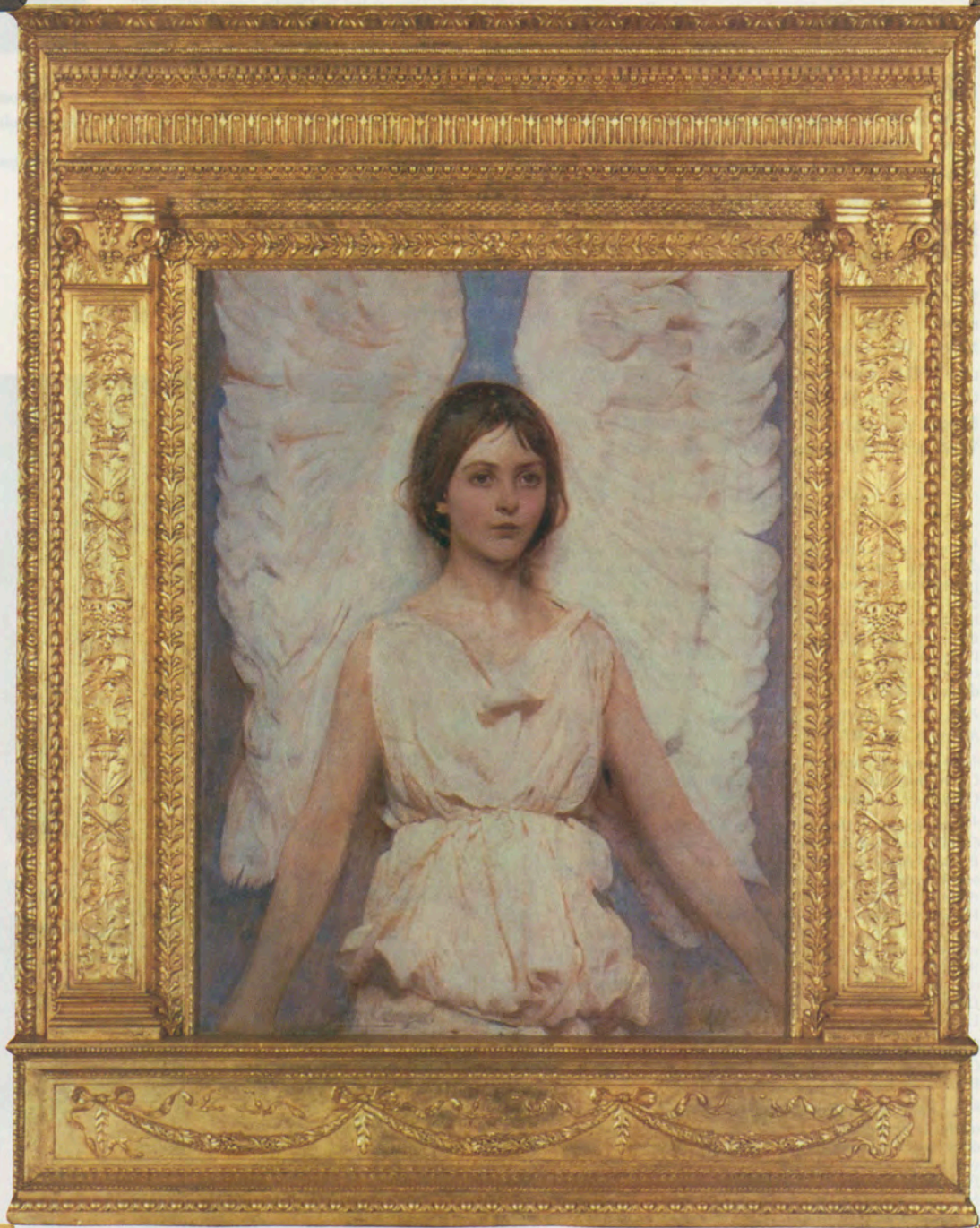



# Stanford White's frames

BY WILLIAM ADAIR





The architect Stanford White has been called the greatest designer America has ever produced.<sup>1</sup> In addition to buildings he delighted in designing picture frames for many of his clients and friends, including the painters Abbott Handerson Thayer and Thomas Wilmer Dewing, and the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (see Fig. 1). White's frame designs were not only influential in the art world of his time but continue to be so today.

The chief role of the picture frame is to be an adroit mediator between the illusionary painting and the environment in which the painting is placed, and it is most successful when it is not noticed. White understood this basic prerequisite. His genius was to combine disparate elements of the many nineteenth-century revival styles to create a new vocabulary of frame design (see Pl. IV). His frames fitted with restraint into the opulent interiors designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White (1879–1909) in which he was a partner.

With the growing middle class of immigrants in the 1850s came the demand for frames with Greek, Italian, Dutch, German, and Spanish elements in Gothic and rococo styles. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in England, which favored the tabernacle frame in the 1860s, planted the seed for the development of the Renaissance revival in the 1890s, championed by White and his associates.<sup>2</sup> This was paralleled by the vogue for the Japanese aesthetic, the Eastlake style, the artist-made frames of the secessionists, and the fluid designs of art nouveau. During this time the frame came to be considered an extension of the art it contained, replacing the Victorian concept of a painting as simply an excuse for an elaborate frame.

