

---

[All ETDs from UAB](#)

[UAB Theses & Dissertations](#)

---

2010

## Drawing a Bath: Works by Robert Henri and George Bellows at the Birmingham Museum of Art

Mary K. Russell  
*University of Alabama at Birmingham*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/etd-collection>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Russell, Mary K., "Drawing a Bath: Works by Robert Henri and George Bellows at the Birmingham Museum of Art" (2010). *All ETDs from UAB*. 2875.  
<https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/etd-collection/2875>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

DRAWING A BATH: WORKS BY ROBERT HENRI AND GEORGE BELLOWS AT  
THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

by

MARY KATHERINE RUSSELL

JESSICA DALLOW, COMMITTEE CHAIR  
HEATHER MCPHERSON  
MINDY NANCARROW

A THESIS

Submitted to the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama at Birmingham and The  
University of Alabama,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Art History

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

2010

Copyright by  
Mary Katherine Russell  
2010

# DRAWING A BATH: WORKS BY ROBERT HENRI AND GEORGE BELLOW'S AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

MARY KATHERINE RUSSELL

## ART HISTORY

### ABSTRACT

The Birmingham Museum of Art owns three images of bathers by Robert Henri and George Bellows, both members of the Ashcan group of painters. The Ashcan is known for recording the gritty street life of New York at the turn of the twentieth century, but the drawings at the Birmingham Museum of Art show an alternate side to their work. Due to the unusual subject matter of these three drawings, it is important to explore why each artist created these works and to place them within a broader historical and social context.

Chapter One explores Henri's *Four Female Bathers* and Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* and *Bathers*, and compares them to preceding European nudes by Edgar Degas and Paul Cézanne. It argues that while the images do appear to be related to the European works, they should be considered as American experimentations with the nude. Chapter Two positions the works in terms of the artists' educational backgrounds and looks to the social-historical context in which these drawings were made. Chapter Three examines the idea of leisure bathing in Bellows's *Bathers* and such popular seaside locales as Coney Island, which allowed city dwellers to leave the urban environment for amusement, while also continuing the study of the nude.

Although these images were included in the 2008 exhibition at the Birmingham Museum of Art, there is no in-depth analysis of the works or subject matter of the nude in current scholarship about Henri and Bellows. My thesis will provide the first study of the

subject matter and conclude that while the images appear different from typical Ashcan topics, they are valid in Ashcan theory as experiments with figures and the nude while placing them in context with the urban life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
 CHAPTERS	
1 THE EUROPEAN MODERN NUDE, HENRI, AND BELLOWS.....	8
The Nude.....	8
Figures by Cézanne.....	10
Figures by Matisse .....	12
Figures by Degas.....	14
2 HENRI’S AND BELLOWS’S ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES.....	19
Academic Practice In Henri’s <i>Four Female Bathers</i> and Bellows’s <i>Five Nude Female Figures</i> .....	19
Cultural and Social Influences in Bellows’s <i>Five Nude Female Bathers</i> .....	25
3 EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY LEISURE AND BELLOWS’S <i>BATHERS</i> .....	31
Leisure Activities and Coney Island.....	32
Bellows on Vacation and Images of the Sea.....	36
City Bathers.....	39
CONCLUSION.....	43
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	58

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Dr. Jessica Dallow for her constant encouragement, time, and guidance in writing this thesis. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. McPherson and Dr. Nancarrow, for their help with this thesis. For donating the Birmingham Museum of Art drawings and offering their insight, I would also like to thank Glenn C. Peck and Valerie Ann Leeds. Lastly, thanks to my friends and family for their unending support.

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Page</i>
1 Robert Henri, <i>Four Female Bathers</i> , 1900.....	46
2 George Bellows, <i>Five Nude Female Figures</i> , 1917.....	47
3 George Bellows, <i>Bathers</i> , 1919.....	48
4 Paul Cézanne, <i>Bathers</i> , 1874-75.....	49
5 Paul Cézanne, <i>Five Bathers</i> , 1885-87.....	49
6 Henri Matisse, <i>Bonheur de Vivre</i> , 1905-06.....	50
7 Henri Matisse, <i>Blue Nude</i> , 1907.....	50
8 Edgar Degas, <i>After the Bath</i> , 1885.....	51
9 Edgar Degas, <i>Spartan Girls Challenging Boys</i> , 1860-62.....	51
10 Edgar Degas, <i>La Classe de Danse</i> , 1873-75.....	52
11 Edgar Degas, <i>Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub</i> , 1886.....	52
12 Edgar Degas, <i>Woman at her Toilette</i> , 1900.....	53
13 George Bellows, <i>Standing Nude</i> , n.d.....	53
14 George Bellows, <i>Nude Woman Seated, Third State</i> , 1916.....	54
15 George Bellows, <i>Cliff Dwellers</i> , 1913.....	54
16 George Bellows, <i>River Rats</i> , 1906.....	55
17 George Bellows, <i>Forty-Two Kids</i> , 1907.....	55
18 George Bellows, <i>Beach at Coney Island</i> , 1908-10.....	56
19 George Bellows, <i>The Beach</i> , 1919.....	56
20 George Bellows, <i>Shore House</i> , 1911.....	57
21 George Bellows, <i>Tennis Tournament (Tennis at Newport)</i> , 1919.....	57



## INTRODUCTION

Located at the Birmingham Museum of Art in Birmingham, Alabama are three drawings, one by Robert Henri (1865-1929) and two by George Bellows (1882-1925) that depict bathers at the turn of the twentieth century. Henri and Bellows were members of the Ashcan group, and Henri was considered its leader. The Ashcan artists emerged in 1908 after an exhibition of eight artists, lead by Henri, at the Macbeth Galleries. Ashcan artists are best known for capturing the gritty street life of rapidly changing New York City. At the turn of the century the city was a growing metropolis with immigrants arriving daily, women moving into the workforce, and an emerging nightlife. Henri, in leading the group of artists, encouraged them to draw or paint what they saw in everyday life: fleeting moments of joy, hardship, the erection of skyscrapers and lowly tenements. He wanted his colleagues and students to capture anything expressing the human experience of modern urban life. Henri and his fellow artists helped to establish an image of modernity and the effects of urbanization through publishing and exhibiting their paintings, sketches, political cartoons, and other illustrations. Henri's mentorship of Bellows began in 1904 and their friendship and artistic relationship lasted until Bellows's untimely death in 1925. Typical Ashcan subjects include illegal boxing matches, storefront windows, working and middle-class women, and filthy tenement living. Most of the works allude to a changing social atmosphere where immigrants were pouring into the city looking for jobs, women were becoming more independent, seedy entertainment

like boxing was thriving behind closed doors, and advertisements were flourishing telling the urban dwellers what was in style.

The three drawings at the Birmingham Museum of Art do not immediately appear to be characteristic of the gritty urban life for which the Ashcan artists are known, but are rather intimate scenes of bathers. They do represent two traditionally modernist interests: the exploration of the nude and the representation of leisure in an increasingly urban world. In pen and black ink and brush with gray wash, Henri's *Four Female Bathers* (1900; fig. 1) depicts women amid a wooden area. Sharp lines create the forms of the rounded figures, all gathered around the center of the image, without much detail apart from shading of the bodies and the natural setting of woods and lake. Two swans are awkwardly placed on the right side, balancing the composition. Unable to see facial expressions or other telling signs, the drawing looks to be a sketch from the artist's mind. The image is reminiscent of the traditional outdoor nude bathing scenes of European artists such as Paul Cézanne, and brings to light Henri's training and overseas travel. In the beginning of 1900, Henri was living in Paris, and he moved to Madrid before settling in New York by the fall when the image of his *Four Female Bathers* was completed, and no scholarship confirms the city in which the drawing was completed. I believe that the drawing, *Four Female Bathers* by Henri was not meant for display, and from my research, does not appear to be a study for a larger work as no comparable work exists to date.<sup>1</sup> In my interview with Henri scholar Valerie Ann Leeds, she agreed that the subject matter and execution is unusual compared with other works, and that the image itself

---

<sup>1</sup>In 1934, after Henri's death, his sister-in-law destroyed an estimated five hundred and fifty works, mostly portraits and nudes. Bennard B. Perlman, *Robert Henri: His Life and Art* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1991), 138.

seems to be a quick scribble, perhaps out of boredom.<sup>2</sup> While the drawing does seem unlikely to be connected with another work, the use of two mediums shows he spent more time executing the image than merely a “quick scribble.”

In contrast to Henri’s *Four Female Bathers*, Bellows’s bathing drawings are more highly finished and place figures in daily scenes. The artist used a lithographic crayon to create *Five Nude Female Figures* (1917; fig. 2), an intimate toilette scene portraying four women gathered around a fifth, central woman washing her hair. Bellows focused on portraying the different views of the female form in this drawing, adding detail in the women’s faces and hairstyles. Although the class of the women is not suggested in this drawing, the spectator feels as if he has walked in, like an undetected voyeur, on a private scene between these five females. Only one female, sitting on the far left side, seems to be displaying her body. I believe the artist wanted to capture the women with a sketch-like quality to give them a liveliness and appearance of movement. Bellows’s *Five Nude Female Bathers* also raises questions about the concerns of hygiene and the state of sanitary laws in an increasingly crowded and dirty city. According to Bellows scholar Glenn C. Peck’s research, this drawing is the only image of bathers completed all year.

Bellows’s second drawing, *Bathers* (1919; fig. 3), is different from the previous two scenes and appears directly related to his earlier image, *Shore House* (1911). This image and *Bathers* possibly represent the same location, a local vacation spot of Bellows. In *Bathers*, figures mingle near a lake or ocean. Across the water sits a large wharf with steps down to a dock is evident in the distance, and the figures are across in the foreground of the picture plane, standing on a pier. The lines are darker than the image

---

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Ann Leeds, telephone interview with author, 10 March 2008. In this interview, she also was able to date the drawing to 1900, but no further information was given.

of the female bathers, with less detail. The strokes are very sketch-like, which stress the people and the community behind them. I believe that *Bathers* is connected to *Shore House*, which stands as a symbol of his marriage. Around the period in which Bellows completed *Bathers*, he was traveling a lot, mostly in Newport, Rhode Island, with his wife and family.

