

Like the nearby Yellow and Macknight rooms, the Blue Room reflects the life and times of Isabella Gardner. More intimate than the grand galleries on the two upper floors, the Blue Room is filled with memories of Gardner's large circle of friends. Works by John Singer Sargent are displayed along with those of less-famous artists Ralph Curtis and Joseph Lindon Smith. In the cases you will find memorabilia of others who helped broaden her understanding and appreciation of art interspersed with letters and photographs of American literary figures.

Gardner's passion for collecting began with books—there are more than 3,000 in the collection. Perusing the titles of the volumes in the low bookcase (to the right as you enter the room) will give you a sense of the breadth of Gardner's reading in art, architecture, horticulture, and music—with some fiction thrown in for good measure!



## Okakura Kakuzō Case and Bernard Berenson Case

Okakura Kakuzō (1862–1913) became a close friend of Isabella Gardner soon after he arrived in Boston 1904 to become the first curator of Japanese art at the Museum of Fine Arts. He promoted interest in Japan's traditional culture and deepened Gardner's appreciation for Asian art in general. This case (located under the window) contains a poem written by Okakura for Gardner as well as mementoes of nineteenth-century American writers Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sarah Orne Jewett, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry Adams. You will find this thought-provoking mixture of East and West throughout the galleries.

In the case just to the right is a photograph of Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), taken around 1897. Isabella Gardner first met the future art dealer about this time, when he was an undergraduate at Harvard College and just beginning his studies of Italian painting. Berenson became Gardner's chief art advisor, arranging her acquisition of some of the greatest paintings in her collection, including Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* (second floor) and Titian's *Europa* (third floor).

*In order to preserve the originals, many of the letters and photographs in these cases are facsimiles.*



