

Thames
&Hudson



Art Day by Day

Edited by Alex Johnson

A daily almanac that presents a selection of art historical events for every day of the year from momentous and headline-grabbing, to intimate, amusing or revelatory.

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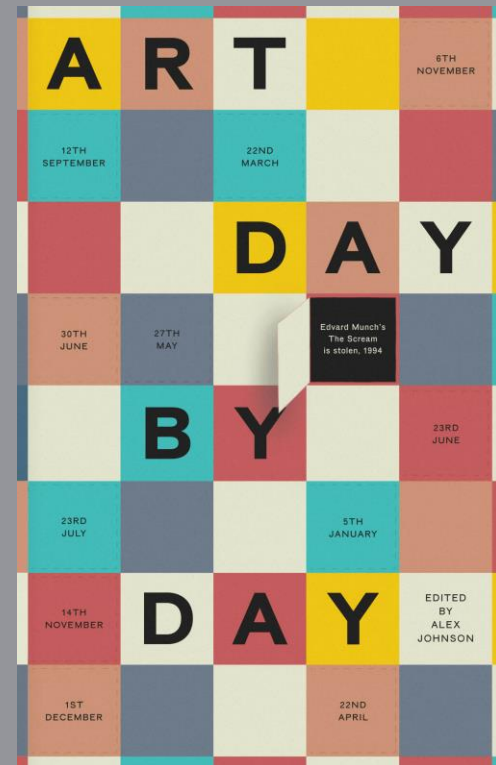
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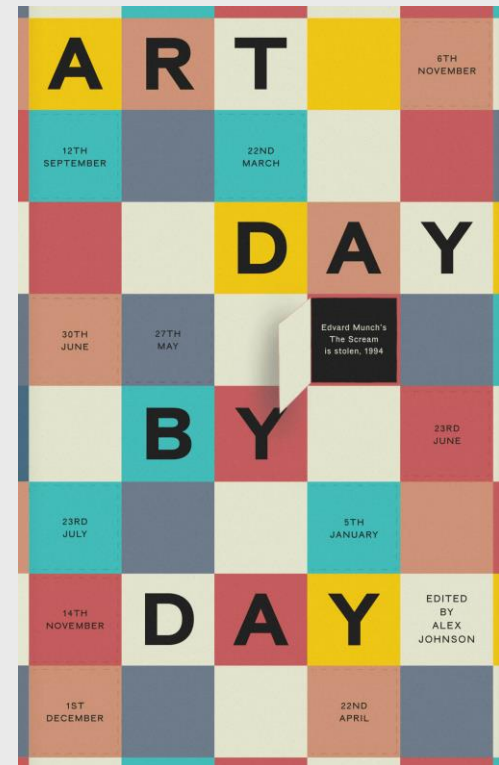
Book



Key Sales Points

- An accessible, fun, and eclectic introduction to art presented through quotes, diary excerpts, letters, speeches, transcripts and other testimony.
- Offers an engrossing insight into the mind of the artist, as well as an informative overview of culture throughout the ages and across the globe.
- Almanac format makes it relevant all year round.

Provisional



Introduction

Historians tend to take the long view. They examine the growth of movements, the developments of trends, ongoing phases, long sweeps of time, decline and fall. There is nothing wrong with this, except for the danger that it can relegate the individual act or the moment of revelation to a position of less importance.

The 365 snapshots in time from around the world and throughout history featured in this book aim to redress that balance, whether that is the first work of art in space (March 18) or dinner inside a giant dinosaur sculpture (December 31). Using diaries, posters, letters, catalogues, autobiographies, advertisements, television listings, speeches, transcripts, cartoons, song lyrics, and interviews, it offers an important event that happened on that day in the the history of art. Here are famous paintings, comic strips, photographs, ancient sculptures, murals, manifestos, births, marriages, and deaths, from the genius of the old to *The Shock of the New*, and terracotta soldiers to a self-shredding Banksy.

Each entry begins with a quote, giving artists, critics, and commentators their voice to speak directly to us, followed by a note of explanation to illuminate its importance and a brief roundup of other events on that day. Not every entry is momentous, but all are significant. Yes, there are thefts, murders, and eureka moments, but there are also President Theodore Roosevelt's doodles and Michelangelo writing to his nephew about his kidney stones. Every day has a story to tell.

