

HISTORY IN ART

Childe Hassam 1859–1935

22 June 2022

1859 – Frederick Childe Hassam born in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

1872 – His father loses his cutlery business during the Great Boston Fire, and Hassam begins working for a commercial engraver, where he quickly demonstrates a talent and interest in draughtsmanship. He soon begins experimenting with watercolours and oil in the Impressionist mode of *plein air* painting. He receives no official formal training in art.

1882 – Hassam becomes a freelance illustrator and opens his first studio in Boston. He soon establishes a reputation with dealers in the city for his lively watercolours.

1883 – Holds his first exhibition of his works in Boston. He takes a “study trip” to Europe with a fellow artist, visiting many countries including Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Spain and Switzerland.

1884 – He marries Kathleen Maude Doanes, who helps him with his career as an artist.

1886 – He moves to Paris, sending his scenes of the Parisian streets to his Boston patrons and developing his techniques. Although he does not meet any of the Impressionists in Paris, he follows their style in using freer brushstrokes and softer colours for a “soft-focus” vision of life in the city.

1889 – His work earns him a bronze medal at the huge *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, which is staged to mark the centenary of the French Revolution. Later that year he returns to America and takes up lifelong residence in New York, painting the busy life of the city, continuing with the Impressionist style he developed in Paris. He sells his work consistently to buyers keen to have art reflecting the vibrancy of living in New York. He spends his summers in the countryside of Massachusetts or Connecticut, painting there *en plein air*, in the spirit of Impressionism.

1898 – Hassam is leader of “The Ten”, a group of artists who have developed their art in Paris and whose work is mostly Impressionist.

1916–1919 – He paints his famous series of flag paintings showing allied flags along streets of New York, perhaps inspired by the flag paintings of Claude Monet. His late career involves teaching, painting, and advocating for the Impressionist movement in America. He travels extensively within the United States, but only to Mexico outside the country.

1935 – Hassam dies at his home in East Hampton, New York.