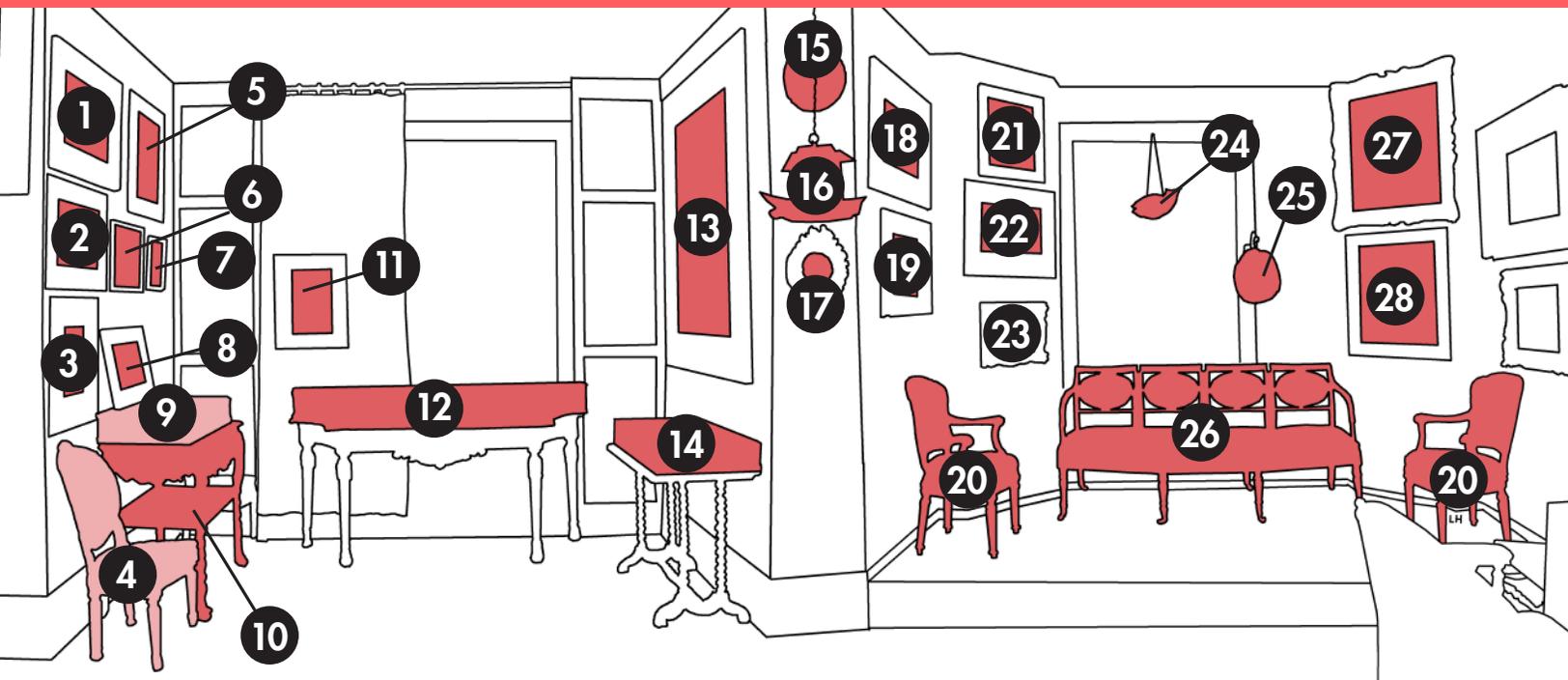
## John Singer Sargent

American, 1856–1925

**Mme Gautreau Drinking a Toast,**  
about 1882–83  
Oil on wood

Virginie Gautreau was renowned for her beauty, low-cut dresses, and lavender pancake makeup. The brushwork of this charming and intimate oil sketch also is daring, from the sitter's quickly sketched forearm to the blobs of paint that still manage to suggest flowers. Isabella Gardner saw this work in Paris when she visited Sargent's studio with writer Henry James (whose portrait hangs nearby); she acquired it from the collection of Gautreau's lover, physician Samuel-Jean Pozzi. Apparently this unconventional picture of an unconventional woman contributed to Isabella Gardner's decision to commission the next year her own portrait from Sargent. This portrait now presides over the Gothic Room on the third floor.

# BLUE ROOM • NORTH WALL



**1. Santa Maria della Salute, Venice, about 1903–04.** John S. Sargent (American, 1856–1925). Photographic reproduction of a watercolor

**2. Bus Horses in Jerusalem, about 1905.** John S. Sargent. Watercolor on paper

**3. Incensing the Veil, about 1880.** John S. Sargent. Watercolor on paper

**4. Side Chair (four in this room).** Italian (Piedmont), 1780s. Painted wood

**5. Portrait of Violet Sargent, 1890.** John S. Sargent. Oil on canvas

**6. The Headland, about 1893–95.** Karl Fredrik Nordström (Swedish, 1855–1923). Pastel on paper

**7. The Assumption of the Virgin, about 1900.** George Hawley Hallowell (American, 1872–1926). After a 15th-century altarpiece in Siena, Italy. Pencil and watercolor on paper

**8. The Marriage at Cana, about 1900.** George Hawley Hallowell. After Tintoretto's painting in Santa Maria della Salute, Venice. Pencil and watercolor on paper

**9. Case with memorabilia**

**10. Carved Table.** Chinese, 19th century. Ebony

**11. Marble Torso of a Woman, about 1878.** Dennis Miller Bunker (American, 1861–1890). Oil on canvas

**12. Case with Okakura Kakuzō memorabilia**

**13. Omnibus, 1892.** Anders Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920). Oil on canvas

**14. Case with Bernard Berenson memorabilia**

**15. Peacocks of Immortality, about 1903–06.** John S. Sargent. Cast of a medallion in the Boston Public Library. Plaster

