



WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE

American, 1849-1916

Mrs. Chase in Pink, circa 1905

Oil on canvas

City of Davenport Art Collection

Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 1929.415

Mrs. Chase in Pink



William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) This realist painter, father of eight and champion of American art, was born in Indiana and studied art in New York, St. Louis and Munich. He was offered a teaching position in Munich but instead returned to New York and established his Tenth Street Studio, a haven for the avant-garde in the 1870s. “I was young; American art was young; I had faith in it,” he stated. Noted throughout his life for his technical skill, he was a kind and enthusiastic instructor whose extensive teaching career spanned 38 years and included positions in Pennsylvania, New York, Chicago and California as well as summer classes taught in Europe. “Be in an absorbent frame of mind,” he taught his students. “Take the best from everything.”

A product of its time

The early 20th Century still had a great deal of class separation and the upper class was fond of showing off their wealth. Portraits during this time are examples of this. *Mrs. Chase in Pink* portrays the woman with an air of royal grandeur.

Take a closer look

From a distance, this painting looks detailed, but closer inspection reveals that details are far less defined than they first appear. This style was inspired by French Impressionism, a style for which the artist was well known.

Did you know?

In 1891, Chase built a new home and studio school on Long Island at Shinnecock. He was in demand as a teacher and among his famous students were Georgia O’Keeffe, Charles Demuth and Edward Hopper. His was the first important school of plein-air painting, or painting out-of-doors, in America.

On your own

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chas/hd_chas.htm

Sullivan Goss Gallery http://www.sullivangoss.com/william_merritt_chase/

Smithsonian Magazine: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/william-merritt-chase-71963962/?no-ist=>