

Basic Detail Report

**Title**

Ophelia ("And He Will Not Come Back Again")

Artist

Arthur Hughes

Date

about 1865

Dimensions

Painting: 37 1/4 × 23 1/8 in. (94.6 × 58.7 cm) Frame: 46 1/4 × 33 × 1 1/4 in. (117.5 × 83.8 × 3.2 cm)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Classifications

Paintings

Credit Line

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

Object number

1952.87

Published References

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Exhibition History

Liverpool Academy, 1867, no. 95.

Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, *Grand Loan Exhibition of Pictures*, 1886, no. 1176.

Lawrence, University of Kansas Museum of Art, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle*, 1958.

Indianapolis, Herron Museum of Art, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 1964, no. 41, repr.

Gallery of Modern Art, New York, N.Y. 1964.

Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, *An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Victorian Artists in England*, 1965, no. 58.

Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, *English Revivalism 1750-1870: The Aesthetic of Nostalgia*, 1968, repr.

Wilmington, Delaware Art Museum, *The Pre-Raphaelite Era 1848-1914*, 1976, p. 53, nos. 3-9, repr. p. 52.

Oklahoma City Museum of Art, *Artist as Narrator: Nineteenth Century Narrative Art in England and France*, 2005, no. 46, p. 23, repr. p. 25 (col.).

Toledo Museum of Art, *Shakespeare's Characters: Playing the Part*, September 2, 2016-January 8, 2017.

Collections

Paintings

Label Text

The sad madness and death of Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was a favorite subject of the group of British artists who called themselves the Pre-Raphaelites. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which included William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, frequently depicted literary subjects, placing an emphasis on emotional and symbolic content. Though not an original member of the Pre-Raphaelites, Arthur Hughes embraced their aims. Hughes shows Ophelia as a melancholy young woman with piercing blue eyes and flowing red hair. In her madness, she is gathering flowers to hang on the willow tree; she will soon slip into the stream and drown. Hughes includes the same flowers and plants that Shakespeare chose for their symbolic meanings. The willow stood for sadness and forsaken love, the daisy for innocence, and the violets around Ophelia's wrist for faithfulness. The little blue forget-me-nots in the grass are an appropriate addition, though Shakespeare does not include them. Hughes adds another significant flower not mentioned by Shakespeare: red poppies, symbolic of death.

On View

Toledo Museum of Art (2445 Monroe Street), Gallery, 32