So here is the moment when the ancient statue of Laocoön and His Sons is dug out of the ground 1,500 years after it is described by Pliny the Elder. We sight the Easter Island statues and Tsar Alexander III opens the first Fabergé egg. Edward Hopper finishes *Nighthawks*. Apollinaire records his thoughts on seeing sketches by Picasso for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. The *Etch-a-Sketch* goes on sale. The *Rebel* starring Tony Hancock premieres and Brian Ward takes the album cover photo for *The Rise & Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. Judy Chicago opens *The Dinner Party*. Saddam Hussein's statue is toppled in Baghdad.

Each entry can be read entirely on its own though I hope they will also be signposts to longer journeys. Van Gogh's diaries are fascinating and freely available online. The full story behind Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (glimpsed on July 2) is remarkable. There is only room to touch on

Rembrandt's inventory of possessions, but a longer investigation is certainly worth the effort.

However you read it - methodically day-by-day, randomly as it falls open, by your family's birthdays - I hope you find plenty to enjoy and much food for thought.

January

The first iron bridge opens to the public, 1781

Of the iron bridge over the Severn, which we crossed and where we stop'd for half an hour, what shall I say? That it must be the admiration, as it is one of the wonders, of the world. It was cast in 1778, the arch is 100 feet wide, and 55 feet from the top of the water, and the whole length is 100 yards; the country agreed with the founder to finish it for £6000 and have meanly made him suffer for his noble undertaking. After this survey, we entered Mr Bank's iron furnace (on the hillside) and were most civilly shown by him all the astonishing progress of such (hellish hot) manufactories; he employs 700 workmen and said there were seven other neighbouring furnaces of the same size; judge then of the flourishing state of this branch of trade, and how it must enrich this vicinage and the kingdom! Every cart belonging to this trade is made of iron and even the ruts in the road are shod with iron!

Diary of John Byng, 1784

The world's first bridge made out of cast iron made a huge impression on traveller and diarist John Byng when he first visited it. Designed by local Shrewsbury architect Thomas Pritchard working with Abraham Darby III, who owned the ironworks where the bridge was cast, it enabled goods to be transported easily across the river as the area forged the Industrial Revolution.

Scaffolding and a wooden framework were used during construction. Around three-quarters of the bridge's components were made individually and fit together using carpentry joining techniques including dovetail. Tolls were collected on the bridge - the sign outside the tollhouse specifically states there is no exemption for serving soldiers, mail wagons, and members of the Royal Family - until 1950. Although it became a scheduled monument in 1934, the iron bridge came close to being demolished and replaced in the 1950s but has now been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its picturesque gorge setting has attracted many artists, including Michael Angelo Rooker whose 1782 engraving so entranced US President Thomas Jefferson that he hung a copy of it in his dining room at his Monticello home. In 1979, the Royal Academy of Arts held an exhibition of art depicting the bridge from its

construction to the present day called 'A View from the Iron Bridge' as part of its bicentenary celebrations.

While it entranced Byng, topographical writer the Reverend Richard Warner was not so sure when he visited the area in 1801. He described it as: "A scene in which the beauties of nature and processes of art are blended together in curious combination. The valley... would be exceedingly picturesque, were it not for the huge foundries, which, volcano-like, send up volumes of smoke into the air, discolouring nature and robbing the trees of their beauty; and the cast heaps of red-hot iron ore and coke, that give the bottom 'ever burning with solid fire' more the appearance of Milton's hell than of his paradise."

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1944: Death of English architect Edwin Lutyens (see November 11) · 1999: *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier published · 2001: In Magnuson Park, Seattle art group Some People anonymously erect a replica of the monolith in 2001: A Space Odyssey

Sunderland vs Aston Villa inspires the oldest painting of a football match, 1895

I have had a chat with Mr T. M. Hemy, the distinguished artist who was born at Newcastle, but who is practically a Sunderland man by sympathy, as his many fine pictures of portions of this town show. And I am glad to find that my friend is marching on from one big achievement to another. His world-famous works 'And Every Soul Was Saved', 'The Wreck of the Birkenhead', and others which have won him the proud title of 'The Clarke Russell of the Brush' are to be followed by one which I believe will be the finest and most striking of a soul-stirring series. The theme is the fight between HMS Shannon (38 guns) and the United States frigate Chessapeake (50 guns) in 1813...