**16. Lantern.** Japanese, 19th century. Wrought iron lined with paper

**17. Head of Isabella Gardner, 1894.** Anders Zorn. Pencil and chalk on paper

**18. Nasturtiums, 1890s.** Jan Voerman (Dutch, 1857–1941). Opaque watercolor on paper

**19. Madame Gautreau Drinking a Toast, about 1882–83.** John S. Sargent. Oil on wood

**20. Armchair (two).** Italian, late 18th century. Painted wood

**21. Portrait of George Proctor, about 1900.** Andreas Andersen (American, 1869–1902). Oil on canvas

**22. Siva Dance at Night (A Samoan Dance), 1890.** John La Farge (American, 1835–1910). Watercolor on paper

**23. Oaks of Monterey, California, 1904.** Francis McComas (Australian, 1874–1938). Watercolor on paper

**24. Gong in the form of a fish.** Japanese, 18th century. Wood

**25. Lantern in the shape of a gourd with a praying mantis.** Japanese, about 1850. Brass lined with paper

**26. Settee.** English, late-18th century. Painted and gilded wood

**27. The Shower of Gold, 1908.** Howard Gardiner Cushing (American, 1869–1916). Oil on canvas

**28. Portrait of Henry James, 1910.** William James (American, 1882–1961). Oil on canvas



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# BLUE ROOM • EAST WALL

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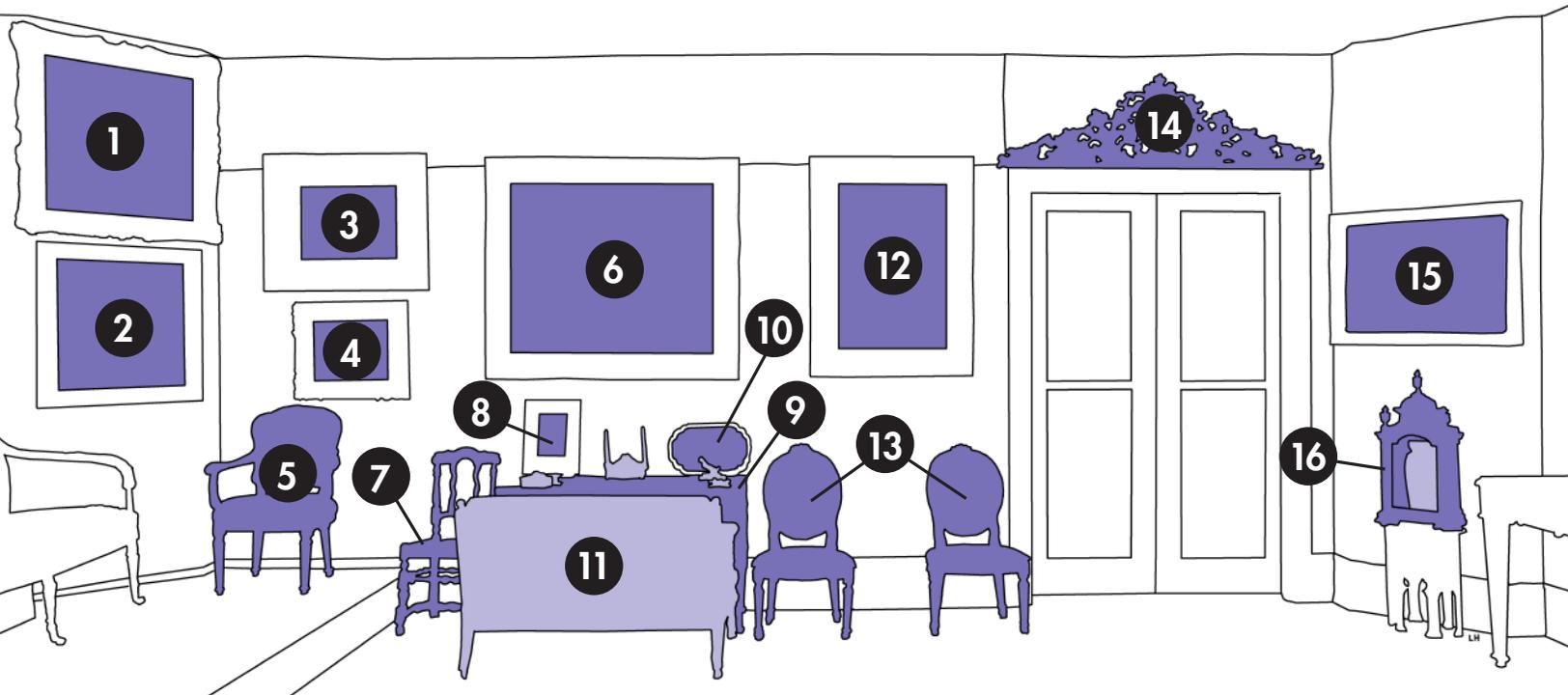
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John Singer Sargent  
American, 1856–1925  
**Yoho Falls**, 1916  
Oil on canvas