**Pl. I.** *Angel*, by Abbott Handerson Thayer (1849–1921), c. 1889, in a frame designed by Stanford White (1853–1906) and made by Joseph Cabus, New York City, 1889. Gilded composition and wood; outside dimensions of frame, 66 1/4 by 48 1/8 inches. *National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C., gift of John Gellatly.*

*Above:* Pl. II. Detail of the frame shown in Pl. IX.

*Right:* Pl. III. Detail of a frame designed by White, c. 1892, and probably made by Alexander G. Cabus, New York City, for *The Blue Dress*, by Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851–1938), 1892. Oil-gilded composition on pine; outside dimensions, 38 3/4 by 34 3/4 inches over-all. The gently sloping reverse profile of the frame away from the aperture recalls Dutch and Spanish frames of the seventeenth century. The surface decoration of Dutch Ripple elements and double C-scrolls causes even low light to dance across the surface. *Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*

*Below:* Pl. IV. Detail of a frame designed by White, c. 1912, and made by the Newcomb-Macklin Company (founded 1871) of Chicago and New York City. Metal leaf oil gilded over red bole, gesso, and composition on basswood; outside dimensions, 41 by 40 inches over-all. The frame was made for *Young Woman Doing her Hair* by Thayer. The frame combines seventeenth-century Dutch and Italian elements. The rich complexity of surface texture owes much to the ability of craftsmen at the time to work in a variety of techniques. *Private collection.*

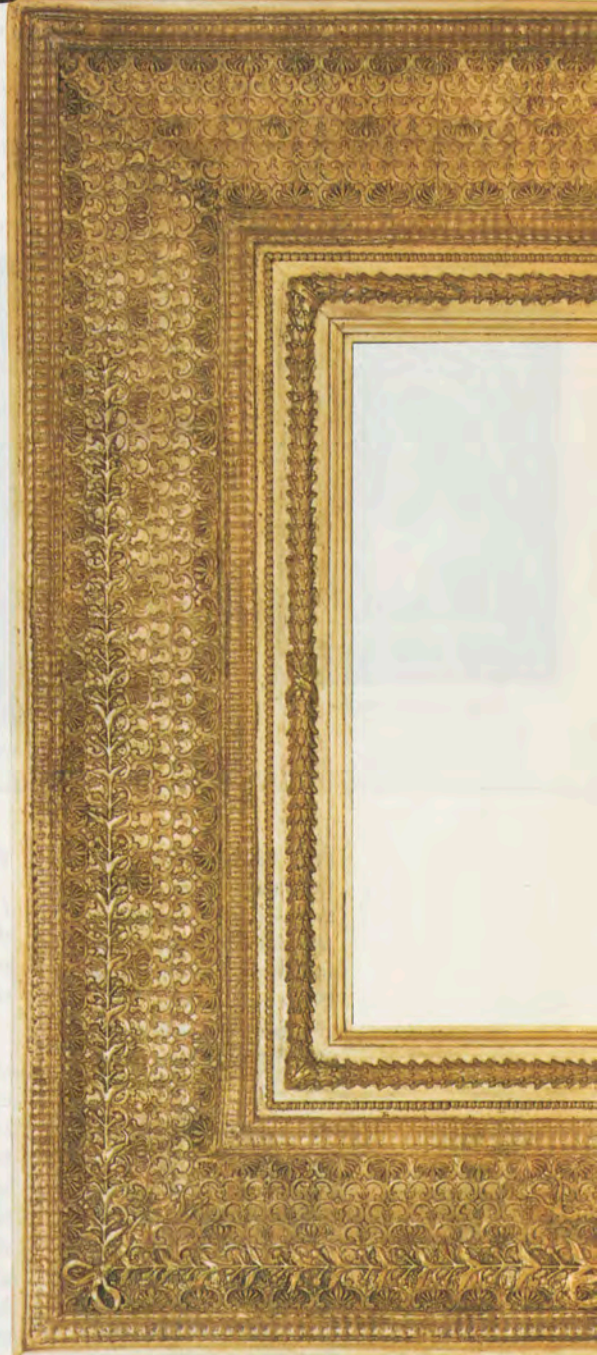


Fig. 1. Three frames designed by White, Pl. 34 in *Sketches and Designs by Stanford White* (New York, 1920). The frame on the left is in a German Renaissance architectural format with a whimsical outer border design known as the Dutch Ripple. The architectural frame at the center incorporates ornament in the panels inspired by fifteenth-century Florentine frames. The frame on the right, with its lacy ornament akin to late nineteenth-century brocades and flocked wallpaper, is pure invention by White. *Collection of Lauder Greenway.*

