left hand are cut out of frame. Such aesthetic decisions communicate the subjects' inseparable connection to the Florida

landscape. Navigating the terrain and fantasies of Florida as a colonial travel artist, Sargent tethers the Bahamian subjects to the discourse of the female nude bather in art so that he, as white masculine artistic authority, can readily claim visual, economic, and (homo-)sexual dominance.

As a source of ethnographic and sexual fascination, the female bather in art has origins that extend back to misogynistic classical and biblical narratives that conceive of women as temptresses and betrayers of men.[128] Man's unfettered scopophilia has always positioned the nude woman as the object of pleasure and blame for his own social shortcomings and desires. For Sargent, *The Bathers* falls directly in line with such narratives as that of *Susannah and the Elders*, but rather looks at the racialized male nudes as feminized object(s) of masculine sexual fantasy. In the story of Susannah, the woman was bombarded by two community elders who secretly lurked in her private garden. The men plotted to ravage the woman as she was bathing—an act of sexual lasciviousness and obscenity that historically would allocate blame to the nude bathing subject.[129] When the men violated Susannah's privacy and she denied their advances, the encounter resulted in an unsettling power imbalance. Susannah's innocence and refusal to obey the demands of the elders unfortunately contributed to her own downfall, as the men labeled her an uncontrollable sexual predator. Sargent's *The Bathers* engage in this narrative in a similar

[128] "Why did [Edgar] Degas return to classical or traditional subjects during the 1890s? One can only sketch approaches to an answer here, but one might be a conscious return by Degas to subject on which he had been trained and had expected to found his career." See, Richard Thomson, "On Narrative and Metamorphosis in Degas," in *Dealing with Degas: Representations of Women and the Politics of Vision*, eds. Richard Kendall and Griselda Pollock (New York, NY: Universe, 1991): 156.

[129] "Writers both for and against intimate hygiene for women recognized the sensuality of water. They likened immersion in it and its intimate contact with every bodily crevice to the sexual act itself: water was perceived as a surrogate lover. Water had always carried connotations of female sexuality, an image familiar from the iconography of the birth of Venus, where the goddess of carnal love emerges naked from the sea… critics viewed [Degas'] *Bathers* as purveyors of carnal pleasure … for bathing was directly associated with lascivious sexual activity, in particular with prostitution; the corpulence popularly attributed to prostitutes was thought to result from an excess of bathing." See, "Anthea Callen, Degas' *Bathers*: Hygiene and Dirt – Gaze and Touch," in *Dealing with Degas: Representations of Women and the Politics of Vision*, eds. Richard Kendall and Griselda Pollock (New York, NY: Universe, 1991): 173.

way where the white artist implicates the forbidden non-white male subjects as indecent and dangerous seducers.

The Bathers has many art-historical precedents depicted in works by artists such as Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, and Thomas Eakins. None resonate with Sargent's watercolor more than an oil painting by Italian artist, Agostino Brunias (1730–1796). Housed in Harvard University's Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography the small-scale oil painting called, *Mulatresses and Negro Woman Bathing* (mid-late eighteenth century), was part of a commissioned project whose patron was a British colonial governor and sugar plantation owner in Dominica (fig. 7).[130] Brunias' bathing scene of four non-white women in a Caribbean Eden provides the most striking discursive similarities to Sargent's *Bathers*. Again, alluding to the story of Susannah, and potentially Diana and Actaeon, these women are aligned with European tropes of the female bather but, with their racialized subjectivities, fall under ethnographic and orientalist lenses that work to construct an exotic tropical picturesque.[131] Art historian Krista A. Thompson, in her 2006 book *An Eye for the Topics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*, points out, "in the context of the British West Indies at the threshold of the twentieth century, the picturesque signified a landscape made into the *fantastic* vision of the tropics (emphasis added)."[132] Despite the bathers' familiar art-historical poses, Brunias' vision is

[130] "After arriving in London in 1758 to work as a draughtsman and decorative painter for the renowned architect Robert Adam (1728–92), Brunias, an Italian born and trained in Rome, left England sometime around 1770 and landed in the British West Indies where he worked mainly on the Lesser Antilles islands of St Vincent and Dominica, initially painting for his primary patron, the colonial governor Sir William Young." See, Mia L. Bagneris, *Colouring the Caribbean: Race and the Art of Agostino Brunias* (Manchester: Manchester University, 2017): 4.
[131] "…art historical literature on the English picturesque landscape tradition, which examines how these representations related to wider social and political issues in Britain, from the dispossession of the rural poor to enfranchisement. These studies testify that landscape traditions can become 'operational' in shaping class relations, social and national identities, and even physical environments. [Michael] Rosenthal notes, however, that despite the wealth of literature on British landscape, British colonial landscape in the West Indies has yet to be explored." See, Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006): 19.
[132] Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 21.

designed to construct the land and women as equal components of fantasy and scientific study. Displayed in Harvard's Philosophy Chamber, Brunias' painting was used as art object, curiosity, and visual aide for pedagogical exploration.[133]

Semiotically, Sargent's watercolor also functions ethnographically like Brunias' work, with both images used to exploit the picturesque as a source of hedonistic indulgence—meaning place and subject were easily manipulatable to white male authority. Brunias' nude women bathe unashamed in the vast and endless tropical landscape where signs of "civility" are constructed to seem non-existent. Hidden behind a thicket of tropical flora, a well-dressed white man intrudes upon the women. Symbolically, the white man foreshadows a colonialist infiltration that will sexually and epistemologically penetrate everything in the image through processes of violent taming, clearing, and enslavement. As the colonial white masculine authority, the non-white female subjects become objects of uncontrollable sexual libidinousness.[134] In a chapter by historians Darlene Hine and Kate Wittenstein called, "Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex," the economic function, or rather exploitation, of non-white, enslaved, female subjects further contextualizes the sexual dynamics at play within images like that of Brunias' and Sargent's. Hine and Wittenstein discuss enslaved women's resistance through acts of hindering impregnation and childbirth, stating, "when they resisted sexual exploitation through such means

[133] "Between 1766 and 1820, Harvard College assembled an extraordinary collection of [various objects that] played a vital role in teaching and research, and stood at the center of artistic and intellectual life both at Harvard and the greater New England region for over 50 years… A veritable workshop for the production and dissemination of knowledge, the Philosophy Chamber served as the college's primary laboratory, lecture hall, and convening space." See, Ethan W. Lasser, *The Philosophy Chamber: Art and Science in Harvard's Teaching Cabinet 1766–1820* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Harvard Art Museum, 2017): xvi-xvii.; Sargent's connection to Harvard most definitely can indicate his familiarity with Brunias' work.