The three drawings at the Birmingham Museum of Art are fascinating because they represent another possible direction to explore about the artistic representation of the body in early twentieth-century America. Literature has been published on the Ashcan group that focuses on the works as they relate to the history surrounding the artists. Rebecca Zurier, Robert W. Snyder, and Virginia M. Mecklenburg published the best and most current collection of the Ashcan artists and their historical contexts in *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York* (1995). This catalog, published by the National Museum of American Art in conjunction with an exhibition, explores the Ashcan artists alongside the multiple changes, which occurred in turn of the century New York, such as growing immigrant populations, the development of bars and city parks, and the landscape of the city.<sup>3</sup> Bennard B. Perlman and his work documenting Henri's life in *Robert Henri: His Life and Art* (1991) and the Ashcan artists in *Painters of the Ashcan School: The Immortal Eight* (1979), and Peck, who is at work compiling Bellows's Catalogue Raisonné, are two scholars uncovering the life and work of these two artists. Perlman discusses Henri's chronological history and places his works in the contexts of his surroundings and companions. Peck is still trying to gather all of Bellows's works, and lists almost 100 unlocated works. He has also listed main themes

---

<sup>3</sup> The book is an exhibition catalog that accompanied an exhibition of the same title at the National Museum of American Art, in Washington, D.C., from November 17, 1995-March 17, 1996.

in Bellows's oeuvre: portraiture, Maine and the Coast, Woodstock and the Country, New York City, and sporting and history scenes.

Henri is known primarily for his portraits ranging from the wealthy, such as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, to poor immigrant children like Willie Gee. Bellows is most remembered for his illegal boxing matches, but these, in actuality, are a small part of his work. The atypical bathing images at the Birmingham Museum of Art, while included in two recent exhibitions, remain largely unstudied. The works have been published in Jeannine O'Grody's drawing catalog, *Methods and Media: Drawings from the Birmingham Museum of Art* (2002); they were also included in a small 2009 exhibition by the museum titled *Body Image: American Art and the Human Form*, which looked at works of the figure in early twentieth-century American art. The most recent showed the appreciation for the nude in art, and the value in further exploring Henri and Bellows's works. The drawings by Henri and Bellows at the Birmingham Museum of Art are examples of the experimentation of the American nude in three different landscapes, Henri's outdoor scene, Bellows's indoor toilette scene, and Bellows's leisure scene. Using the drawings at the Birmingham Museum of Art, I will consider the modernist traditions in order to understand the production of nudes and bathing scenes as they relate to their context of turn-of-the-century New York.

Chapter One explores the history of the modern nude by looking at works by Edgar Degas, Paul Cezanne, and Henri Matisse while discussing each drawing by Henri and Bellows. Nudes are common throughout the history of art as a way to show the artist's observations of nature and skill in reproduction. In order to demonstrate the context for the American representations of the nude bathers, I examine European trends

of the nude preceding and during the time of Henri and Bellows. Bellows was exposed to European artists with his involvement of the Armory Show of 1913, but never traveled overseas. Henri was aware of Degas during his trip to Paris, but no interaction between the two has been discovered. I argue that while the images do resemble the works of European artists, Henri and Bellows's images should be considered independent drawings dealing with the new idea of the modern American nude and the idea of display.

Chapter Two discusses the reasons why Henri and Bellows completed the bathing images by looking at their academic studies and background, and their contemporary imagery depicting urban bathing. Henri's interest in the nude began at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where its director, Thomas Eakins, was dismissed a year before Henri's enrollment due to his teaching practices with live models. Bellows also experimented with nude figures, many of which are in museums, galleries, and private collections. I examine Henri's education both as student and teacher and the impact on followers such as Bellows. Using comparative imagery, I also position Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* within the context of public bathing and sanitation practices in New York. At the time, proponents were building bathhouses to help the immigrant and poor communities practice appropriate hygiene rituals in hopes to alleviate epidemics and strengthen morality.

Chapter Three focuses specifically on Bellows's *Bathers*, depicting the new modern idea of leisure life for urban dwellers. Many amusements were becoming popular due to the shortened workweek and the need to escape the bustling city life. I explore the idea of vacationing out of the city, which social classes were involved, and the most common destinations of the time. Wealthy citizens owned vacation homes

upstate and every social class was heading to closer seaside resorts such as Coney Island. This chapter further considers the development of the bathing costume worn to seaside resorts and the amusements popular at the time using works by Bellows.

Due to the lack of in-depth analyses of Henri and Bellows in relation to the subject of bathing, my thesis dates the images at the Birmingham Museum of Art. It also looks at bathing in the context of hygiene and leisure and the drawings in relation to the concerns and practices of the Ashcan artists. These drawings offer the opportunity to explore areas of the artists' work that have been passed over, particularly the representation of the figure and experimentations with the body in art at the turn of the century, and how such representation and experimentation connect to changing urban life and social constructs.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE EUROPEAN MODERN NUDE, HENRI, AND BELLOWS

Nudes have been a long-standing tradition in art history from the Paleolithic cave paintings of France to the present. Whether it is a statement of fertility or athletic prowess, religious depictions or seductive beauty, or merely to show the talent of the artist, the continual study of the nude remains. While there was also a preoccupation with the male nude during the nineteenth century, this chapter does not address the male version of the academic nude, but focuses on the female.

In discussing the drawings in this thesis, it is relevant to include a study of the preceding European artists' depiction of the nude. This chapter examines examples of the nude by Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Edgar Degas to argue that while Henri and Bellows's Birmingham Museum of Art drawings do appear based on European precedents, they should be considered as independent American experimentations with the nude and not copies. Modern ideas of the nude include women that were confident in their bodies, not idealized, but were rather an experimentation of forms using the body. The female form can be placed in an outdoor landscape, with an aspect of confrontational display. The modern idea of the nude would be contradictory to academic nudes by artists such as William-Adolphe Bouguereau.

#### The Nude



The traditional academic female nude, which was flourishing with artists such as Bouguereau and Alexandre Cabanel in the salons of Europe and America, was the epitome of perfection and proportion. Oftentimes, she was labeled as an allegorical figure in a mythological tale or a heroine of a classical story. Her body was plush and pristine, with no imperfections, and her vision rarely engaged the viewer in a confrontational manner. If the artist does project her gaze outward towards the viewer, it is in a come hither look that would express longing. When the modern nude became accessible to all viewers, the distinctions of the old and new nude became pronounced. In modern nudes, such as Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), the bodies of the figures are not idealized, and a more intimate setting allows the viewer to become a part of the scene. The gaze of the female form is abrasive, leaving the viewer to feel intrusive. Movement was a great concern to the modern artists, many of whom attempted to capture the figure in a state of unrest, unlike the static images of Bouguereau and the academic nude.

Artists such as Cézanne and Matisse, however seem to have had some influence on Henri as evidenced by his *Four Female Bathers*, even though direct evidence was not found. Henri did study in Paris during the late 1890s until 1900, and was more inspired by European modernists like Manet than the Impressionists. Due to the approximate date of the image, 1900, it is unclear where this drawing fits in his chronology. In 1898, he was studying in Paris and might have been inspired by the works around him, including works by Cézanne, but no specific connection has been discovered yet between these two artists. The infamy of the Impressionists and post-Impressionists could have reached Henri, inspiring him to continue creating artwork that challenged previous American ideals. These European artists abandoned the academic nude in search of a figure

familiar with the culture of modernity. The nudes completed by Henri and Bellows differ greatly from the traditional female academic nude, with her perfect proportions, found appropriate in New York at the turn of the century, and are better characterized in the modern style similar to the nudes of Europeans.<sup>4</sup>

Although the work of Henri and Bellows, completed decades apart from the European modernists, is significantly different in style, the theme of the nude or bathing can be seen in each. Similarities such as the desire for free, non-juried exhibitions, the desire to capture the changing city and moral attitudes, and the rejection of work by well-established salons, are found between Henri and Bellows and their European predecessors proving the parallels in which these artistic movements occurred.<sup>5</sup> While each European artist wanted to find a new voice for art in the modern age, he depicted the traditional theme of the nude and bathers very differently.

### Figures by Cézanne

Henri's *Four Female Bathers* and Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* are similar in style to Cézanne's series of bathers. Henri and Cézanne choose to loosely depict the figures with expressive lines, departing from the Academic style. The women are not seen as ideal figures, but are rather portly and lack facial detail. The backgrounds place the bathers outdoors, connecting them to nature, and capturing them in a state of

---

<sup>4</sup> Bellows scholar Peck insists that the Europeans did not influence *Five Nude Female Figures*. He states that this image connects with works by John Sloan, and Sloan's work should be considered Bellows's inspiration.

<sup>5</sup> Cezanne and Degas became part of a group, the Société Anonyme des Artistes, which advocated for free, non-juried exhibitions. While it is unclear how much these two artists interacted, it can be assumed that most artists in these circles were searching for a more modern approach to art, including the nude, while rejecting the Academic standards of the salons.

unrest. Bellows's work is similar to Cézanne's later works due to the spacing of the women and the interaction with the viewer. I will look at two Cézanne images that magnify the similarity between Henri and Bellows's works.

Much has been said about why Cézanne so often completed images of bathing. Historians note how an early experience of unrequited love in his life impelled his desire to depict women in an erotic, aggressive fashion; yet, by the 1880s, his bathing images become more serene and idyllic.<sup>6</sup> Some scholars claim that he still felt angst towards females and their sexuality throughout his life, but he was able to hide his emotions in the latter bathing works. Regardless of the completion date, his paintings and drawings of bathing have a sketch-like quality, with humans interacting in nature. Depicting bathers in this manner would be highly praised by modernists for the ugliness of the image, the desire to go beyond what is academically beautiful.

In *Bathers* (1874-75; fig. 4), Cézanne places five women along a shoreline and one frolicking in the water. The women are each in a different position, showing the artist's skill in catching movement of bodies. While the viewer does not feel he is interrupting the scene, the unaware women are displaying their body. The bodies are plump and not idealized. The detail of the surrounding bushes and trees echo the young women's poses. The women are interacting with nature physically as well as with their nudity. Cézanne's nude women look more along the lines of Henri's *Four Female Bathers*, due to the lack of facial or frontal detail, and the landscape in which the ladies are placed.

