

APPENDIX C

Chronology of the American Watercolor Movement

American Watercolor Society (AWS) Membership Categories

- A Associate (1874–78 for nonresident professionals; 1898–1922 for women)
- H Honorary (1866–73 for nonresidents and connoisseurs; 1874–78 for connoisseurs)
- NR Nonresident (1878–1903)
- R Resident (1878–1903)

Unless otherwise noted, figures come from the American Watercolor Society records, 1867–1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Italicized entries refer to the AWS and its annual exhibition.

1850–55

New York Water Color Society is active. Crystal Palace exhibition held in New York (1853).

1857–58

Loan exhibition of British art travels to New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

1865

National Academy of Design (NAD) opens new building at 23rd Street and Fourth Avenue in New York.

1866

Artists’ Fund Society holds special exhibition of watercolors at NAD (November). American Society of Painters in Water Colors (later named the American Watercolor Society) is formed (December).
Formation of Women’s National Art Association.

1867–68

AWS holds its first annual as part of the NAD winter exhibition (December–January), resumed after the hiatus of the war years; half of items shown are in black and white.
46 members (4H); 110 exhibitors (31% women) show 278 works (26% by women).

1869

AWS sets pattern of holding its annual in late January or early February.
55 members (10H); 102 exhibitors (24% women) show 232 works (30% by women).

1870

58 members (10H); 96 exhibitors (23% women) show 193 works (22% by women), including 17 European artists showing 25 works.

1871

Salmagundi Sketch Club forms. F. V. Hayden leads expedition to Yellowstone territory.

55 members (10H); 74 exhibitors (12% women), including 9 European artists, show 172 works (12% by women).

1872

Metropolitan Museum of Art opens in its first building on Fifth Avenue (February).
*54 members (10H); 128 exhibitors (16% women) show 341 works (15% by women), including 30–45 European artists showing 100–150 works; 28 works sold.*²

1873

Blackburn loan collection of English watercolors (95 artists, 203 works) is shown alongside the AWS annual. For the first time, the annual includes a gallery of black-and-white work and specially decorated galleries; Spanish-Italian watercolors make news.
Financial “Panic” in the fall sets off five-year depression.
60 members (13H); 159 exhibitors (25% women) show 354 works (20% by women).

1874

NAD cancels winter exhibition. AWS holds its annual independently at the NAD and produces its own catalogue.
Furor erupts over the NAD’s rejection of John La Farge’s work from the spring annual.
*64 members (10A, 4H); 222 exhibitors (12% women) show 490 works (13% by women); about \$10,000 in sales.*³

1875

AWS issues first exhibition catalogue listing prices. Union League Club of New York and Brooklyn Art Association hold their first watercolor exhibitions.
Founding of Art Students League in New York. “Salon des Refusés” forms in response to the number of artists rejected from the NAD annual.
*74 members (10A, 7H); 251 exhibitors (14% women) show 589 works (14% by women); \$15,209 in sales.*⁴

1876

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) opens its new building on Broad Street in Philadelphia. Museum of Fine Arts building opens in Boston. Historical surveys of American art take place in New York and Philadelphia.
Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia; AWS displays 186 watercolors.
*75 members (11A, 9H); 243 exhibitors (27% women) show 605 works (19% by women); \$17,000 in sales.*⁵

1877

AWS prints 50,000 circulars and first illustrated catalogue for exhibition; name officially changed to American Water Color Society (effective for annual of 1878). PAFA holds its first watercolor exhibition.

Formation of the Society of American Artists (SAA), the Tile Club, the Society of Decorative Art, and the New York Etching Club. Revival of the Salmagundi Club. Liberal NAD annual creates backlash.
*77 members (11A, 8H); 242 exhibitors (14% women) show 529 works (14% by women); 111 works sold, fewer sales than previous year.*⁶

1878

AWS membership categories reorganized (effective in 1879); advertising included in catalogue. Dutch watercolor vogue begins.
Salmagundi Club hosts first “Black and White” exhibition/ auction. SAA holds its first exhibition.
75 members (18A, 13H); 242 U.S. exhibitors (24% women) show 569 works (17% by women).

