

Blakeslee Galleries

Active Dates: 1890-1914¹

Gallerist: Theron Blakeslee

Location:

1891: 218 5th Ave 26th Street ²

1898: 353 5th ave 34th street³

Later move to knickerbocker trust and co on the opposite corner (5th ave and 34th street)⁴
5th ave and 53rd (renovating prior to death)⁵

Specialty: Blakeslee specialized originally in American works then quickly moved to Old Masters Paintings.⁶

Gallery History

Well known in its own time, the Blakeslee galleries became eclipsed by the fame of its owner, Theron Blakeslee, in 1914 when he killed himself in his shop.⁷ Though his death was attributed to a great depression and stress he experienced due to business affairs, Blakeslee's ventures were noteworthy feats. Born in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1849, the gallerist started his career with Noyes & Blakeslee in Boston. He relocated to New York city in 1890 to establish his own gallery and tap into a larger market, originally selling modern American Dutch paintings along with popular Barbizon landscapes until 1892. He then pivoted his gallery towards the sale of Old master paintings. He produced sumptuous catalogues to go along with these sales, highly descriptive and full of reproduced images.⁸ Though his clientele for this kind of work was initially quite small, it quickly expanded across the continental United States. His charisma and known "infallible" eye made him one of the few trustworthy American sources for Old Master paintings. His initial success in the United States inspired other galleries to open across the country.⁹ Nonetheless, by the dawn of the Twentieth Century he participated in auctions of his

¹"Theron J. Blakeslee," *American Art News*, March 14, 1914, XII edition.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=-cFIAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA3-PA14&lpg=RA3-PA14&dq=theronblakeslee&source=bl&ots=YwZolVQpi2&sig=ACfU3U0fNaYTCYHSz9eow-arwdg5crD31w&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiK6tio2u_oAhVpl3IEHVUKCVc4ChDoATAGegQIChAt#v=onepage&q=theron blakeslee&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=-cFIAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA3-PA14&lpg=RA3-PA14&dq=theronblakeslee&source=bl&ots=YwZolVQpi2&sig=ACfU3U0fNaYTCYHSz9eow-arwdg5crD31w&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiK6tio2u_oAhVpl3IEHVUKCVc4ChDoATAGegQIChAt#v=onepage&q=theron%20blakeslee&f=false).

²Julian Alden Weir, Catalogue of recent paintings by J. Alden Weir: exhibited at the Blakeslee Galleries, January twenty-first to February seventh (New York: Blakeslee Galleries, 1891), <https://archive.org/details/catalogueofrecen00weir/page/n9/mode/2up>.

³Theron J. Blakeslee, 1914, Exhibition of Early English, Dutch, And Flemish Paintings At the Blakeslee Galleries (New York: Blakeslee Galleries, 1898), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.fl2sel&view=1up&seq=4>.

⁴"Theron J. Blakeslee."

⁵"Theron J. Blakeslee."

⁶"Theron J. Blakeslee."

⁷"Art Dealer Ends his Suffering: Theron Blakeslee, Owner of Great Masters, Kills Himself," *Sacramento Union*, Volume 175, Number 8, (March 8, 1914)

<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SU19140308.2.16&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>.

⁸ For example, see Exhibition of Early English, Dutch, And Flemish Paintings At the Blakeslee Galleries.

⁹ All information retrieved from "Theron J. Blakeslee."

works with others such as Eugène Fischhoff in 1900 and Dowdeswell in 1904, the latter at which works sold for notably low prices, implying that his works were not selling particularly well.¹⁰ In 1915, at the behest of Blakeslee's widow, the American Art Association auctioned off his collection and remaining Gallery at the famous Plaza Hotel on 5th and 59th in NYC. The catalogue was extensive, luxurious, and full of certifications and descriptions of the works by European academics.¹¹ No photographs of Blakeslee were ever published at his request.¹²

Illustrations

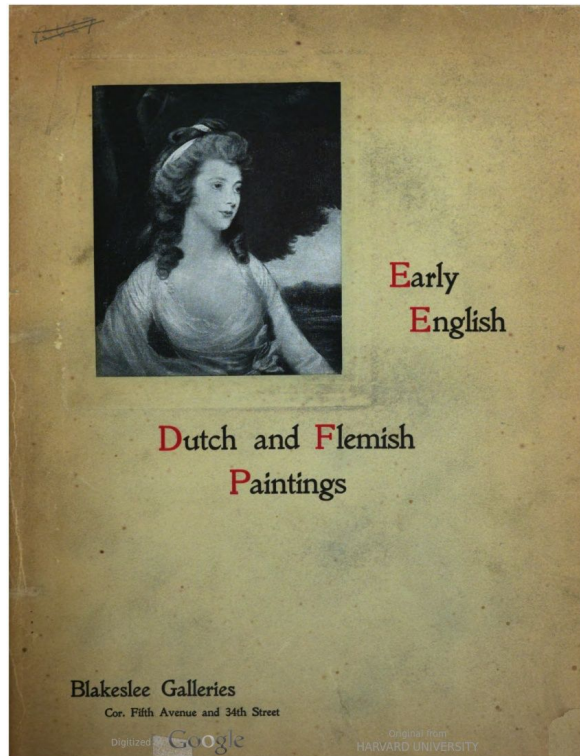


Figure 1. “Catalogue cover of Early English Dutch and Flemish Paintings,” Blakeslee Galleries, New York, 1898.