[134] As argued by Mia L. Bagneris, "the mulatress [used by Brunias in his work] … represented *both* the potential for developing a refined British civilisation in the Caribbean colonies *and* the illicit pleasures and profits to be had there… [Additionally] Slavery informed all relations of power in the colonial Caribbean including sexuality, and interracially sexual activity – particularly between white men and black or mixed-race women – constituted an inescapable hallmark of colonial Caribbean life. Slave society allowed white men effectively unrestricted access to the bodies of women of African descent – access that they enjoyed with virtual impunity." See, Bagneris, *Colouring the Caribbean*, 140.

as sexual abstention, abortion and infanticide, they were, at the same time, rejecting their vital economic function as breeders." Through these modes of resistance, the enslaved women stymied patriarchal control and threatened the very economic stability of the institution of slavery. Thus, what happens when the (enslaved) non-white female nude is replaced by a male counterpart—one that cannot get pregnant but serves the same fantastical function? In Sargent's *The Bathers*, the Black male nudes become the enslaved objects of desire that complicate the artist's masculinity and heteronormative social position. The removal of the white man lurking in the garden, in Sargent's watercolor, is an attempt to lessen the homosexual context of the image and leave the artist innocent of such degenerate engagement.

NOT MASCULINE, BUT FEMININE EUROPEAN

It is worth mentioning that *The Bathers* was the only watercolor of nude laborers that Sargent sold. As disclosed in a catalog for a 2000 exhibition entitled, *American Drawing and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: John Singer Sargent*, the artist, "sold eleven watercolors painted in Florida [in 1917], to Worcester Art Museum" in Massachusetts shortly after the artist created them at Vizcaya.[135] The other ten pieces were works highlighting the architecture and gardens of the estate. Briefly after the watercolors were acquisitioned into Worcester's collection, the works were hung in a June 1917 exhibition in Boston's Copley Gallery called, *Sargent Watercolors Painted in Florida*.[136] This was the first exhibition *The*

[135] Stephanie L. Herdrich, John Singer Sargent, H. Barbara Weinberg, Marjorie Shelley, and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), *American Drawings and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: John Singer Sargent*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000): 354.

[136] Lauren Szumita, Curatorial Assistant of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Worchester Art Museum revealed in an email that four of the eleven works "were deaccessioned in 1948, and [she believe[s] they went to a private collection in Chicago (Which, in hindsight, was a very unfortunate decision by the museum!) Based on letters in our files, Philip Gentner, the director then, certainly was involved in the acquisition, and I believe that Frederick Pratt, a Trustee at the time, had a hand in connecting Gentner and Sargent. It appears that [the art museum] was looking to acquire watercolors from Sargent for a few years, and had established a relationship by 1914, but Sargent didn't have any work for WAM until the 1917 series." None of the deaccessioned artworks were of the images of Bahamian nudes. Lauren Szumita, email to David Saiz, Jul. 10, 2019.

Bathers was displayed in, and it apparently made the most memorable impact for critics. Featured in a special edition of the New York-based *Vogue* magazine, Sargent's watercolor was reproduced in monochromatic sepia tones and captioned, "Negroes Bathing" (fig. 8). Found in the archives of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's collection, the small clipping of Sargent's nude laborers offer critical insight about the watercolor's reception in 1917. There is no way to know if this is a title Sargent originally gave the work, or if it was the gallery or art critic, but it is apparent that the non-whiteness of the subjects shocked audiences.

For one local Boston art critic, Sargent's watercolor of nude Black men was a confused endeavor, writing, "And so, now, [Sargent] comes bringing from Florida, not the mysteries of the tangled jungle … but a sort of snapshot of a few negroes sprawled on the dark sand of a shady cove." This review of Sargent's work is a jab at the artist. The critic seems to have anticipated an artwork more aligned with Homer's Florida watercolors, such as *In a Florida Jungle* (1885–86)—an artwork also housed in the Worchester Art Museum's permanent collection (fig. 9). Instead, Sargent's views of Florida are reduced by the critic's use of the word snapshot, which connects the image and the watercolor medium to an amateurism typically associated with upper-class feminine leisure. With the rise of Kodak photography at the end of the nineteenth century, amateur snapshot photography was marketed extensively to women in magazines. With the creation of the fashionable marketing icon Kodak Girl, American women fueled the commercial craze for the Kodak camera. They became the main consumers who now felt responsible to be family documentarians. Historian Nancy Martha West reveals, "one of the primary functions of the Kodak Girl was to promote snapshot photography as an enhancement of vacations and such leisure activities as bathing, tennis, and golfing."[137] Therefore, the art critic's

[137] Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*. *Cultural Frames, Framing Culture* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000): 58.

strategic use of "snapshot" directly attacks both Sargent's skill and his masculinity. Lazily sprawled on the beach, Sargent's bathers are called out as mere vacation advertisement. Rather than painting masculine, Homer-inspired watercolors of the consuming qualities of nature, Sargent is accused of presenting an unoriginal and recalcitrant souvenir. The artwork is thus marked with a non-masculine nostalgia that is further solidified by the artist's use of the feminine watercolor medium.

Underneath the magazine reproduction of Sargent's watercolor, a caption further derides, "On the Beach, Somewhere in Florida, the Dark Forms of the Colored Folk Commingle with the Bristling Shadows in a Way to Delight the Wandering Sketch Artist." Labeled as a "wanderer" and "sketch artist," Sargent is labeled comparable to a dilletante hobbyist whose watercolors remain restricted to the "status [of] product and [feminine] symbol of [the] refined and cultured classes."[138] Women of upper-class society were strictly ruled by gendered spheres of domestic existence, where they themselves became products of class-based luxury and objecthood. It was only through acts of cultural preservation and leisure that women could find some semblance of mobility in the public realm.[139] Such freedoms included snapshot photography, typically of family life and vacations, and watercolor painting, "a somewhat 'feminine' art … [and] the principal amateur medium for leisured women in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[140] Sargent's use of watercolor, coupled with his intention to document his time in

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[138] Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 9.

[139] "Women were also increasingly identified as the preservers, not creators, of culture." See, Pohl, 265; "By the turn of the century, ideas about men and women were a mix of the Victorian and the modern. There was still concern with appropriate behavior for males and females. A 'cult of masculinity,' for example, has been linked to imperialism abroad and feminism at home in the Western nations experiencing both. Nations as well as male individuals needed 'manly' qualities to assert their authority in the world." See, Eaklor, *Queer America*, 36.

[140] West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*, 132; "…women (as well as men) also worked in the 'lesser' media associated with female amateurism, such as watercolor, which critics and consumers valorized as exemplifying genteel taste and cultural refinement." See, Kirsten Swinth, *Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art, 1870–1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Caroline Press, 2001): 5.

Florida, reactively further downplayed perceptions of his masculinity. As Burns reveals, in a 2000 article, "Under the Skin: Reconsidering Cecilia Beaux and John Singer Sargent," navigating the public realm with an "involvement in minute details of fashion and accessories, [Sargent's] taste for voluptuous sensation might well have consigned [him] to the status of 'man-milliner.'"[141] Since watercolor revealed a feminization and invalidation of Sargent's overall artistic practice, art historians instead attempt to view the medium as an expression of the artist's freedom and childishness.[142] Connections to childhood play a role in trying to safeguard the artist from falling further into the realms of degeneracy in order to make him acceptable enough to maintain an American identity. As Burns mentions, it is often noted "the boyish spirit of the painter" is a source of Sargent's self-depreciation of his own work, particularly his watercolors and charcoal sketches. I argue this tendency to defer to childhood functions as a scapegoat to explain Sargent's deviation from modernism, as well as pacify his proclivities to a "sensualist" aesthetic and bachelor lifestyle.[143] This trivialization of the artist's persona attempts to protect Sargent's whiteness and masculinity from concepts of immorality. A process of tailoring history and biography to serve the needs of an anxious and "wholesome" citizenry.