By the way, Mr Hemy has also earned fame as a football painter.

Echoes of the Week column, *Sunderland Echo*, January 7, 1895

Though not the oldest football painting (local artist Jos Curry painted the Sunderland AFC team in what has become the accepted official squad pose in 1892), "Sunderland v. Aston Villa 1895" also known as "A Corner Kick"

and "The Last Minute - Now or Never" by Thomas Hemy (1852-1937) is the oldest showing a match in progress. The moment selected is a corner during the 4-4 draw between the two top sides at the time at the Newcastle Road ground in Sunderland.

Hemy had been a sailor in his youth and, like his famous brother Charles Napier Hemy, usually focused on marine paintings - hence the comparison with nautical novelist William Clark Russell - but also depicted more urban local scenes. The 12 ft x 8 ft painting here shows a hugely packed old-fashioned penalty area, a pitch in a truly terrible condition, and piles of straw by the touchline, used to cover pitches to protect them from frost in winter. After a chequered history of ownership, the painting is now appropriately on permanent show at Sunderland's Stadium of Light football ground.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1462: Italian painter Piero di Cosimo born · 1777: German sculptor Christian Rauch born · 1938: English photographer David Bailey born

03 JANUARY

John Ruskin meets Rose La Touche for the first time, 1858

...the drawing room door opened, and Rosie came in, quietly taking stock of me with her blue eyes as she walked across the room; gave me her hand, as a good dog gives its paw, and then stood a little back. Nine years old, on 3 January 1858, thus now rising towards ten; neither tall nor short for her age; a little stiff in her way of standing. The eyes rather deep blue at that time, and fuller and softer than afterwards. Lips perfectly lovely in profile;--a little too wide, and hard in edge, seen in front; the rest of the features what a fair, well-bred Irish girl's usually are; the hair, perhaps, more graceful in short curl around the forehead, and softer than one sees often, in the close-bound tresses above the neck.

John Ruskin, *Praeterita: Outlines of Scenes and Thoughts
Perhaps Worthy of Memory in My Past Life* (1885)

In his memoir *Praeterita*, art critic and polymath John Ruskin (1819-1900) recounts his first impressions of Rose La Touche who became his pupil, muse

and object of his affection, even after her death in 1875. Their relationship is alluded to in the novel *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov.

Ruskin was taken with her immediately and, after a lengthy correspondence, proposed to her when she was 18. However the match was opposed by her family (and indeed Ruskin's ex-wife Effie Gray) and the two only met intermittently. After several years of consideration, Rose turned down the proposal of the man she called St Crumpet.

Rose's death, probably of anorexia, caused Ruskin much mental anguish and in his later years he sought comfort in spiritualism, trying to contact her in the afterlife and calling out for his 'Rosie-Posie'. [John Ruskin by Tim Hilton biography]

Praeterita also includes Rose's first letter to him in which she describes a trip to Nice. "Some wise, and prettily mannered people have told me I shouldn't say anything about Rosie at all. But I am too old now to take advice," he wrote, "and I won't have this following letter - the first she ever wrote me - moulder away."

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1027: Death of Japanese calligrapher Fujiwara no Yukinari · 1795: Death of English pottery entrepreneur Josiah Wedgwood (see May 15) · 2000: Final daily edition of the comic strip *Peanuts* by Charles M Schulz (see October 2)

04 JANUARY

On Kawara begins his Date Paintings, 1966

I GOT UP AT 8.15 A.M.

On Kawara, postcard, April 1, 1969

Famously silent about his life and work, Japanese artist On Kawara (1933-2014) worked on his *Today* series or *Date Paintings* for 48 years, producing thousands of works which consisted of the date painted in white on a colour block background. Starting with 'Jan. 4 1966', each date was hand drawn in a kind of Gill Sans sans serif or Futura typeface and in the language and dating system of the country in whichever one of the 112 countries in which he was working, so "26. ÁG. 1995" when he was in Reykjavik, Iceland. If the language did not use the Roman alphabet, he used Esperanto instead. If he had not finished the painting by midnight, he discarded it.

