

## Cottier & Co.

**Active Dates:** 1873-1915

**Gallerist:** Daniel Cottier (b. 1838-1891)

**Location:**

1873<sup>1</sup>-1892<sup>2</sup>

144 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., New York

1908<sup>3</sup>

3 East Fortieth Street, New York

**Specialty:** Prominent importer of modern European masterworks, European Impressionists, Decorators and house-furnishers characteristic of the Aesthetic Movement

### Gallery History

The gallery Cottier & Co. was founded by Daniel Cottier when his first gallery opened in London in 1869. Contemporaries with William Morris, Ford Madox Brown, and John Ruskin, Daniel Cottier, was a skilled stained glass artist from Glasgow affiliated with the Aesthetic Movement.<sup>4</sup> In 1873, he opened branches in New York and Sydney that remained active until 1915.<sup>5</sup> With his European origins and transatlantic connections, he is now credited with introducing the craft-based movement to both America and Australia.<sup>6</sup>

Under Cottier, the New York gallery sold works characteristic of the decorative arts movement such as stained glass, gasoliers, rugs, and the occasional picture. Although a large part of the gallery was based in decorative arts, the New York gallery received the bulk of its media and public attention for its importation of modern and avant-garde European works. In 1877, an article in the *New York Times* reviewed Cottier's exhibition on Fifth Avenue, commending his acquisition of "an extraordinary collection of masters."<sup>7</sup> Whilst the collection was not one of large quantity, the author noted that it was significant for its top notch quality, exposing American audiences to the French, Dutch, and English avant-garde paintings by the likes of Corot and Daubigny.

In January of the following year, another article in the *New York Times* praised the gallery, this time for their water-color exhibition and its especially notable large canvas by the deceased

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<sup>1</sup> "Opening of the Cottier Gallery on Fifth-Avenue—An Extraordinary Collection of Masters," *New York Times*, March 1, 1877, The Fine Arts.

<sup>2</sup> "Art Notes," *New York Times*, February 21, 1892.

<sup>3</sup> "Works by Melchers on Exhibition Here," *New York Times*, February 15, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Spring" (web page), Met Museum (website), accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/19200>

<sup>5</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Spring" (web page), Met Museum (website), accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/19200>

<sup>6</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Spring" (web page), Met Museum (website), accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/19200>

<sup>7</sup> "Opening of the Cottier Gallery on Fifth-Avenue—An Extraordinary Collection of Masters," *New York Times*, March 1, 1877, The Fine Arts.

Italian artist Monticelli.<sup>8</sup> Three months later, the periodical reported an update on the sale and location of the high status, imported Cottier paintings.<sup>9</sup> The reporter remarks that most of the collection was hanging in the Leavitt gallery at Broadway and the corner of Twelfth Street. Although some pieces had been sold and a couple added, the remainder of the collection was to be sold the next week at auction. Despite the Times' claim that it represented "the finest collection of modern masters ever brought together in this country," the article goes on to discuss the rumors circulating that the New York branch might shut down, lamenting the possibility of such successful tastemakers leaving the city.

After Cottier's death in 1891, the New York gallery's success continued, although its focus shifted away from the decorative arts as its painting sales—especially those of the Impressionists—increased to keep the gallery in business until 1915. In 1908, a catalogue title page advertised an exhibition consisting of a selection of 24 paintings from the gallery collection that consisted of almost 500 "original paintings by old and modern masters."<sup>10</sup> Several works by Degas, Manet, and Corot are recorded through the National Gallery of Art as sold through Cottier & Co. (after other transactions with Durand Ruel). Despite its founding in the decorative arts, the New York branch was cherished for its import of high quality European paintings, which demonstrated its international connections and sound aesthetic judgement.

## Illustrations



Figure 1. Spring, Daniel Cottier & Company, ca. 1873-1875.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Remarkable Paintings at Cottier's The Exhibition of Water-Colors," *New York Times*, January 24, 1878, The Fine Arts.

<sup>9</sup> "The Cotter Collection of Paintings," *New York Times*, April 17, 1878.

<sup>10</sup> Cottier Gallery, *A Group of Twenty-Four Paintings of the French, Spanish, German, and American Schools*, New York: Frick Art Reference Library, published ca. 1908.

<sup>11</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Spring" (web page), Met Museum (website), accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/19200>

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**Author's Initials:** BT, MP

**Primary Sources**

New York Times Archive

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**Secondary Sources**

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