---

<sup>6</sup> Richard Murphy, *The World of Cézanne, 1839-1906* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1968), 23.

In Cézanne's *Five Bathers* (1885-87; fig. 5), a group of young women invade the viewer's space and are aware of an outside view. All but one connects eyes with the spectator, allowing for their bodies to be on display. The background is solely for placing them outdoors, but the detail lacks from the previous image. The women are again very stout and seen from different angles with the light source coming from the viewer. The triangular spacing framing the women in light, along with one figure gazing out towards the viewer, is similar to Bellows's image of women bathing. Cézanne's *Five Bathers* is an excellent image to convey the idea of the modern nude; she is confrontational and not in a state of rest. Cézanne's bathers and Bellows's bathers are not the ideal nudes of Academia. They are images created with a feeling of immediacy in the way the pen, crayon, or paint is applied to produce the image. In Henri's image, detail is only given to the landscape, just enough to place the forms in the wooden area, with their bodies creating the movement with the varying contours of the bodies. In Bellows's *Five Nude Female Bathers*, the image is more detailed in the faces of the women and the one body on display, but as for the context, it is left up to the viewer. The forms are not in great detail and leave the viewer with the ability to interpret the work in his own way.

### Figures by Matisse

In the following works by Matisse, thematic connections between Henri's *Four Female Bathers* and Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* are evident. Matisse creates his lively rotund figures outdoors, connecting them with nature, much like Henri. Bellows's image connects with a later work by Matisse with the exploration of the female

body on display. By looking at these two works by Matisse, similarities are discussed with Henri and Bellows.

A well-known work by Matisse, *Bonheur de Vivre* (1905-06; fig. 6), is an excellent study of the modern human form in nature. While Henri and Bellows's images are drawings, Matisse chose strong colors of paint and lines of a draftsman to help depict each figure. Nature reiterates the roundness of the human forms in the swooping of the trees, leaving the viewer to visually separate the figures from their surroundings. Each is on display in various poses, showing the motion of the lives these bodies encompass. The vitality is also continued in the liveliness of their environment. The viewer is allowed to take part in the scene and is pulled in wondering what each group is experiencing. Two ladies recline in the center, which lead the viewer to wonder what discussion is occurring, as well as an intimate chat among friends beside them. Dancers are in the background enjoying the company of one another. The whole image resonates with a feeling of shared experiences in life: friendship and community. Similarly, Henri creates a community in his *Four Female Bathers* by placing the figures together in a circle creating a sense of companionship while being surrounded by nature. The figures are paired together as if each is having a separate conversation or moment, but the figures are a group of women sharing an experience out of doors with nature. A sense of movement and display are captured with his quick pen marks. Both works by Matisse and Henri allow the viewer to take part in the energetic scenes.

A singular view of the modern woman can be found in Matisse's *Blue Nude* (1907; fig. 7). While the image was completed during a time when Henri and Bellows were actively working in America, the image is the epitome of the modern nude. She

encompasses the entire picture plane, leaving no room for exploration outside her body. She is strong, aggressive, and confrontational. The viewer does not feel welcome, but is not shunned from looking. Her pose shows almost all of her figure and places it on display, which is similar to Bellows's female interpretation. There is a grittiness to the image that touches the viewer even after the viewing is complete, not allowing him to forget the contours of her body or her gaze. While Matisse's image is more confrontational than Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures*, the theme of exploration of the female figure is present. Bellows wanted to show the viewer the outlines of the female form from many angles, and does add confrontation from the woman to the left of the drawing. She has the same attitude of display as Matisse's *Blue Nude*.

In both Henri and Bellows's works, there is the presence of the viewer's gaze. In Henri's image, the figures do not connect with the viewer's gaze, and this makes the viewer feel as if he has just stumbled upon a private scene. In Bellows's female bathers, the far left woman connects eyes with the viewer and makes him a participant in the scene. The other women do not yet know of his presence, which makes the viewer feel as if he is a voyeur. In Bellows's *Bathers*, I believe that the figure looking back to the spectator is connecting with him, perhaps asking him to join the party on the pier. There is not the sense of inappropriate looking as in Bellows's other image of bathers. The power of the gaze addresses the viewer and makes him become part of the scene.

#### Figures by Degas

Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* is very similar to Degas's images of women at their toilette. At first glance, the viewer would assume Bellows was aware of and inspired by Degas, but this is not the case. Bellows did help organize the Armory Show

of 1913 where Degas's *After The Bath* (1885; fig. 8) was on display.<sup>7</sup> Bellows did not make many comments on the exhibition as a whole other than his dislike for the abstraction of the Europeans. Another possibility of exposure to Degas's work would have been through Everett Shinn, another member of the Ashcan group. Shinn and Degas often used the same model for posing while Shinn was studying in Paris in 1900, but Shinn was more concerned in creating his own art than copying another artist. By looking at a selected number of works by Degas, I will discuss the evolution of his nudes and how Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* is similar but not a copy.

Degas often chose the female figure as a subject, whether it be stage women or women at their toilette. Degas looked to Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres for inspiration due to his love of lines and draftsmanship, meeting the artist himself and studying with one of his pupils, Louis Lamothes. Working in Italy, Degas studied works by Renaissance artists, who were fans of depicting the human figure. There are over 700 copies by Degas of classical and Renaissance works completed in his lifetime.

An example of an early Degas nude in a classical scene is *Spartan Girls Challenging Boys* (1860-62; fig. 9). The image is set at dusk with Spartan girls battling groups of boys in the foreground. While Degas is using a mythological subject, he is experimenting and challenging the academic nude. Two of the boys are static figures, while the other three present more aggressive poses. The boy in the middle displays a boxing pose, another in the foreground is crouched down in a prowler position, while the strongest holds his hands in the air stretching. The girls are closer together, but one stretches her arm out as if calling upon the boys to begin the battle. The human forms,

---

<sup>7</sup>Shelley Staples, "Gallery O," *1913 Armory Show*, May 2001,[online], available from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MUSEUM/Armory/armoryshow.html>, 4 Sept. 2008 I did not find any comments by Bellows specific to Degas or this work.

while partially clothed, are not idealized and Degas is studying the changing forms of different stances. The girls are not ashamed of their nudity and are not the pristine figures of the traditional academic nude. Throughout Degas's oeuvre, his compositions become less confrontational and more intimate, often with one or two main women. *Spartan Girls Challenging Boys* proves his love for lines at this point in his career, as well as his respect for the classical form.

In the early 1870s, Degas's study of the nude continues with the large production of ballerinas on and off stage. He found that dancing was an excellent way to show movement of the body in a variety of poses. A famous example of Degas's love for dance and ballerinas can be seen in *La Classe de Danse* (1873-75; fig 10). A large class of young ballerinas is gathered together in a small room with an instructor in the middle of the room. Poses vary from seated with pointed toes to erect backs at attention. His attention to line and detail are found throughout the work from the floorboards to the skirts of the ladies, and upwards to the detail in the architecture. While the girls are clothed, the attention to detail and anatomy is prevalent, and continues in his work of ballerinas and bathing women.

More appropriate for this thesis discussion are Degas's toilette scenes, a theme Bellows also chose to complete. In 1886 he completed the intimate work, *Woman Bathing In a Shallow Tub* (fig. 11). A nude woman is seen crouched over the tub with a washcloth in hand. Degas places her in what seems to be her home, with curtains and an armchair in the background. The detail lies in the completion of her back and feet, as well as the tub basin. Strong outlines of her arms and backside contrast the brightness of her skin. She does not know we are watching; we are an intruder into her ritual.



We are also an intruder in Degas's *Woman at the Toilette* (1900; fig. 12), another image of hygiene practices of the time. This is the most similar to Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* due to the pose of the female figure. She is seen bent sideways with cloth in hand washing her hair. The background is not detailed, but the colors of her hair and body are repeated with the large color blocks. She is the center of the image and our focus, but does not know we are present. Many other images similar to *Woman in a Tub* and *Woman at the Toilette* continue throughout Degas's career, a theme Bellows addresses in *Five Nude Female Figures*.

Bellows, like Degas, wanted to capture the intimate setting of females bathing by allowing viewers into the private lives of women in his image *Five Nude Female Figures*. In the image, the women are not aware of the viewer. Bellows, like Degas, focused on the depiction of the figure, specifically the contours of the body. The women are engaged in an intimate activity not often shown to the public eye. There are images in his oeuvre that are completed nudes, but most of those are portraits of women partially nude. It is unclear if Bellows executed this image of bathers for reasons other than to study the forms of the female figure. As an artist of the Ashcan group, he focused on placing them in a scene, although intimate, common in the tenement life around him.

### Conclusion

By looking at the drawings by Henri and Bellows at the Birmingham Museum of Art, it is clear that they were experimenting with new ways of depicting the nude in America and were influenced by the ideas of European predecessors, but were not copying them. Similar in theory to the Europeans, the Ashcan artists were taking ideas of

the modern nude and experimenting with her to bring a different female figure in American art. Henri's *Bathers* is an example of the traditional outdoor figures of European predecessors. Bellows's intimate drawing, *Five Nude Female Figures*, could possibly be a work either to capture bathing trends at the turn of the century, to focus on exploring the contours of the female form, or to comment on working class women. His other image, *Bathers*, is a highly finished drawing recording a leisurely outing, and similar in the theory of the figure placed outdoors by the Europeans. In looking to the predecessors, there is commonality in the experimentation of the nude. Perhaps Henri's travels to Paris and Bellows's involvement in the Armory Show gave them new ideas in looking to the nude and the female subject. Henri and Bellows appear to be attempting a new American style apart from the traditional academic static nude and not copying European predecessors. The need to experiment with a new type of nude was Henri and Bellows's desire, and the trips to Paris by Henri, and the organization of the Armory Show by Bellows would have shown the artists new ways of displaying the nude. In the next chapter, I will look to the trends of Academia in New York at the turn of the century in relation to Henri and Bellows as well as discuss changing social trends that influenced the Ashcan artists.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HENRI AND BELLOWS'S ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

In the last chapter, I discussed that while the works of Henri and Bellows appear to be related to their European predecessors, they are not copies and should be considered examples of American artists experimenting with the modern nude. Henri was a mentor to Bellows personally and professionally; Henri encouraged Bellows and other Ashcan artists to paint from life. By looking at Henri's academic background and his teachings, this chapter investigates this academic influence present in their works and attempts to situate the drawings within the chronology of the artists' oeuvres. It also examines the social trends of bathing in New York, and shows that Bellows was following the Ashcan group's idea of capturing everyday life.

