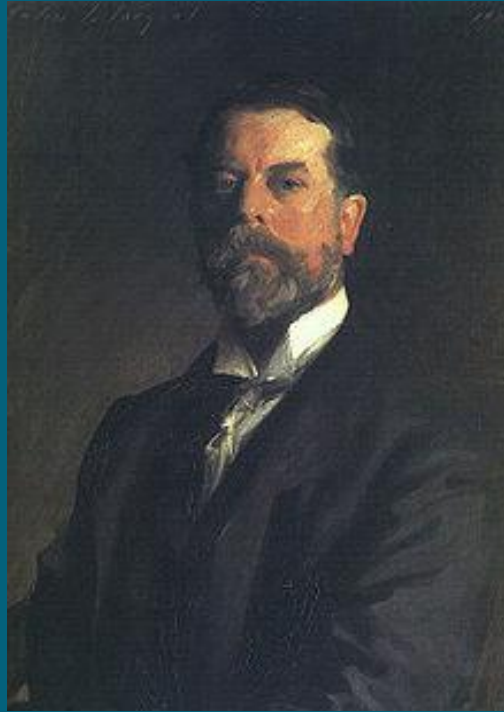


# John Singer Sargent

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*John Singer Sargent*  
12.01.1856 – 15.04.1925

# Biography

Before Sargent's birth, his father Fitz William was an eye surgeon at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. After his older sister died at the age of two, his mother Mary suffered a mental collapse and the couple decided to go abroad to recover. They remained nomadic expatriates for the rest of their lives. Though based in Paris, Sargent's parents moved regularly with the seasons to the sea and the mountain resorts in France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. While Mary was pregnant, they stopped in Florence, Italy because of a cholera epidemic, and there Sargent was born in 1856. A year later, his sister Mary was born. After her birth Fitz William reluctantly resigned his post in Philadelphia and accepted his wife's entreaties to remain abroad. They lived modestly on a small inheritance and savings, living an isolated life with their children and generally avoiding society and other Americans except for friends in the art world. Four more children were born abroad, of whom two lived past childhood.

Though his father was a patient teacher of basic subjects, young Sargent was a rambunctious child, more interested in outdoor activities than his studies. As his father wrote home, “He is quite a close observer of animated nature.” Contrary to his father, his mother was quite convinced that traveling around Europe, visiting museums and churches, would give young Sargent a satisfactory education. Several attempts to give him formal schooling failed, owing mostly to their itinerant life. Sargent's mother was a fine amateur artist and his father was a skilled medical illustrator. Early on, she gave him sketchbooks and encouraged drawing excursions. Young Sargent worked with care on his drawings, and he enthusiastically copied images from *The Illustrated London News* of ships and made detailed sketches of landscapes. FitzWilliam had hoped that his son's interest in ships and the sea might lead him toward a naval career.

At thirteen, his mother reported that John “sketches quite nicely, & has a remarkably quick and correct eye. If we could afford to give him really good lessons, he would soon be quite a little artist.” At age thirteen, he received some watercolor lessons from Carl Welsch, a German landscape painter. Though his education was far from complete, Sargent grew up to be a highly literate and cosmopolitan young man, accomplished in art, music, and literature. He was fluent in French, Italian, and German. At seventeen, Sargent was described as “willful, curious, determined and strong” (after his mother) yet shy, generous, and modest. He was well-acquainted with many of the great masters from first hand observation, as he wrote in 1874, “I have learned in Venice to admire Tintoretto immensely and to consider him perhaps second only to Michelangelo and Titian.”