Abiding most strictly to realism, *The Bathers* may be argued as the only watercolor Sargent created of the nudes that seemed the most "finished." Like many canonized male artists,

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[141] Sarah Burns, "Under the Skin: Reconsidering Cecilia Beaux and John Singer Sargent." *The Philadelphia Magazine of History and Biography* 124, no. 3 (2000): 329.

[142] Learning watercolor from his mother, an amateur artist, early in his childhood, "[Sargent] wanted the freedom to paint what he wanted, to find a way to re-energise [*sic*] his art. So he picked up the little tin of watercolours [*sic*] from his boyhood and let the skill that had first found its expression through this eminently portable medium gradually re-establish its grip." See, Rachel Campbell-Johnston, "And, Relax. Sargent's Off-Duty Watercolours: John Singer Sargent is Famed for Painting Grandees in Oils. these Pictures show another Side, Says Rachel Campbell-Johnston," *The Times*, June 3, 2017, http://libproxy.unm.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.unm.edu/docview/1906977242?accountid=14613.

[143] Fairbrother is the one who dubbed Sargent's work to be not modern but "Sensualist." See, Fairbrother, "Introducing a Complicated Individual," in *John Singer Sargent: The Sensualist*, 15; Sarah Burns, "Under the Skin," 330.

Sargent's works, regardless of medium or state of completion, were deemed masterworks even while he was alive. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Worchester Museum of Art were each reaching out to Sargent to purchase any of his watercolors a few years before 1917.[144] So then, why did Sargent actively choose to sell only one out of five of his watercolors with Black nude laborers, leaving the majority of the works shrouded from history until twenty five years after his death in 1925?[145] Despite having both artistic and political influence in the formation of "American" art in the twentieth century, Sargent's confinement to the superficial realms of realism and materialism caused his art practice to be construed as a way he, "had prostituted himself, painting material things for material gain at the expense of his higher self [thus, his] reputation greatly suffered under the regime of modernism."[146] Unable to break free from portraiture's "for-hire" status, Sargent was often conceived of as a sellout and a "fake" solely aligned with the European upper class. Since "realism was … an art of commercial culture" it was also thought to have the "potential to degrade democracy" and, by extension, his American status.[147] Therefore, Sargent seemed to resist the urge to sell the watercolors based on his own need to prove his loyalty as a true "American" artist—officially shedding the expatriate title. Sargent was trapped by his own abilities and stifled by American ideologies that retroactively oriented him with a superficial Anglo-centrism and fanciful aestheticism at odds with American culture.

THE CHALLENGE OF BLACKNESS AND FEMINIZATION OF NUDE LABORERS

[144] "For each example of water-color painting made thus ineptly Mr. Sargent receives a thousand dollars … [after] he had given up portraiture, which he regarded as 'the lowest form of art.'" See, Frederick W. Coburn, "John Singer Sargent, Bostonian: Anecdotes of an American Portrait Painter Returned to His Ancestral New England," *New York Times* Oct. 28, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 8.
[145] These works, along with other male nude depictions, were kept in the possession of Sargent until his unexpected death. After the artist's death, his estate transferred over to his sisters, Mrs. Francis Ormond (*née*, Violet Sargent) and Miss Emily Sargent. Ormond the youngest and longest surviving sister, gifted the folio in 1950 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art due to the rapport the Sargent family built with the museum director.
[146] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 63.
[147] Ibid, 60-61.

Sargent's entitled watercolor, *Figure and Pool* (1917), looks down upon a male nude laborer in a cropped landscape (fig. 10). Sinuous pools of blue, yellow, and additions of neutralizing complimentary hues bloom and bleed into each other in the foreground. In this wet-on-wet application, Sargent gives an impression of a reflective body of water. Framing the water is a frenetically painted landscape, comprised of various earth tones and greens applied with both wet and drybrush applications. Oriented diagonally in the upper right quadrant of the composition, the laborer slowly appears lying flat on his stomach. The skin tone of the figure takes on the warm hues of the surrounding landscape and nearly camouflages the man. Angled in a radial position, the man's head juts into the center of the image while his body recedes away from the viewer—permitting the eye to travel from the man's muscular shoulders, back, derrière, and spread legs. At each elbow, the man's arms bend as if he is about to push himself back upright before freezing to gaze upon his own reflection—a nod to Ovid's Narcissus.[148]

Art historian Richard Leppert, in his 2007 book *The Nude: The Cultural Rhetoric of the Body in the Art of Western Modernity*, picked up on this allusion to Narcissus and discusses reflections of the self in mirrors or water as a symbol of vanity thought to reveal women's innate "moral weakness."[149] In the case of Sargent's watercolor, the male subject's role as Narcissus posits a rejection of heteronormative and masculine conventions. Narcissus, desired by men and women, rejected all romantic advances and was cursed to fall in love with himself. As the young Narcissus went to rest by a pool of water after hunting, he fell madly in love with his reflection and committed suicide for not being able to "obtain his desire."[150] Through such same-sex, self-desire, the Narcissus archetype omits the need for an opposite-sexed partner. Rather, the figure

[148] The Narcissus reference is also alluded to in an exhibition catalog with *Figure and Pool*. See, Herdrich and et. al, *American Drawings and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: John Singer Sargent*, 358.
[149] Leppert, *The Nude*, 46.
[150] David Raeburn and Ovid, "Narcissus and Echo," *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (England: Penguin Books, 2004): 112.

functions as a cautionary warning to vanity's feminine and immoral homoerotic dangers, which compromise heteronormative conventions via procreative stagnation. Moreover, the man's reflection renders the figure anonymous and ameliorates the scene's homoerotic degeneration with the mere offering of the subject's body as a site of disorder.

