

Whistler, c. 1896

## Artist Resources – James Abbott McNeill Whistler (American, 1834 – 1903)

[The Complete Works of James Abbott McNeill Whistler](#)

[Whistler at the Tate](#)

[Whistler at the National Gallery of Art](#)

Read an [essay](#) by H. Barbara Weinberg for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.

Watch a [lecture](#) from Heather Nolin, Arthur Ross Collection Research Associate and Project Manager at the Yale University Art Gallery about Whistler’s impact on British society.

[“James McNeill Whistler and the Case for Beauty”](#) is available for free as a PBS Special.

The Smithsonian Archives of American Art includes the [digitized](#) Rudolf Wunderlich collection of James McNeill Whistler exhibition catalogues, 1903-1935.

Visit the [Whistler House Museum of Art](#), where the artist was born, or connect with the [Whistler Society](#), whose aim is “to promote interest in the life, work and influence” of the artist.

Take a [virtual tour of \*The Peacock Room\*](#), Whistler’s famous dining room originally designed for Frederick Richard Leyland’s London townhouse. Owen Edwards’ [“The Story Behind the Peacock Room’s Princess”](#) reveals “how a portrait sparked a battle between an artist and his patron.”

The Frick Collection has one of the largest collections of Whistler’s work. Browse the institution’s history of Whistler exhibitions, from the 1968 [Works of James A. McNeill Whistler in the Frick Collection](#) to the 2003 [Whistler, Women, and Fashion](#).

To commemorate the centenary of Whistler’s death, the University of Glasgow published [The Correspondence of James McNeill Whistler](#), which is now available online.

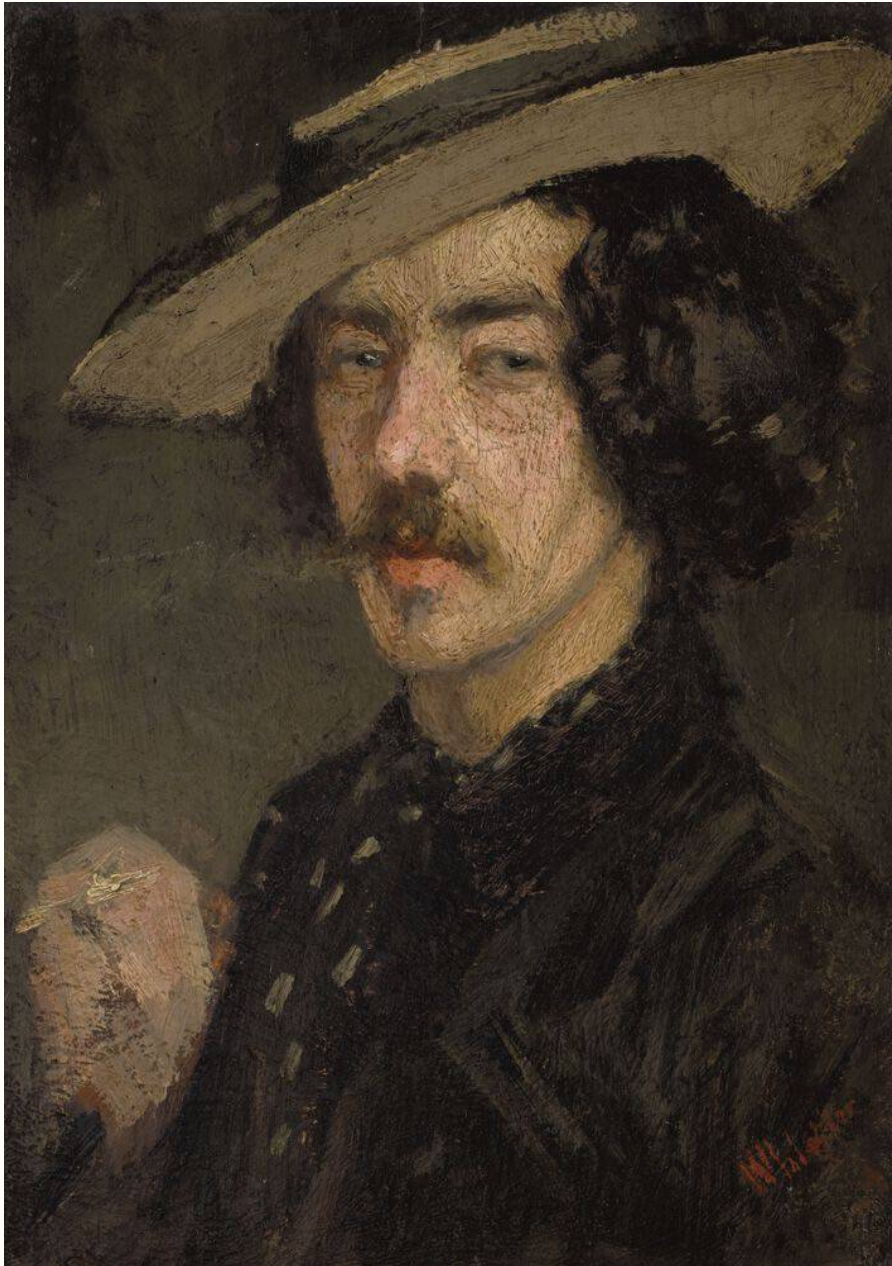
Read Mary Zajac’s [article](#) in The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, “How James McNeill Whistler Became a Brand and Fought for It in Court.”

[Whistler & Nature](#) was installed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, in 2019. The exhibition featured around 90 paintings, sketches and prints by the artist.

The 2022 Royal Academy of Arts exhibition, [Whistler’s Woman in White: Joanna Hiffernan](#), “explores her life and role as a friend, model, lover and collaborator” and reveals “Joanna Hiffernan’s relationship with Whistler ran deeper than artist and muse.”



Whistler, 1870s  
Photograph: London Stereoscopic & Portrait Company



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (American, 1834-1903)

**Whistler Smoking**, ca. 1856-1860

Oil on panel laid down on cradled panel

Private Collection; L2021:167.2

“I belong always to the Bohemian life.” Born in New England, James Abbott McNeill Whistler first took private art lessons at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia, when his father was temporarily employed to work for a Russian railroad company. Whistler later studied drawing and map making at the United States Military Academy at West Point, but was expelled in 1855 due to his sarcastic and rebellious behavior. The artist then moved to Paris, where he met other self-described “Bohemian” artists known for their unorthodox lifestyles and eccentric clothing. Whistler fully embraced “la vie de bohème” (“the bohemian life”), taking on the flamboyant public persona of a witty, mischievous, outrageous artist. **Whistler Smoking** is one of the artist’s earliest known self-portraits in oil. Wearing his signature off-kilter straw hat and confidently smoking a cigarette, the artist’s personality leaps from the canvas. Whistler once wrote: “It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features.”

*On view March 16 – June 19, 2022*