# Pictures:



A Portrait of Cicely Horner 1844



Glacier 1908-1909



Carnation, Lily. 1885-1886

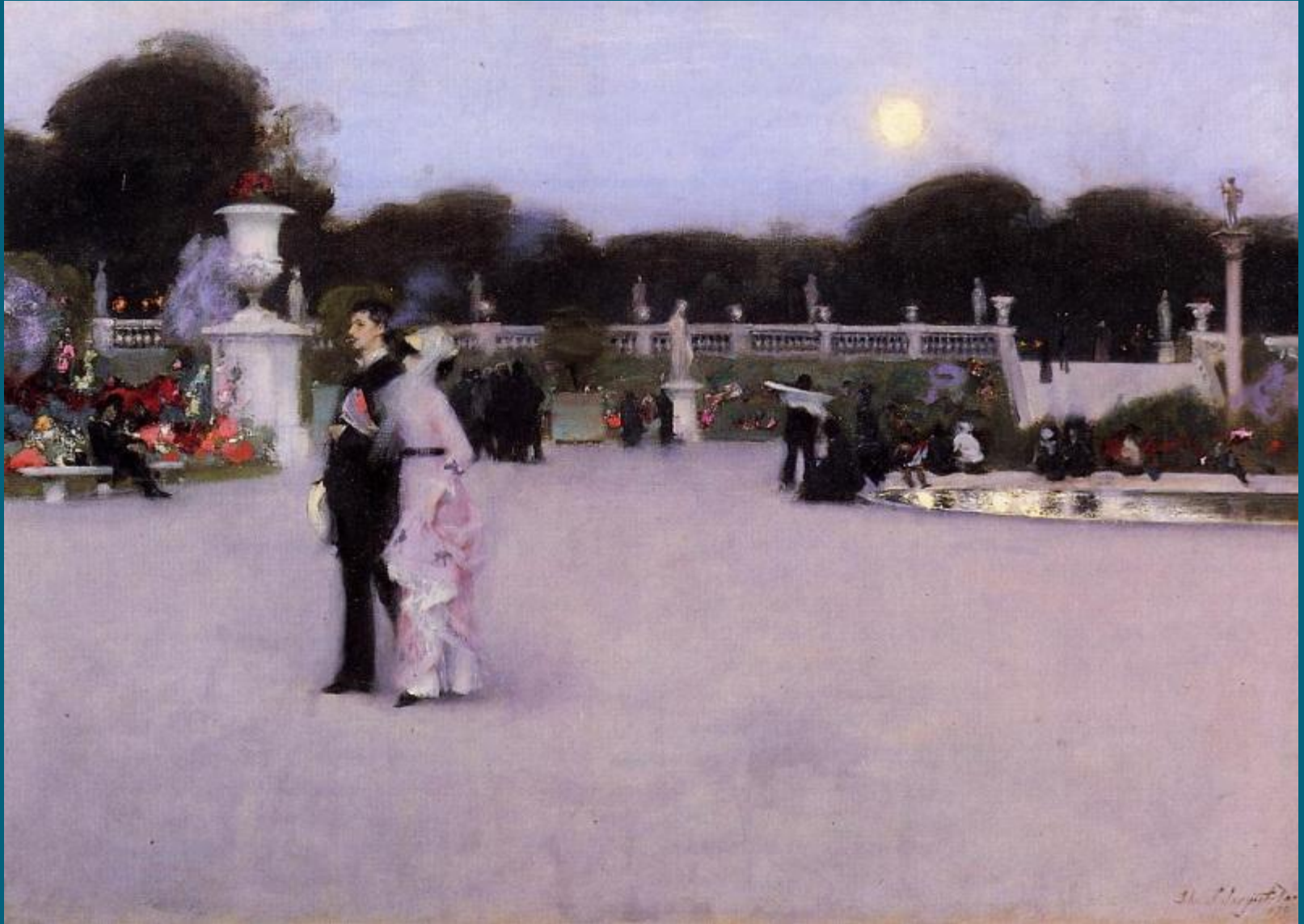


Facade of a Palazzo, Sicily





Garden Study of the Children



