



**NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY & MUSEUM**  
A RESEARCH CENTER FOR EQUESTRIAN AND FIELD SPORTS

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

DATE 3/05/2013

FROM:  
National Sporting  
Library & Museum  
102 The Plains Road  
Middleburg, Virginia 20117

CONTACT:  
Mickey Gustafson  
540-687-6542, ext. 11  
[mgustafson@nsl.org](mailto:mgustafson@nsl.org)



Caption: Abbott Handerson Thayer (American, 1849 – 1921), *Male Wood Duck on a Pond I*, ca. 1890-1907, oil on board, 32 ¼ x 34 in., courtesy of the Abbott Handerson Thayer estate & family (1992.2).

**National Sporting Library & Museum**  
**lecture**  
**Roy R. Behrens**  
**“Abbott Thayer and the Uncloaking of Camouflage”**  
**and**  
**Community Open House**  
**March 16, 2013**

**Reception and winetasting by Boxwood Winery following the lecture**

MIDDLEBURG, VA - On Saturday, March 16, 2013, from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m., the National Sporting Library & Museum will host an evening open to the public that

features an opportunity to see works by Abbott Handerson Thayer that have never been exhibited, hear a fascinating lecture about Thayer's insights regarding camouflage in nature and art "tricks-of-the-trade," then enjoy a reception with a winetasting by Boxwood Winery.

**The evening will begin with the lecture at 4:30 p.m.**

**Lecture - "Abbott Thayer and the Uncloaking of Camouflage"**

**Roy R. Behrens, Library, Founders' Room**

**4:30 - 5:30 p.m.**

In the 19th century, scientific interest in animal camouflage surged in response to the writings of Charles Darwin, because it was seen as confirming natural selection. But a big breakthrough came in the 1890s, when American artist Abbott Handerson Thayer (1849-1921) realized that "concealing coloration" in nature is based on the same tricks-of-the-trade that he had learned while studying art. Later, during World War I, he showed how his discoveries could be used effectively in military camouflage. This fast-paced, profusely illustrated talk reveals what Thayer's findings were, and shows how his influence is still being felt.

Roy R. Behrens is a Professor of Art and Distinguished Scholar at the University of Northern Iowa, where he teaches graphic design and design history. He has researched and written about Abbott Thayer, art and camouflage since the 1970s. The author of numerous publications on the subject, his most recent books include *CAMOUPEdia: A Compendium of Research on Art, Architecture and Camouflage* (2009), and *SHIP SHAPE: A Dazzle Camouflage Sourcebook* (2012). He maintains an extensive blog on camouflage research at <http://camoupeia.blogspot.com/>.

**Exhibition - *Abbott Handerson Thayer: A Beautiful Law of Nature*, Museum**

**5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Guests may stroll through this exhibition in the Museum that shows works by the early American naturalist painter Abbott Handerson Thayer (1849-1921) which highlight the artist's observations of nature and his correlating discovery of early camouflage concepts, which were implemented by the Allied countries during World War I. Included are landscapes, animal studies, and early camouflage designs for military uniforms and navy vessels. Selected from the artist's family archives, most of these paintings and drawings have never been exhibited. A catalog accompanies the show, edited by Ari Post with essays by renowned scholars William Kloss, Martin Stevens and Roy Behrens. This exhibit was organized by Gold Leaf Studios in Washington, D.C., and is sponsored by Blair Inc. and the Family and Estate of Abbott Handerson Thayer. (Thayer exhibition dates are February 1 - May 26, 2013.)

**Reception - Winetasting provided by the Boxwood Winery, Library**

**5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

**RSVP** by Wednesday, March 13, 2013, to Judy Sheehan at 540-687-6542 ext. 10 or [jsheehan@nsl.org](mailto:jsheehan@nsl.org)

**Photo caption:** Abbott Handerson Thayer (American, 1849 – 1921), *Male Wood Duck on a Pond I*, ca. 1890-1907, oil on board, 32 ¼ x 34 in., courtesy of the Abbott Handerson Thayer estate & family (1992.2).

*The National Sporting Library & Museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing the literature, art and culture of equestrian, angling and field sports. Founded in 1954, the institution has over 24,000-books dating from the 16th-21st centuries. The John H. Daniels Fellowship program supports the research of visiting scholars. The Museum, a newly renovated and expanded historic building on the Library campus, houses exhibits of American and European fine animal and sporting art. Information is shared through exhibitions, lectures, seminars, publications and special events. The NSLM is open to researchers and the general public.*

**Admission:** free.

**Library Hours:** Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Museum Hours:** Wednesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

**Web site:** [www.nsl.org](http://www.nsl.org)

**Telephone:** 540-687-6542

**Address:** 102 The Plains Road, Middleburg, VA 20117