Intended as a comment on the very meaning of existence, and the concepts of place and time, every painting was accompanied by a homemade cardboard box that included information about Kawara's experiences that day, especially snippets from newspapers such as obituaries or weather forecasts, mostly from The New York Times. It also contained a smudge of the paint used. Though integral to his work, these boxes are not usually exhibited alongside the paintings.

The paintings were made in Liquitex on canvas, all horizontal except for three days around the moon landings in 1969, and varied in size from A4 up to 3.5 m using red, blue, or dark grey backgrounds behind the centred text. Kawara, who did not use an easel, applied four coats of paint, rubbing each down when dry in preparation for the next.

Other work reflects a similar fixation with date and time. Between 1968 and 1979 he sent daily postcards to friends and colleagues stamped with the time he woke up, while his work One Million Years lists consecutive dates a million years into the past and another million into the future to celebrate everybody who has lived and died as well as the last survivor. Live readings of this are performed by two readers, one male and one female, reciting alternately.

Indeed, rather than provide a biography for exhibition catalogues, he only offered the number of days from his birth to the opening of the exhibition. He died at 29,771.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1878: Welsh painter Augustus John born · 1880: Death of German painter Anselm Feuerbach · 2012: Death of American photographer Eve Arnold

The exhibition catalogue without an exhibition Robert Barry

1. Wall to Wall interior Piece, September 1968, thin black plastic line and screw eyes, 21' 10" × 12' 4" (× 7' H). Collection: Mr. and Mrs. John W. Wendler, N. Y.
2. Outdoor nylon monofilament installation, December 1, 1968, nylon monofilament and screw eyes, 65' × 43' (× 14 ½' – 16' above ground). Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N.Y.
3. (Proposal for) 99.5 mc Carrier Wave (WBAL-FM), 1968, 99.5 megacycles; 5.4 kilowatts, New York. Collection*
4. 88 mc Carrier Wave (FM), 1968 88 megacycles; 5 milliwatts, 9 volt DC battery, Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Greer, N.Y.
5. 1600 kc Carrier Wave (AM), 1968, 1600 kilocycles; 60 milliwatts; 110 volts AC/DC. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N.Y.
6. New York to Luxembourg CB Carrier Wave, January 5 – 31, 1969, (N.Y. station WR2WER to Luxembourg station LX1DT), 10 meters 28 megacycles' 180 watts. Collection*
7. 40 KHZ ultrasonic soundwave installation, January 4, 1969, 8.25 mm ultrasonic soundwave. Collection Mr. Seth Siegelau, N.Y.
8. Microcurie Radiation Installation, January 5, 1969, Barium-133, Central Park, N.Y., 10 year duration (approximate). Collection: Private, N.Y.

* Nontransferable. Facing page: Photograph of Catalog number 2.

Following page: 2 photographs of artist's studio being occupied simultaneously by Catalog numbers 4 and 5

Exhibition catalogue

The group exhibition '*January 5-31, 1969*' organised by art dealer and writer Seth Siegelau took an intriguingly conceptual route to the conventional approach in that the exhibition catalogue was the only actual object on display. There were no paintings, no sculptures, and no objects. The catalogue was the exhibition.

Above is the first page of the catalogue. As well as Robert Barry (1936-), the other artists taking part were Douglas Huebler (1924-1997), Joseph

Kosuth (1945-), and Lawrence Weiner (1942-), each of whom included a statement about their work. The unpaginated, spiral-bound, 28 page catalogue measured 7 × 8.25 inches and was printed in black and white. It ran for a month in a temporary space at 44 East 52nd Street in Manhattan, New York.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1477: German painter Hans Memling wounded at the Battle of Nancy · **1892:** In Finland, German astronomer Otto Brendel takes the first photograph of the Aurora Borealis · **1917:** Death of English painter and stained glass window designer Isobel Glog