#### Academic Practice In Henri's *Four Female Bathers* and Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures*

Henri was always focused on capturing the originality and spirit of his sitters, especially in his portraits, but also understood the need for formal education, particularly in dealing with the subject of the nude. While American academic art schools only allowed for students to work from casts and molds, Henri felt artists should learn from live models. He was confident that his contemporaries would see the benefit of having a live human in their presence as opposed to studying from a cast. In *Four Female Figures*, Henri portrays an image of bathing in nature. The figures are all positioned

unclothed in different poses. The contours of the figures show the plumpness of the bodies, a realistic view of the figures, and the ability of the artist to capture different views of human form. The drawing's sketch-like quality gives it energy, as if the viewer is watching the scene in action. One does not feel these figures come from plaster casts, but rather real models as seen by the artist. Henri's introduction to the portrayal of the nude comes from his early years studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Henri's interest in the nude appeared when he enrolled at the Academy in 1886. The year prior to Henri's enrollment was Thomas Eakins's last as a professor and director at the Academy. Eakins had a profound impact on the students through his life classes, but his resistance to use plaster casts as the mode for teaching human anatomy left him an outsider compared with his colleagues and eventually cost him his job at the Academy. Eakins felt that the best way to replicate a figure was to see it first hand, using live models. "In teaching the life class he insisted that a study of the unclothed model was the only approach which ensured an understanding of the form and structure of the human body."<sup>8</sup> Eakins worked for the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for ten years as an assistant, a professor of drawing, and finally as Director before he resigned due to pressure from the Board. Many reasons have been given why he was asked to resign, most centering around the use of the live nude model. Some scholars believe the final straw was using male and female models together; others believe it was because he used students as nude models for life classes attended by the opposite sex. The most shocking story given to why he was fired was the lifting of a loin cloth on a male model in front of

---

<sup>8</sup> Perlman, 20.

a female drawing class.<sup>9</sup> When it was announced he would not be returning due to his radical teaching, many students organized a life class outside of the Academy and continued to study under Eakins using living models. In 1988, standing nude photographs from Eakins's collection during his time at the Pennsylvania Academy were discovered, as well as reproductions of these images given to students in the life classes. Even Henri, who was not an Eakins student, owned a copy of these images, which further suggests Eakins's lasting impact.<sup>10</sup>

Although Eakins never taught Henri, his effect was strong on the younger artist:

On occasion, Henri spent the afternoon examining figure studies produced in Eakins's class, which still decorated the Academy walls, and he would go with a couple of classmates to the Jefferson Medical College to view Eakins's still-infamous canvas, *The Gross Clinic* (1875) which had been purchased by the school's alumni.<sup>11</sup>

Having the medical college so close, Henri would often listen to lectures by surgeons and retreat to the library for further study of muscle movement in anatomy books. Like Eakins, he felt the best way to produce a nude was using the actual human form.

In 1888, Henri and other students from the Pennsylvania Academy decided that Europe was the next move in their artistic study. Henri's diary reveals that he believed the move would only progress his study:

They work eight hours a day on one model there – only three here. They have old students who do excellent work there, we have none here. I have gall enough to

---

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Johns, "Thomas Eakins and 'Pure Art' Education," *Archives of American Art Journal* 30, no. ¼ (1990): 71-76.

<sup>10</sup> Elwood C. Parry, "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered: Another Look at the Standing Nude Photographs Made for the Use of Eakins's Students," *American Art Journal* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 553.

<sup>11</sup> Perlman, 8.

think that I am about as good as any here.... I can't learn much from those about me in drawing.<sup>12</sup>

Henri and his colleagues found a place to live in Paris after a brief stay in London, and they enrolled in the Académie Julian. While studying in Paris, Henri was able to visit the Exposition Universelle Internationale, the Paris Salon, and such cities as Rome and Venice. During the time of *Four Female Bathers*, he was living in Paris, Madrid, and later that fall, New York. From the periods of 1898-1902, Henri focused his work on European landscapes like the Seine and Notre Dame, and it was not until 1902 that portraiture became his focus. *Young Woman in Black*, 1902, and *Girl with Red Hair*, 1903, are clearly influenced by Velazquez and his trip to Madrid, as both images are painted in dark tones, which he continued to use for most of his executed portraits. Henri traveled often, visiting Europe throughout his life, and as a result, he became well versed in the ideas and styles of the current European artists, and brought them back to study and share with American artists.

As a teacher, Henri, like Eakins, was very influential on his students. They both believed in painting immediately, “rather than emphasizing the long ritual of months and years of drawing,” using live models, the study of anatomy, and “an emphasis on the nude.”<sup>13</sup> As a teacher, Henri influenced such artists as Edward Hopper, Stuart Davis, and Bellows. Bellows, part of the Ashcan group, was influenced by all members of “The Eight” but did not exhibit at their revolutionary Macbeth Gallery show of 1908. Through interaction with Henri and his associates, however, Bellows was introduced to their emphasis on capturing the life and energy in a subject, including the nude through the use

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Gerds, *The Great American Nude: A History in Art* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1972), 123.

of live models. It was this knowledge that inspired Bellows to capture bustling New York life, and it was through Henri and his colleagues that Bellows was introduced to contemporary modernist ideas, like the new depiction of the nude, from Europe.

The female form lends itself to various artistic experimentations due to the varying contours and lines of the body. While the female body can exude a sexual nature, Henri and Bellows's images are not erotic. They are merely intimate scenes of women. Henri's female bathers are not considered images based on plaster cast examples, but rather studies of the lines and shapes of the female figure Henri has seen from life. The poses of the figures are not academic, but rather show unflattering positions of the females. While I do not believe women posed for this particular sketch because of the quickness of the sketch, I do believe Henri used his knowledge of the reality of the female form to complete this work. Henri's study of the human form through models and medical school lectures would have helped him in completing realistic views of the body, as seen in his female bathers. His short pen marks capture the vitality of the body, continuing his ideas, and those shared by Eakins, of working quickly and without hesitation to capture the essence of the scene and figures.

In Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures*, the viewer can see the desire of mastering the female form from all angles and practice of the teachings of Henri. Each woman is seen from a different angle, with different shading based on the contours of their figures. Bellows's image of the five women bathing and Henri's bathers hold true to Eakins's innovations in painting quickly rather than working on an image for months, a desire to work from live models, a study of anatomy, and finally, the emphasis on the nude.

Henri settled in New York in 1900 and Bellows moved to New York four years later. Henri was very close with members of the Ashcan group; even before their famous exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery, they would get together at night, putting on plays for each other and discussing art. Most of the artists Henri knew were experienced newspaper illustrators, since it was too expensive to use photographs in the daily papers. To supplement his income, Henri taught at the New York Art School under his friend, William Merritt Chase, and it was here that Henri met Bellows, an enrolled student. Henri and Bellows became instant friends with a mutual respect for each other's art. It was at the New York Art School and the after school activities and exhibitions that Henri was able to mentor Bellows. It was in these first few years Henri taught Bellows to work from real life.

Many studies of nudes by Bellows exist, which demonstrates that he had a desire to master the human form.<sup>14</sup> There is a lack of chronology in Bellows's drawings, most of which he never dated, but in the works he did date, the nude as subject is prevalent in his last five years, 1920-25.<sup>15</sup> In *Standing Female Nude* (n.d.; fig. 13), the focus is on the contours of the woman. She is clearly propping herself up by the position of her leg, and her arms are stretched back. This image is very similar to the position of the only figure gazing out at the viewer in *Five Nude Female Figures*. The curvature of her arms down to her legs is Bellows's key focus, correctly interpreting the forms of her body. Another image similar to *Five Nude Female Figures* is *Nude Woman Seated, Third State* (1916;

---

<sup>14</sup> The Smithsonian Museum of Art houses pictures of many nude drawings by Bellows within its photography archives. The location of the actual works are not given, nor are the dates, sizes, etc. I have chosen these two images because of accessibility of the images.

<sup>15</sup> Carl O. Schniewind, "George Bellows: His Lithographs and Drawings," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951)* 40, no. 2, Part I, (February 1946): 14-16. After 1917 and during the last five years, Bellows was focusing on Dynamic Symmetry to establish his compositions.



fig. 14). In this lithographic print, Bellows again is looking at the female form in a state of rest. Her legs are crossed and she is leaning backwards with her head down. Bellows attempts to accurately portray the female in seated form, focusing on the curves of her body instead of the details of her surroundings. These women would be examples of the artist's knowledge of the shapes of live models instead of the traditional use of plaster casts. While Bellows continued to work on the subject of the nude until his death, his image of *Five Nude Female Figures* is not only a study of the female form, but is also directly related to his body of work dealing with bathing scenes. He was inspired by the everyday life in New York, and the drawings of the female figures at the Birmingham Museum of Art are placed in context with his surroundings.

#### Cultural and Social Influences in Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures*

Once, when Bellows was asked about his attitude toward the nude, he acknowledged that its study in the art schools was the basis for sound draftsmanship, but when it came to painting pictures for the public he preferred to "include the nude figure only when it fit logically into public scenes of real-life bathers."<sup>16</sup> His sound draftsmanship in constructing the nude can be seen in his many studies of the female nude, such as those mentioned above. The image places the figures in a logical "real-life" scenario, leading the viewer to understand the work as an indice of both Bellows's interest in the everyday life of the city's inhabitants and his continual experimentation with the figure. *Five Nude Female Figures*, while a successful study of nude women from multiple angles, is also useful in discussions of bathing trends.