When a non-white male subject replaces a female nude bather, the art-historical discourse is complicated in a way that brings into question the white male observer/artist's position in the encounter. Sargent's relationship with Vizcaya's laborers, whether artistic, economic, and/or sexual, was a, "male-male encounter [where] only the 'passive' partner [or the penetrated body] (likely the prostitute, as a man playing a 'woman') would be[come] deviant in some way." [151] For Sargent, creating Bahamian, masculine laborers as bathers is part of a confused process of forced, non-consensual passivity that was likely transactionally indemnified. Positioning lower-class, non-white men into the fantastical role of female bathers is a way to further deny the subjects of masculinity and participation within white hetero-patriarchal society.[152] This exploration of the male nude as feminine object becomes a process of salvation for the artist. Sargent works to bolster his civility and deflect/blame his homoerotic desires on the non-white male subjects. *Figure and Pool* is the perfect example of this deflection, since the nude subject violates masculine properness with the display of his buttocks. The subject's undressed state and body position becomes an invitation for anality, which is designed to function as the evidence of his uncontrollable sexuality—a "fact" Sargent merely nervously documented. The placement of

[151] Eaklor, *Queer America*, 49.
[152]As quoted from political scientist Adolf Reed, Jr., "Ideologies of ascriptive difference help to stabilize a social order by legitimizing its hierarchies of wealth, power, and privilege, including its social division of labor, as the natural order of things." See, Roberto R. Aspholm and Cedric Johnson, "Betting on 'The Greek': How the NFL Is Banking on Biological Racism," *NonSite.org*, February 1, 2021, https://nonsite.org/betting-on-the-greek-how-the-nfl-is-banking-on-biological-racism/.

the figure on the ground, along with his debasing self-admiration of his own reflection, becomes a process of self-realization and self-criminalization.

This imbalanced relationship can be better understood in a black-and-white photograph entitled, *Construction Worker Posing with Female Nude Sculpture* (*c.*1917) (fig. 8). The unfinished gardens of Vizcaya appear in the background with its leveled ground and thin trees breaking up the vacant sky (fig. 11). Various giant pots line the midway of the image with little shacks barely visible in the distance—likely housing for the workers or house staff. A white sculpture of a nude Aphrodite of Knidos stands tall atop a wooden pallet in a contrapposto stance, suggesting it has just arrived and been uncrated. Next to Aphrodite is another statue positioned behind the laborer. The Aphrodite sculpture's hands insouciantly hold up a drapery to hide her nakedness, but leave her breasts and torso exposed. Arm in arm, the laborer's eyes meet the sculpture's gaze as it towers over the man and he jokingly choreographs his body in a similar fashion. The man, dressed in darkly colored pants held in place by suspenders over a white button-up shirt, stands tall and confident in his newsboy cap. Despite the scene's playfulness, this apparent clash between race and culture, even though staged and unreal, would have been viewed as a form of defilement to white femininity.

Construction Worker Posing with Female Nude Sculpture was part of a project to document the progress of the estate for the frustrated owner. Likely administered by Chalfin, there were a total of 2,415 images taken of the estate between 1914–1922 by three photography firms and housed in the archives of Villa Vizcaya Museum and Gardens. In 1917 Florida, a black man arm in arm with a naked white woman would have been a violently punishable act that violated Jim Crow laws and fueled miscegenational anxieties. Florida had some of the highest numbers of lynchings in the U.S. between 1877–1950 with mass executions being fairly common

in some of the state's northern and panhandle counties. For example, in August 1916, eight Black citizens, including a woman and her unborn baby, were senselessly lynched in the search for a man who was suspected of being a hog thief.[153] The loss of eight Black citizens over the mere *suspicion* of a man stealing a hog, likely the property a white owner, reveals the ludicrous measures taken to punish a population that was clearly disdained. Therefore, it would not be hyperbolic to tie in the para-judicial politics of fin-de-siècle lynching practices to the image of the statue and laborer. As maintained by art historian Michal Hatt, "allegations of rape, a crime which included any kind of sexual or even social dalliance [or any] breaches of decorum [in] the defilement of pure white womanhood by the negro," would immediately charge the Black male subject as violent and unruly perpetrator.[154] The undraped state of the white female statue, an object and symbol of white culture, is tainted by its interaction with the non-white laborer. Mindful of the political restraints inflicted upon blackness and its mark on the laborer's body, Sargent refrained from positioning his nude Black subjects within the villa's estate boundaries to avoid such repercussions. Rather, the artist found the Black subject's place to be more suited outside the realms of civilization in the mangrove forest, where white civility cannot be witness to or tainted by their presence.

[153] "On Aug. 18, 1916, Boisy Long, a suspected hog thief in the Alachua County community of Newberry, shot the sheriff and another man, who were attempting to arrest him. A posse was formed to find Long, who had gone into hiding. The mob took his wife, Stella, and a friend, Mary Dennis, into custody. They came upon another black man, James Dennis, and shot him to death. The following day, Dennis' brother was arrested when he went into Newberry to buy a coffin for James. The posse found John Baskin, a black preacher, and lynched him, then returned to the jail, seized the three prisoners and lynched them. Mary Dennis had two children and was pregnant when she was lynched. Stella Young was the mother of four. Boisy Long was later arrested and executed after a trial." See, James C. Clark, "Lynching: Florida's Brutal Distinction," *Orlando Sentinel*, Mar. 7, 1993, https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1993-03-07-9303070156-story.html.

[154] Michael Hatt, "Race, Ritual, and Responsibility: Performativity and the Southern lynching," in *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*, eds. Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson (London and New York: Routledge, 1999): 77.

Understanding the role of blackness and its (de)attachment to perverse femininity and politicization in this narrative, in this point in history, is critical. In a 2015 chapter from *A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance*, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Sculpture of the Harlem Renaissance," art historian Kirsten Pai Buick states:

> The problem of black embodiment has a very particular history in the United States, one predicated on contingencies of citizen v. slave, free v. non-free, disembodied v. embodied, paid labor v. unpaid—all toward constructing a class of people ('whites') who may not share a set of interests based on material circumstances, but who could temporarily be aligned against the enslaved, the disembodied, the unpaid laborer (i.e. 'blacks'), specifically to construct and reconstruct whiteness as a series of relational, performative, and participatory functions of difference as the very act of differentiation.[155]

Such metaphysical binaries have thus constructed not just inter-racial taxonomies of difference, but intra-racial levels of negotiation for whiteness exclusively. White women dually exist as a superior and inferior subject, based on their "pure" whiteness and often class, while the black subject, regardless of race, class, or gender, remains inescapably trapped within an immoral realm of damnation. For Sargent, the nude Bahamian laborers became tools to traverse and map out his own inter-racial, same-sex curiosities. Undergirded with an almost sexual prowess with the watercolor medium, Sargent's homoerotic and aesthetic encounter with the laborers can be seen as a moment of fascination fueled by temptation at the fault of the Black subject. Conversely, the above-mentioned photograph troubles or rather instantiates the problem of blackness which, when not rendered docile by idioms of femininity or enslavement (or community-based violence), can then become a destructive force. Sargent's watercolors become complicit in such acts of racial effacement weaponized to sustain the practice of segregation and

[155] Kirsten Pai Buick, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Sculpture of the Harlem Renaissance," in *A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Cherene Sherrard-Johnson (Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture, 91. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015): 318.

domination over Black citizens. I argue Sargent participates in these racist acts as an attempt to concede to a white, masculine, "American" identity he is so often denied.

THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN AND ANDROGYNOUS BLACKNESS

Sargent's *Bather, Florida* (1917), presents an isolated nude laborer on an abstracted beach (fig. 12). The background is painted rapidly with swatches of color that abstractly surround the seated figure. The nude man's body, blotted with heavy shades of warm brown hues, faces right. The artist creates another strong diagonal composition as the man's upper body is propped up by his arms, allowing the lower portion of his body to lazily extend into the water where his legs form into a V-shape. In most of Sargent's watercolors of Vizcaya's nude laborers, there is focus drawn to the centralized genital region. Despite this compositional decision, Sargent works to obscure these areas as if he were anxious to spend too much time on such details. Rather, the artist uses his mastery of watercolor and construction of the human form to produce phallic substitutes. The maimed and stubby hands and feet that are attached to the limbs of the man in *Bather, Florida* read as priapic forms. This is a motif that is noticeably present in all of Sargent's watercolors of Bahamian bathers. It is as though Sargent wanted to both revoke and preserve the masculinity of the men, while actively complicating gender binaries. Such disruptions add to the figure's racial and gender-based mysteriousness, which Leppert derides, "The typical orientalist nude claims the prerogative of a sexuality that is feminine not only on account of the sex of its favored subject, the harem girl, but also on account of the mystery—mysteriousness being culturally marked as a feminine trait—attending the putative geographical setting."[156] Thus, such levels of

[156] Leppert, *The Nude*, 68.

orientalist feminization and racial eroticization of the nude Bahamian men is achieved by Sargent's androgynization of the nude subjects in his watercolors through a visual castration.[157]

To further disrupt the metaphysical forces that dictate U.S. society, such as civilized and uncivilized, whiteness and blackness, masculinity and femininity, I would like to tie in allusions to *Genesis* and Eve's archetypal fall. Sargent's experience in Florida, specifically his adventure in the mangroves surrounding Vizcaya, is referential to an Edenic fantasy. Navigating the subtropical and exotic landscape, Sargent is tempted by the metaphorical forbidden fruit that is embodied by the Black male nude subjects who entice sexual consumption. The Black nudes in this situation perform a dual role as the object of desire and feminine foil who is, as aforementioned, the subject at fault for the fall of man (i.e. Sargent).

Édouard Manet's 1863 oil painting, *Olympia*, will further expand upon my allusion to *Genesis* and the Black Bahamian laborers' necessary transformation into sexual commodities (fig. 13). Manet's use of the white nude Olympia (prostitute) and the black servant help to expound the dynamics of race, sexuality, gender, and class in Europe that were mirrored and magnified in the U.S. The Olympia plays the role of strictly woman (Eve), deceivingly innocent and collusive with the Black servant (the serpent). The latter becomes the instigator of the prostitute's fall, thus functioning as the mysterious dark force of evil responsible for initiating the seemingly inevitable fall. Manet creates a theatrical backdrop behind Olympia's bed, with dark bluish-green curtains functioning as layers of (in)visibility. The curtains behind the servant are slightly open implying there is a hidden space behind the scene. This slit between the curtains can also be construed as a sexualized entry point the John will have to break through in order to

[157] "…it is through the body that the ideology of race is articulated." See, Kirsten Pai Buick, *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the Problem of Art History's Back and Indian Subject* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010): 41.

attend to the nude woman. Much like Sargent's watercolor "snapshots" of the nude laborers, Manet's painting acts as an encapsulation of a private moment where the viewer becomes a voyeur and source of critical moral judgment. Visual artist Claudette Johnson adds to this stating, in regards to Manet's work, to "explore [the artist's] strange fantasies of purity versus impurity … where the strategic positioning and obscure rendering of the servant woman who offers flowers in a self-abnegating gesture serves to highlight [] whiteness, and all its religious and moral associations with purity."[158] Strategically, the Olympia's genitals are awkwardly covered up by her own hand and serves as the centralizing element for the whole composition. Manet highlighted this gesture to remind the viewer that the enjoyment of this woman's sexuality, of her nudity, comes at a price. In understanding the Olympia as presenting obscene nakedness as opposed to nudity, the figure calls into question the penetrating white male gaze and shifts the willful power dynamics of sexual pleasure, for the sake of procreativity, to that of a business transaction.

The servant woman's role in this exchange enhances her position as the immoral and cunning entity attempting to taint white racial purity. The servant's blackness nearly renders her illegible against the dark background and, much like the bouquet, constructs her more as a prop as opposed to a supporting character. Hidden behind the flowers and ill-fitting white gown, the servant woman's body is amassed into an amorphous and non-sexualized pyramidal shape. Verging on androgynous, the servant gazes upon her superior in a doting fashion. One of the servant's hands reaches over from behind the mass of floral paper and fondles the edge of the bouquet, while her other hand remains out of sight. Wrapped around the top of the servant's head is a type of oriental turban, which attempts to echo the bright pink flower tucked behind

[158] Claudette Johnson, "Issues Surrounding the Representation of the Naked Body of a Woman," in *Sexuality: Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Amelia Jones (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2014): 55.

Olympia's ear. The black cat to the right of the image is startled with its back arched severely and tail shooting up—possibly serving as a warning of what lurks in the shadows or references the uncontrollable sexuality. Each of these elements work together to deflect blame away from whiteness and project it onto blackness. The tensions between tamed/untamed, gendered/ungendered, usable/unusable, and idealized/nonidealized, form together to produce a discomforting understanding of the literal and figurative function of blackness in art. Film and cultural theorist Jane Gaines explores the complicated nature of racism expressed in the visual image in "Competing Glances: Who is Reading Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book*?," where she maintains, "Just as feminists often saw women 'pictured' sexually as synonymous with women denied subjecthood … racism sees black men [or blackness generally] represented sexually as meaning that blacks are denied subjecthood."[159] For Manet and for Sargent, the processes of reductivism their Black subjects undergo are informed by and entangled within social and cultural dynamics of racism in their own time and place in history. Sargent's watercolors deny the laborers a subjecthood, rather permitting their representations to dematerialize into the Florida landscape. Therefore, Sargent's racialized nude subjects are metaphorically swept up into continuing processes of U.S. imperial conquest. The Bahamian laborers in Sargent's vision become both the Olympia and the servant. Two subjects whose working-class status labels them as uncontrollable sources of immorality. Tied down to the Florida landscape, the laborers subjectivities ambivalently intrigue and warn viewers of their availability.

THE CAPTIVATING LANDSCAPE

The final watercolor by Sargent in this chapter, *Figure on Beach* (1917), offers the viewer a nearly supine nude laborer (fig. 12). Sprawled back into the sand, the nude reclines his body to

[159] Jane Gaines, "Competing Glances: Who is Reading Mapplethorpe's *Black Book*?," *New Formations* no. 16 (1992): 26.

the left of the image. The subject's legs come toward the foreground and create another V shape. Arranged in another diagonal composition, the man's extended leg to the right of the image evanescently trials off into the nearby water. The foreshortened leg to the left, with foot close to the paper's bottom edge, mimics a type of jetty that perpendicularly divides land and sea. Each of the man's legs travel back to the center, the groin, which Sargent hides behind the laborer's vertically downturned arm and hand. Tensely thrusting forward, the man's splayed hand pushes into the sand to prevent his full-frontal nudity. Sargent again paints this laborer from a perspective that looks down upon the subject. Most intriguing about this composition is the subject's disintegrating right hand with two marks as fingers. The subject's leg and body are easily connected to the water but the hand that reaches beyond the shoreline begins to dematerialize. This hand limply reaches to the mainland and is constructed to look like a maimed, phallic stump. It is as though Sargent is making clear this subject's connection to the islands, by way of the ocean water, while visually implying the man's disjunction from a U.S. existence. I argue, Sargent's use of ocean water in each of his watercolors of Bahamian bathers becomes a way to emphasize the subjects' non-"American" identity. Despite being a major participant in the literal construction of Florida, Sargent is extracting Bahamians from U.S. history and, with the presence of the ocean and landscape, keeping the men "pristine and untouched."