06 JANUARY

John Singleton Copley immortalises the hero of the Battle of Jersey, 1781

A body of French Troops having invaded the Island of Jersey in the year 1781, and having possessed themselves of the Town of St. Heiller's, and taken the Lieutenant-Governor prisoner, obliged him in that situation, to sign a capitulation to surrender the Island; Major Peirson, a gallant young Officer, under the age of twenty-four years, sensible of the invalidity of the capitulation made by the Lieutenant-Governor, whilst he was a prisoner, with great valor and prudence, attacked and totally defeated the French Troops, and thereby rescued the Island, and gloriously maintained the honor of the British arms; but unfortunately for his Country, this brave Officer fell in the moment of Victory, not by chance shot, but by a ball levelled at him, with a design by his death, to check the ardor of the British Troops. The Major's death was instantly retaliated by his black servant on the man that shot the Major.

Brochure given to visitors at the first public showing of
The Death of Major Peirson, 6 January 1781

Anglo-American painter, John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) also spent a long time living and working very successfully in England, making his name as a portraitist and with several large history paintings including his depiction of the death of Major Francis Peirson (sometimes also spelled Pierson).

The Major's death came at the final efforts by the French army to take the island of Jersey. French troops invaded on the morning of January 6, but Peirson - the young commander of the 2,000 British garrison - refused to

surrender, went on the attack, and was killed by a French shot in St Helier's Royal Square. This is the moment portrayed by Copley, with Peirson leading the charge and his servant (sometimes referred to as Pompey and modelled on the servant of the auctioneer James Christie) shooting Peirson's killer. After his death, the French were comprehensively defeated.

Peirson was acclaimed a national hero and Copley was immediately commissioned by publisher and future Lord Mayor of London John Boydell to mark his service to the country. When Copley exhibited it - controversially done privately rather than at the Royal Academy - it attracted huge public crowds who each paid a shilling admission. It now belongs to the Tate and featured on the Jersey 10 pound and one pound notes between 1989 and 2010, and in a series of 7p, 10p, 15p, and 17p stamps in 1981.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1832: French painter and sculptor Gustave Doré born · **1902:** Death of Norwegian painter Lars Hertervig · **1998:** Little Mermaid statue in Copenhagen decapitated by vandals

07 JANUARY

Tate Britain floods, 1928

Whole Country Swept by Gale.

- Trail of wreckage and Large Number of Casualties.
- THAMES EMBANKMENT FLOODED.
- Midnight Refugees from South Side Houses Camp Out in Waterloo.

Remarkable scenes were witnessed all along the Embankment. At the Houses of Parliament the water "cataracted" over the parapet into the open space at the foot of Big Ben. The floods penetrated into Old Palace Yard, which shortly after one o'clock was about a foot under water in parts.

Flooding was worst at Charing Cross and Waterloo bridges, where the river sweeps round. Water poured over the Embankment, and the road was covered in a depth of several inches.

At intervals along the Embankment stood tramcars derelict and deserted. Later attempts were made to tow them through the floods by means of motor-lorries. Taxicabs and motor-cars splashed along the far side of the road. The public subway, Westminster Bridge, was flooded to a depth of four feet. There were miniature waterfalls at Cleopatra's Needle

and the Royal Airforce Memorial, and the training ship President floated at street level.

The only spectators of the strange scenes were policemen, belated the-atregoers, and the usual Embankment stragglers.

Manchester Guardian, January 7, 1928

A potent meteorological cocktail of heavy snow, sudden thaw, and huge storm brought floodwater from the Thames surging into the Tate in the early hours of January 7, 1928, reaching depths of up to 8ft. Fourteen people died in the city floods and around 4,000 were made homeless.

Tate Director, Charles Aitken, had major problems even reaching the gallery (and at one point needed to be rescued when he fell down a flooded manhole), where he and Tate staff worked with volunteers - including many from London's other major galleries and museums - to pump the waters away from the nine basement galleries which were all submerged.

Although 18 paintings were ruined and nearly 300 more damaged, the overall damage was not catastrophic. The newly-finished Rex Whistler murals on the restaurant walls emerged almost undamaged despite being entirely underwater for some time and despite being covered in mud, the colour on the Turner watercolours somehow had not run. There was also a happy ending for John Martin's enormous 1821 painting *The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum* (see October 24). Initially regarded as unsaveable, it was rediscovered 45 years later rolled up inside Paul Delaroche's painting *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* (1833) which itself had been considered lost. About a fifth of Martin's painting, including the actual volcano, needed major restoration but after careful work it went on display again at the Tate in 2011.

