

*From Peasants  
to Presidents:  
Sweden's Greatest Etcher*



**Anders Zorn**  
**at the American Swedish Institute**  
**February 6 - June 1, 2008**

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*Founded in 1929 by Swan J. Unrblad*



## An Introduction to Anders Zorn

by Willow and Bill Hagans

Anders Zorn (1860-1920) made seven trips from Europe to America between 1893 and 1911, spending time in the major cities of the East and Midwest as well as California and Florida, even Mexico and Cuba.

After leaving Stockholm at the age of twenty, Zorn began a vagabond existence, never staying in one place for long during the remainder of his life. He lived and worked in London and Paris, where he enjoyed great success as a portrait painter and a revolutionary portrait-er of nudes in the open air. Zorn also traveled and worked extensively in Spain, Germany, and North Africa. While living in London in the 1880s, Zorn learned the rudiments of etching from fellow countryman, Axel Hägg.

Zorn came to America for the first time in 1893 as superintendent of the Swedish art section of the Chicago World's Fair. There he not only made important contacts, but sold all of his works amid a great deal of publicity. He made six other trips through 1911.

During Zorn's time in America, the Swedish artist painted or etched more than one hundred prominent Americans. Zorn related his humble peasant roots in the province of Dalarna to his appreciation of America. The artist wrote in his memoirs:

I get on well in America and with Americans. Their frank, straightforward manner suits my nature. I've never really been able to stand our urban Europeans' ceremonious style and artificial customs. When I first came out of Dalarna, I learned quickly that everything I knew and valued was considered nothing, and that one should never tell the truth in polite society. . . . But the only rules of conduct that were so severely





impressed on me by my grandfather from my earliest childhood were not so tricky; faithfulness, being true to one's word, honesty, and punctuality--virtues I discovered that were unnecessary in the cities of Europe. . . . Why was I more than other foreigners during [my visits to America] closest to the elite of America and introduced in all the clubs? Everywhere I go, I ascribe this to my grandfather, the splendid old Mora peasant who raised me until I was twelve. . . . Over there [in America], when they say "he's all right," all doors open to foreigners, which Europeans cannot understand. Openness, honesty, straightforwardness, punctuality, these things are included in the assurance, "he's all right."

The latter part of Zorn's career centered on life in his home village, Mora, in Dalarna, where he had bought land in 1886. There Zorn painted scenes from his peasant youth and worked hard to preserve traditional life as industrialization encroached on the old ways. Zorn's unique approach to art coupled impressionistic techniques with portraiture, nudes, and traditional scenes from Mora.

Zorn's etchings have aided in keeping his art before the public since his death in 1920. As admired as his etchings are, the artist took a cavalier approach to the medium. He wrote in his memoirs:

Speaking of etching, I devoted free moments, particularly evenings, to etching, both reproductions of paintings and direct from life. I attached little importance to this pursuit but was entertained by the surprises inherent in this game of chance, that lines that I incised with a steel needle on a treated black copper plate became light red against a dark background, and when printed would be black on a white field, and reversed to boot; it was like playing blind man's bluff, a game that delighted me then and still delights me now.





We began collecting Zorn's etchings in the early 1990s. Having already gathered a modest collection of contemporary prints, we saw Zorn's etching of the American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens in a book. Fascinated by this marvelous work, we wanted to learn more about Zorn.

Although we found very little on the artist in English, we went searching for the etching by Zorn of his friend Saint-Gaudens. Extremely rare, the piece took us some time to locate. We finally found it in Göteborg, Sweden. Having purchased our first Zorn etching, over time we jettisoned the contemporary prints and began acquiring a Zorn collection through galleries, auctions, and word-of-mouth. Now our collection spans "peasants to presidents," and many interesting subjects in between.



Willow and Bill Hagans



### Major Collections Represented in *"From Peasants to Presidents: Sweden's Greatest Etcher"*

Numbering and titles for Anders Zorn's engravings are provided by two catalogues: Karl Asplund, *Zorns graverade verk 1-2* (Stockholm 1921), gives Swedish titles and numbers "A.#" while Bertil Hjert & Svenolof Hjert, *Zorn - engravings* (Uppsala 1980), provides English titles and numbers "H&H #."