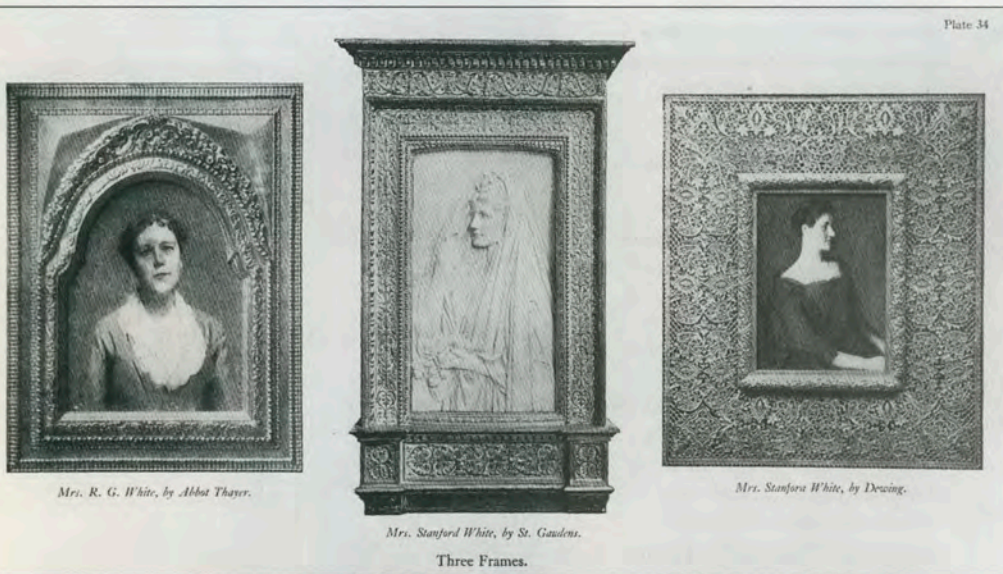


Fig. 2. Detail of the façade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, Italy, designed by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), c. 1456–1470. White borrowed elements for the frame shown in Pl. VI. *Photograph by courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York City.*

Pl. V. Inglenook in the Metcalfe house, designed by McKim, Mead and White and built in Buffalo, New York, 1882–1884. The pierced grille pattern at the right turns up in White's later frames. It was a popular expression of the Oriental influence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, gift of Delaware North Companies Incorporated.*

The 1890s was a time of experimentation with many unusual solutions to framing.<sup>3</sup> Understanding the important effect of a frame on a painting, White designed specific frames for specific paintings. As his reputation grew he began to design frames for lesser-known artists such as Arthur B. Frost (1851–1928), who wrote to White on May 20, 1904:

*When you make the drawing for the frame, would you object to letting me have it after you are through with it? I would be very much obliged if you would let me use it... I have only frame maker's frames and the giddy glittering things make me sick... I have tried to design frames and they have been rather dingy failures.<sup>4</sup>*

Five days later Frost wrote to White again:

*I thank you for letting me have the drawing of the frame. I will be glad to get it made up and you can bet no one will get a copy of it. I will value it and try to paint things that will fit it.<sup>5</sup>*

White did not charge for his distinctive, classically inspired frame designs, which he executed as a counterfoil to the poorly conceived and ill-proportioned commercial frames.<sup>6</sup> Those factory-made frames, used by an earlier generation of American artists, had a tendency to overpower the pictures.<sup>7</sup> By 1900 the austere approach of the arts and crafts movement, coupled with James McNeill Whistler's profound influence,<sup>8</sup> created an environment receptive to change.

The catalogue to a Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston exhibition in 1907 sums up the reactionary mood:

*It is true that pressed and stamped ornament*



*has been used in cheap factory made wood work...but the manifest ugliness and hopeless vulgarity of this tawdry and insipid ornament has prevented the use of such methods in wood work making any pretensions to quality, and of late, the growth of a better taste is tending, at least in some quarters, to the elimination of this cheap stamped ornament.<sup>9</sup>*

White's background in frame design most probably began with his apprenticeship to the Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886) from 1872 to 1878, during which time he often dealt with the ornamental elements of Richardson's projects. The ornament focused on color, low-relief carving, and the harmony between the over-all design and the all-important surfaces, both inside and out.

In 1878, at the impressionable age of twenty-five, White embarked on a sketching trip through Belgium, Holland, Italy, and France with Augustus Saint-Gaudens<sup>10</sup> and his future partner Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909), both of whom he had met when all three were working on Richardson's Trinity Church in Boston. It was during this and other sketching trips to Italy that White became strongly in-



fluenced by the Italian masters. He even incorporated part of the design of the façade of the Florentine church Santa Maria Novella into one of his frame designs (see Pl. VI and Fig. 2). It is the elaborate carved and inlaid calligraphic pattern in the architrave above the portal designed by Leon Battista Alberti. For Alberti beauty was the result of harmonious proportions, simplicity, and the skillful use of classical ornamentation—all admirable traits that must have also appealed to the young American architect.

White's frame for *The Wave* by Thomas Alexander Harrison (Pl. VI) is a remarkable

ing used what came to be known as the Dewing grille frame on many of his paintings of ladies dressed in lace. The frame design is a sort of poetic essay in gilded lace and "shimmering teardrops"<sup>12</sup> (see Pls. VII, VIII). The frames were varied by using different combinations of metallic colors and a technique called Roman gilding.<sup>13</sup> The use of Roman bronze powder instead of gold created a less brilliant finish and was popular at the time since the bright gilding of the preceding era was no longer considered tasteful. Indeed, with the advent of electric light around 1900, a brightly gilded frame



combination of elements. The design moves around like a wave, echoing the roll of the ocean. The pierced effect is related to Arabic calligraphy and is intermittently interrupted by a design that imitates the lateen sail of a dhow, the vessel in common use from the Red Sea to the west coast of India. This Moorish touch was part of the Eastern influence evident in other projects White executed in the 1880s. An example is the pierced woodwork in an inglenook in the Metcalfe house built in Buffalo, New York, between 1882 and 1884 (see Pl. V).

