



The Art of Kahlil Gibran at Telfair Museums

Telfair Museum of Art, Suheil Bushrui, Tania June Sammons

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Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931), Lebanese-born artist and writer, was best known for authoring *The Prophet*, a collection of short philosophical essays that became one of the top selling books of the twentieth century. In 1895, Gibran, age twelve, immigrated to Boston with his family. Through a series of important connections stemming from the recognition of his creative talents at a local settlement house, the aspiring artist met Mary Haskell, the headmaster of a Boston girls' school. Despite a ten year separation in age, the two formed an important lifelong relationship that culminated in Haskell's patronage and provided Gibran with the security to pursue his career. In 1950, Haskell (who became Mary Haskell Minis in 1926) donated her personal collection of nearly one hundred works of art by Gibran to the Telfair Museums in Savannah, Georgia.

Comprising two essays, this book features the Telfair's collection of work by and about Gibran, the largest holding in the United States. The collection spans Gibran's career from his first major exhibition at photographer Frederick Holland Day's studio in Boston in 1904 to works created during the last years of his life. It includes photographs of Gibran and his New York studio and a portrait of the young artist painted by Lilla Cabot Perry.

Sammons' essay discusses the visionary artist's creations as well as addresses Gibran's relationship with Haskell and the development of her personal collection, which makes up the majority of the Telfair's Gibran holdings.

Bushrui's essay focuses on Gibran's literary contributions through six of Gibran's English-written books from which the Telfair collection includes original illustrations by the artist. These books include *The Madman* (1918), *The Forerunner* (1920), *Sand and Foam* (1926), *Jesus the Son of Man* (1928), *The Earth Gods* (1931), and *The Garden of the Prophet*.

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