Sargent was best known as a society portraitist, but he yearned for recognition of his talents in subjects of his own choosing. Landscape paintings like this large oil (and the watercolors displayed elsewhere in the room) allowed Sargent more freedom to experiment with point of view and brushwork. *Yoho Falls* shows Sargent at his most modern; rather than a conventional view of this landmark in the Canadian Rockies, its emphasis is on paint and atmosphere.

# BLUE ROOM • EAST WALL



**1. The Shower of Gold**, 1908. Howard Gardiner Cushing (American, 1869–1916). Oil on canvas

**2. Portrait of Henry James**, 1910. William James (American, 1882–1961). Oil on canvas

**3. Noonday**, 1860s. Camille Corot (French, 1796–1875). Oil on canvas

**4. The Bird House at the Villa Borghese, Rome**, 1922. Martin Mower (American, 1870–1960). Oil on canvas

**5. Armchair**. Italian, about 1780. Painted and gilded walnut

**6. Yoho Falls**, 1916. John S. Sargent (American, 1856–1925). Oil on canvas

**7. Chair** (six in this room). Italian, about 1800. Walnut

**8. The Nativity**, about 1900. George Hawley Hallowell (American, 1872–1926). Ink and watercolor on paper

**9. Writing Desk**. Italian (Veneto), about 1790. Walnut; the top is marquetry from southern Germany

*On the desk:*

**Teapot Tray** (with 5 keys). English, 18th century. Silver

**Inkstand**. French, 18th century. Faience

**Tobacco Box**. Dutch, 18th century. Brass

**Duck**, early-20th century. Jane Poupelet (French, 1878–1932). Bronze

**Tapestry Fragment**. Chinese, 19th century. Silk

**Letter Opener with figure of a satyr**, 19th century. Bronze

**10. Tray with The Adoration of the Magi**. Dutch, 18th century. Painted wood

**11. Settee**. American, late-19th century. Wood

**12. Astarte**, about 1893–94. John S. Sargent. Oil on canvas

**13. Side Chairs** (four in this room). Italian (Piedmont), 1780s. Painted wood

**14. Mirror Top**. American, 19th century. Gilded wood

**15. Blue Sails—Concarneau I**, about 1910. Boris Anisfeld (Russian, 1879–1973). Oil on canvas

**16. Vitrine**. Italian (Marches), 1780s. Painted wood. *Inside: Vase*. Chinese, about 1700. Porcelain

# BLUE ROOM • WEST WALL

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Denis Miller Bunker  
American, 1861–1890  
**Chrysanthemums**, 1888  
Oil on canvas

Isabella Gardner loved flowers and gardening, as the courtyard of this museum makes wonderfully clear. This painting of blooming chrysanthemums in the greenhouses at Green Hill, the Gardner's summer residence in Brookline (about six miles away), is among the earliest examples of American Impressionism. It is less a description of a particular place than a rendering of the riot of colors found there.

Bunker gave this work to Gardner just before his tragic death at the age of 29, calling it "A very poor sketch of your favorite flower—and which was painted entirely to please you." The picture was painted after Bunker spent the summer in France with John Singer Sargent, both of them working outdoors under the influence of French Impressionist Claude Monet.