## Willow and William Hagans Collection Etchings

- NUDE STUDY (MODELLSTUDIE), 1884, etching, unsigned, 8 x 5 in. (20.5 x 12.5 cm), A.12 (H&H 211)
- MARY, 1884, etching, signed, 8  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 5  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (22 x 13.25 cm), A.13 (H&H 12)
- CARL SNOILSKY, 1888, etching (book plate), unsigned, 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (8.9 x 5.7 cm), A.29 (H&H 24)
- A PAINTER ETCHER (EN GRAVÖR, SJÄLVPORTRÄTT), 1889, etching, unsigned, 4  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (11 x 7 cm), A.32 (H&H 25)
- ROSITA MAURI, 1889, etching, unsigned, 8  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (22.5 x 14 cm), A.34 (H&H 27)
- ZORN AND HIS WIFE (ZORN OCH HANS HUSTRU), 1890, etching, signed, 12  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 8  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (31.5 x 21 cm), A.43 (H&H 31)
- THE WALTZ (VALSEN), 1891, etching, signed, 12  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 8  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (32 x 22.5 cm), A.54 (H&H 178)
- MADAME SIMON II, 1891, etching, unsigned, 9  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 6  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (23.5 x 16 cm), A.67 (H&H 46)
- ERNEST RENAN, 1892, etching, signed, 9 x 13 in. (23 x 33 cm), A.73 (H&H 50)
- A TOAST II (EN SKÅL I IDUN II), 1893, etching, signed, 12  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (31.75 x 26.5 cm), A.80 (H&H 57)
- MY MODEL AND MY BOAT (MIN MODELL OCH MIN BÅT), 1894, etching, signed, 9  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (23.75 x 15.75 cm), A.91 (H&H 221)
- PAUL VERLAINE II, 1895, etching, unsigned, 9  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (23.75 x 15.75 cm), A.94 (H&H 66)
- MRS. POTTER PALMER, 1896, etching, signed, 9  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (23.75 x 15.75 cm), A.107 (H&H 72)
- AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS I, 1897, etching, signed, 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (19.5 x 13.5 cm), A.113 (H&H 75)
- AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS II, 1897, etching, signed, 5  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 7  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (13.5 x 20 cm), A.114 (H&H 74)
- EMMA, GIRL FROM MORA (EMMA (MORAKULLA)), 1897, etching, signed, 8  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 6  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (22.5 x 17.5 cm), A.117 (H&H 81)
- OLD BALLAD II (GAMMAL BALLAD II), 1898, etching, signed, 7 x 5 in. (17.75 x 12.75 cm), A.128 (H&H 192)
- KING OSCAR II, II (OSKAR II, II), 1898, etching, signed, 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7 in. (24.75 x 17.75 cm), A.132 (H&H 88)
- MADONNA, 1900, etching, signed, 9  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 7  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (25 x 19.5 cm), A.151 (H&H 100)
- BILLY MASON, 1900, etching, unsigned, 8 x 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (20 x 14 cm), A.159 (H&H 107)
- AT THE PIANO (VID PIANOT), 1900, etching, signed, 7  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 5  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (20 x 15 cm), A.160 (H&H 108)





## Etchings

STORM (OVÄDER), 1891, 7 ½ x 5 ½ in. (19.6 x 13.9 cm), A.63 (H&H 181)

OMNIBUS, 1892, 11 x 7 ¼ in. (19.6 x 13.9 cm), A.72 (H&H 183)

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER, 1894, 9 ⅞ x 5 ⅞ in. (25.2 x 15 cm), A.84 (H&H 60)

EFFET DE NUIT III (NATTEFEKT III), 1897, 4 x 7 ⅞ in. (10.1 x 20 cm), A.111 (H&H 188)

BILLIARDS (BILJARD), 1898, 7 x 5 ⅞ in. (17.9 x 12.9 cm), A.137 (H&H 195)

GROVER CLEVELAND II, 1899, 8 ⅞ x 6 ⅞ in. (22.7 x 17.6 cm), A.144 (H&H 95)

MRS. CLEVELAND II, 1899, 9 ¼ x 6 ¼ in. (24.7 x 15.7 cm), A.146 (H&H 97)

MRS. THOMPSON SETON, 1901, 8 ⅞ x 5 ⅞ in. (22.5 x 15 cm), A.167 (H&H 113)

PRESIDENT WILLIAM H. TAFT, 1911, 9 ¾ x 7 ¾ in. (24.8 x 19.8 cm), A.239 (H&H 156)

SHEPHERDESS (VALLKULLA), 1912, 11 ¾ x 7 ¾ in. (29.8 x 19.8 cm), A.251 (H&H 209)

*Exhibit Materials Loaned by:*  
Willow and William Hagans  
Zornsamlingarna (The Zorn  
Collections)

&

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Bengt and Margareta Sohlén  
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*Catalogue made possible by the generosity of Urban Lundberg*



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