White specified another type of pierced design, with four known variations, when creating a frame for his friend Thomas Dewing.<sup>11</sup> For more than twenty years Dew-

visually overpowered the painting. The chief characteristic of the grille frame is that the composition ornament is reinforced with thin wire and stands away from the gilded background of the frame, creating the illusion that light emanates from within the frame itself. The effect is especially noticeable when the painting is placed opposite a light source.

The grille frame was often imitated. One of the models in Carrig-Rohane, Hermann Dudley Murphy's frame shop, was a grille frame, although it was made of carved wood rather than composition (see Pl. XI). Others were used later by the Newcomb-Macklin Company. Murphy and his group of craftsmen had established the Carrig-

Pl. VI. *The Wave*, by Thomas Alexander Harrison (1853–1930), c. 1897, in a frame designed by White and made by Joseph and Alexander Cabus. Oil-gilded composition on pine; outside dimensions of frame, 35 by 66 inches. The outer section of the frame is decorated with double C-scrolls. The inner section of the frame incorporates the dhow sails found at the left in Fig. 2, each on a small halyard that forms an abstracted Arabic calligraphic design. The innermost molding has a delicately rendered fluted design reminiscent of frames designed by James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). *Collection of David and Ann Sellin; photograph by courtesy of Gold Leaf Studios, Washington, D.C.*



Rohane Shop in Boston in 1903<sup>14</sup> to supply good handmade frames designed for specific paintings in the tradition that White had developed for his artist friends.

Imitating fabric has long been one of the basic tenets of frame design. The walls of large houses were often covered with elaborate foliate and floral brocades and damasks, which gave way to embossed wallpaper in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The frame became an integral part of the wall decoration and was, in effect, a piece of shimmering wall jewelry that often reflected the personality and taste of the owner.

White developed a series of frames modeled after the delicate lace sometimes seen in portraits of women. The patterns of double C-scrolls used side by side were punctuated with small acanthus leaves, surrounded by pearls or beading, and in some cases surmounted by garlands tied with ribbons. The design became the personification of the delicate and refined nature of woman and was inexorably linked to the atmosphere of the paintings they enshrined and the opulent spaces for which they were intended (see Pls. II, III, IX).

White did business with a handful of New York City frame makers, among them Oscar Rudolph and Company, Wirth and Fyfe, Edward and Albert Milch (see Fig. 8), W. C. LeBrocq, and Joseph Cabus and his son Alexander G. Cabus.<sup>15</sup> White's frame designs were so successful that Alexander Cabus began to make unauthorized copies for other clients, which greatly vexed White, as perhaps he was sensitive about fitting the frame to the specific picture, or perhaps simply because he did not like having his designs used for commercial gain.

The prevailing attitude of the era was artistic co-operation. According to the handbook *Principles of Handicraft* issued by the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston in 1907:

Pl. VII. *The Piano*, by Dewing, 1891, in a prototype grille frame designed by White. Gilded wood and composition; outside dimensions of frame, 35<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> by 41<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. The open grillwork and crisp acanthus ornament are more detailed and refined than in many later frames. *Freer Gallery of Art.*

Pl. VIII. *Self Portrait*, by Dewing, 1906, in a frame designed by White and replicated in 1985 by Gold Leaf Studios in Washington, D.C. Basswood, composition, and gold leaf; outside dimensions of frame, 40<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> by 36 inches. The freestanding dark-toned grille over a brightly gilded background creates the illusion that light is coming from within the frame. *Freer Gallery of Art.*



*When the worker and the designer are not united in the same person, they should work together, each teaching the other their special knowledge, so that the faculties of the designer and the worker may tend to become united in each.*

This was not White's method when designing a frame. He first surveyed his large collection of antique frames—of which there were more than sixty at his death.<sup>16</sup> He made a sketch using the chosen frame for inspiration, and then a series of refinements were drawn to scale, probably by an assistant. The broken pediment frame in the sixteenth-century mannerist style that White hung over the mantel of the Green Room in his New York City house is a prime example of his method (see Fig. 7). A series of drawings with progressive refinements survives with cost estimates from several frame makers listed on one of the drawings (see Figs. 4–6).

There was such a demand for frames



designed by White that they were produced by unauthorized firms such as Cabus on a limited basis during his lifetime, and made in quantity after his death, especially between about 1910 and the early 1920s.<sup>17</sup> The variations in these copies were more pronounced in the frames with flatter profiles that became popular at the turn of the century<sup>18</sup> than in the earlier, more sculptural designs. In some of the low-relief frames each element of the ornament was cast separately in composition or plaster and affixed to the wooden frame in sections with hide glue. Later, the entire width of ornament was cast in plaster at once. In the 1920s the brass embossing wheel was introduced, creating a continuous length of decorative molding at a fraction of the previous cost while still maintaining the integrity of the design.<sup>19</sup>

White also designed a wide variety of carved wood frames that were unique to the work of art for which they were created. A number of these frames enhanced bronze or marble bas-reliefs by Saint-Gaudens (see Pl. X).

