

# Frederic Remington Art Museum Albert P. Newell Gallery

## Painting Guide



***The Last March*, 1906**

In the night paintings, or “nocturnes,” that Remington created in the last decade of his life, he explored not just the light, colors, and shadows of night, but areas of psychological darkness as well. Here, the poignantly empty saddle, the resigned progress of the horse, and the implacable patience of the wolves provoke reflection on universal themes such as loneliness, despair, and the inevitability of death.

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***Small Oaks*, 1887**

*Small Oaks* shows Remington’s early painting style. It is far more detailed than the later impressionistic paintings that predominate this gallery. Remington’s color choices, as well, are far different.

The subject matter here is Remington’s beloved summer escape, the St. Lawrence River. This painting

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***The End of the Day*, 1904**

Remington explored different color palettes in his many nocturne paintings. The blue of *The End of the Day* is effective in showing the cold of this snowy night. He has successfully used it as the color of snow in the darkness, falling through the air and covering every surface, even the tired backs

of the horses and of the man who unhitches them. The warm light of the kitchen is an effective contrast, beckoning the logger inside.



***Antoine's Cabin*, 1890**

*Antoine's Cabin* was painted to illustrate the article, “Antoine’s Moose-Yard,” which appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, October 1890, and was written by Remington’s friend Julian Ralph. The article describes a moose hunting excursion made by the two men into the snowy wilderness of northern Quebec. The moose head hanging at the opposite end of the gallery was shot on this expedition.

### Common questions about *The Charge of the Rough Riders*

**Did Theodore Roosevelt really lead the charge up San Juan Hill?**

Roosevelt did not lead the initial main attack on San Juan Hill, Colonel Roosevelt was leading another charge up nearby Kettle Hill, within view of the San Juan charge.

**Did Theodore Roosevelt go up San Juan Hill at all?** Yes, Roosevelt and the troops following him captured Kettle Hill, then were under fire from the Spanish on San Juan Hill. Roosevelt led a charge across the valley and up San Juan Hill to join the fighting. It is this charge that Remington probably chose to depict, with a shell bursting over head.

**Did Remington witness the charge?** No, Remington was nearby, but out of harm’s way. He did not approach the hill until the fighting was over and the American flag had been raised at the top. He had plenty of fresh eyewitness accounts to provide information for this painting.

**Why are there so many different uniforms in this painting?** On his way to Kettle Hill leading the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders), Roosevelt passed through other troops: the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers), the First Cavalry, and portions of the Third and Sixth Cavalries. Many of the regular (as opposed to the volunteer) cavalry units joined in the charge. The survivors of the Kettle Hill charge followed Roosevelt on to San Juan Hill. Although Buffalo Soldiers and the Rough Riders were expert horsemen, they fought dismounted because there had been space enough aboard ship to transport only the officers’ horses. The horse Theodore Roosevelt is riding was named Little Texas.

**Were Remington and Roosevelt friends?** The two men were close acquaintances whose careers brought them together repeatedly. During Remington’s 1883 stint as a Kansas sheep rancher; Roosevelt was cattle ranching in the Badlands of North Dakota. In 1888 a series of six articles were published in *Century Magazine*, written by Roosevelt and illustrated by Remington. The Museum’s archives hold several letters to Remington from Roosevelt when Roosevelt was Governor of New York and President of the United States.



***The Charge of the Rough Riders*, 1898**

Remington went to Cuba in 1898 to cover the Spanish-American War for the *New York Journal*. Despite Remington’s long record of painting Western military troops and officers, the artist

had never seen battle. He was sickened by what he saw of war, the “broken spirits, bloody bodies, hopeless, helpless suffering.” After this experience, Remington’s love affair with the cavalry was over.



***Lieutenant Powhatan H. Clarke, Tenth Cavalry*, 1888**

Remington befriended Clarke at Fort Grant, AZ in 1886, where Clarke was among the white officers attached to the African-American K Troop of the Tenth Cavalry regiment. Until his untimely death in 1893, Clarke served for Remington as the ideal type of the young cavalry officer: handsome,

dashing, athletic, courageous, and more than a little cocksure. This portion of what was once a full-length portrait survived a fire in 1922.



***Full Dress Engineer*, 1889**

This portrait of a Mexican military engineer is one of dozens Remington painted in rapid succession on a working trip to Mexico in 1889. Remington was fascinated with all aspects of military gear and with perceived “types” within the groups he depicted the most: cowboys, military figures, and Native Americans. This painting represents the figure more as a typical character than as a portrait of an individual person.