---

<sup>16</sup> Gerdts, 162.

At the turn of the twentieth century, New York City was a growing metropolis. The city was overcrowded, especially in the tenement and immigrant sections, with filth overflowing. In Bellows's *Cliff Dwellers* (1913; fig. 15), tenements and their inhabitants are depicted to show the crowded conditions of city life spilling out onto the streets. Men, women, and children piled on top of one another, since overcrowding was a problem with the apartment community. Another problem was the increased dirt and grime of the city, which spilled into the tenements. Cleanliness was a great factor in American society, which largely believed that if a person was hygienic, it spoke to their superior moral character. "Personal cleanliness had become a necessity, not only for social acceptability and public health but also as a symbol of middle class status, good character, self-respect, and membership in the civic community."<sup>17</sup> Because the lower classes and immigrants could not afford a home or place to bathe, public health advocates fought for bathhouses to be built in their neighborhoods to decrease filth and disease, and increase civic pride.<sup>18</sup> Those fighting for affordable public baths used the argument that it would help "Americanize" the immigrants and lead them to live more fulfilling lives as well as productive citizens. The reality of disease, poor nutrition, and prostitution were strong factors in tenement living and created a great divide in the growing New York population.

The idea of public baths was not new to America in the 1900s. The demand for public baths appeared as early as the 1840s in response to many factors, such as the

---

<sup>17</sup> Marilyn Thorton Williams, *Washing 'The Great Unwashed': Public Baths in Urban America, 1840-1920* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Public baths were not a new idea at the turn of the century, but bathhouses of the mid-nineteenth century did not last due to inadequate funding.

widespread suffering caused by the Panic of 1837, massive numbers of immigrants from Ireland, and issues of urban growth were realized by Americans.<sup>19</sup> To deal with these problems of city growth, two types of baths were built from the 1850s through the 1900s: municipal baths, which were public baths available to all, and the more exclusive private bathhouses, which were available to the public but were generally too expensive for the poorer classes.<sup>20</sup>

To save money, two types of municipal public baths were erected. One type was a floating platform on local waterways, and the popularity of this type of bath during the summer months gave proponents just cause to build the second type, an indoor bathing facility open year round. The floating platform as bathing facility was very popular among the poor and immigrant classes. Not only was the bath free, it was seen as more a means for recreation in the summer months. City authorities were troubled by the idea of the floating platform as recreation and not sanitation and imposed a time limit for bathing, which only created a bath-hopping scenario among the youth.

Two scenes by Bellows, *River Rats* (1906; fig. 16) and *Forty-Two Kids* (1907; fig. 17), capture the essence of recreation among youth on the floating platforms. In *River Rats*, Bellows places the frolicking bathers in a corner of the very large city. Details of the age and costume of the bathers cannot be seen due to their inferior size in comparison to their surroundings, but the title of the work shows they are key in the description of the modern city. It does seem that there is no organization to this new way of bathing, but rather a gathering in the water to escape from the heat. In *Forty-Two Kids*, youngsters

---

<sup>19</sup> Williams, 6.

<sup>20</sup> When this thesis mentions public baths, it refers to the municipal types and not the private bathhouses.

swim near and play on a seemingly dilapidated pier, some clothed, others not. There are groups playing and jumping in the water, while others are seen sunbathing on the float. This does not seem a picture of bathing for sanitary purposes, which was one of the challenges authorities faced in the hot summer months. It is a view of recreation, which took place in many of the poorer neighborhoods.

The floating platforms did not solve the problems of cleanliness in the poorer districts. The water was increasingly polluted as, “by 1914 all floating baths were required to be watertight, and if river water was used, it had to be purified and filtered.”<sup>21</sup> Bath reformers, lead by ‘the father of the public bath movement’, Simon Baruch, continued the fight of cleanliness for all, and more indoor public baths were built.

Even though the new idea of hygiene bathing was reaching a few immigrants, the idea of public baths did not catch on as much as reformers hoped. One reason for the underutilization of public baths outside of the hot summer months was the tenement population not feeling the need for regular bathing. This was a new idea brought on by their new surroundings, which their cultures did not stress. Another reason for the lack of visits by immigrants to the bathhouses was the preferred limited facilities of their apartment, and with the fight lead by bath reformers, tenement housing was starting to offer bathing facilities within their walls. A commission was created to study the problems of the tenements in 1900 and found that tuberculosis was one of the most common diseases. The lack of light, space, and fresh air did not allow those who fell ill to recover, and instead infected more and more residents. With these findings, the Tenement House Law of 1901 was put into effect, requiring each apartment to have a

---

<sup>21</sup> Williams, 20.

private toilet and most added a bath.<sup>22</sup> By the 1920s, the public bath movement was dead, having lost interest and support.

Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* is a scene that can be better understood with the knowledge that new tenement laws were being passed beginning in 1901. These laws regulated the amount of space per family and the necessity for toilets or indoor bathing tubs. These women are seen bathing in the interior of their home. I believe the figures are working class women enjoying their new liberties that Victorian standards would not have previously allowed. Bellows did not create many images like the one at the Birmingham Museum of Art, which is why this work is so interesting. Other Ashcan artists, such as John Sloan, often created images of working-class women and prostitutes. Perhaps Bellows was looking to Sloan for inspiration, although no scholarship was found on their relationship. *Five Nude Female Figures* is an interesting study of the nude as well as a work that provides insight on common practices in New York and topical inspiration from his peer group, like Sloan.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the academic side of the study of the nude with Eakins, Henri, and Bellows, as well as a connection to the current bathing trends that affected Bellows's work. Each artist relied heavily on the use of live models instead of plaster casts, trying to catch the natural lines and contours of the female form. Neither Henri nor Bellows portrayed the women with a strong erotic nature, but rather focused on a study of forms. Henri was clearly influenced by his academic background and travels in *Four Female Bathers*, a drawing that uses quick strokes of the pen to express a

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 66.

liveliness of the figures and their surroundings. Bellows completed many drawings of nudes using Henri's teachings, but rarely dated the works. In *Five Nude Female Figures*, Bellows not only uses his knowledge of live models and their forms to convey a captured intimate moment of bathers, but also places the figures in the social context of sanitation in apartment living as well as images of the floating bathhouses. His image of the female bathers is unlike any other work in his oeuvre.<sup>23</sup> Bellows's *Five Nude Female Bathers* is influenced by the teachings of Henri as well as his desire to place the figures in an authentic situation current to bathing trends.

---

<sup>23</sup> I could only find three works that dealt with bathing, two representing the same scene. *Riverfront, No. 1* was completed in 1914 and *Riverfront, No. 2* was completed in 1924. I used Peck's Catalogue Raisonné to find this information. Both images depict a mass group of people on a pier with a boat in the background. The third bathing image was completed in 1919, *The Beach*, which I will discuss in my next chapter. No sanitation bathing scenes or images related to the drawing at the Birmingham Museum of Art were found. The Boston Public Library owns four sketches, two of them for *The Beach*, one of Emma, his wife, in the water, and the remaining sketch, of different views of people in swim costumes.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY LEISURE AND BELLOWS'S *BATHERS*

This chapter focuses on the resort town trends of entertainment and the theme of leisure bathing, which include the idea of swimming for purposes of entertainment. In the previous chapter, I discussed Henri and Bellows's beliefs in working with live models to create correct proportions and contours of the body. I looked at Bellows's image of the five women not only as a study of the female figure, but also as a sign of contemporary sanitary bathing practices. I examined the desire by the middle and upper classes for the immigrant and poor to clean themselves using public bathhouses, based on the desires of health reformers and aging Victorian standards.<sup>24</sup> The idea of leisure bathing became prominent at the same time as the public baths and continued the desire to leave the bustling city and return to nature through vacation time. Henri completed images of the sea along with Bellows, and focused on the landscape rather than figures within the image. Bellows completed images of bathers at Coney Island and landscapes including the sea, but his work, *Bathers*, at the Birmingham Museum of Art, is unusual because Bellows placed figures within a serene landscape scene. This is not an image of a bustling vacation spot, but rather a quiet seaside location. Bellows's *Bathers* fits into the larger context of entertainment that New Yorkers were seeking, the desire to escape the city, and to spend time with friends and family. While *Bathers* does not take place on Coney Island, Bellows did complete an image of the seaside resort; it was the prominent

---

<sup>24</sup> Bellows's work *Cliff Dwellers* was the completed work of a sketch published in the radical magazine *The Masses*, which he titled *Why Don't They Go to the Country for Vacation?* (1913).

vacation spot for citizens and relates to New Yorkers and leisure. These images by Bellows of the beach and Coney Island serve as examples of the popular idea of taking time to enjoy others without the stress of the urban environment.

### Leisure Activities and Coney Island

Bellows's *Bathers* is an example of how the artist experimented with the nude, modifying the subject to fit logically into scenes of modern bathing, as well as referencing the growing popularity of escaping the city life and finding amusement outside the city. In *Bathers*, the figures are placed in a remote vacation spot, surrounded by one stark shore house. With the decrease in the hours of the workweek, New York citizens wanted to spend their time and money looking for different entertainment venues. Vaudeville was a popular escape available in New York City and surrounding towns, performing different acts to keep the crowd happy from the start of the show into the late evening hours.<sup>25</sup> Dance halls were also very popular among the younger ages because the sexes could mingle freely, and moving pictures, or movies, were also becoming a favorite source of entertainment. While all of these types of leisure activities were very successful, the most prominent leisure activity at the turn of the century was seaside resorts, which were accessible to all social classes as a means of escaping city life, and which housed all the aforementioned activities.<sup>26</sup>

Coney Island emerged as one of the prominent leisure sites for city dwellers looking for amusement, and the invention of quicker and cheaper transportation allowed

---

<sup>25</sup> The Vaudeville performances often started as early as one o'clock in the afternoon, with family friendly shows, and as the hour got later, the acts became more risqué.