As objects with a sexual and economic signification, Vizcaya's nude laborers, much like the still modernizing Florida landscape, became units of measurement in which white American culture could affirm its right to possession of place. The ways in which Sargent uses art-historical convention to frame his subjects does not work to elevate them in U.S. or European culture, but rather works to further segregate them. Referring to art historian Lynda Nead's 1992

book, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, "an opposition between the perfection of art and the disruption and incompletion of non-art, or obscenity … [in regards to the] obscene body is the body without borders or containment … that moves and arouses the viewer," which Sargent ambivalently, or rather anxiously, plays with in his watercolors.[160] Confining the nude Bahamian laborers within the Florida landscape, sexualizing them, inverting their gender roles, and exerting class inferiority each act as evidence of continuing legacies of "obscene power." Philosopher Calvin L. Warren in his article, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope" (2015), expands on this notion and deplores, "the ability to turn a 'human' into a 'thing.' The captive [black subject] is fractured on both the Ontological and ontic levels. This violent transubstantiation leaves little room for the hopeful escape from metaphysics that Heidegger envisions."[161] Thus, the non-descript and anonymous depictions of the Bahamian laborers summon U.S. practices of violent erasure and domestication in the way the human body is viewed as an object in need of taming and moralistic subjugation. Sargent utilized his own social and artistic authority to solidify his right to own part of the American landscape and the Black Bahamian laborers who worked it. Through aesthetic, Sargent is able to utilize his whiteness and masculine force to control and reshape history, landscape, and human experience, much like the U.S. industry magnates the artist was hobnobbing with in Florida.

[160] Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 2.
[161] Calvin L. Warren, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 15, no. 1 (2015): 237.

Conclusion

"Stripped and Exploited Blackness: Black Nude Men in the Art of F. Holland Day and John Singer Sargent" is my first attempt at researching, analyzing, and writing on U.S. art. As an unexpected but very much welcomed transition into the field, U.S. art opened my eyes to a history and visual culture that still heavily informs the world today. Reductive Black representation in the work of Day and Sargent lingers in popular culture and mainstream media. Blackface minstrelsy has disgustingly emerged in the form of high fashion on the runways of Prada and Gucci. Black degeneracy in the images of "thugs" and "criminals" shot down by uncontrollable and racist police authorities inundate our televisions and social media feeds—with no justice served for these innocent citizens. Fantasies of Black sexuality overwhelm the pornographic panoply, where black masculinity specifically, in straight and gay sex culture, is imagined and reduced to irregularly large sex organs. The stereotypes, or prototypes, which filled U.S. culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still exist and thrive. Will these toxic fictions ever stop being performed as our reality? Of this, I am unsure. All I know is art history is not the answer, but could maybe be but one solution to untangle the mess that distracts us from deeper buried class-based inequities.

It seems that blackness and "Black culture" are antithetical/antagonistic to(ward) white U.S. culture, but this is not the case. These fictions have been part of a centuries-long process of persuasion that racial differentiation (i.e. racism) is necessary for the maintenance of power and nation. U.S. society has employed didactic and mnemonic devices and strategies to convince its citizenry that a wholesome, truly "American," moralistic vision is that of whiteness. Through the death, omission, or transformation of blackness (or non-whiteness), whiteness can be preserved. This process occurs in the work of Day and Sargent in both metaphorical and literal manners.

The latter occurs in the technic display, dim lighting, and manipulated photographic printing process of Day's images and in the light-to-dark development of Sargent's watercolor paintings. Day and Sargent transformed human into racially codifiable and legible racial subjects. Unlike the previously mentioned copper engraving by Thomas Williamson, where the black nude model is reconfigured to embody white idealism, Day and Sargent manipulate and maintain blackness in ways that continues to fuel racist discourses. I believe Day and Sargent conceived of blackness as intrinsically unequal, anti-modern, and fetishistic. Beyond pigmentation, the artists found subjects who were working-class, largely unknown in white communities, physically fit, and struggling to survive in the United States. With this context, the subjects in Day's and Sargent's artistic explorations were readily made and transformed into repressed fantasies.

Day, in all of his images containing Black male subjects, clearly abides to racial divisions of his historical time. Stripping J.R. Carter of his nationalism and staging him as an African object concedes to late-nineteenth century campaigns to send freed, U.S.-born Black citizens back to Africa, which the artist metaphorically enacts. While upholding segregation, Day's images also fueled ideas that Carter could only find suitable cultural identification with the pan-ethnic idealization of Africa. Moreover, Carter's aesthetic and preserved beauty emphasizes the subject's untainted and imagined existence outside of moralistic U.S. dogma. Carter is enveloped in darkness and made to seem untrusting of the blinding light of enlightenment (i.e. whiteness). I argue that this tension reenforces Day's own struggles with white civilization. Day fantasizes through Carter a time and place where humans are not conditioned to abide to rules and regulations on their bodies, lifestyles, or sex practices. In constructing a savageness, Day mirrors U.S. perceptions of racial degeneracy but also enviously conceives of Carter as a subject free to

satiate carnal desires. Contradictorily, established as a figure who is both free yet captured and staged, Day ambivalently exposes his own uncertainty and disdain of his own whiteness.

Sargent uses Black Bahamian laborers in a similar way but, rather than critiquing white U.S. society as he nonchalantly would do on occasion, he exploits his subjects in a manner that works to exert his white superiority. Black Bahamians in Miami were subjects who were destined to remain invisible and silent in relation to the city's history or more specifically Vizcaya. Instead of ignoring or erasing the Bahamian presence from his Florida sojourn, Sargent actively chose to paint the men as nude bathers. Sargent's choice to depict these men was not an act of visual empowerment. The watercolors of Bahamian bathers instead express the artist's white privilege as an oblivious traveler in search of aesthetic (and sexual) enjoyment. Contextually, the laborers were impoverished and exploited labor resources in the area. In search of new subject matter, Sargent strips the laborers of their clothes and identifications to make them into not idealized classical nudes but indecent bathers. With the exotic tropical locale and the heavy weight of Jim Crow segregation, Sargent found in the Bahamian nude subjects a chance to prey upon the men. By taking advantage of his guest position at the estate, Sargent either paid or secretly observed the bathing subjects for his own private interests. The artist's sexual desires were quenched, while his own racial and class performance came to full fruition. Always feeling not "American" enough, I view these works as Sargent's feeble attempt to embrace U.S. ideologies of the U.S. South and claim his nationalistic identity by any means necessary.

