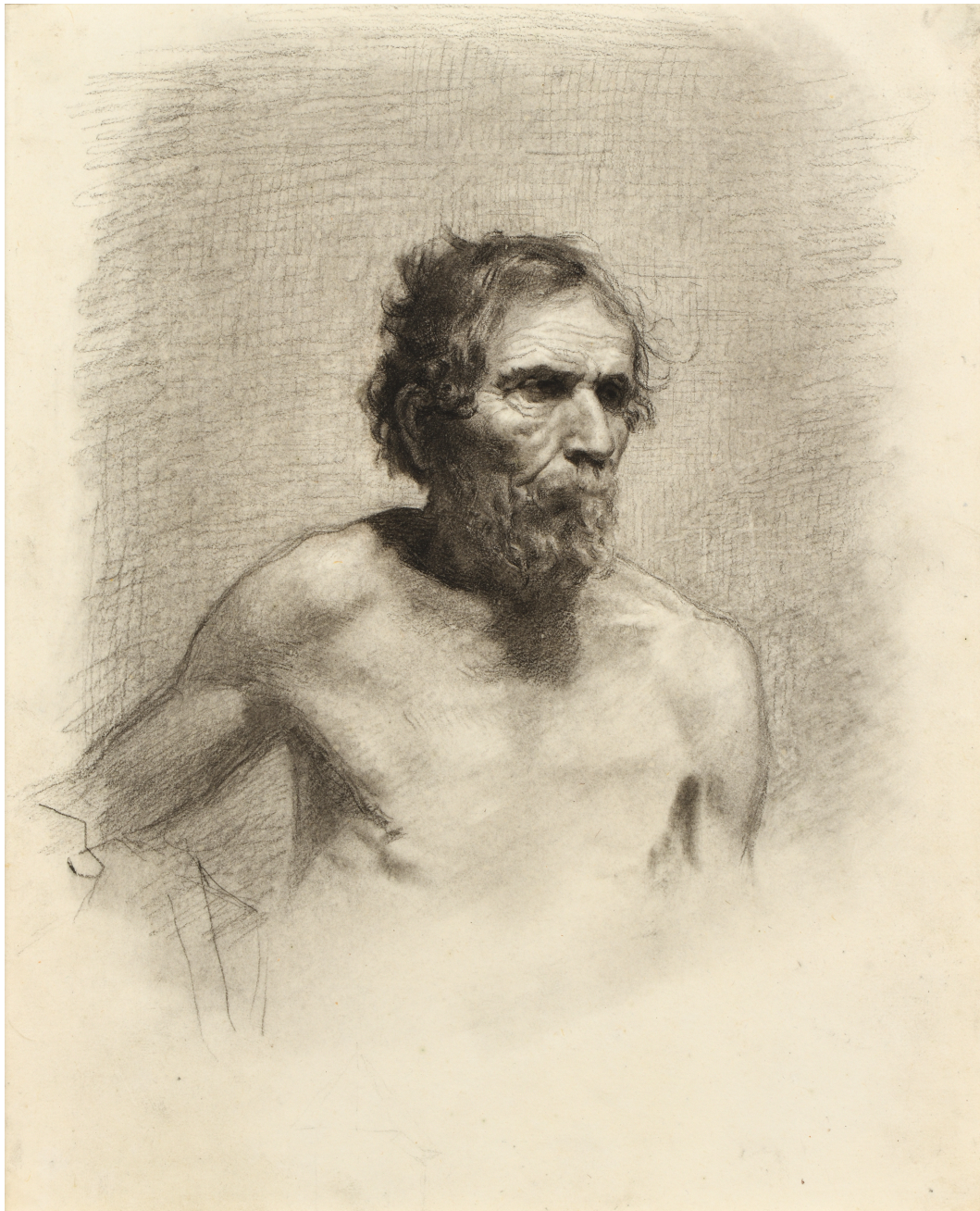


HENRY OSSAWA TANNER (Pittsburgh 1859 - 1937) ATTRIBUTED TO

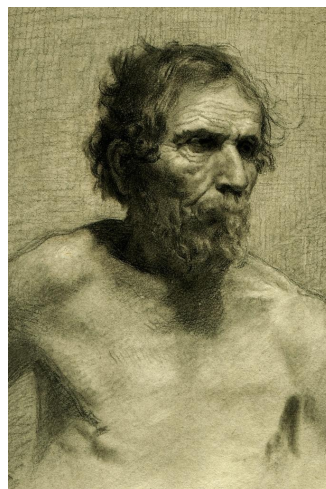
Study of an old bearded man

1890's
Charcoal on paper
25,5 x 20 cm

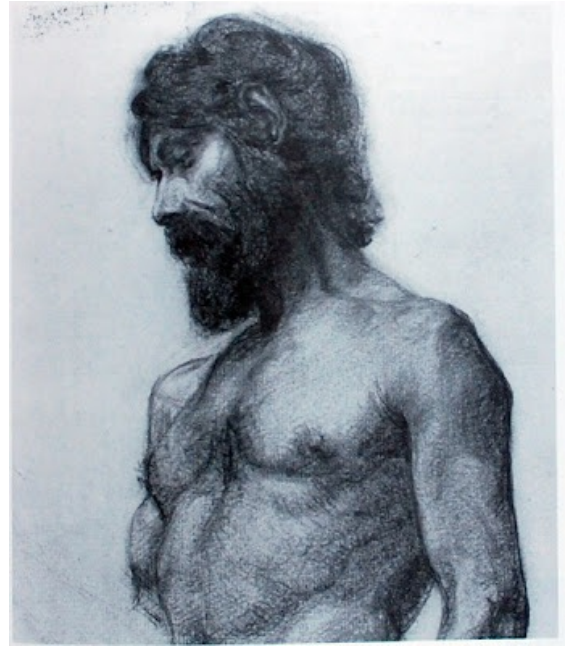


Tanner drew and painted figures and scenes of daily life in a realistic style that echoed that of Eakins. He was not limited to one specific approach to painting and drawing. His works reflect at times meticulous attention to detail and loose. The source and intensity of light and shadow in his drawings create a physical, almost tangible space and atmosphere while adding emotion and mood to the environment.