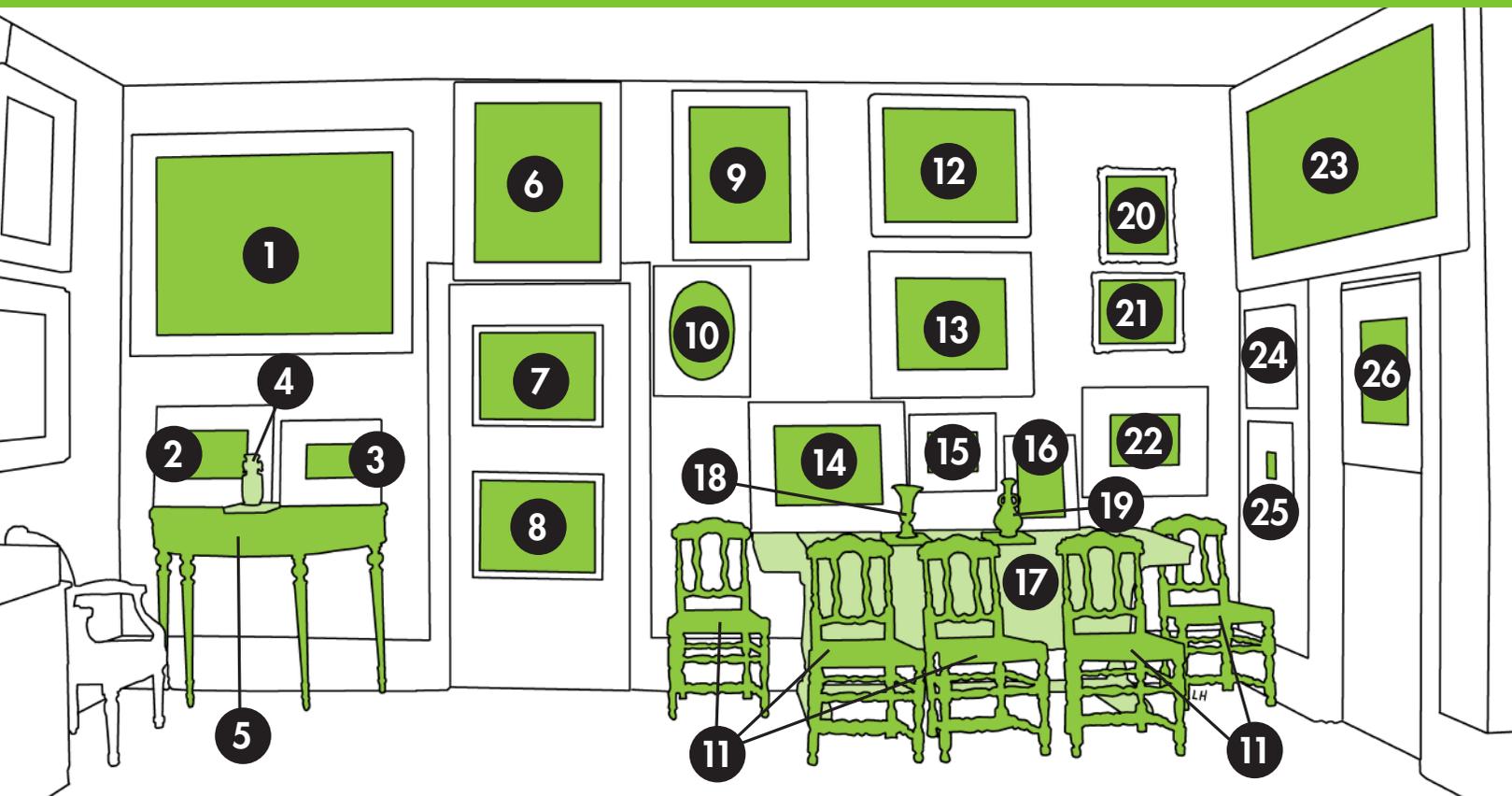


Ralph Curtis  
American, 1854–1922  
**Return from the Lido**, 1884  
Oil on canvas

Isabella Gardner first met Ralph Curtis in Venice, in 1884. He was the son of Bostonians who had moved to Venice in the late 1870s; later, the Curtis's Palazzo Barbaro in Venice became Gardner's home-away-from-home. In this painting, a gondola wends its way back at dusk from the Lido, a little island with a popular beach. Gardner and Curtis spent many hours floating through Venice's canals, which may have added to her attraction to this languid and slightly mysterious painting.