Racist Black representation is expressed in the work of Day and Sargent, and has unquestionable contributed to the formation of stereotype in the U.S. Artworks such as Day's *Ebony and Ivory* and Sargent's *The Bathers* were part of mainstream culture of their time.

Circulated in popular magazines and art critic reviews, these depictions of Black male nudes fed lexicons of blackness or Black identification. Viewed as aggressively savage and libidinous, these subjects emit both aesthetic wonder, civil disobedience, and uncontrollable danger. Instead of trying to sweep this reality under the rug in fear of tainting the reputations of Day or Sargent, I felt it was necessary to call each of them out as figures in U.S. culture who were a product of their time, place, and circumstance. Furthermore, this thesis is key to beginning my examination of how racism in art is inextricably tied to science and medicine, which is critically lacking in this work. I leave out understanding of the (pseudo-)scientific quantification and medicalization of race and invert/homosexual identification with the hope to apply these critical lenses in the near future. For now, this thesis became an opportunity for me to merely flesh out and test arguments that at first seemed too hyperbolic to be proven. The more I learn about U.S. society as a whole the more the dots begin to connect to prove my arguments are indisputable truth.

Figures

Chapter 1

Figure I, John Boyne (European, British *c.*1750–1810), *A Meeting of Connoisseurs*, *c.*1790–1807, watercolor on paper, Collection of Victoria & Albert Museum, Gift of William Smith.

Figure II, Thomas Williamson (European, British act. 1800–1832), *A Meeting of Connoisseurs*, 1807, engraving on copper, isolated print, British Museum.

Chapter 2

Figure 1, Clarence H. White (American, U.S. 1871–1925), *F. Holland Day with Model*, 1902, platinum print, 9 1/2 x 7 3/8 in., Gilman Collection, Purchase, Harriette and Noel Levine. Gift, 2005, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

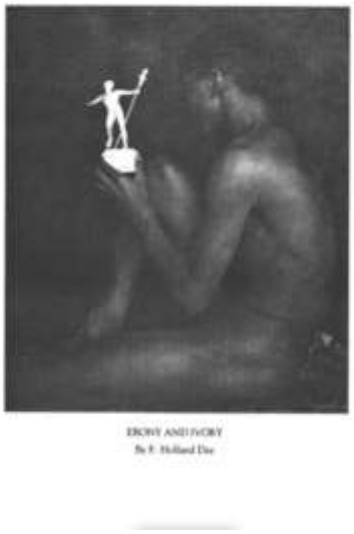

Figure 2, Alfred Stieglitz, *Ebony and Ivory*, c.1896–97, in *Camera Notes*, 2, no. 1 (New York: Photochrome Engraving Co., 1898).

Figure 3, Google image of building.

Figure 4, F. Holland Day (American, U.S. 1864–1933), *Young man with headband and necklace*, *c.*1897, platinum print, 6 3/10 x 4 2/5 in., Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Prints and Photography Division, Louise Imogen Guiney Collection.

Figure 5, F. Holland Day (American, U.S. 1864–1933), *Young man in African costume*, *c.*1897, platinum print, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Prints and Photography Division, Louise Imogen Guiney Collection.

Figure 6, Kamba "type," Niari River region, French Congo, Jean Audema (European, French, 1864–1921), *c.*1900, postcard collotype, published by *Impriméries Réunis de Nancy*, France, Postmarked April 20, 1914, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution 1985-140019.02.

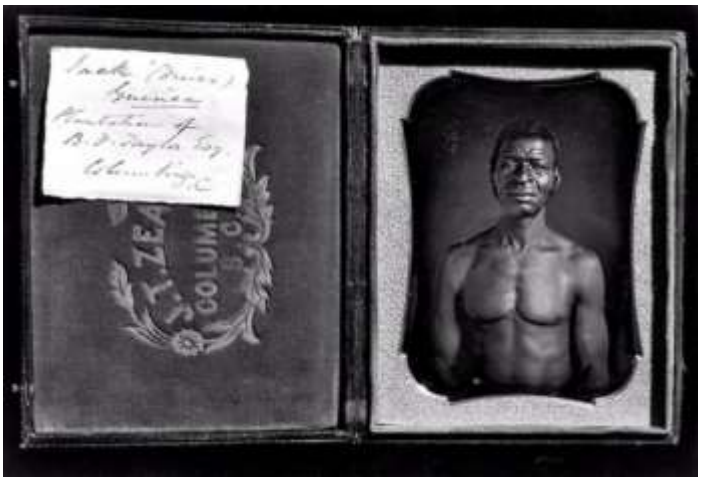

Figure 7, J.T. Zealy (American, U.S., 1812–1893), *Jack (driver) Guinea. Plantation of B.F. Taylor, Esq. Columbia, S.C.*, March 1850, daguerreotype, Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Photographic Archives.

Figure 8, Carl Frederik von Breda (European, Swedish, 1759–1818), *Half-length portrait of Carl Bernhard Wadström (1746–1799) and the African prince Peter Panah, son of the King of Mesurado (Libera), c.*1789, oil painting, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, 61.465.

Figure 9, London Stereoscopic Company, *Sir Henry Morton Stanley Right*, *c.*1872, wet-plate, 6 ½ x 4 ¾ in., Everett Collection.

Figure 10, Robert Demachy (European, French, 1859–1936), *Contrasts (A Study in Black and White*, 1901/3, gum-bichromate print, Division of Culture and the Arts, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

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Figure 12, London Stereoscopic Company, *Peter Jackson*, London, 1889, silver-gelatin dry half plate, 6 ½ x 4 ¾ in., Hulton Archive/ Getty Images, http://themissingchapter.co.uk/portfolio_page/peter-jackson-london-1889-3/.

Figure 13, Napoleon Sarony (American, Canadian 1821–1896), *Oscar Wilde*, *c.*1882, photograph, Library of Congress.

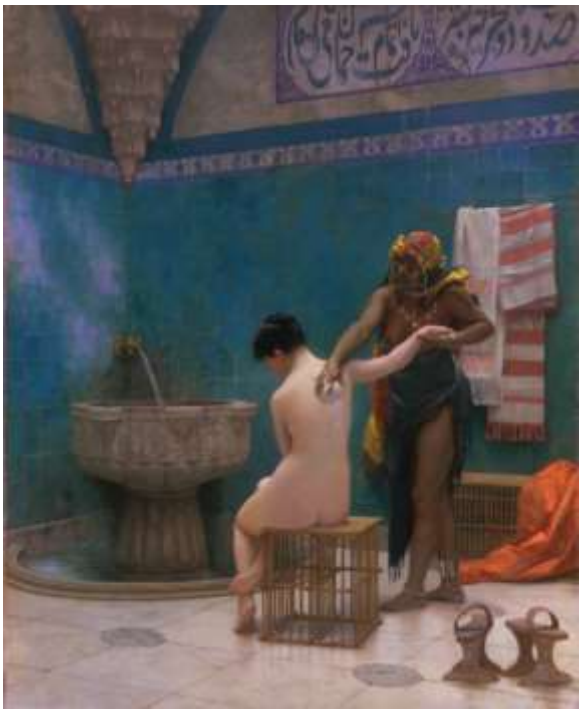

Figure 14, Jean-Léon Gérôme (European, French, 1824–1904), *The Bath*, *c.* 1880–85, oil painting, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, California, Mildred Anna Williams Collection, 1961.29.

