

Modern Movement:

Arthur Bowen Davies Figurative Works on Paper from the Randolph College and Mac Cosgrove-Davies Collection

Arthur B. Davies (1862-1928) was an artist and primary curator of the groundbreaking Armory Show of 1913, credited with bringing modern art to American audiences. The Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College is home to sixty-one works by Davies. Malcolm Cosgrove-Davies, great grandson of Arthur B. Davies and owner of over 300 Davies pieces, has contributed a selection of works from his collection to the exhibition. *Modern Movement: Arthur Bowen Davies Figurative Works on Paper from the Randolph College and Mac Cosgrove-Davies Collections* focuses on figurative works, many depicting dancers in various poses. This exhibition was first presented on the centennial anniversary year of what was officially billed as The International Exhibition of Modern Art but commonly referred to as the Armory Show due to its location at New York's 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. That year the exhibition traveled to venues in Chicago and Boston as well.



Arthur B. Davies, 1862-1928, *Floating Figures [1]*, n.d., pastel on paper, 17 x 10 1/2 in.
Gift of Mrs. A. Conger Goodyear, 1952.

Arthur B. Davies, ca. 1908.
Gertrude Käsebier, photographer.

Sometime in the mid-1890s, Davies began to sketch and paint images of dancers and would dwell on that subject until the end of his career. The exhibition title, *Modern Movement*, suggests not only the illusion of movement within Davies' works, but also the wealth of modernist styles and ideas which debuted in the Armory Show. Undoubtedly that exhibition initiated a modern movement in the visual arts in the United States, and the individual largely responsible for selecting works and organizing gallery themes was Davies himself. The exhibition title also serves as a reference to the modern dance movement that influenced Davies and his contemporaries. Isadora Duncan in particular was simpatico with Davies. The two shared a Hellenic adoration and, as Davies has been referred to as the father of modern art in America, Duncan has been called the mother of modern dance in America. While the Armory Show rocked the foundations of traditional visual art, Duncan's trailblazing approach to what was then called aesthetic barefoot dance, transformed the world of theatrical dance.



Left: Arthur B. Davies, 1862-1928, *Floating Figures [I]*, n.d., pastel on paper, 16 x 11 1/2 in. Gift of Mrs. A. Conger Goodyear, 1952.



Right: Arthur B. Davies, 1862-1928, *Floating Figures [III]*, n.d., pastel on paper, 15 3/4 x 6 3/4 in. Gift of Mrs. A. Conger Goodyear, 1952.