



TITLE: *Three Mile Harbor* (also known as *The Rainbow*)
ARTIST: Thomas Moran
DATE: 1880
SIZE: Image 4 ¼ X 8 1/8 inches
Framed 10 ¾ X 14 ¼ inches
MEDIUM: Etching
ACCESSION #: 2002.6.35
Additional works in the collection by the artist? No

Artist Note

Moran sketched, painted, and etched his personal interpretations of nature. His landscapes reflected his sensitive temperament and unique perspectives. Moran combined his sketches of nature with imaginative elaborations to create his own aesthetic landscape visions.

Artist's Biography

Thomas Moran was born 1837 in Bolton, near Manchester, a textiles center, during England's Industrial Revolution. He died in Santa Barbara, CA in 1926. Moran emigrated with his family in 1844 to a town near Philadelphia, USA. At sixteen, Moran began his apprenticeship with a Philadelphia wood engraving company. He left the apprenticeship early to pursue a profession in drawing, illustration, and painting. An avid reader and mostly self-taught as an artist, Moran was influenced by his brother Edward, Paul Weber, James Hamilton, John Sartain, Claude Lorrain, JWM Turner, and the poets Shelley and Byron. One of the most successful printers in the 19thc United States, Moran found etching was a good fit for his drawing skills. He holds a historical place in etching because of his creatively illustrated and aesthetically designed prints produced from 1860-1890. His wife Mary Nimmo Moran, an artist, became the first female fellow in the London Royal Society of Painter-Etchers when both were inducted in 1881.

Vocabulary

Etching is an acid-biting technique used in intaglio prints in which artists cut designs into metal plates. The artist exposes the metal plate with its cut design to acid. The acid bites into the metal not covered by a special wax that protects the metal plate.

Burnish means to smooth the plate surface allowing the artist to rework the plate.

Roulette is an engraving tool with a moving metal head to incise patterns into the plate.

Retroussage involves lightly rubbing the plate after inking to smear or leave partial ink markings on the plate creating blurry areas for painterly effects.

Contextual Information

Moran considered himself a printer of the highest order yet he was as famous for his landscape paintings that depicted the dynamic power of nature. Moran travelled extensively to directly experience different artworks and landscapes. Figures, as secondary forms within his landscapes, allowed him to express the way land or sky formations towered over humanity. Moran enjoyed experimenting in his landscape etchings through drawing, acid biting, burnishing, using tools such as a roulette, and ink techniques such as *retroussage* to create new types of line and painterly effects. Commitment to interpreting landscapes through reworking his drawings and using new techniques contributed to Moran's artistic success.

Moran's Landscape Title(s)

Some of Moran's landscape prints within this edition have different titles. This etching is titled *Three Mile Harbor*, but other titles included *The Rainbow*, *Road to the Marsh*, and *Three Mile Harbor-Two Boats at Morning*. This etching has a reverse inscription, *Three Mile Harbor*, placed at bottom right of center. In addition, Moran gave the title, *Three Mile Harbor*, to an etched plate with a different image. That image also has other titles including *Near the Shore*, *Rainbow*, and *Marshes Near the Shore*.

References

- Anderson, N.K. (1998). *Thomas Moran*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Francis, M.G. (1983-1984). Mary Nimmo Moran: Painter-Etcher. *Woman's Art Journal* 4, (2): 14-19.
<https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/1426414a-p>
- Morand, A., & Friese, N. (1986). *The Prints of Thomas Moran in the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art*. Tulsa, OK: Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association.
- Ross, J., Romano, C., & Ross, T. (1990). *The Complete Printmaker: Techniques/Traditions/Innovations*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Wilkins, T. (1998). *Thomas Moran: Artist of the mountains*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Creative Teamwork: Mary Nimmo Moran and Thomas Moran

Next Generation Sunshine Standards 9-12

Big Idea: Skills, Techniques, and Processes: Critical and Creative Thinking, Self-Expression, and Communication with Others are Central to the Arts. **Enduring Understanding 2:** Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and sequence information. **Benchmark:** VA.912.S.2.6 Incorporate skills, concepts, and media to create images from ideation to resolution. **Big Idea:** Historical and Global Connections. **Enduring Understanding 3:** Connections among the arts and other disciplines strengthen learning and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to and from other fields. **Benchmark:** VA.912.H.3.2 Apply the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills used in art to develop creative solutions for real-life issues.



Mary Nimmo Moran, *Twilight-Three Mile Harbor Road, East Hampton* (1883), Etching, 7 ¾" X 11 ¾"



Thomas Moran, *Three Mile Harbor* (1880), Etching, 7" X 9 5/8"

Session Introduction: Discuss the way Thomas Moran convinced his wife Mary Nimmo Moran in 1879 to submit her etchings to the New York etching Club. She signed her etchings M.N.M., and when accepted the review board assumed she was a man because of her bold technique. Later, writers discussed her mastery of technique through tool work and ink, revealing her ability to understand the relational strength of both needle and acid-biting skills to create poetic scenes. In 1881, Mary and Thomas exhibited etchings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston prompting invitations to submit their work to the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers in London. Both were selected as fellows and Mary Nimmo Moran was the sole female of the 65 original fellows. A London newspaper reported her artwork was "so masculine." The critic thought she was a man. **Objective:** Students will learn that within the history of art, critics and audiences made assumptions about art and artists based on sociocultural views of gender. **Materials:** Computer, PowerPoint (PP), and access to research materials. **Procedure:** Students will select and research women's artworks mistaken for works by male artists. Students will consider subject matter, socio-cultural, and historical timeframes, or any area that may influence the way viewers receive and make assumptions about art and gender. <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-2/still-invisible#018> <https://womennart.wordpress.com/2017/02/22/misrepresentation-of-women-in-art/> What does it mean for artists or art to be masculine or feminine? How are these terms defined? How have they changed in contemporary life? Students will find an artwork and create a PP presentation for the class raising questions about the ways we define gender, gender roles, art, and artists. How can art break gender barriers? Include a title for your presentation.

Session Introduction: This session will focus on Thomas Moran's creative process. Thomas sketched various landscapes outdoors but then added imaginative aspects to the sketches. His process included placing objects and printed images on the floor to find new and different shapes and patterns. He experimented with his sketches by adding these new forms and transforming them into landscape designs. **Objective:** The students will practice Moran's creative processes, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to produce artworks. **Materials:** Pencils, charcoal, erasers, smudging tools, ink, watercolor paints, paintbrushes. **Procedure:** Students will create sketches directly from nature. Working like Thomas Moran, students will then juxtapose disparate objects and printed materials on the floor moving around for different viewpoints to create new designs and compositional formats. They will add these new designs and formats to their sketches to create imaginative landscape compositions like the artist. Taking further steps, the students will experiment with abstracting the landscape designs creating a range of art from realistic to contemporary perspectives. Students will collaboratively develop an exhibition of their artwork playing with a range of titles and based on creative process, landscape features, forms, patterns, and locations. Students will write artists' statements describing their processes including idea generation, problem-solving, critical thinking, and development of a title.