Figure 15, McPherson and Oliver (American, U.S. active New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1860s), *The Scourged Back*, April 1863, albumen silver print from glass negative, 3 7/16 x 2 3/16 in., International Center for Photography, Purchase, with funds provided by the ICP Acquisitions Committee, 2003, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 16, F. Holland Day (American, U.S. 1864–1933), *Ebony and Ivory*, *c.*1897, photogravure, 15 ½ x 11 ½ in., Gift of Albert Boni, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 17, Unknown Artist, *Mr. Akeley and the Leopard he Killed Bare Handed*, 1897.

Figure 18, Villa dei Papiri, Herculaneum, *Dancing Faun statuette*, found in 1754 on south side of entrance to peristyle, Naples Archaeological Museum, 5292.

Figure 19, Unknown Artist, *Barberini Faun*, *c.*220 B.C.E., Hellenistic Period (Glyptothek, Munich).

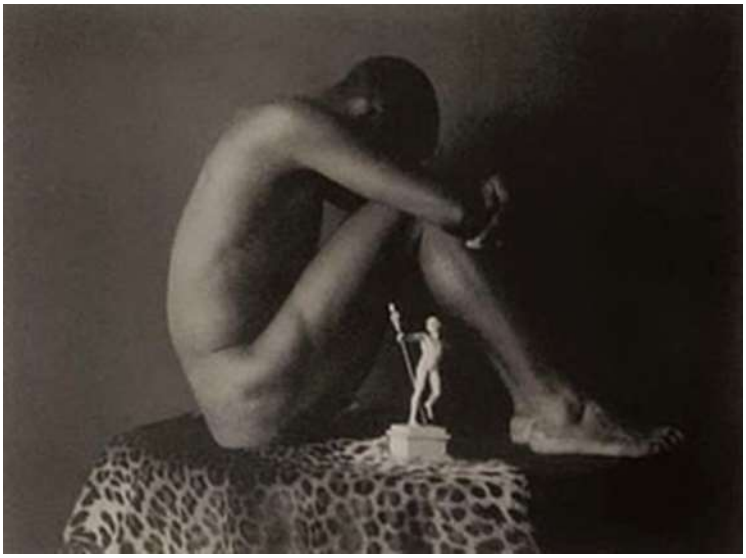

Figure 20, F. Holland Day (American, U.S. 1864–1933), *Ebony and Ivory*, *c.*1897, platinum, 4 ½ x 5 9/10 in., The Royal Photographic Society, Bath, England.

Figure 21, Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin (European, French, 1809–1864), Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer, *Figure d'Etude*, *c.*1835–36, Louvre Museum, M.I.171.

Chapter 3

Figure 1, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), Portrait of Charles Deering (1852–1927), 1917, oil on canvas, 28 1/2 x 21 in. (72.4 x 53.3 cm). Private collection, Chicago.

Figure 2, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *Man and Trees, Florida*, 1917, watercolor, gouache, and graphite on paper, 24 1/2 × 30 1/2 × 1 1/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950.

Figure 3, Robert F. Carl, *James Deering's Villa Vizcaya*, aerial photography, 21st century.

Figure 4, Unknown Artist, *A home in Colored Town, c.*1900, photograph, Courtesy of the Historical Association of Southern Florida.

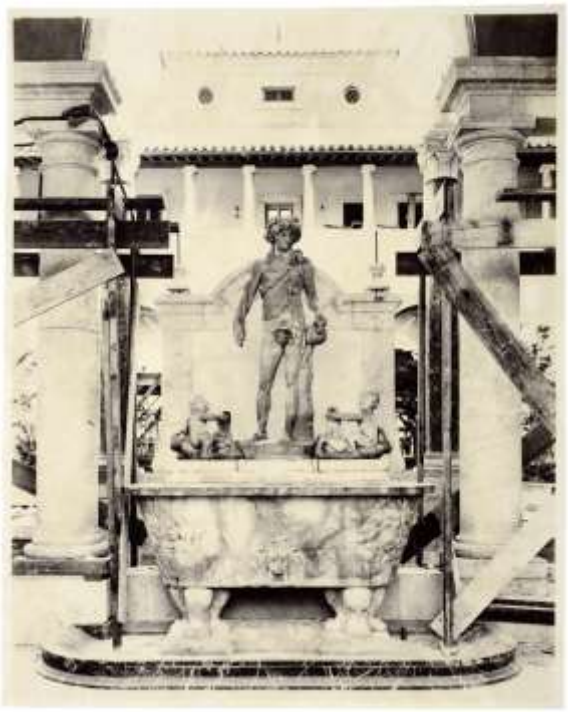

Figure 5, Unknown Artist, *Bacchus Fountain, Entrance Loggia*, 1916, Construction Album 7 photo 5 VMGA, Vizcaya Museum and Garden, Miami, FL.

Figure 6, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *The Bathers*, 1917, watercolor and gouache over graphite on paper, 15 3/4 x 20 3/4 in., Worchester Museum of Art, Massachusetts, Museum Purchase, Sustaining Membership Fund.

Figure 7, Agostino Brunias (European, Italian 1730–1796), *Mulatresses and Negro Woman Bathing*, West Indies, St. Dominica, late eighteenth century, 11.25 x 14 in. (framed), Gift of Harvard College Library.

Figure 8, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *"Negroes Bathing,"* 1917, scan of magazine clipping, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

Figure 9, Winslow Homer (American, U.S. 1836–1910), *In a Florida Jungle*, 1885–86, watercolor over graphite on moderately thick, smooth off-white woven paper, 35.8 × 51 cm (14 1/8 × 20 1/16 in.), Worchester Museum of Art, Massachusetts, Museum Purchase.

Figure 10, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *Figure and Pool*, 1917, watercolor, gouache, and graphite on white woven paper, 13 11/16 x 21 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950.

Figure 11, Unidentified Artist, *Construction Worker Posing with Female Nude Sculpture*, *c.*1917, photograph, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens Archives, Miami Florida.

Figure 12, John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *Bather, Florida*, 1917, watercolor on white woven paper, 15 ¾ x 2 7/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950.

Figure 13, Édouard Manet (European, French 1832–1883), *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 x 190 cm., Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Hervé Lewandowski.

Figure 14: John Singer Sargent (American, U.S. 1856–1925), *Figure on Beach*, watercolor graphite on white woven paper, 1917, 15 3/4 x 20 7/8 in. (40 x 53 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950.

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