1879

Etching Club shows with the AWS. First annual exhibition of the Salmagundi Club (January). Whistler-Ruskin trial concludes in London.
65 members (47R, 18NR); 213 exhibitors (18% women) show 597 works (12% by women); 118 watercolors and 5 etchings sold, \$9,000 in sales⁷ \$3,000 from admissions).

1880

AWS annual takes in \$5,000–\$6,000 from admissions and catalogue sales.
Louis Prang holds his first Christmas-card competition. Metropolitan Museum of Art opens in its new building on Fifth Avenue.
*68 members (48R, 20NR); 297 exhibitors (16% women) show 766 works (20% by women); sales of 246 watercolors (\$20,522) and 62 etchings (\$432).*⁸

1881

10,000 visit the AWS annual; \$5,000–\$6,000 in admissions, \$1,500 in catalogue sales. Brooklyn Art Association and Boston Art Club hold their first watercolor exhibitions.
*77 members (55R, 22NR); 268 exhibitors (13% women) show 804 works (10% by women); 290 works (36%) sold for \$28,068–\$32,000.*⁹

1882

AWS rents all NAD galleries, takes in \$7,000 on Buyer’s Day, sells 8,000 catalogues and 1,200 season tickets. Etching Club exhibits jointly with AWS. Turmoil over the number of works rejected from annual inspires rival “Salon des Refusés” (February). Philadelphia Society of Artists holds its first watercolor exhibition.
Five artists form the Society of Painters in Pastel. The Society of American Wood Engravers and Charcoal Club also form this year. Decorations for W. K. Vanderbilt’s house are completed. Onset of an economic downturn.

82 members (60R, 22NR); 243 exhibitors (9% women) show 650 works (12% by women); 231 works sold, \$33,000 in sales of watercolors, \$1,882 for etchings.¹⁰

1883

Detroit Water Color Society is founded.

Loan exhibition held to raise funds for the pedestal of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty includes modern European painting. Exhibition of Impressionist art in Boston.

93 members (69R, 24NR); 264 exhibitors (9% women) show 605 works (8% by women); sales of \$19,248 for watercolors, \$1,900 for etchings.¹¹

1884

AWS sells 500 season tickets, 5,000 catalogues; poor weather and economy depress sales and visitation at the annual.

First exhibition of the Society of Painters in Pastel.

94 members (67R, 27NR); 280 exhibitors (16% women) show 663 works (16% by women); \$16,000 in sales.¹²

1885

Watercolor societies form in Baltimore and Boston.

95 members (67R, 28NR); 309 exhibitors (12% women) show 740 works (17% by women); sales of about \$13,500.¹³

1886

Paul Durand-Ruel exhibits French Impressionist works in New York. Architectural League of New York holds its first exhibition.

1887

11,000 visit the AWS annual. Boston Water Color Club (for women artists) forms.

103 members (76R, 27NR); 283 exhibitors (14% women) show 656 works (17% by women); 190 works sold, \$22,000 in sales of watercolors, \$2,300 for etchings.¹⁴

1888

AWS holds its first annual dinner; establishes Evans Prize, awarded (through 1913) for the most meritorious watercolor in annual exhibition.

1889

Decorative Art Ball held in conjunction with the AWS exhibition. Art Institute of Chicago holds its first annual watercolor exhibition.

250 works sold, \$24,000 in sales of watercolors, \$2,500 for etchings.¹⁵

1890

New York Water Color Club (NYWCC) forms; its first exhibition in November includes pastels. Society of Painters in Pastel holds fourth and final exhibition.

More than 200 works sold (30% of total) for about \$19,000.¹⁶

1893

World's Columbian Exposition is on display in Chicago.

