

Basic Detail Report

**Title**

The Falconer

Artist

Thomas Couture

Date

probably 1846

Dimensions

H: 51 in. (129.5 cm); W: 38 1/2 in. (97.7 cm)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Classifications

Paintings

Credit Line

Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

Object number

1954.78

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Collections

Paintings

Label Text

"This painting of my youth is considered, perhaps rightly, as my best picture," declared Thomas Couture in 1876. Contemporary admirers praised *The Falconer's* "vivacious" and "velvety" colors, its design, and the contrast in execution between the figure and the background. The subject reflects the 19th-century revival of interest in romantic subjects from the Gothic age of chivalry and pageantry. Dressed in striped tights and belted velvet doublet, the youth ascends the marble stairs of a grand terrace while taunting a falcon, which flaps its wings and snaps its beak in response. Falconry was associated with medieval knights and courtiers and remained a sport of the aristocracy even into the 19th century. Couture was an important teacher to a number of forward-looking artists in the mid-1800s. Édouard Manet, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, and Henri Fantin-Latour (all in the Museum's collections) were among his most innovative students.

Not On View