Tabernacle frames, having an entablature and two supporting columns, are based on patterns from ancient architecture and are often decorated with anthemions, palmettes, dentils, leaf patterns, and lamb's-tongues (see Pl. XIII). Symbolically, these frames suggest passages to the

**Pl. IX.** *Elizabeth Platt Jencks*, by Dewing, 1895, in a frame designed by White in 1895 and made by Alexander Cabus. Gilded pine and composition; outside dimensions of frame, 43 by 36 inches. *Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of the Atholl McBean Foundation.*

**Pl. X.** *Dr. Henry Shiff* (1833–1906), by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848–1907), 1880, in a frame designed by White and made by Joseph Cabus in 1880. The bas-relief is bronze and the frame is carved oak; outside dimensions of frame, 23 1/4 by 23 1/2 inches. In May 1888 White requested that Joseph Cabus retrieve this original frame from Saint-Gaudens's studio in Cornish, New Hampshire, in order to make a mold for the frame for the bronze relief of Robert Louis Stevenson now at Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey. *Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire; photograph by Jeffrey Nitzel.*

**Pl. XI.** Detail of a frame designed by Herman Dudley Murphy (1867–1945), inspired by White's grille frames, c. 1905, and made by the Carrig-Rohane Shop (1903–1915), Boston. Gilded wood; sight dimensions, 21 1/2 by 17 5/8 inches over-all. Carrig-Rohane hand carved their frames, considering composition inferior. Consequently, the grillwork is not suspended above the surface in this frame. *Julius Lowy Frame and Restoring Company, New York City.*

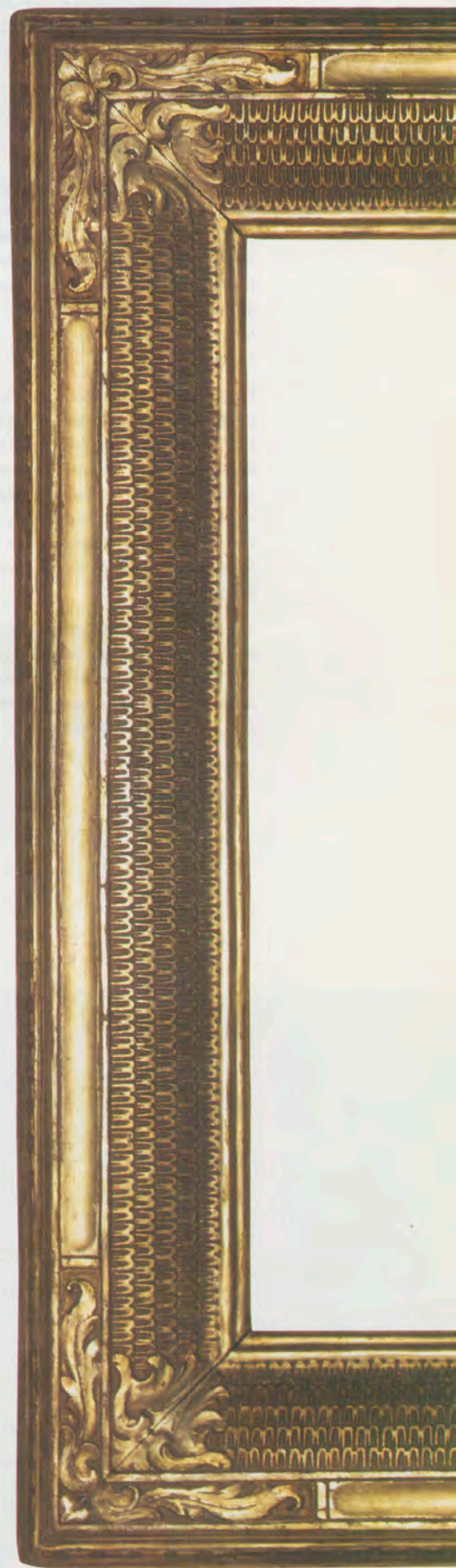
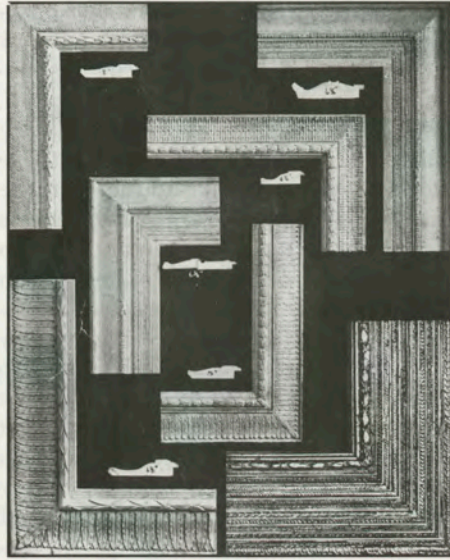


Fig. 3. Page from a Newcomb-Macklin Company catalogue of about 1922. The grouping illustrates the frames most generally associated with White's designs. *International Institute for Frame Study, Washington, D.C., gift of Robin Alonge.*

Fig. 4. Detail of a preliminary sketch for the frame shown above the mantel in Fig. 7, after 1895. Pencil on paper, 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> by 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches over-all. *Stanford White Papers, Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City.*

Fig. 5. Detail of an interim sketch for the frame shown above the mantel in Fig. 7. Pencil on paper, 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> by 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches over-all. At the top of the sheet are price quotes from Oscar Rudolph and Company and Wirth and Fyfe, both New York City frame makers. *White Papers, Drawings and Archives, Avery Library.*

Fig. 6. Detail of the final drawing for the frame shown above the mantel in Fig. 7. Pencil on paper, 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> by 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches over-all. *White Papers, Drawings and Archives, Avery Library.*



afterlife, like the doorways depicted on sarcophagi that they resemble. White's tabernacle frames for Thayer primarily enshrine his paintings of angels (see Pl. I), emphasizing the sacred overtones of the style. White did not supply a tabernacle frame for Thayer's picture of his Irish maid Bessie Price (Pl. XIV), but the current owner has had it reframed in a tabernacle frame in an attempt to impart a sacred quality to the humble but brilliantly painted subject (Pl. XIII).

