**Thomas [Cowperthwait] Eakins Exhibit**

**John F. Peto Studio Museum, Island Heights, NJ**

May 1, 2021 – June 27, 2021

**Thomas Eakins, 1844-1916 (born and died in Phila.)**

Thank you for your interest in the *Thomas Eakins in New Jersey* exhibit. My name is Mary Judge, and I am a docent at the John F. Peto Studio Museum. I will be telling you a little bit about Thomas Eakins (an American painter, photographer, sculptor, and fine arts instructor), and the time he spent in New Jersey later in life with a group of students from the Philadelphia Art Students' League.

We are not exhibiting any actual paintings by Eakins, but have sculptures and posters of paintings flanked by the photos taken by Eakins and his wife Susan, which he used as studies for the paintings. Edward Boulton, one of Eakins' students, often invited him to spend time visiting his Point Pleasant, NJ home and as a result of this friendship, Eakins and his wife Susan gave Boulton many gifts of oil studies, a portrait of Boulton, and glass plate negatives, which are being shown for the first time ever in this exhibition.

* Eakins was one of the first American artists to treat photography as an art form in itself. Known as one of America's greatest realist artists, and was fascinated with the human figure, which became the center of his work. He attended anatomy lectures at the Jefferson Medical College and one of his most famous works is entitled *The Gross Clinic*, featuring a surgical procedure and lecture by Dr. Samuel Gross.
* As a realist, he become known for his anatomical accuracy of the human body. Very athletic himself and often posed with his students for art works depicting the beauty of the human body.
* He attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts from **1862 to 1866**; he then left for Paris to study until **1870**. On his return from Paris, he helped shift American focus on landscape to portraiture and athletic figures. In **1876** he became an instructor (and eventually Director) at the Academy, where he stayed for the next ten years.

**Walt Whitman**

Eakins met Whitman in Camden, NJ and shared his fascination for the human body. Whitman posed for his portrait and was photographed by another of Eakins' students, Samuel Murray, for a later sculpture.

* Eakins enjoyed **hunting waterfowl** with his father and friends in the tidal marshes of New Jersey’s Delaware River. He contracted a severe case of malaria during these 1873 expeditions, but created a series of works during this time of hunting the rail bird—small game birds that populate marshes, which is possible only at high tide, when the "pusher" can propel the flat-bottomed cedar boat through the thick reeds with a 15' pole.
* Eakins encouraged field trips to paint from life rather than use romantic or classical clichés.
* Over 100,000 of these birds were taken in the last quarter of the 19th century. An environmentally tempered 1,500 birds a year are currently taken by hunters.

***Will Shuster and a Black Man Going Shooting***. On the wall next to this poster are two photo studies for this painting and others that involve "pushing for rail".

***The Artist and His Father Hunting Rail Birds on Cohansey Marshes*** – photo study taken by his wife Susan Eakins.

***Mending the Net* –** next to this poster are details of two photos used for this painting.

**NEXT ROOM**

***Setting Off After Rail*** – the books are *The Sea Bright Skiff and Other Jersey Shore Boats* by Peter J. Cuthorn (containing an excerpt on rail gunning skiffs). and *Thomas Eakins* by Darrel Sewell.

**The Model of the Rail Bird** was carved by Doug Clinton and is on loan to this exhibit from Mr. Don Bottomley of Island Heights.

Photo of **collecting ice on the Manasquan River**, which, prior to building the canal, was a fresh water body, and therefore froze. The photos of the Manasquan River, were most like taken while visiting with his student, Edward Boulton, who owned a home nearby.

**Photo study for *Manasquan River***

**Photo Study for *Sailing on the Manasquan***

**NEXT WALL**

**Photo study for *Hauling the Net, Gloucester, NJ*** *(note the added drawing on the right of the piece).*

**NEXT WALL**

Poster of ***Shad Fishermen Setting the Net at Gloucester on the Delaware River*** – note the photo detail of the Eakins family and their dog Harry at Gloucester, NJ and the photo detail of shad fishermen.