112 members (77R, 35NR); 314 exhibitors (33% women) show 646 works (29% by women).

1898

AWS creates Associate class of membership for women artists. Formation of "the Ten" American painters.

1900

113 members (80R, 31NR, 2A); 129 exhibitors (16.5% women) show 260 works (14.2% by women).

1901

AWS annual held for the last time at the NAD before its building is demolished; the annual will travel to different venues in the next decades. First exhibition of the Philadelphia Water Color Club.

1903

105 members (2A); 158 exhibitors show 229 works.

1904

AWS annual loses money for the first time; the society begins sending "Rotary" exhibitions to cities such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Saint Louis.

1906

AWS sustains loss of \$1,600.

1907

Loss repeated. Pastels accepted to AWS annual for the first time.

1908

First exhibition of "the Eight." Alfred Stieglitz begins to show modern painting at his gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue.

1909

Brooklyn Museum purchases 83 watercolors by John Singer Sargent from the Knoedler gallery.

1910

Deaths of Winslow Homer and John La Farge. Stieglitz presents *Younger American Artists*.

1913

AWS sells 16 works for \$2,475. Armory Show introduces European modernism to America.

1916

Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters held in New York.

1921

First Brooklyn Museum watercolor biannual includes 52 artists; among the 43 living artists represented, 12 are members of the AWS, 14 of the NYWCC.

AWS holds its first joint exhibition with the NYWCC (practice continues through 1931).

1922

155 members (1A); 238 exhibitors show 565 works.

1925

Death of John Singer Sargent. Stieglitz exhibits *Seven Americans* at his new space, the Intimate Gallery.

1941

AWS and NYWCC merge.

1. Percentages of women exhibitors and their entries are based on known American exhibitors whose gender could be identified. Many women exhibited without declaring their full names; their percentages probably would be higher if all identities were known, and lower if European exhibitors were counted. The statistics presented here are graphed in fig. 244.

2. Francis A. Silva, "Our Art Clubs: The American Water Color Society," *Art Union*, vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1885), p. 52.

3. Earl Shinn, "Notes: American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Nation*, vol. 18 (March 12, 1874), p. 172. Sales figures vary in different accounts: sometimes the total is based on listed prices and sometimes on actual prices received, usually 10–15 percent lower, reflecting sales commissions or bargaining.

4. Ralph Fabri, *History of the American Watercolor Society: The First Hundred Years* (New York: The Society, 1969), p. 18.

5. Silva, "Our Art Clubs," p. 52.

6. "Fine Arts," *Independent* (New York), vol. 27 (February 11, 1875), p. 6.

7. "Exhibitions and Sales," *American Art Review*, vol. 1 (April 1880), p. 269.

8. Ibid.; Silva, "Our Art Clubs," p. 52.

9. "Exhibitions and Sales," *American Art Review*, vol. 2 (April 1881), p. 253; Silva, "Our Art Clubs," p. 52; "Notes and News," *Art Interchange*, vol. 12, no. 6 (March 13, 1884), p. 65; Sylvester R. Koehler, *United States Art Directory and Year-Book (Second Year)* (New York: Cassell, 1884), p. 11.

10. Koehler, *United States Art Directory and Year-Book (Second Year)*, p. 11.

11. Ibid., pp. 11, 35.

12. "Notes and News," *Art Interchange*, vol. 12, no. 6 (March 13, 1884), p. 65.

13. "The Lounger," *Critic*, vol. 61 (February 28, 1885), p. 102.

14. Clarence Cook, "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Studio*, vol. 2, no. 9 (March 1887), pp. 151–53; "Art Notes," *Critic*, vol. 166 (March 5, 1887), p. 115.

15. "Close of the Water Colors," *New York Times*, March 3, 1889, p. 16.

16. "The Fine Arts," *Critic*, vol. 323 (March 8, 1890), p. 122.