<sup>26</sup> Other than the names of places Bellows vacationed, no substantial evidence has been found about what type of resorts he and his family visited.



for all classes to participate. Coney Island offered all types of entertainment, including the beach. There was definitely a divide in the theory of bathing with the slowly dying Victorian ideals and the ideals brought by the working class and immigrants. The more conservative classes felt that too much frivolous behavior would lead to loose morals while the working and immigrant classes were looking for amusements without the concern of strict rules. The conservative class frowned upon the lack of productivity from the varying amusements. Swimming and beach leisure fell within the category of unproductive activities, and the Victorians used this as ammunition to argue the loose morals of those partaking in the activities:

Seaside life was a burlesque for the masses where everyone was welcome and the price of admission was the cost of a bathing costume. ... For Americans, the resort and the public beach were very much about status, social climbing, and health. And about vanity and fashion. But, beneath it all, they were also about sex and sensuality.<sup>27</sup>

The public beaches and the activities of swimming unleashed an alternate way for citizens to become more sensual, which started with the mixture of sexes and continued with the swimsuit's dwindling amount of fabric.

Much like the tumultuous city, the fashion of bathing suits changed during the late 1890s through the 1910s. Originally, bathing costumes were based on typical street wear. The Victorian interest, although becoming less popular, can be shown in these costumes for women. The "customary bathing dress consisted of a pair of drawers and a skirt reaching to about three inches above the ankles. The drawers were plain or edged with lace and tightly banded at the ankle."<sup>28</sup> The fabric belt was quickly replaced with corsets

---

<sup>27</sup> Lena Lencek and Gideon Boske, *Making Waves: Swimsuits and the Undressing of America* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989), 30.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

to show the curves of women, but failed in the water often causing cramping.<sup>29</sup> The material was originally heavy and uncomfortable when wet. With the turn of the century and the exploration of other fashion influences, the swimsuit fabrics became lighter and skimpier. The conservative public was outraged but in a losing battle:

When it came to diminishing coverage, the law might have been on the side of tradition, but history clearly supported fashion. ... As the decade [1920] wore on, the standards of public dress would be orchestrated less by governmental bodies and more by market-driven entrepreneurs seeking to capitalize on – and satisfy – vast hordes of American beachgoers.<sup>30</sup>

For flexibility in the water, manufacturers looked to creating bathing costumes that would not weigh down the swimmer. This allowed for sleeker swimwear deemed unacceptable by previous Victorian standards, but was becoming exactly what the modern bather needed. This display of skin would be used to describe the lasciviousness of Coney Island and other beach resorts as viewed by Victorian standards. The resorts, while offering this new scene of the beach to expose the body, also offered attractions that did not require the flimsy bathing suit. They offered new entertainment for the masses including vaudeville, dance halls, and sideshow attractions, as well as the seedier horse races, boxing matches, and even prostitution.<sup>31</sup>

Bellow's *Beach at Coney Island* (1908-09; fig. 18) is an accurate portrayal of Coney Island during the busy summer months. The initial attraction of Coney Island was

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Quick et al., *The Paintings of George Bellows* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992), 144.

<sup>31</sup> Very popular in Coney Island and across America was Edison films, which were short films shown on storefront theaters. Most all the films are fictional in nature, but some are live shots. Edison films of Coney Island can be viewed today on Youtube.com, submitted by the Library of Congress.

Reginald Marsh, an American painter, often chose the subject of Coney Island due to its array of vacationers wearing bathing costumes and its seedy undertones.

the beach where different socio-economic classes could come together to find rest, relaxation, and entertainment from one another. The idea of turning Coney Island into an amusement center for city dwellers came after great success of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and more specifically, the Midway. The Midway was an area of the Exposition that housed shops, restaurants, an amusement park, and exotic, sometimes erotic, attractions. Coney Island was originally a seaside escape full of hotels, restaurants, and seedy individuals, but it was not until a fire in 1895 ravaged the entertainment section, called West Brighton, did the Coney Island of the 1900s emerge.<sup>32</sup> Coney Island then built the three main "worlds" separating the family friendly environments from the less respectable. In Bellows's portrayal, young children as well as grown adults are seen enjoying the waves and sand beneath their feet along with their family and close friends. A couple is seen in the foreground in the midst of a kiss, which suggests the relaxed moral expectations at Coney Island and other beach resorts, but does not appear a part of the family gathering. Women are seen fully clothed, possibly of the more conservative class, but nonetheless, participating in the fun. A tent has been constructed to hold the food so the group can stay the entire day. There is a liveliness to this work, a feeling of movement and recreation that sparks a carefree attitude in the viewer. At Coney Island, the feeling of freedom was contagious and spread from the beaches to the amusement areas, where one could find rides, vaudeville, and the circus.<sup>33</sup> The main purpose in every aspect of entertainment at Coney Island and other seaside

---

<sup>32</sup> John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 34.

<sup>33</sup> Bellows also completed in 1912 two images that relate to the circus and entertainment, but are not addressed in this thesis as they do not take place in Coney Island. I do want to mention the works and the subject matter take place in Montclair, New Jersey and are titled *Outside the Big Tent* and *The Circus*.

resorts was to create a fun atmosphere, something different the masses would not be familiar with in their everyday lives in the city.

In *The Beach* (1919; fig. 19), vacationers are seen playing and lying in the sand with the water in the background. The woman in the foreground is wearing the formal bathing suit of the time, with full stockings, long bloomers, and a full-sleeved shirt. The man standing is also wearing the sleeker male modern bathing costume, a one-piece covering his chest and upper legs, while the other man laying near the woman is dressed in full pants and shirt. The more fully clothed beach goers appear to the viewer that they have just arrived at the shore and collapsed in relaxation. There is a sense of tranquility and playfulness among the figures that would have been found on the vacation shore and was not solely for the wealthy. The beaches and seaside resorts provided entertainment for all classes, unlike the quiet vacations to Rhode Island and Maine taken by Bellows and his family.

### Bellows on Vacation and Images of the Sea

Vacations were not new to Bellows, as he and his family traveled when financially able. Always fascinated by the sea, he often escaped to Maine or Rhode Island to paint shorelines while taking his own family for vacation. Just after Bellows married in 1910, they took a trip to Montauk, Long Island and he continued to paint throughout their visit. He hated to leave his wife, but always felt inspired by the sea. Montauk was still remote and rugged; as one visitor at the time noted, “tourists...find special charms in its seclusion, and in the bold and picturesque scenery of its defiant promontory, upon which the wild Atlantic incessantly beats, and sometimes with

tremendous violence.”<sup>34</sup> The idea of nature in pure form without the industrial hand of man was a place for which most city dwellers longed.

Bellows created many scenes of the coast and sea throughout his lifetime. When Bellows attended an exhibition in 1907, he was drawn to the images of Monhegan. He, “feasted his eyes long and enviously on these pictures, vowing that someday he would go to Monhegan himself and do better ones.”<sup>35</sup> In July of 1911, Bellows, along with Henri and Randall Davey, traveled to Monhegan to paint the sea, completing 42 works during this visit. Bellows continued to travel the northern coastlines each consecutive summer with either his family or with Henri from 1915 until 1921. Most of the works during this period were of landscapes uninhabited by vacationers, unlike *Bathers*. The idea of the sea fascinated Bellows and was a subject matter he continuously painted.

The sea as something peaceful or tranquil that can suddenly turn to terror is a pervasive artistic and literary trope, and evidenced by such renowned stories as Ernest Hemingway’s *Old Man and the Sea* (1952), which dramatically recounts an epic and courageous battle between an old fisherman and his prey. The sea is figuratively the challenge of life, the turbulence of hard times, and the serenity of the happy times. The difficult years or situations leave man gasping for air, trying to stay afloat until the waters of life calm. As man stands at the shoreline of the sea, he is reminded of the vastness of the world and things left to discover. It can also bring a sense of loneliness that could swallow man without warning. The sea can be considered part of the sublime; and, although it deals with matters much larger than man, there is a beauty almost too painful

---

<sup>34</sup> Quick, 138.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 141.

to accept. All the themes of survival and loneliness related to the sea were echoed in the vastness of the growing cities like New York at the turn of the century.

In *Shore House* (1911; fig. 20) Bellows creates a serene image with a hint of mystery and loneliness. The deep waters seem calm, but white caps crash upon the shoreline. The house appears empty, standing alone surrounded by the vastness of nature. The viewer is taken by a sense of solitude and strength by the standing house and the cross reaching high into the sky. The house has been considered a symbol of his recent marriage to Emma, an upper-class woman he met in a New York drawing class. He courted her for a very long time and finally convinced her to marry him in 1910.

Although the house in *Shore House* was remote in place and spirit from their (Mr. and Mrs.) New York home, its simple monumentality and quiet expression of strength and stability as it sits at the edge of the sea suggests that, for Bellows, it may have been a personal symbol of his union with Emma and their future together.<sup>36</sup>

The house standing strong could represent his new family, or the isolation man encounters when facing the vast sea.

In Bellows's *Bathers* (fig. 3), the background of the figures seems to be the *Shore House* from 1911 (fig. 20). I believe the figures in *Bathers* are his close friends and his wife, Emma. During this time, Bellows and his family were retreating to Newport and Maine. The others are probably friends as his children would not yet be old enough. Emma came from a middle-upper class family and was familiar with vacationing to the northern shorelines, and *Bathers* is a scene familiar to the more affluent families of New York that had the financial and transportation means to travel longer distances. There is a feeling of capturing a memory, possibly Bellows's attempt at remembering this vacation

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 142.

by drawing the scene. Emma appears to be turning towards Bellows as he is capturing the scene, or asking him to join the fun. Her bathing suit is the modern suit and shows more skin than the previous generation of bathers. By placing Emma with the Shore House in the background, Bellows is possibly paying tribute to the strength of their relationship and placing friends as a reminder he is not isolated, but surrounded by family and friends.

