Charles Ethan Porter
Jan. 12 - March 16, 2008

Connecticut-born, African-American artist Charles Ethan Porter will be featured in a special exhibition of 51 paintings on view from Jan. 12-March 16, 2008 at the NBMAA.

Porter painted mainly flowers, insects, fruit, and landscapes -- subjects that became his signature. He was well-regarded among critics and the public, and his work caught the eye of Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) who introduced Porter and his work to influential circles both in the U.S. and abroad.

Curated by well-known scholar Hildegard Cummings, formerly on the staff of the Benton Museum at the University of Connecticut, the exhibition is the first major display of works by Porter since a 1987 exhibition at the Old State House in Hartford. It will travel to the Studio Museum in Harlem (April 1 - July 15, 2008) and to the North Carolina Central University Art Museum, Durham (Aug. 3 - Oct. 7, 2008).

Porter was born in the late 1840s in Rockville, Conn., a section of Vernon. In 1871, he was accepted into the prestigious National Academy of Design in New York, a school for exceptionally gifted artists. Porter taught art lessons to support himself through school. He then completed his studies in 1873 and opened a small studio in New York City. Living in the city was not easy, and like many African-Americans, Porter suffered the effects of prejudice; however, this did not deter his focus on his career in art, and he began to study with renowned artist Joseph Oriel Eaton.

17 Spruce Street
Vernon, CT

Grove Hill Cemetery
Sec 1 Lot 28
3rd Rite from Ofc.

Of all the notable artists who have lived and worked in Connecticut over the years, few of the most deserving have received less public recognition than Charles Ethan Porter (1847-1923). An academically trained African American painter, championed by Frederic Church and Mark Twain and admired by other influential figures, he overcame perpetual obstacles of poverty, prejudice and the notion that blacks were incapable of making art of lasting importance . . . In recent years, with the surge of scholarship about African American art, there has been renewed interest in Porter and his oeuvre, culminating in a welcome and rewarding exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art, "Charles Ethan Porter: African-American Master of Still Life," on view through March 16."—*Antiques and the Arts Weekly*

The first study of the artistry of a noted African-American painter

This full color catalogue celebrates the works of Connecticut-born, African-American artist Charles Ethan Porter that documents a special exhibition of fifty-two paintings. Written by well-known scholar Hildegard Cummings, the catalogue documents the first major display of works by Porter. Porter painted mainly portraits, flowers, insects, fruit, and landscapes—subjects that became his signature style. He was well-regarded among critics and the public, and his work caught the eye of Samuel Clemens who introduced Porter and his work to influential circles both in the U.S. and abroad.

Charles Ethan Porter was born in the late 1840s in Rockville, Connecticut. In 1871, he was accepted into the prestigious National Academy of Design in New York. He gave art lessons to support himself through school, then eventually opened a small studio in New York City. In the late 1870s, Porter moved back to Hartford, and his work began showing up in local exhibitions and art galleries. At this time he produced some of his better-known paintings. Porter died in 1923 having moved back to Rockville.

"Porter's work of the 1880s reveals rich, subtle color and sensitive brushwork as well as a wonderful sense of composition and visual balance . . . Porter's compositions are masterly."—*Magazine Antiques*