**MOVE TO POSTER**

Poster of ***Pushing for Rail.***

Photo study for this painting

Photo study for this and other paintings by wife Susan Eakins.

**ROOM 4**

Poster of ***Cowboys in the Badlands*** with photo study of Edward Boulton, posing as a cowboy. Illness kept Eakins from being able to travel west, as he would have liked.

**ROOM 5**

Poster of **Monsignor James P. Turner** (actual painting is life-size), with the bronze sculpture by Samuel Murray, one of the Boys. This is one of a series of 14 paintings Eakins completed on clergymen. While he was a sceptic of organized religion, his respect for Turner's intellect and discipline is reflected in this work.

* Samuel Murray (1869-1941) was the 11th of 12 children. Studied under Eakins at the Art Students League of Philadelphia at age 17. Became his assistant and an instructor at the Phila. School of Design for Women (now the Moore College of Art) at age 21 and held that position for over 50 years. Shared a studio with Eakins for 8 years and remained good friends, helping care for Eakins in his old age.

**NEXT WALL**

Photo of Oona O'Neill, Charlie Chaplin and children. [She was 18, he was 53. 8 children, lived in Switzerland due to Chaplin's McCarthyism and his alleged "communism". Note the painting in the background. The nude figure is Oona's grandmother, Cecil Boulton. Oona is the daughter of Eugene O'Neill (playwright) and Agnes Boulton (bust is across the room).

Photo of William Rush carving his ***Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River***. The studies adjoining it show the required chaperone for nude women with male painters.

**NEXT WALL**

**Photo taken by Thomas Eakins of Edmund Quinn** (one of "the boys") playing the banjo.

Painting of ***To Cecil***by Edmund Quinn (1868-1929) (most likely of Agnes, who would have been 12-13 years old at the time).

**Bust by Edmund Quinn of Agnes Boulton** (mother of Oona O'Neill).

* Edmund Quinn studied at the Academy under Eakins and followed him to the Art Students League. He trained in Paris as a sculptor for a short time and is best known for his bronze statue of Edwin Booth as Hamlet in Gramercy Park. He committed suicide by drowning in NYC in 1929.

Painting of ***Manasquan-Bay Head Canal*** by Edward Boulton (you will recall he had a home in Point Pleasant).

Photo taken by Thomas Eakins of Edward Boulton.

* Studied under Eakins at the Academy in 1885, and was president of the Art Students League from 1887 to 1903.
* Purchased a home in Pt. Pleasant, NJ on the Manasquan River and for 34 years painted the surrounding area and depictions of the work of "pound fishing" (use of a circular trap with 17 poles) in an expressive impressionist study.
* His first-born child, Agnes (bust), married Eugene O'Neill in 1918 and had a daughter Oona, who married Charlie Chaplin.

STOP HERE

Thank you for visiting the John F. Peto Studio Museum and we hope you have enjoyed seeing the *Thomas Eakins in New Jersey* exhibition. Join us again for our summer concert series, new fall exhibition, and our winter lecture series.

**Charlie Chaplin, Oona O'Neill, and *Boulton***

**Cecil and Edward Boulton** lived in Pt. Pleasant – had a house on the Manasquan River. Edward Boulton was one of "The Boys" and Thomas Eakins visited his shore home (on Herbertsville Road near the present Riverfront Park) many times. Cecil and Edward's first-born was Agnes (a noted writer), who married **Eugene O'Neill.** In the spring of 1918 they were invited to live in the home of **Agnes' parents, Cecil and Edward.**

**Oona O'Neill was the daughter of Eugene and Agnes**, who divorced in 1929 (after O'Neill abandoned them for an actress, whom he married soon after the divorce), when Oona was 4 years old. Oona went to school in Pt. Pleasant, but became a NYC debutante and ultimately moved to L.A. to act, but was constantly rejected by movie producers who carried out O'Neill's wish to undermine her career. He disowned her when she married Charlie Chaplin when she was 18 and Chaplin was 54 (O'Neill's age at the time). They had 8 children, lived mostly in Switzerland because of the McCarthyism.