***The Sun Dance*, 1909**

Remington's diary, Sunday, February 28, 1909: "Am starting Sundance for the love of Record of Great Things but I'll never sell it - it will give everyone the horrors. It is in my system and its got to come out. Schuyler Kemble [son of fellow illustrator and friend,

E. W. Kemble] is going to pose for the tall skeleton shapes." Remington offered *The Sun Dance* in a one man show at Knoedler's Gallery in December 1909, and the painting did not sell.



***Evening in the Desert. Navajoes*, 1905-1906**

Here is a fine example of how Remington merged the western subject matter with which he had made his name with his newly developed impressionistic style. The subject is as much the evening in the desert as the Navajoes. The interplay of the colors and shadows formed by the setting sun with

the mounted figures provides the central drama of this painting.



***River Drivers in the Spring Break Up*, 1905-1906**

This painting is one of Remington's most experimental in his use of color and atmospheric effects. The green ice in this painting has been identified as the actual color of the ice on the St. Lawrence River near Clayton, New York.

This foggy spring river scene is a far cry from the main stream of Western art and the sharp detail of illustration Remington had left behind.



***An Old-Time Plains Fight*, 1904**

Remington provided this painting to *Century Magazine* to illustrate an article on the fur trade. The mixed-race fur traders have entered Native American territory and are meeting a hearty resistance. The arrows in the foreground show that a battle is

in progress. The composition is simple and direct. The viewer is confronted by the front figure as he anticipates a last stand. The men are representative of Eastern civilization caught in a classic confrontation with hostile Native Americans on whose land they trespass.



***The Howl of the Weather*, 1906-1907**

When subject was of the artist's choice, Remington deviated repeatedly from the expected western themes in favor of North Country subjects. *Howl of the Weather* is set in an unknown landscape, but it is certain this painting is based on Remington's

experiences of rough water on the St. Lawrence River.



***The Moaning of the Bulls*, 1907**

In this unusual nocturne, Remington leaves out his typical human subject, using instead nonhuman subjects to create a primordial scene with allegorical weight. The atmosphere is heavy with the charged standoff between two powerful, muscular

bulls, one white, one dark, as the ghostly figures of the herd fade in and out of focus. Remington's complex chiaroscuro in greens and browns was too subtle for one Boston critic, who called the painting a "monotone in color."



***Pontiac Club paintings*, 1909**

In the last summer of his life (1909), Remington and his wife Eva spent much of their time at the Pontiac Club on Lac Summerville in the Outaouais region of western Quebec. The impressionistic landscapes Remington painted there are representative of the work Remington was doing at the peak of his artistic development.



***Waiting in the Moonlight*, ca 1907-1909**

If this is a courtship scene, the spare setting—a play of dark shadow and bright highlights—seem to heighten the indeterminacy of romance. The woman's glowing skirt and enveloping wrap are decidedly feminine, but the shadowy, indistinct lines of her face give little hint of her feelings for the mounted figure

leaning toward her. Is she bending to listen to the cowboy's words, turning away coyly, or perhaps shyly, or is she rebuffing his advances? We get no hint from the cowboy's face, which is masked in shadow.



***Untitled (possibly *The Cigarette*, aka Remington's Last Painting)*, ca. 1908-1909**

Left untitled—and with a signature that may have been added by another hand—this unfinished painting has been described as Remington's last ever since Eva Remington bequeathed it as such to what is now the Frederic Remington Art Museum. In this depiction of a quiet smoke outside

a Western cabin, Remington creates a scene of relaxed companionship; the casual, makeshift seating, the wisp of cigarette smoke from the mouth of the figure on the left, and the arrangement of figures to mirror the gentle downward slope of the roof, enhance the effect. Because the seated figure with his back to the viewer blocks most of the firelight, the cool tones of the moonlight dominate, and contribute to the calm mood of the painting.



***The Sentinel*, 1907**

Standing guard outside a circle of covered wagons, the figure in this painting is at once relaxed and alert as he stares out into the night. Painted in an era when electricity was transforming people's experience of night, *The Sentinel* evokes the experience of being alone in the dark. When this painting was exhibited at

Knoedler's in 1907, a critic for the *New York Tribune* wrote of it: "The very spirit of the night is in this painting."