The seashore was not the only attraction for the wealthy when they visited their summer homes. Bellows's *Tennis Tournament (Tennis at Newport)* (1919; fig. 21), was created the same year as *Bathers*, and depicts crowds of well-dressed, upper class vacationers seated on the lawn watching a tennis match. Tennis was wildly popular at the time and Newport was the location of an invitational open to doubles competitors in 1919. Bellows was in attendance and documented it with this work, but also continued to work on the subject, now in private hands.<sup>37</sup> The movements of the figures are echoed in the swooping of the trees. This is clearly an image of the wealthy class spending their vacation time in a morally sound environment, unlike the visitors to Coney Island, and places Bellows and his *Bathers* in a timeline. During this drawing, Bellows was in Newport and executing images based on his location, serving as a study of figures while placing them in a logical social context.

### City Bathers

I believe it is necessary to discuss the city bathers here, returning to works by Bellows such as *River Rats* (fig. 16) and *Forty-Two Kids* (fig. 17) because these show the citizens that were not able to venture outside the city but are still images of bathers

---

completed by Bellows. They relate to both bathing images at the Birmingham Museum of Art by showing his concern in executing the human form while placing them in a scene popular at the time. They are wonderfully realistic views of city bathers in the early twentieth century who did not venture to Coney Island. Swimming was becoming a popular water sport in America:

Large American cities began to provide 'swimming baths,' the most popular of which was the series of floating bathhouses in New York City. Moored among the docks from the Battery to Harlem, these rickety structures bobbed and groaned in the wash with each passing ferry and barge.<sup>38</sup>

Bathers were allowed a certain amount of time for bathing, but in actuality they were swimming for recreation. Due to the lack of wealth among these bathers, they often wore old clothes, tights, and pants, which did resemble the style of current bathing costume trends. Modesty was very important, except for the stray groups of young boys who preferred to swim naked. One of the positives of the floating bathhouses was the instructional classes given to teach bathers how to swim. The instruction was necessary for all that desired to venture into the water safely and helped the sport gain popularity. Fashionable magazines regularly featured beach activities and published articles to teach women how to swim. The magazines also ran advertisements for the latest trends in bathing costumes. While these New Yorkers of a poorer class were not able to venture outside the city often if at all, swimming was becoming a popular leisure and sporting activity.

Bellows created many images of the sea throughout his lifetime, as can be seen in his online Catalogue Raisonné, and he found the sea was a powerful motivator. He also looked to Henri, who took inspiration from the waterfront, and both artists traveled

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 28.



together to work on landscapes during their vacation times. Bellows's first sea images were created the year of his marriage, and he continued to focus on the water every summer. In the latter works, however, he rarely places figures in the landscape, which is why *Bathers* is special: it combines landscape and figures. While its highly finished nature suggests it was perhaps a study for a painting, it is more likely one of a series of drawings related to Bellows's *Shore House* and *Tennis Tournament*. *Bathers* is positioned in the same location as *Shore House*, using the house as a symbol for his successful marriage and family life.

### Conclusion

Looking at Bellows's body of work allows the viewer to understand his love of the sea and the continual fascination of the vastness of the water, in addition to the social trends of vacationing that became more popular and affordable to all social classes. By the 1920s, flocks of Americans and immigrants were enjoying time at Coney Island and other beach resorts, while other New Yorkers traveled farther north to summer in vacation homes. Strict Victorian principles were thrown by the wayside, and the mingling of sexes and daring swimsuits became more prominent. Bellows and his contemporaries would participate in these entertainment venues as well record the changing ideas of the city and social classes in the vacation spots. Bellows wanted to capture the changing city, and the mingling of the classes at such locales as Coney Island would definitely be of interest. Furthermore, by documenting his own vacations with his family, he was able to preserve their memories for viewers today. Bellows successfully documents a familiar subject matter of escaping the city by resort towns such as Coney

Island in works such as *Beach at Coney Island* and *The Beach*, and the less populated seashores of Maine and Rhode Island in *Tennis Tournament*. His drawing *Bathers* should therefore be understood as more than a formal experiment with the nude, but as a product of the artist's personal experiences and the Ashcan group's broader interest in representing aspects of modern American life.

## CONCLUSION

The drawings at the Birmingham Museum of Art are important because they deal with bathing and represent an aspect of Henri and Bellows's work that is largely unstudied. They deal with the issue of experimentation with regard to the modern nude, and while the images do appear to imitate those of preceding Europeans, the works are not copies. The drawings highlight the form of the figure, and connect with Ashcan subject matter. In Henri's *Four Female Bathers*, his focus was to experiment with the female form in various poses while placing them in a typical outdoor scene. Henri was taught early at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts that realistic forms come from the study of live models and not plaster casts. He continued this lesson as a teacher throughout his life. Henri's *Four Female Bathers* is neither a copy of a European artist nor a study for one of his own paintings. Rather, it shows Henri's constant desire to depict the human form that can be connected to his success in portraiture. Bellows's *Five Nude Female Figures* shows the artist using the trope of the modern toilette scene, and demonstrates his experimentations with poses and the female form. This drawing can also be linked to contemporary sanitation practices and concerns in turn of the century New York.

Bellows's *Bathers* can also be connected to the artist's interest in human form, and to his, and his fellow Ashcan artists', preoccupation with modern day leisure activities. This image can also be associated with his relationship with his wife and the symbolism found in *Shore House*, and the popularity of leisure in *Beach at Coney Island*.

At first glance, the three Birmingham Museum of Art drawings do not appear to fit within Henri and Bellows's oeuvres since they do not initially express conventional Ashcan subject matter, but stress the artists' experimentation with the subject of the nude bather. In this way, they reveal new glimpses of Ashcan practice, particularly concerning drawing. The drawings suggest a strong formal debt to European precedents that Ashcan scholars have typically eschewed. Yet, they certainly demonstrate the more established understanding of nineteenth-century American artistic pedagogy as emphasizing drawing from life, not from casts, that was epitomized and advanced by Henri and his circle. Henri continued to teach this desire of capturing the image in modern life, which Bellows understood and applied in his images. Bellows then utilized his education of the nude and executed studies of figures to depict images of bathers, and to make them lifelike. Bellows, importantly, too, contextualized his bathers within settings that absolutely reflect Ashcan interests—life in the tenements, the increasing presence of public baths and sanitation regulations, and the leisure pursuits of the urban dweller—the experiences of turn of the century modern American life.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1: Robert Henri, *Four Female Bathers*, 1900, pen and black ink and brush and gray wash, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama



Figure 2: George Bellows, *Five Nude Female Figures*, 1917, lithographic crayon, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama



Figure 3: George Bellows, *Bathers*, 1919, crayon, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama





Figure 4: Paul Cézanne, *Bathers*, 1874-75, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/works\\_of\\_art/collection\\_database/european\\_paintings/bathers\\_paul\\_cezanne/objectview.aspx?collID=11&OID=110000300](http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/european_paintings/bathers_paul_cezanne/objectview.aspx?collID=11&OID=110000300)



Figure 5: Paul Cézanne, *Five Bathers*, 1885-87, oil on canvas, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland  
<http://blogs.princeton.edu/wri152-3/jholt/archives/001957.html>



Figure 6: Henri Matisse, *Bonheur de Vivre*, 1905-06, oil on canvas, Barnes Foundation, Lincoln University, Merion, Pennsylvania  
<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/matisse/>



Figure 7: Henri Matisse, *Blue Nude*, 1907, oil on canvas, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland  
<http://beta.wnyc.org/shows/lopate/2010/jul/22/moma/>



Figure 8: Edgar Degas, *After the Bath*, 1885, pastel, last known collection 1963 Estate of Mrs. C. Suydham Cutting, Gladstone, New Jersey.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MUSEUM/Armory/galleryO/degas.1013.html>



Figure 9: Edgar Degas, *Spartan Girls Challenging Boys*, 1860-62, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London, United Kingdom

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hilaire-germain-edgar-degas-young-spartans-exercising>





Figure 10: Edgar Degas, *La Classe de Danse*, 1873-75, oil on canvas, Musee d'Orsay, Paris, France

[http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no\\_cache=1&zoom=1&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=001151&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno\\_cache%3D1%26sz%3D9](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=001151&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26sz%3D9)



Figure 11: Edgar Degas, *Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub*, 1886, pastel on paper, Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington, Connecticut

<http://www.abbeyville.com/interiors.asp?ISBN=0789202018&CaptionNumber=05>



Figure 12: Edgar Degas, *Woman at Her Toilette*, 1900, pastel on tracing paper, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois  
<http://www.artic.edu/artexplorer/search.php?artistname=40543&tab=1&just=1>



Figure 13: George Bellows, *Standing Nude*, n.d., graphite on paper, collection of Ronald Slotter, Columbus, Ohio  
<http://www.georgebellows.com/artwork/George-Bellows-220>



Figure 14: George Bellows, *Nude Woman Seated, Third State*, 1916, lithographic print, H.V. Allison and Co., Larchmont, New York  
<http://www.georgebellows.com/artwork/George-Bellows-174>



Figure 15: George Bellows, *Cliff Dwellers*, 1913, oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California  
<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=12254;type=101>



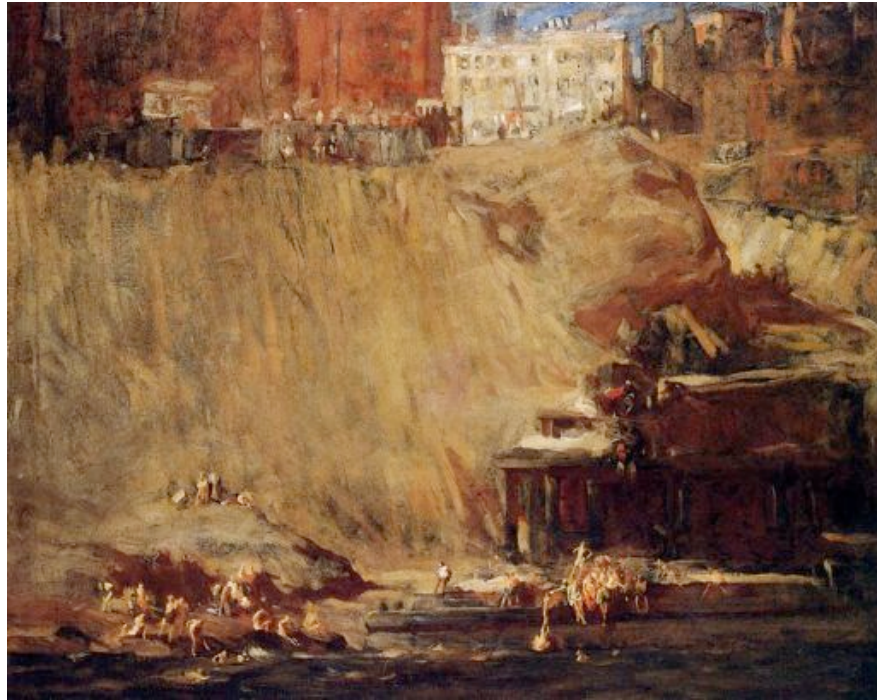


Figure 16: George Bellows, *River Rats*, 1906, oil on canvas, private collection  
[http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/bellows/bellows\\_river\\_rats.jpg.html](http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/bellows/bellows_river_rats.jpg.html)