Further floods in 1953 and 1967 came dangerously close to causing more damage to the Tate but a combination of a new storage area and the construction of the Thames Flood Barrier has provided fully secure protection. Hopefully.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1619: Death of English goldsmith and portrait miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard · **1830:** Death of English painter Thomas Lawrence · **1990:** Tower of Pisa closes after leaning worsens (see August 9)

Art forger Eric Hebborn attacked

On the whole, critics, connoisseurs and art historians, when obliged to go beyond statements of fact – such as authorship, subject matter, measurement and medium – and speak of the quality of the drawing, tend to do so in the vaguest of terms... To imagine that one can learn about drawings simply by looking at them is presumptuous, not unlike imagining that one can learn how aeroplanes work simply by flying in them.

Eric Hebborn, The Language of Line, unpublished manual, excerpts, Guardian, August 24, 2015

Eric Hebborn (1934-1996) was arguably the 20th century's greatest forger. After a troubled childhood, he studied at Chelmsford and Walthamstow Art Schools and then went on successfully to the Royal Academy and won a scholarship to the British School in Rome.

Working as an art restorer, he learned about the history of paper and moved on to making full scale forgeries and paintings in the style of old masters including VanDyck, Rubens and Piranesi. These were sold through major art auction houses and Hebborn claimed his work found homes in many of the world's famous galleries, a claim they deny.

Hebborn openly admitted his forging career in 1984 and went on to attack what he saw as pomposity, hypocrisy, and general uselessness of the mainstream art world in a series of books including his autobiography *Drawn to Trouble, The Art Forger's Handbook*, and his unpublished *The Language of Line*.

Hebborn lived in Italy for many years and his death in Rome three days after sustaining a mysterious head injury after a night out with friends remains unexplained, with theories ranging from a stroke to a personal vendetta and even a mafia killing.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1037: Chinese painter and calligrapher Su Shi born · **1628:** Italian painter Elisabetta Sirani born · **1775:** Death of English typeface designer John Baskerville

Puritan commissioner William Dowsing destroys 'monuments of idolatry and superstition', 1643

SUDBURY, Suffolk. Peter's parish. Jan. the 9th 1643. We brake down a picture of God the Father, 2 crucifix's, & pictures of Christ, about an hundred in all; and gave order to take down a cross off the steeple; and diverse angells, 20 at least, on the roof of the church... Gregory Parish. We brake down 10 mighty great Angels in Glass, in all, 80... Allhallows. We brake about 20 superstitious Pictures; and took up 30 brazen superstitious Incriptions, *ora pro nobis and pray for the soul.*

Journal of William Dowsing. The Christian miscellany,
and family visiter, Volume 1, 1846

William Dowsing (1596-1679) was not unusual for being a Puritan commissioner focusing on destroying what government ordinances of the day described as 'monuments of idolatry and superstition' but he was unique in that he kept a meticulous diary about his brutal work in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk between 1643 and 1644.

During the 'second Reformation' of the 1640s, he roamed hundreds of parishes - and Cambridge colleges - in the region, shattering stained glass, removing monumental brasses, pulling down altar rails, and confiscating crucifixes, stone crosses and statues. Angels and cherubim were his particular *bête noirs*. He undertook the work personally and with apparent genuine religious zeal, but also had a team of assistants, some of whom were members of his family, to help his iconoclasm for which he charged the churches themselves in addition to any fines for non-compliance.

'Basher' Dowsing, as he was sometimes called, finished his destruction at the end of 1644 after Edward Montagu, 2nd Earl of Manchester, who had appointed him, quarrelled with Oliver Cromwell. Dowsing then returned to obscurity. What is believed to be his portrait is on display at the Wolsey Art Gallery in Ipswich.

ALSO ON THIS DAY 1875: Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, founder of Whitney Museum of American Art, born · **1908:** Death of German illustrator and painter Wilhelm Busch · **1998:** Decapitated head of Little Mermaid is returned (see January 6)

February