

ILLUMINATING John Sloan

Bryn Mawr College, Carpenter Library, Kaiser Reading Room

April 30—June 1

Illuminating John Sloan was organized by nine students in an exhibition seminar led by Carrie Robbins, PhD '13, Lecturer, Department of History of Art.

Alexandra Elizabeth Adams, '15
Maya Gabrielle Berrol-Young, '17
Caroline Parker Cassidy, '16
Lili A. Hutchison, '15
Xinyi Ren, '17
Sarah M. Wolberg, '15
Pia Wong, '17
Yue Xiu, '17
Qianni Zhu, MA '15

Special thanks to Chau Nguyen, '17, for her work on the exhibition checklist.
The exhibition is made possible with the support of Bryn Mawr College's Museum Studies Working Group, Department of History of Art, and Special Collections.
Additional thanks to Carpenter Library staff and Haverford College's Special Collections.



#SpotlightSloan

SPOTLIGHT

Sloan Lights Up the Scene

Light is directive in John Sloan's prints, guiding the viewer to take note of specific elements. The contrast of light and dark illuminates small, characterizing details of individuals and their relationships to others and the world around them. By using light in this way, Sloan can show us intimate interior moments, such as those in *Night Windows* and *Turning Out the Light*. Or, he can use the spotlight as a distraction, showing us that the most interesting aspects of life are often overlooked in the shadows. In *Anshutz on Anatomy* and *Private Theatricals*, the dominant light source illuminates not only the stage, but also the audience. Sloan borrowed this compositional strategy from his illustration of de Kock's novel for his more famous painting *Movies, Five Cents* (1907).

1.

3.

2.

4.

1. **Private Theatricals**

De Kock series, *The Flower Girl*, vol.1

John Sloan

1904

Etching

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.108.c

2. **Night Windows**

John Sloan

1910

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.150.b

3. **Anshutz on Anatomy**

John Sloan

1912

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.140

4. **Turning Out the Light**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1905

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.146.b

SPOTLIGHT

Drumming Up Support

Of the many plots in Charles Paul de Kock's novels, Sloan chose to illustrate two scenes with drummers. He designed each composition around these figures. In *Nanon Beats The Drum*, Sloan placed a woman drummer near the center of the print, encircled by onlookers. In the story, Nanon illegitimately seizes the right to drum from the town's rural guard. In contrast to de Kock's intention, Sloan dignifies her. He then borrowed this sympathetic treatment of the drummer for his *New York Life* series. In *Man Monkey*, the lightest part of the street surface becomes the spotlighted stage for a street performer.

1. Man Monkey
New York City Life series
John Sloan
1905
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.143

1.

2.

3.

2. The Serenade

De Kock series, Saint Martin, Saint Gervais, and Memorial Editions,
Monsieur Dupont, vol.2
John Sloan
1902
Etching on vellum
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.138

3. Nanon Beats the Drum

De Kock series, Gregory Edition,
Madame Pantalon
John Sloan
1904
Etching
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.126

Illuminating the City and its Disparities

Inspired by the New York City streets, Sloan's prints highlight the social disparities between the people who shared this urban space. The strewn rice in *The Little Bride* points to the class disparity between the lightly-rendered bride and the barely visible figures at the margin. In *The Show Case*, the corset on display attracts the attention of young girls, who catch the eye of a nearby upper-class man. One girl notices the woman accompanying this man, whose parallel position with the cased corset reminds us of the unseen undergarment she likely wears. While Sloan's subjects seem to share a lightness of skin color, the recent waves of immigrants depicted in *The Wake on the Ferry* might not have had access to a more privileged racial status of whiteness.

1. **Roofs, Summer Night**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1906

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.148.b

2. **The Show Case**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1905

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.142

3. **Fun, One Cent**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1905

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.112

4. **The Little Bride**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1906

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.149.b

5. **Subway Stairs**

John Sloan

1926

Photomechanical print

Gift of Jacqueline Koldin Levine, Class of 1946,

and Howard H. Levine

2012.27.169

2.