White was so skilled at blending classical ideals with his own sense of taste and proportion that he was constantly being asked for help. Charles Lang Freer, for example,

wrote to him on December 7, 1905:

*I spent a day with Abbot Thayer at Dublin and saw a picture now nearly completed... It is a life size figure of an angel (the portrait of his youngest daughter). I think it is the finest large thing he has ever done. He is extremely anxious to have a fine frame for it, and would like the frame designed, made, and sent to him at Dublin, so that he can finish the canvas in its frame. He and I both agreed that if we could induce you to design the frame the whole thing would be perfect... If you will kindly design the frame, Thayer will send you a photograph of the picture together with the dimensions.<sup>20</sup>*

White took on the challenge, but when the frame was finished Thayer was unhappy with the size of the opening (known as the sight dimension).<sup>21</sup> Ultimately White made another frame to accommodate the artist's wishes (Pl. I), specifying a combination of gold and bronze powder that produced a somber, subdued effect duplicating the subtle tonality of Thayer's delicate creation.

Another frame that White designed for Thayer can be directly linked to a recently discovered seventeenth-century Spanish frame (Pl. XVI). White's frame (Pl. XVII) was intended for Thayer's now unlocated portrait of a child named Beatrice Holden. The putti at the corners and in the center of each side cleverly suggest the doll that the little girl may have been clutching in the painting.

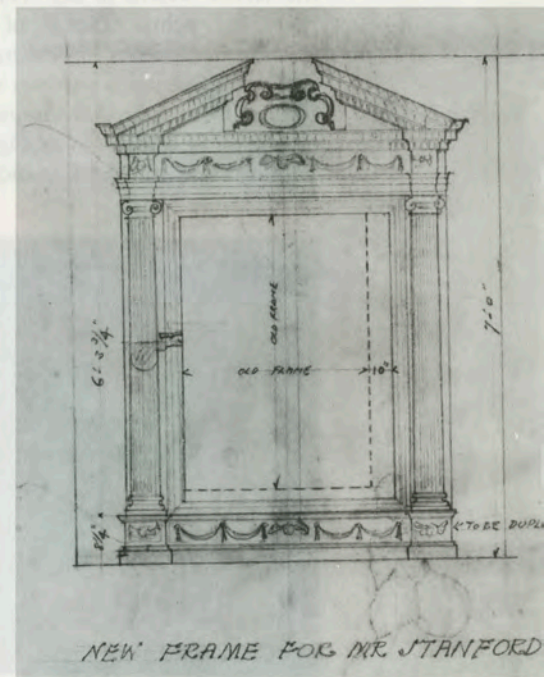
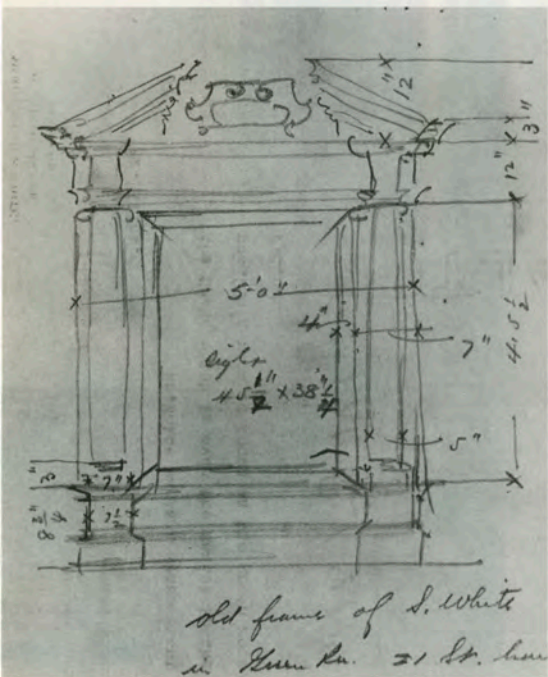




Fig. 7. The Green Room in White's house at 121 East Twenty-first Street, New York City, in a photograph of 1901 by H. H. Sidman. Above the fireplace hangs *Bacchante*, by Robert Van Vorst Sewell (1860–1924), in a frame designed by White after 1895 (see Figs. 4–6). The painting in Pl. VI hangs at the left of the fireplace. *New-York Historical Society, New York City.*

Pl. XII. Detail of a frame attributed to White and probably made by Alexander Cabus, c. 1900. Gilded pine; outside dimensions, 22<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> by 42<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches over-all. The frame was almost certainly made for a specific painting, although the painting has not been identified. The flowing tendrils are laid over the mosaic background pattern creating graceful movement and shimmering light appropriate for a seascape. *Lowy Frame and Restoring Company.*

There have been no surveys of frames as they relate to the paintings they originally enclosed, and as of yet no agreed nomenclature exists to describe the various components of frames, nor a central resource for information about them. Indeed, until recently the frame has not really been considered worthy of systematic consideration.<sup>22</sup>