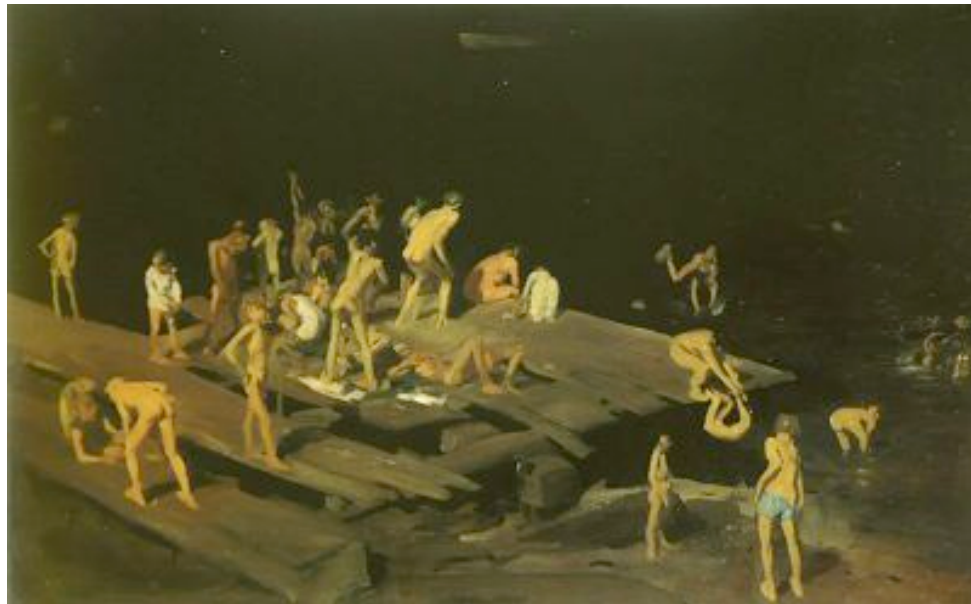


Figure 17: George Bellows, *Forty-Two Kids*, 1907, oil on canvas, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.  
[https://www.corcoran.org/collection/highlights\\_main\\_results.asp?ID=61](https://www.corcoran.org/collection/highlights_main_results.asp?ID=61)



Figure 18: George Bellows, *Beach at Coney Island*, 1908-10, oil on canvas, private collection

<http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/full.php?ID=36690>



Figure 19: George Bellows, *The Beach*, 1919, oil on panel, collection of Charles K. Williams, II, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

<http://hvallison.com/WorkDetail.aspx?w=143&b=http%3A//hvallison.com/Era.aspx%3Fs%3D1918%26e%3D1919%26si%3D12>





Figure 20: George Bellows, *Shore House*, 1911, oil on canvas, private collection  
<http://hvallison.com/WorkDetail.aspx?w=320&b=http%3A//hvallison.com/Era.aspx%3Fs%3D1910%26e%3D1912%26si%3D0>



Figure 21: George Bellows, *Tennis Tournament (Tennis at Newport)*, 1919, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York  
<http://hvallison.com/WorkDetail.aspx?w=193&b=http%3A//hvallison.com/Era.aspx%3Fs%3D1918%26e%3D1919%26si%3D12>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acton, David. *Master Drawings: From the Worcester Art Museum*. New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1998.
- Adams, Clinton. *American Lithographers 1900-1960: The Artists and Their Printers*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1983.
- Bellows, George. *Five Nude Female Figures* (1917). Verso: Single Figure Study. Curatorial file. Birmingham Museum of Art.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bathers* (1919). Curatorial file. Birmingham Museum of Art.
- Bernheimer, Charles. "Degas's Brothels: Voyeurism and Ideology." *Representations* 20 (1987): 158-86.
- Berger, Martin A. *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Guilted Age Manhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Bernstein, Daniel. *Next to Godliness: Confronting Dirt and Despair in Progressive Era*. New York City. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Broude, Norma. "Edgar Degas and French Feminism, ca. 1880: 'The Young Spartans,' the Brothel Monotypes, and the Bathers Revisited." *Art Bulletin* 70, no. 4 (1988): 640-59.
- Bushman, Richard L. and Claudia L. Bushman. "The Early History of Cleanliness in America." *Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (1988): 1213-238.
- Callen, Anthea. *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method, and Meaning in the Work of Degas*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Clark, Kenneth. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1957.
- Conway, Robert. *The Powerful Hand of George Bellows: Drawings from the Boston Public Library*. Washington D.C.: The Stinehour Press, 2007.
- Davis, Helen E. *The Y.M.C.A. and Public Recreation, Informal Education, and Leisure-time Programs*. New York: Association Press, 1946.
- Duncan-Clark, S. J. *The Progressive Movement: Its Principles and Its Programme*. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1972.
- Eisler, George. *From Naked to Nude: Life Drawing in the Twentieth Century*. New York:

William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1977.

Fairman, Deborah. "The Landscape of Display: The Ashcan School, Spectacle, and the Staging of Everyday Life." *Prospects* 18 (1993): 205-35.

Gerdts, William H. *The Great American Nude: A History in Art*. New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Gilfoyle, Timothy J. *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994.

Glackens, Ira. *William Glackens and the Ashcan Group*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1957.

Henri, Robert. *Four Female Bathers* (1900). Curatorial file. Birmingham Museum of Art.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Art Spirit*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1951.

Homer, William Innes. *Robert Henri and His Circle*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Exhibition of 'The Eight': Its History and Significance." *American Art Journal* 1, no. 1 (1969): 53-64.

Hopkins, C. Howard. *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America*. New York: Association Press, 1951.

Johns, Elizabeth. "Thomas Eakins and 'Pure Art' Education." *Archives of American Art Journal* 30, no. 1/4 (1990): 71-76.

Kasson, John F. *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1978.

Krumrine, Mary Louise. "Cezanne's 'Restricted Power': Further Reflections on the 'Bathers.'" *The Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1074 (1992): 586-595.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Paul Cezanne: The Bathers*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1989.

Mason, Lauris. *The Lithographs of George Bellows: A Catalogue Raisonné*. New York: KTO press, 1977.

Mecklenburg, Virginia M. "George Bellows's Vine Clad Shore – Monhegan Island." *American Art* 11, no. 3 (1997): 74-76.

Michelson, William H. *Man and His Urban Environment: A Sociological Approach*.

- Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1976.
- Morgan, Charles H. *George Bellows: Painter of America*. New York: Reynal & Company, 1965.
- Murphy, Richard W. *The World of Cezanne, 1839-1906*. New York: Time-Life Books, 1968.
- O'Grody, Jeannine. *Methods and Media: Drawings from the Birmingham Museum of Art*. Birmingham: Birmingham Museum of Art, 2002. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Methods and Media: Drawings from the Birmingham Museum of Art" shown at the Birmingham Museum of Art in Birmingham, Alabama 20 January to 7 April 2002.
- Parry, Ellwood C., III. "Thomas Eakins's 'Naked Series' Reconsidered: Another Look at the Standing Nude Photographs Made for the Use of Eakins's Students." *American Art Journal* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 553-77.
- Perlman, Bennard B. *Painters of the Ashcan School: The Immortal Eight*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Robert Henri: His Life and Art*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1991.
- Quick, Michael, Jane Myers, Marianne Doezema, and Franklin Kelly, eds., *The Paintings of George Bellows*, with an introduction by John Wilmerding. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1992.
- Read, Helen Appleton. *Robert Henri & Five of his Pupils: George Bellows, Eugene Speicher, Guy Pène du Bois, Rockwell Kent, Edward Hopper*. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Roberts, Keith. *Degas*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1976.
- Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk. *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experience*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Serullaz, Maurice. *Degas: Women Dressing, Washerwomen, Milliners*. New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1958.
- Staples, Shelley. "Gallery O," 1913 Armory Show. May 2001. [Online]. Available from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MUSEUM/Armory/armoryshow.html>. 4 September 2008.
- Tottis, James W. et al., eds., *Life's Pleasures: The Ashcan Artists' Brush with Leisure, 1895-1925*. New York: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2007.
- Valerie Ann Leeds, telephone interview with author, 10 March 2008.

- Watson, Forbes. "Realism Undefeated." *Parnassus* 9, no. 3 (1937): 11-14, 37-38.
- Wattenmaker, Richard J. "William Glackens's 'Beach Scenes' at Bellport." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2, no. 2 (1988): 74-94.
- White, Barbara Ehrlich. "The Bathers of 1887 and Renoir's Anti-Impressionism." *The Art Bulletin* 55, no. 1 (1973): 106-26.
- Williams, Marilyn Thorton. *Washing "The Great Unwashed:" Public Baths in Urban America, 1840-1920*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991.
- Young, Mahonri Sharp. *The Paintings of George Bellows*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1973.
- Zald, Mayer N. *Organizational Change: The Political Economy of the Y.M.C.A.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Zilczer, Judith. "The Eight on Tour, 1908-1909." *American Art Journal* 16, no. 3 (1984): 20-48.
- Zimmerman, Edith. "Ashcan Drawings." *VNU Business Media* 4, no. 14 (2007): 64-77.
- Zurier, Rebecca. *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Art for the Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911-1917*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- Zurier, Rebecca, Robert W. Snyder, & Virginia M. Mecklenburg. *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995.