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# BLUE ROOM • WEST WALL



**1. Chrysanthemums**, 1888. Denis Miller Bunker (American, 1861–1890). Oil on canvas

**2. Bridge of Boats to Campo Santo, Venice, All Soul's Day**, about 1892. Francis Edward James (British, 1849–1920). Watercolor on paper

**3. Santa Maria della Salute from the Giudecca, Venice**, about 1883. Francis Edward James (British, 1849–1920). Watercolor on paper

**4. Vase with fish-shaped handles**. Korean, 18th century. Lacquer

**5. Side Table** (two in this room). Italian (Naples), about 1790. Painted poplar with marble top

**6. Portrait of John Briggs Potter**, about 1903. Denman Ross (American, 1853–1935). Oil on canvas

*On the back of the door:*

**7. A Torso**, about 1883–84. Denis Miller Bunker (American, 1861–1890). Chalk on paper

**8. Day**, about 1883–84. Denis Miller Bunker (American, 1861–1890). After Michelangelo's sculpture in the Medici Chapel, Florence. Chalk and wash on paper

**9. Portrait of Mrs. Grover Cleveland**, about 1899. Anders Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920). Oil on canvas

**10. The Little Groom**, 1880s. Antonio Mancini (Italian, 1852–1930). Pastel and opaque watercolor on paper

**11. Chairs** (five). Italian, about 1800. Walnut

**12. A Theater in Mukden, Manchuria**, about 1905. Joseph Lindon Smith (American, 1863–1950). Oil on canvas

**13. A View Across the River**, 1860s. Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877). Oil on canvas

**14. A Tent in the Rockies**, 1916. John S. Sargent (American, 1856–1925). Watercolor on paper

**15. Among the Rocks**, about 1906. Howard Gardiner Cushing (American, 1869–1916). Oil on cardboard

**16. A New York Blizzard**, 1890. Childe Hassam (American, 1859–1935). Pastel on paper

**17. Refectory Table**. Italian, 17th century. Walnut

**18. Vase in the shape of two lotus flowers**. Japanese, early 19th century. Bronze

**19. Vase with elephant-head handles**. Chinese, early 19th century. Bronze

**20. Ponte della Canonica, Venice**, about 1912. Caleb Arnold Slade (American, 1882–1961). Oil on canvas

**21. The Shores, Etaples, France**, 1913. Caleb Arnold Slade. Oil on pasteboard

**22. A Snow-Capped Mountain**, about 1895. Rodolfo Lanciani (Italian, 1846–1929). Watercolor on paper

**23. Return from the Lido**, 1884. Ralph Curtis (American, 1854–1922). Oil on canvas

**24. The Recording Angel**, 1890. John La Farge (American, 1835–1910). Watercolor on paper

**25. The Spirit of the Waterlily**, about 1861–62. John La Farge. Watercolor and opaque watercolor on paper

**26. A Head by Desiderio**, 1894. Joseph Lindon Smith. Watercolor on paper



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# BLUE ROOM • SOUTH WALL

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Edouard Manet  
French, 1832–1883  
**Portrait of Madame Auguste Manet, 1863**  
Oil on canvas

Manet was very close to his mother, who encouraged his interest in becoming a painter. In this somber portrait, Manet's mother—who appears both sympathetic and a bit formidable—wears mourning clothes for her husband, who had died the year before. The subtly differentiated shades of black sharply contrast with the lighter, flatter paint of Mme Manet's face and hands. Compare this work to Sargent's sketch of the socialite Mme Gautreau on the wall behind, noticing how the younger woman's gauzy clothing and extravagant gesture contrast with the solemn stability of Mme Manet.



Antonio Mancini  
Italian, 1852–1930  
**The Standard Bearer of the Harvest Festival, about 1884**  
Oil on canvas

Notice how the boy and the standard are dark and light, complementing each other, and how the solid stance of the boy contrasts with the billowing fabric of the standard. Ralph Curtis (whose work is on view on the opposite wall) introduced Isabella Gardner to Mancini's painting and negotiated the purchase of this work. Curtis was entranced by Mancini's thick, expressive brushwork and his unsentimental pictures of life in the Italian countryside.