In the Luxembourg Garden 1874



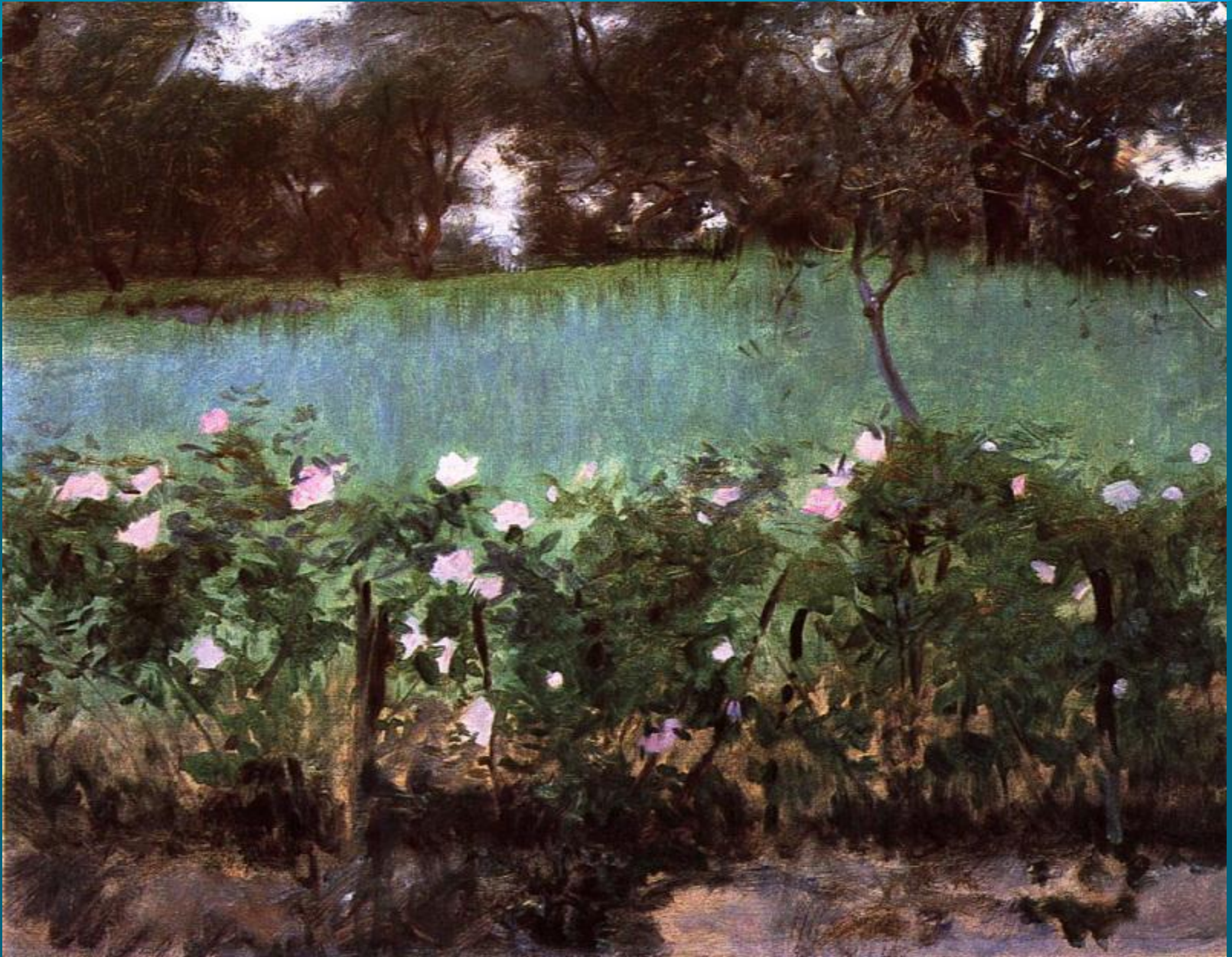
In the Tyrol 1904



Landscape 1909 Corfu



Landscape at Broadway 1885



Landscape 1886



Landscape, Olive Trees, Corfu 1909