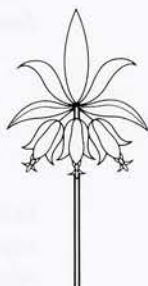


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Two chromolithographs and related paintings

James J. White

I. Callas

The *Calla* of gardeners, *Zantedeschia*, South African in origin, was named for Giovanni Zantedeschi (1773–1846), an Italian botanist and physician. This subject seems to have been popular in the late 19th century, as it is today. To an artist wishing to depict white flowers (in the case of callas, the ivory-white or cream-colored spathes), the dark background is a dramatic solution.

We have discovered two oil paintings of callas, one on canvas (21" × 14 ½") and one

on tin (16 ¼" × 12 ⅛"), and a chromolithograph (20" × 13 ½") signed "R. Hill 1877." The painting on canvas was purchased in Rhode Island during the 1970s; the other oil may have been purchased in Ohio about the same time. We have been unable to find any biographical data on this artist. Presumably the oil on canvas was the model for the chromolithograph and the oil on tin is a copy.

In *Chromolithography 1840–1900: The democratic art, pictures for a 19th-century America* (Boston, 1979) Peter C. Marzio discusses in



Figure 1. Oil on canvas, private collection.

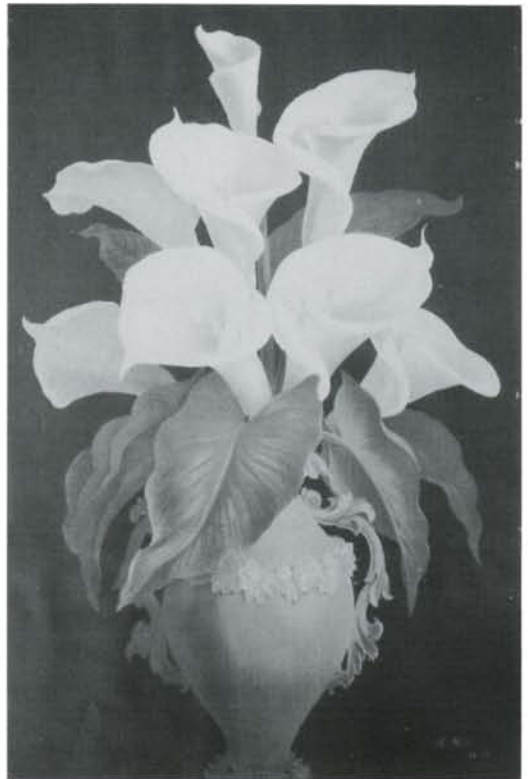


Figure 2. Chromolithograph, courtesy of Paul Mason.



Figure 3. Oil on tin, courtesy of Sue Ellen Steffens.

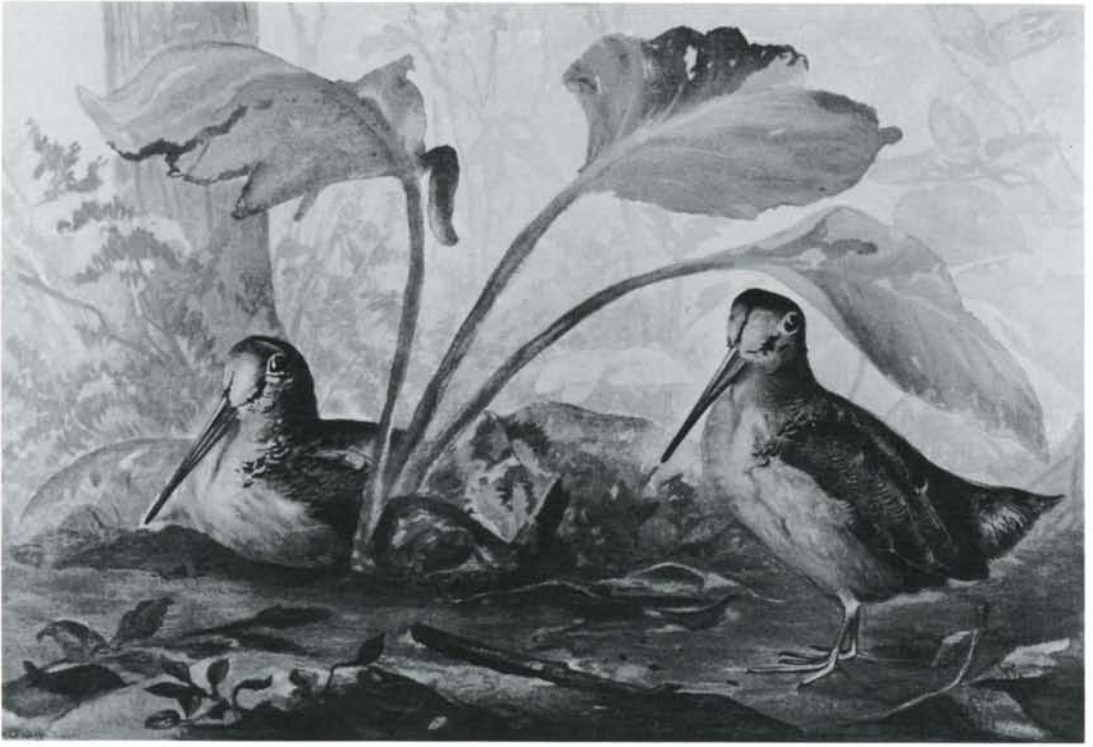


Figure 4. Chromolithograph by Alexander Pope Jr. Courtesy of Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota.

detail how original paintings from 1840 to 1900 were reproduced and sold in America by the millions.

Incidentally, an oil on panel of callas, contemporary with the ones already mentioned and also with black background, was painted by George Cochran Lambdin in 1874 (see Ella M. Foshay, *Reflections of nature: Flowers in American art*, 1984, fig. 89, p. 116). In 1875, Fidelia Bridges painted the subject in watercolor (see *The Brooklyn Museum: American watercolors pastels collages: A complete illustrated listing of works in the museum's collection*, 1984, p. 19).

II. Woodcocks

Woodcocks, squat-bodied and long-billed, are not uncommon in American art. *Game*

birds of America (1861) included a set of four oval lithographs, one of them titled "Woodcock." Currier and Ives produced at least two lithographs, "A Rising Family" and "Woodcock. *Scolopax minor*," and *American agriculturist* (July 1885) featured a pair on its cover.

A painting on porcelain plaque (11" × 13 3/4") by unknown artist of a single woodcock apparently was inspired by Alexander Pope Jr.'s chromolithograph (Armstrong & Co., Boston) of a pair of American woodcocks in *Upland game birds and water fowl of the United States* (1878). The mound at bottom left and some of the plants in this damp wood setting are too similar to be coincidence. The artist eased his task by choosing only one bird as his subject. Kenneth C. Parkes, senior curator of birds, The Carnegie Museum of Natural



Figure 5. Painting on porcelain plaque, private collection.

History, remarked that Pope's pictures are "clearly painted from the typical poorly-shaped taxidermy mounts of the time (indeed, some present-day taxidermists don't do much better). The male Goldeneye, for example, would fall over on his face if he were really built that way; the legs are placed much too far back. Except when in motion, a bird's feet, whether on the ground or on a perch, must contact the substrate directly under the bird's center of balance. Standing ducks hold their bodies horizontally, not tilted as in Pope's lithograph."

Acknowledgments

Our gratitude to Sue Ellen Steffens (Hudson, OH) and Paul Mason (Harrisburg, PA) for allowing reproduction of their artworks of callas; Donald T. Luce, curator of natural history art, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, for providing a photograph of the Pope chromolithograph; and Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes and George J. McDonald for their comments.

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