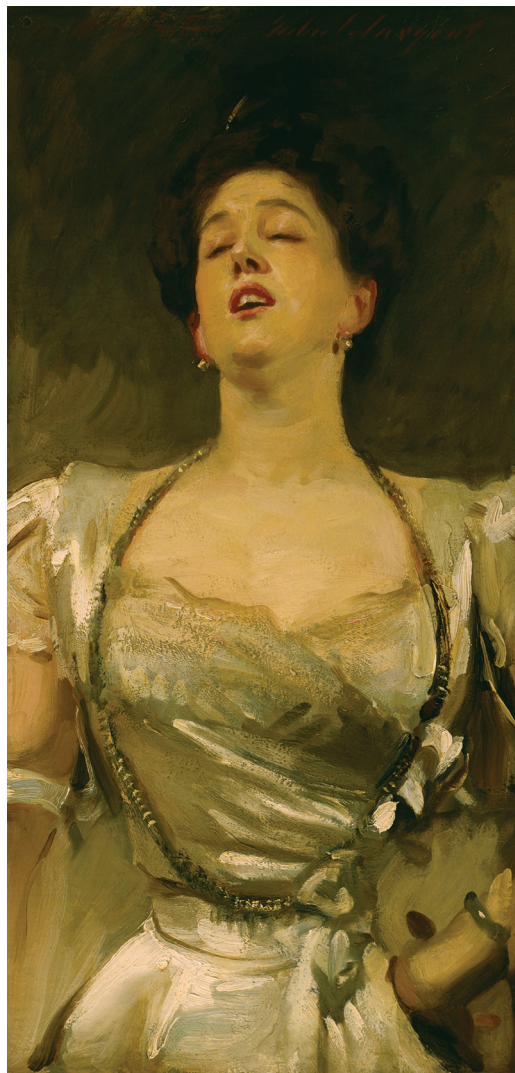


RIGHT: Painted with great flourish, **Mrs. George Batten Singing** (1897; oil on canvas, 35x17) is reminiscent of earlier depictions of singers by Edgar Degas and Thomas Eakins. When first shown in 1897, the artist Walter Sickert wrote: "Mr. Sargent exhibits two dashing sketches on a large scale. No one must be more surprised than he to be called 'the leader of the modern movement,' as I see it is becoming the fashion to call him. I don't know what the modern movement is, but Mr. Sargent leads nothing but his own very able brush, and that to great effect."

Lent by Glasgow Life (Glasgow Museums) on behalf of Glasgow City Council; presented by the Trustees of the Hamilton Bequest, 1929



in August 1885 as a gift to the sitters. Stevenson described the painting in a letter to a friend: "It is, I think, excellent, but is too eccentric to be exhibited. I am at one extreme corner; my wife, in this wild dress and looking like a ghost, is at the extreme other end; between us an open door exhibits my palatial entrance hall and a part of my respected staircase." The description ends with an exclamatory appraisal of the canvas: "All this is touched in lovely (sic), with that witty touch of Sargent's, but of course it looks damn queer as a whole." Of note is the prominence of red in the design; it surrounds Stevenson as wall color, features in the trim of his wife's dress, and bleeds across the lower edge of the painting, furnishing the path upon which Stevenson paces.

Artists at Work

Among the fellow artists Sargent painted were Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, William Merritt Chase, Antonio Mancini, Dennis

Miller Bunker and Paul Helleu, but he also portrayed less well-known painters. One of the finest examples is *The Fountain, Villa Torlonia, Frascati, Italy* (page 41), an oil that depicts Sargent's friends and traveling companions Wilfrid and Jane de Glehn. Both husband and wife were landscape painters and here Sargent has depicted Jane at work, while Wilfrid leans beside her. About the painting, Jane wrote, "Sargent is doing a most amusing and killingly funny picture in oils of me perched on a balustrade painting. It is the very 'spit' of me. He has stuck Wilfrid in, looking at my sketch with rather a contemptuous expression ... Wilfrid is in short sleeves, very idle and good for nothing and our heads come against the great panache of the fountain." Every part of the canvas is expertly finished: the de Glehn's creamy white fabrics, the mottled textures of stonework and the lush vegetation are all set down with a delightful sensuality. The painting's complex design is equally assured, with the sweep of the distant balustrade reinforcing the connection of Jane's arm to her canvas, while a perpendicular line is formed by the spume of the fountain, placed with daring and some humor just above Wilfrid's head.

Jane de Glehn reappears in *In the Generalife* (page 40), a watercolor painted at a former palace of Moorish sultans in Spain. This time she's observing the creative process, seated beside Sargent's sister, Emily, who works at an easel. To our right, also intently watching Emily, is another friend, Dolores Carmona. The painting appears to have been done rapidly and left unfinished: Emily's portrait remains unresolved, and the streaks of color that run up to Dolores's head give a highly spontaneous impression. But the Metropolitan Museum also has a pencil sketch of de Glehn that indicates a preparatory thought process, and Sargent signed and exhibited the watercolor, so he considered it completed. Further, and not atypically, there are numerous traces of a graphite underdrawing throughout. Thorough planning and an armature of confident draftsmanship supported Sargent's seemingly effortless facility with which he used watermedia.

An Art of Impeccable Manners

"Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends" provides a level of entrée into the artist's private life. It was a life of hard-earned luxury,