1.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

8. **Man Monkey**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1905

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.143

9. **Fifth Avenue Critics**

New York City Life series

John Sloan

1905

Etching

Edition of 100

Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.144.a

6. **The Wake on the Ferry**

John Sloan, printed by Ernest D. Roth

1949

Etching

Edition of 350

Bequest of John Nichols Estabrook

and Dorothy Coogan Estabrook

JNE.P.30

7. **Girl and Beggar**

John Sloan

1910

Etching

Edition of 100

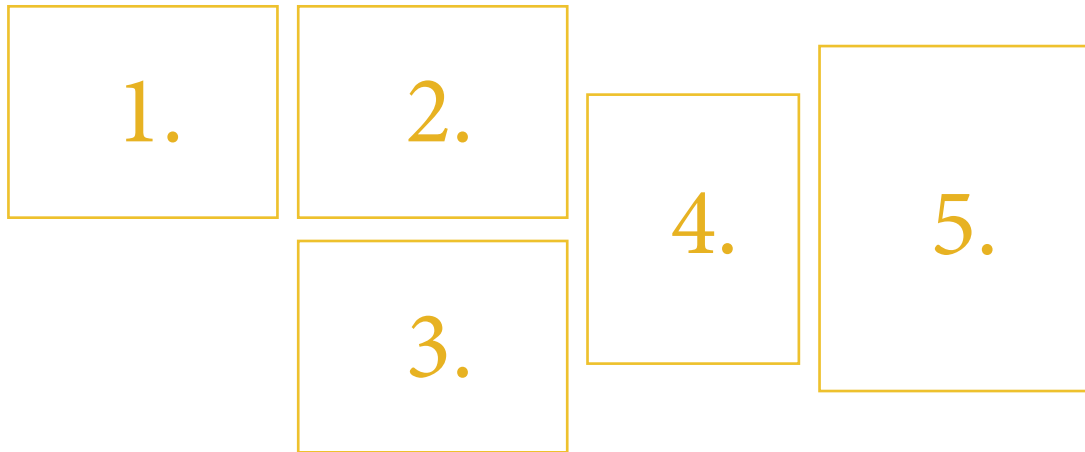
Gift of Richard E. Bishop

in memory of Mary E. Harrington

1962.115.b

Illuminating the Interior

In his depictions of domestic spaces, Sloan illuminated otherwise unseen interiors. Sometimes this is a voyeuristic intrusion, as in *The Women's Page*. We look from behind at a woman absorbed in her reading. Our trespass is softened by the ray of sunlight illuminating the paper, which reminds us that the outside world has already entered her bedroom. In other prints, our entry feels invited, met with a warm and familiar look, as in *Mother*. Light shines across the wall in *Man, Wife, and Child*, joining us with this happy moment. But our intrusion is not as welcomed by the woman in *Turning Out the Light*, who reaches for the light switch. Is she about to regain control, by plunging the room into darkness?



1. Turning Out the Light
New York City Life series
John Sloan
1905
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.146.a

2. Man, Wife, and Child
New York City Life series
John Sloan
1905
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.145

3. The Women's Page
New York City Life series
John Sloan
1905
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.147.b

4. Nude on Hearth
John Sloan
1933
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Jacqueline Koldin Levine, Class of 1946,
and Howard H. Levine
2012.27.165

5. Mother
John Sloan
1906
Etching
Edition of 100
Gift of Richard E. Bishop
in memory of Mary E. Harrington
1962.152

Sloan's Circle of Friends

Along with four of his friends, Robert Henri, William Glackens, George Luks, and Everett Shinn, Sloan trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and is best known as a member of two artist groups, the Ashcan School and The Eight. By 1904, Henri convinced the other four artists, then illustrators at *The Philadelphia Press*, to move to New York, where they worked and exhibited together. In *Memory*, Sloan recalled the comfortable friendship he and his wife Dolly enjoyed with Henri and his late wife Linda. The print's title underscores Sloan's preferred way of working from memory, and thus at a slower pace than his energetic line suggests. Henri often teased Sloan that his surname implied his slow speed, but Sloan embraced this, sometimes signing his work with the image of a snail.



SPOTLIGHT

Madame Pantalon

Written in 1869, Charles Paul de Kock's novel *Madame Pantalon* is an anti-feminist satire about a foolish group of bourgeois women, who declare themselves independent of men. The novel's intended moral is made clear in its final line:

Women have too many attractions, charms, grace, tact, and mischief to wish to abdicate the throne of women merely that they may resemble the masculine sex.

Sloan's illustrations, made 35 years later for an American audience, are not as clearly condemning as Honoré Daumier's *Les Bas-Bleus* series. Although capable of Daumier's visual satire as in "Madame Flambart left both her hands in the mortar," Sloan reserved this for an ancillary character at a particularly slapstick moment of the novel. In *Nanon Beats the Drum* and *The Boar Hunt*, Sloan illustrated Nanon and the titular character Madame Pantalon, each at the center of the composition, looking capable and self-assured, rather than ridiculous. His proto-feminist sympathies allow him to read de Kock against the grain, illuminating the text in an unexpected way.



Illuminating the Story

The Frederick J. Quinby Company of Boston commissioned Sloan, among other Ashcan School artists, to illustrate English language translations of 19th-century novels by Charles Paul de Kock. These satirical novels share the social commentary of artist Honoré Daumier, de Kock's contemporary in France, whose prints and caricatures Sloan studied. Sloan's etchings for the deluxe editions were embraced for their handmade and autographic qualities. He illuminated playful parts of the plot with a charming lamp or eerie candles, such as those in *Rossignol's Drunken Advice to Pierre* and the frontispiece of *Frère Jacques I*. In *Monsieur Le Comte's Fireworks Explode*, the light source sweeps across the upper section of the print, animating the chaos of the scene.