¹⁰ Eugène Fischhoff, Theron J. Blakeslee, and American Art Association, Illustrated Catalogue of Master Works of the Early English, Dutch, French And Flemish Schools: Belonging to Eugene Fischhoff, Paris, And T. J. Blakeslee, New York, to Be Sold At Absolute Public Sale At Chickering Hall ... March 9th And 10th ... (New York, 1900), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008700728>. and “Record prices, bargain sales and the complications of dealing with Duveen: the early 20th century history of art dealers Dowdeswell’s in the pages of The Burlington Magazine,” The Burlington Magazine Index Blog, April 29, 2016, <https://burlingtonindex.wordpress.com/2016/04/29/record-prices-bargain-sales-and-the-complications-of-dealing-with-duveen-the-early-20th-century-history-of-art-dealers-dowdeswells-in-the-pages-of-the-burlington-magazine/>.

¹¹ Theron J., Blakeslee, -1914. Illustrated Catalogue of the Extensive Collection of Highly Valuable Paintings by the Great Masters of the Early English, French, Flemish, Dutch, Italian And Spanish Schools, From the Widely Known Blakeslee Galleries. (New York: American Art Association, 1915), <https://archive.org/details/liu-31289009872021/mode/2up>.

¹² “Theron J. Blakeslee.”

No. 25.

RAVESTEIJN (JAN ANTHONISZ VAN).

About 1572—1657.

Portrait of a Young Lady.

"A CELEBRATED portrait painter, born at The Hague. Was a pupil of Frans Hals, whose early style he closely followed. He was scarcely surpassed by any of his countrymen in the particular branch of art which he practised, if we except Rembrandt, Hals, and Von der Helst. Ravesteijn's portraits are characterized by a peculiar nobility in the carriage of his sitters and by a fine largeness of conception. His paintings may be found in the Amsterdam Museum, Berlin Gallery, Munich Pinakothek, The Hague, and Dresden."—Bryan's "Dictionary of Painters."

A decided charm of quaintness in costume, treatment, and general pose of the model characterizes this interesting canvas, which represents a patrician woman of Flanders, with great ruff and a head-dress and cuffs of lace. In her right hand, which is gloved, she holds a gauntlet. The gown is black and embroidered in gold, and about her neck is a string of pearls. The head is painted in great detail, but broadly enough to leave no suspicion of over-elaboration, and the color is as fresh as when the work was first sent out from the artist's studio. In drawing and modelling there is nothing left to be desired, while the brilliancy of the light and the interesting arrangement of the canvas make this picture exceptionally attractive.

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Figure 2. "No.25. Ravesteijn (Jan Anthonisz Van), *Portrait of a Young Lady*," Catalogue entry, Blakeslee Galleries, New York, 1898.

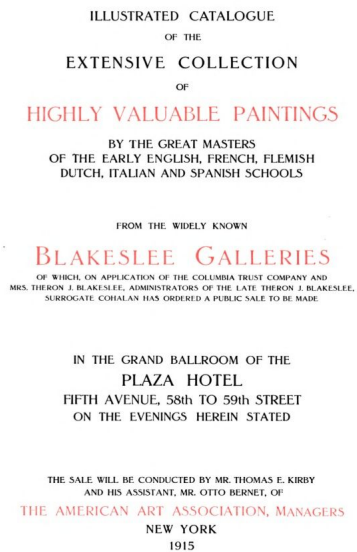


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Figure 3. "Reproduction of *Portrait of a Young Lady*," Catalogue entry, Blakeslee Galleries, New York, 1898.¹³

¹³ Images 1-3 From: Exhibition of Early English, Dutch, And Flemish Paintings At the Blakeslee Galleries.



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Figure 4. “Catalogue cover for 1915 Auction of Theron Blakeslee’s estate,” Catalogue entry, The American Art Association, New York, 1915.¹⁴

Date Written: April 17, 2020

Author’s Initials: CC

Primary Sources

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¹⁴ Catalogue of recent paintings by J. Alden Weir: exhibited at the Blakeslee Galleries, January twenty-first to February seventh.

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