

# The Lost Symphony: Whistler and the Perfection of Act

On view January 16- May 30, 2016, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

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Three Girls would have been a seminal work in the stylistic development of American artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)—if he had completed it. He intended to hang the large painting opposite his *Princess from the Land of Porcelain* in the dining room of his patron Frederick Leyland, but after they quarreled over the cost of the Peacock Room, Whistler destroyed the work. As part of Peacock Room REMIX, this exhibition reconstructs how Whistler’s unrealized quest for “the perfection of art” intersected with less-rarified concerns about patronage, payment, and professional reputation.

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**James McNeill Whistler**  
*La Princesse du pays de la porcelaine (The Princess from the Land of Porcelain)*, 1864-65.  
Oil on canvas, 201.5 x 116.1 cm.  
Frame designed and decorated by the artist.  
Freer Gallery of Art, Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1903.91.



**James McNeill Whistler**  
*The White Symphony: Three Girls*, ca. 1868.  
Oil on millboard mounted on wood panel, 46.4 x 61.6 cm.  
Freer Gallery of Art, Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1902.138.

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Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery



**FREER | SACKLER**  
THE SMITHSONIAN'S MUSEUMS OF ASIAN ART



**Julian Margaret Cameron**  
*A Dalmatian Maid (Christina Spartali)*, 1868 (negative); 1891 (print).  
 Albumen print.  
 Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, A1996.03.2.



**James McNeill Whistler**  
*Three Female Figures*, 1869-74.  
 Chalk and pastel with white heightening on brown wove paper, 22.5 x 26.7 cm.  
 Colby College Museum of Art, The Lunder Collection.



**James McNeill Whistler**  
*Woman with Parasol*, 1870-73.  
 Black and white chalk on brown paper, 18.3 x 13 cm.  
 Freer Gallery of Art, Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1905.138.



**James McNeill Whistler**  
*Girl with Cherry Blossom*, 1868-78.  
 Oil on canvas, 139.3 x 73.7 cm.  
 Private Collection; on loan to The Courtauld Gallery, London.



**Darren Waterston**  
*Porcelain Princess Enlarged*, 2013.  
 Pencil on photocopy.  
 Courtesy the artist and DC Moore Gallery, NY.



**Darren Waterston**  
*Porcelain Princess Study (for architectural model)*, 2013.  
 Acrylic on board.  
 Courtesy the artist and DC Moore Gallery, NY.