

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition

Today, sunshine, warm, low humidity levels, high 87. Tonight, partly cloudy, low 72. Tomorrow, sunny to partly cloudy, warm, more humid, high 90. Weather map, Page B12.

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Digital Catalogs For 19th-Century Artists

New technology and fresh perspectives are jumpstarting efforts to assemble exhaustive lists of works by 19th-century American painters, sometimes in progress for decades. Next month a consortium of museums interested in the Massachusetts maritime painter Fitz Henry Lane (1804-65) will introduce a website, fitzhenrylaneonline.org, documenting about 320 paintings, drawings and prints at various institutions. Much of the material is being drawn from the Cape Ann Museum, in Mr. Lane's hometown, Gloucester, Mass., and images on the website will be linked to infrared paint analyses, biographies of Mr. Lane's clients, newspaper ads for his suppliers, maps of harbors where he sketched and portraits of owners of the ships moored there.

The website will eventually cover about 200 additional works that are in private collections, and it will explore the career of Mr. Lane's little-known collaborator, Mary Blood Mellen. The site's senior researcher, Melissa Geisler Trafton, said the project "can be expanded infinitely."

Mr. Lane's recently rediscovered tableau of an 1840s sailing ship, scheduled to be added to the site, will be offered for auction (with an estimate of \$150,000 to \$250,000) on Aug. 26 at James D. Julia in Fairfield, Me.

The Lane consortium is working with panOpticon, a Manhattan supplier of technology for comprehensive artist databases, known in the trade as catalogues



JAMES D. JULIA INC.

"Portrait of the Bark 'Mary,'" by Fitz Henry Lane, whose works will be documented in an online catalogue raisonné.

raisonnés. Roger Shepherd, the company's founder, said that the sites can link artworks to diary entries, restorers' reports, photos of gallery installations and collectors' homes, descriptions of related works that have been destroyed and more.

Crowdsourcing would bring in more data, and persistent errors could be corrected. (Mr. Lane, for instance, is often erroneously called Fitz Hugh Lane.) Past owners could be identified as they emerge, which is increasingly crucial in an art market riddled with forgeries.

"You don't want holes in your provenance," Mr. Shepherd said.

Betty Krulik, an art dealer, historian and appraiser in Manhattan, has set out to complete an

online catalogue raisonné for Willard Leroy Metcalf (1858-1925), who produced radiant landscapes of locales in Europe, North Africa, the United States and Cuba. He was also a heavy drinker whose wives were likewise colorful. He first married his model, the actress Marguerite Beaufort Hailé, and after she ran off with another painter, Robert Nisbet, Mr. Metcalf married Henriette McCrea, a bisexual who ran in the same circles as the novelist and provocateur Djuna Barnes.

Ms. Krulik is sifting through Mr. Metcalf's paperwork amassed by dealers and scholars over the last four decades. Given the artist's fairly manageable output of about 600 artworks, she said, "it's not an oppressive task"

and she aims to personally see as many paintings as possible. A few weeks ago, she examined a Metcalf scene of a Vermont stream, painted in 1920; Christie's in New York will offer it in September (for an estimated \$120,000 to \$180,000).

Descendants of the peripatetic British-born artist Dawson Dawson-Watson (1864-1939) are working on an online catalogue raisonné, dawsondawson-watson.org. They are searching for paintings (which routinely bring around \$20,000 each) that he produced during stints in Boston, Quebec, Hartford, the Grand Canyon and Giverny, France, among other places.

Shannon Aaron, a great-great-grandson of Mr. Dawson-Watson, said that sketchbooks, catalogs and a typewritten autobiography from 1929 remain in family hands. They are finalizing a chronology of travels and exhibitions for the artist, who was prolific and did not keep meticulous records.

"He often worked on three or four paintings at a time and could finish two in a day when he was on a roll," Mr. Aaron said, adding, "He was known to give away his paintings if they were admired quite readily."

One major canvas from the 1890s is known only from photos: Mr. Dawson-Watson's portrait of the poet Bliss Carman, in a frame inscribed with a quote from a Carman poem about daisies. "I would give anything to someday see this painting in its full color and glory," Mr. Aaron said.

A catalogue raisonné for the landscape painter John Henry Twachtman (1853-1902) has been in progress for two decades, and

a handful of paintings resurface each year. The historian Lisa N. Peters, who has taken on the project, said she recently traveled to Venice and identified vantage points from which Mr. Twachtman painted. Tracing his footsteps, she said, "is a never-ending process."

Mastodons Remembered

Mastodons, while tramping around what is now New York, shed teeth and tusks, and dinosaurs, wandering along riverfronts in Massachusetts, left footprints in mud that hardened into sandstone. Remnants of these prehistoric creatures and artifacts from the Americans who discovered them are heading to museum galleries in the region.

The Staten Island Museum is moving its collection, long unseen by the public, into a former 1870s dorm for retired sailors on the Snug Harbor Cultural Center grounds. The mastodon items in an exhibition opening on Sept. 19



AMESSE PHOTOGRAPHY, COLLECTION OF THE STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM

A molar from a mastodon.

will include a blackened molar, found in the 1890s in an oyster bed in the Arthur Kill tidal strait, and grayish teeth fragments, which turned up at Moravian Cemetery on Staten Island. The origins of a brownish leg bone remain unknown.

The museum has also commissioned a life-size mastodon statue, made by Blue Rhino Studio in Minneapolis, that is coated in Icelandic goat hair. The public will be invited to suggest names for it; why not consider Tusk Master or perhaps Arty, since, after all, it is in a museum and near the Arthur Kill.

Institutions in western Massachusetts have been collaborating on "Jurassic Roadshow," a sort of traveling museum offering events and exhibitions focusing on dinosaur footprints in the Connecticut River Valley and the 19th-century scientists who documented the discoveries. Related shows and programs, collectively titled "Impressions From a Lost World," are expected in that region in 2017.

This summer mastodon bones and tusks were recovered at a farm in Orange County, N.Y., — in 2014, the team paid about \$24,000 at an auction for rights to explore the site. The mastodon died some 13,000 years ago, around the age of 65, and there are signs that humans tore apart the corpse. Richard Michael Gramly, an archaeologist who has studied the remains, said the data, photos and skeleton will be turned over to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard.