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**Review of *Beyond Madness: The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847-1919* By Norman A. Geske**

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ownerships, prices paid, letters of family members and others, publications of scholars and notations of collectors, and so on. In 1969 and 1974 Geske directed four examination seminars to separate the artist's genuine work from the many forgeries.

*Beyond Madness: The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847-1919* is an extension of Geske's catalogue essay for the 1975 Blakelock exhibition at the Sheldon. There is now a thirty-six-page chronology of Blakelock's life with frequent changes of residences, exhibitions, purchases, and other information. This includes an annotated bibliography with what appears to be everything ever published on Blakelock. There is an appendix of letters from Cora Blakelock, the artist's wife, to the gallery owner Robert C. Vose, but it is uncertain why others closer to the core were not included, or the artist's writings when he was kept in the Sanitarium in Middletown, New York, or Cora's accounts of her husband's breakdown. There are sections on the artist's drawings, on forgeries of his work, and a short but important section on his signatures. There is the presentation of unknown and little known works such as a small oil on paper of Blakelock's physician father and a luminous oil on paper, *Japanese Lantern with Moths* (used for the jacket), Blakelock's only attempt at the subject.

A reservation I have concerns Geske's wobbly placement of Blakelock in some areas of nineteenth-century American painting. This is well done for Blakelock's relation to such Barbizonists as William Morris Hunt. But in the 1880s and 1890s the artist's work grew more inward, imaginary, and "visionary." The relation of that work to other visionaries of the time, such as Albert P. Ryder, is touched upon but could be further fleshed out.

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*Beyond Madness: The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847-1919.* By Norman A. Geske. Foreword by Peter H. Hassrick. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. xviii + 175 pp. Illustrations, color plates, bibliography, appendix, notes, index. \$70.00.

No one has studied the art of the American painter Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847-1919) for as many years and as intensely as Norman A. Geske. After a telephone call from the artist's great-grandson in 1966, Geske was on board. In 1969, while Director of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, he launched the Nebraska Blakelock Inventory. This was to hold all known information on the artist—photographs of paintings and drawings, previous