When properly studied, however, the frame can reveal much about the relationship of the painting to its original surroundings and how the artist's work was valued by earlier collectors. It can sometimes also provide details about the artist's or patron's taste. There is a growing underground of connoisseurs who are beginning to know the importance and value of a good frame. Like White and his friends, artists have long understood the effect of a frame—for better or worse—on a painting. Charles Willson Peale summed it up in 1807: "A good picture deserves a good frame and a bad picture will preserve its place longer by having a handsome frame."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Saarinen, unpublished manuscript on Stanford White (microfilm reel 2073, frames 505 and 836, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.). My thanks to Richard J. Wattenmaker, the director of the archives, for his advice and wise counsel. Two good, recent articles about White's frame designs are Joyce K. Schiller, "Frame Designs by Stanford White," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, vol. 64, no. 1 (1988), pp. 21–31; and Nina Gray and Suzanne Smeaton, "Within Gilded Borders," *American Art*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 33–45.

<sup>2</sup> See William Adair, "The Remaking of a Stanford White Aedicule Frame," *Picture Framing Magazine*, August 1996, pp. 22–32.

<sup>3</sup> The American artist Birge Harrison (1854–1929) recalled how he glued an Oriental carpet to a panel of a frame for artistic unity, and then declared the effort a disaster since all eyes went to the rug rather than the painting. He declared that gold was the only suitable surround for a painting: a cool color (16K or 18K) for a warm toned painting and a warm color (23K) for a cool toned painting. See Birge Harrison, *Landscape Painting* (Charles Scribner and Sons, New York, 1909), pp. 123–130.

<sup>4</sup> Stanford White Papers, Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City. Frost was a Philadelphia artist known for his illustrations to the Uncle Remus books by Joel Chandler Harris. My thanks to Janet Parks, the curator of drawings and archives at Avery Library, for her help with the research for this article. I would also like to thank Toby Chieffo for her assistance with the article.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Although White actually did something about the poor quality of frame design, it appears that the sustained development of the frame reformation movement was carried out by the Boston artists Charles Prendergast (1863–1948) and Hermann Dudley Murphy. For the frame work of Prendergast see Richard C. Wattenmaker, *The Art of Charles Prendergast* (Rutgers University Art Gallery, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1968). For a detailed account of Murphy's work see William A. Coles, *Hermann Dudley Murphy, Realism Married to Idealism Most Exquisitely* (Graham Gallery, New York City, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> On May 22, 1894, the Detroit philanthropist and collector Charles Lang Freer wrote to the American artist Frederick Stuart Church (1842–1923): "I do not like old style crude frames. I believe for your own delicate creations and that of Dewing and Tryon in particular, the designs of Stanford White are altogether the best in existence. Years ago Whistler learned that his best pictures appeared hideous in conventional frames" (Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art Archives, Washington, D.C.). I am grateful to Susan Hobbs for bringing this quotation to my attention.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed outline of Whistler's contribution to frame design see William Adair, "Endangered Frames: To Save a Butterfly," *Framing Magazine*, August 1995, pp. 22–32; and Ira Horowitz, "Whistler's Frames," *College Art Journal*,







Pl. XIII. *Portrait of Bessie Price*, by Thayer, 1897, in a tabernacle frame made by Gold Leaf Studios, Washington, D.C., in 1996. Collection of Willard G. Clark.

Pl. XIV. *Portrait of Bessie Price*, in a frame designed by White and perhaps made by Alexander Cabus. Composition, wire, gold leaf, and asphaltum glaze; outside dimensions of frame, 38 by 30 inches. Bessie Price was Thayer's Irish maid, and this is the original frame. The present owner of the painting preferred a tabernacle frame (see Pl. XIII). Clark collection.

Fig. 8. Logo of Edward and Albert Milch, New York City frame makers. The logo is on the frame of *A New Year on the Cimarron*, by Frederic Remington (1861–1909), 1901, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



vol. 39, no. 2 (Winter 1979–1980), pp. 124–131.

<sup>9</sup> *Exhibition of the Society of Arts and Crafts Together with a Loan Collection of Applied Art...* (Boston, 1907), p. 86. This exhibition included frames and framed looking glasses by many individuals, including Hermann Dudley Murphy.

<sup>10</sup> John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, and London, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> The most thorough treatment of Dewing's work is Susan A. Hobbs, *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing: Beauty Reconfigured* (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> I owe this poetic description to Susan Hobbs.

<sup>13</sup> Roman gilding consists of the application of bronze powder with a glue binder, with the resulting finish polished with a stone. I am grateful to Joyce K. Schiller of the Saint Louis Art Museum in Saint Louis, Missouri, for pointing out the catalogue of the W. H. Kemp Company of New York City that is among the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers in the New-York Historical Society in New York City. There are, on pages 4 and 5 and pages 22 and 23, valuable descriptions of how to apply enamel bronze powder and pure gold powder.

<sup>14</sup> The Carrig-Rohane Shop was bought by Vose Gallery in 1915 and went out of business in 1939. Frames made in the shop are usually painted red on the back and have an incised pattern number, date, and M monogram. The shop's papers have been given to the Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C., by the Vose Gallery. My thanks to Morton, Bill, and Terry Vose for their help regarding the Carrig-Rohane Shop.