# BLUE ROOM • SOUTH WALL



**1. Blue Sails—Concarneau I**, about 1910. Boris Anisfeld (Russian, 1879–1973). Oil on canvas

**2. Vitrine.** Italian (Marches), 1780s. Painted wood.  
*Inside:* **Vase.** Chinese, about 1700. Porcelain

**3. Portrait of Madame Auguste Manet**, 1863. Edouard Manet (French, 1832–1883). Oil on canvas

**4. Side Table.** Italian (Venice), late-18th century. Painted pine

*On the table:* wood **Lion Finials**, Italian, 15th century; pine and sandalwood **Box**, Italian, 17th century; stone **Mortar**, Italian, 16th century

**5. Surge of the Sea**, about 1900. Andreas Andersen (American, 1869–1902). Oil on canvas

**6. Vitrine.** Italian, mid 18th century. Painted wood.  
*Inside:* **Head of a Crozier (bishop's staff).** Italian, 15th century.

**7. Chest.** Chinese, 19th century. Lacquer with brass mountings

**8. The Scapegoat**, about 1903–16. John S. Sargent (American, 1856–1925). Cast of a medallion in the Boston Public Library. Plaster

**9. Sheep in the Shelter of the Oaks**, about 1870. Charles-Émile Jacque (French, 1813–1894). Oil on canvas

**10. Ponte della Canonica**, about 1903–04. John S. Sargent. Photographic reproduction of a watercolor

**11. Armchair.** Italian (Veneto), 1780s–90s. Wood

**12. Bust of Akhenaten**, about 1908. Joseph Lindon Smith (American, 1863–1950). Oil on canvas

**13. A She-Goat**, 1880s. Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–1899). Oil on canvas

**14. The Beach**, about 1908. Denman Ross (American, 1853–1935). Oil on canvas

**15. Self-Portrait**, about 1910. Ignaz Gaugengigl (American, 1855–1932). Oil on canvas

**16. The Crusader**, about 1840. Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863). Oil on card

**17. Cinerary Urn (container for ashes).** Roman, 1st century A.D. Stone

**18. Side Table (two).** Italian (Naples), about 1790. Painted poplar with marble top

**19. Portrait of A. Piatt Andrew, Jr.**, about 1911. Anders Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920). Oil on canvas

**20. The Brook at Medfield**, about 1889. Denis Miller Bunker (American, 1861–1890). Oil on canvas

**21. Armchair (two).** Italian (Piedmont), 1780s. Painted wood

**22. Cope (an ecclesiastical vestment).** French or Italian, 18th century. Brocaded satin

**23. Standard Bearer of the Harvest Festival**, about 1884. Antonio Mancini (Italian, 1852–1930). Oil on canvas

**24. The Terrace at La Granja**, 1912. John S. Sargent. Watercolor on paper

**25. San Giuseppe di Castello**, about 1903–04. John S. Sargent. Photographic reproduction of a watercolor

**26. The Old Barn Under Snow, Newport**, about 1860. John La Farge (American, 1835–1910). Oil on wood

**27. At the Window**, before 1918. Louis Kronberg (American, 1872–1965). Oil on canvas

**28. Case with selections from Isabella Gardner's library**

**29. A Bandaged Head**, about 1919. Denman Ross. Oil on canvas

**30. A Lady with a Rose**, before 1892. Albert Besnard (French, 1849–1934). Pastel on paper

**31. Chrysanthemums**, 1888. Denis Miller Bunker. Oil on canvas

**32. Bridge of Boats to Campo Santo, Venice, All Soul's Day**, about 1892. Francis Edward James (British, 1849–1920). Watercolor on paper

**33. Santa Maria della Salute from the Giudecca, Venice**, about 1883. Francis Edward James. Watercolor on paper

**34. Vase with fish-shaped handles.** Korean, 18th century. Lacquer