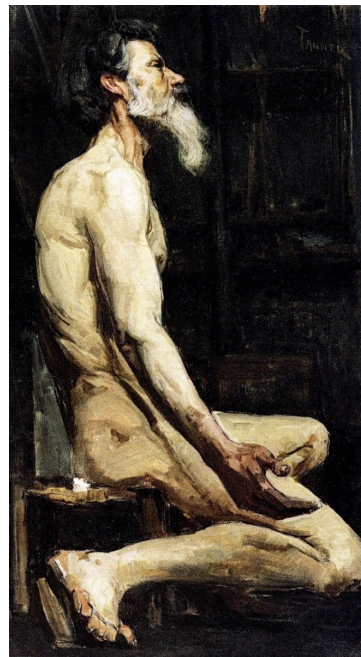
This drawing can be likened to a number of drawings by Tanner comparable with an identical treatment of lines and faces of the figures: « *Nude: Study of a Young Girl* » by Henry Ossana Tanner, conte crayon, pencil and pastel on paper, 22.5 x 16.0 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Robbins, 1983.95.46; and « *Study of a Young Man* » by Henry Ossawa Tanner, conté crayon and pencil on paper, 31.0 x 24.3 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum.



In 1880 at the age of twenty one Tanner enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts and studied under Thomas Eakins and Thomas Hovenden for the next five years. At the academy Eakins gave Tanner the solid training he needed in drawing and painting and Hovenden taught him to infuse his paintings with emotion and sensitivity and to paint from experience. These two complimentary approaches would serve Tanner well as he matured as an artist.



To end with, two other examples, *Study of a male nude*, charcoal on arches paper, 62,2 x 42,9 cm, sale DuMouchelles, Detroit, 14 June 2019; and *Study for Androcles* by Tanner, oil on canvas.



Henry Ossawa Tanner was an American artist and the first African-American painter to gain international acclaim. Tanner moved to Paris, France, in 1891 to study, and continued to live there after being accepted in French artistic circles. His painting entitled *Daniel in the Lions' Den* was accepted into the 1896 Salon, the official art exhibition of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Although many artists refused to accept an African-American apprentice, in 1879 Tanner enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, becoming the only black student. His decision to attend the school came at an exciting time in the history of artistic institutional training. Art academies had long relied on tired notions of study devoted almost entirely to plaster cast studies and anatomy lectures. This changed drastically with the addition of Thomas Eakins as « *Professor of Drawing and Painting* » to the Pennsylvania Academy. Eakins encouraged new methods, such as study from live models, direct discussion of anatomy in male and female classes, and dissections of cadavers to further familiarity with and understanding of the human body. Eakins's teaching and progressive approach to art education had a profound effect on Tanner. The young artist was one of Eakins' favorite students; two decades after Tanner left the Academy, Eakins painted his portrait.

During a relatively short time at the Academy, Tanner developed a thorough knowledge of anatomy and the skill to express his understanding of the weight and structure of the human figure on the canvas and on the paper.

In 1891 he traveled to Paris, France, to study at the Académie Julian. He also joined the American Art Students Club. Paris was a welcome escape for Tanner; within French art circles, race mattered little. Tanner acclimated quickly to Parisian life. There he met Atherton Curtis who became a friend and a patron of his art.

Except for occasional brief returns home, Tanner spent the rest of his life in Paris. There he was introduced to many new artists whose works would affect his approach to art. At the Louvre, he encountered and studied the works of Gustave Courbet, Jean-Baptiste Chardin and Louis Le Nain. These artists had painted scenes of ordinary people in their environment, and the influence in Tanner's work is noticeable. That of Courbet's *The Stone Breakers* (1850; destroyed) can be seen in the similarities in Tanner's *The Young Sabot Maker* (1895). Both paintings explore the themes of apprenticeship and manual labor.

Tanner continued his studies under renowned artists such as Jean Joseph Benjamin Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens. With their guidance, Tanner began to establish a reputation in France.

In his adopted home of France, in 1923 Tanner was appointed Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, the highest national order of merit. He considered this « *citation by the French government to be the greatest honor of his illustrious career* ». In 1937, Tanner died peacefully at his home in Paris.

Several of Tanner's paintings were purchased by Atlanta art collector J. J. Haverty, who founded Haverty Furniture Co. and was instrumental in establishing the High Museum of Art. Tanner's *Étapes Fisher Folk* is among several paintings from the Haverty collection now in the High Museum's permanent collection.

Tanner's work was influential during his career; he has been called « *the greatest African American painter to date* ». Tanner's *Sand Dunes at Sunset*, Atlantic City (c. 1885; oil on canvas) hangs in the Green Room at the White House; it is the first painting by an African-American artist to have been purchased for the permanent collection of the White House. The painting is a landscape with a « *view across the cool gray of a shadowed beach to dunes made pink by the late afternoon sunlight. A low haze over the water partially hides the sun.* » It was bought for \$100,000 by the White House Endowment Fund during the Bill Clinton administration from Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter, grandniece of the artist.