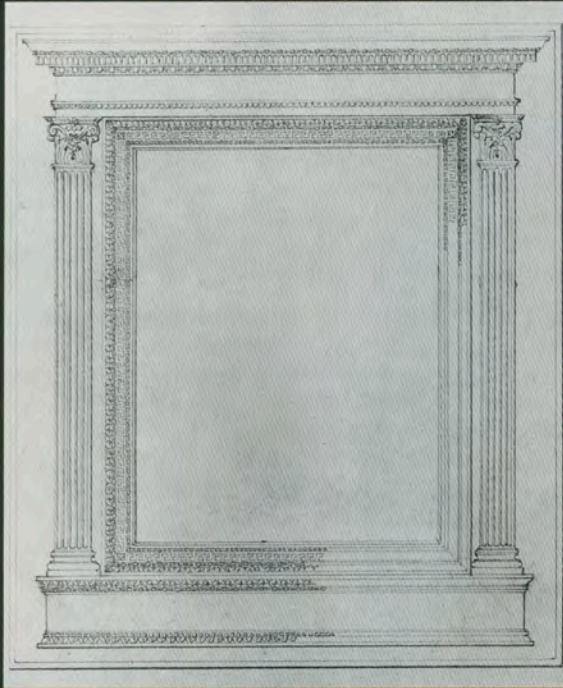
<sup>15</sup> For a partial listing of New York City frame makers see Alexander W. Katlan, *American Artist's Materials Suppliers Directory—Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Noyes, Park Ridge, New Jersey, 1987); and Katlan, *American Artist's Materials*, vol. 2 (Sound View Press, Madison, Connecticut, 1992). Rose Shar, the mother of Larry Shar, the proprietor of the Julius Lowy Frame and Restoring Company in New York City, recalls that Edward and Albert Milch ran the frame business while their cousins Teddy and Harold Milch ran the Milch Gallery. Florine Long worked for the Milch frame shop from 1930 until 1956, when it closed and she went to work for the Lowy company. My thanks to Mark Methner of Lowy for pointing out the Milch logo shown in Fig. 8, and to Emily Neff, curator of American paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for her research.

<sup>16</sup> *Catalogue of Valuable Artistic Property Collected by the late Stanford White* (American Art Association, New York City, 1907), Lots 590–651. A copy of the catalogue is in the collection of the Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library in Winterthur, Delaware. White avidly collected frames through various Italian dealers including Stephano Bardini in Florence. The Museo Bardini there is a great repository for the kinds of objects White bought, and many letters from Bardini to White survive in the Stanford White Papers in Avery Library.

<sup>17</sup> After White's death in 1906 the designs were produced and sold by the Newcomb-Macklin Company, one of the best-known frame companies in America, with an extensive catalogue and a vast mail-order business, as well as a network of traveling salesmen. In 1972 the company was bought by the Thanhardt-Burger Company of La Porte, Indiana, which continues to keep the tradition alive using the remaining molds and samples.

<sup>18</sup> On April 24, 1899, Freer wrote to Thayer, "I think





the frame seriously injures the picture. The projection is so great that in artificial light a great shadow was cast from the frame. Will you do me the kindness, and yourself the satisfaction of selecting a new frame...with a flatter profile...for your canvas?" (Freer Papers, Freer Gallery Archives). My thanks to Linda Merrill, the curator of American art at the Freer Gallery, for her assistance.

<sup>19</sup> My thanks to Carl Krantz and William Burger of the Thanhardt-Burger Company for showing me their brass wheel and explaining the process.

<sup>20</sup> Freer Papers, Freer Gallery Archives.

<sup>21</sup> Thayer, Cornish, New Hampshire, to White, February 24, 1906, in the Stanford White Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 505. My thanks to Elizabeth Sherman Raymond for her research assistance.

<sup>22</sup> In recent years the New York City firms Eli Wilner and Company and the Lowy company organized exhibitions on American frames. Last year an exhibition sponsored by the International Institute for Frame Study in Washington, D. C., entitled *The Frame in America, 1860-1960*, was shown at the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C. It is planned that the exhibition will travel to various museums under the auspices of Exhibits USA of Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>23</sup> Letter of March 7, 1805, to Alfred William Grayson (Peale-Sellers Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia). For this quotation I am grateful to David C. Ward, the research associate of the Charles Willson Peale Papers at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

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**Fig. 9.** Drawing for the tabernacle frame shown in Pl. XV. Pencil on paper. The sheet measures 12<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> by 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches over-all. *White Papers, Drawings and Archives, Avery Library.*

**Pl. XV.** Tabernacle frame for *Portrait of a Woman*, by Thayer. It was designed by White in the early twentieth century and possibly made by Newcomb-Macklin Company. Gold leaf, water-gilded bole, gesso, composition, and basswood; outside dimensions, 59 by 47 inches. The location of the painting is unknown. See also Fig. 9. *Private collection; Gold Leaf Studios photograph.*



**Pl. XVI.** Detail of a frame, Spanish, late sixteenth century. Water-gilded and polychromed wood; outside dimensions, 78 by 54 inches over-all. White had a mold taken of the frame, which formed the inspiration for the frame shown in Pl. XVII. The frame is said to have been in White's estate. *Collection of Nelson Shanks; Gold Leaf Studios photograph.*



**Pl. XVII.** Detail of a frame designed by White combining Italian and Spanish elements, c. 1900. Water-gilded gold leaf over red bole, gesso, composition, and basswood; outside dimensions, 66 by 45 inches over-all. *Private collection; Gold Leaf Studios photograph.*

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