

## SOUTH STAIRCASE/BASEMENT TO FIRST FLOOR LANDING

*View in the Sierra*, ca. 1880

Frederick Schafer (1839 – 1927)

Oil on canvas

Frederick Ferdinand Schafer was a native of Germany, but moved west in 1877. He maintained a studio in San Francisco and exhibited widely. Little is known about Schafer's professional art training; he may have been self-taught. Schafer was an itinerant painter, taking regular sketching trips throughout the Northwest, particularly Oregon, Washington, and the Rocky Mountains. Schafer was well known for his grand landscapes, painted in controlled brushstrokes and bright, vivid colors. He supplemented his income as a painter of theatrical scenery for San Francisco and Oakland theaters. Schafer became discouraged with the general decline of interest in fine art in the 1890s and disappeared from public view. He died in Oakland in 1927.

## SOUTH STAIRCASE/FIRST FLOOR TO SECOND FLOOR LANDING

*Lake Tahoe*, ca. 1867

Frederick Butman (1820 – 1871)

Oil on canvas

Frederick Butman was one of the first of California artists to devote himself to painting landscapes exclusively. A native of Gardiner, Maine, he operated an apothecary shop and began to paint without professional instruction. Butman came to San Francisco in 1857 and immediately settled into the artistic milieu. He received high praise from the press and his work commanded large sums of money; it is said that Butman once sold his landscapes for as much as \$8,000 in gold (quite a sum then). Butman was doing his finest work when he died suddenly in Gardiner in 1871.

## NORTH STAIRCASE

*Yosemite Valley from Inspiration Point*, 1893

Thomas Hill (1829 – 1908)

Oil on canvas

Hill was born in Birmingham, England in 1829. At age 15, he and his family settled in Taunton, Massachusetts; he was soon apprenticed to a carriage painter. Hill studied in Boston and Pennsylvania, and often traveled and painted with a group of

artists in the New Hampshire White Mountains that included Albert Bierstadt and Asher B. Durand. Due to health reasons, in 1861, Hill and his family moved to California and settled in San Francisco. He found work as a portrait painter; in 1862, he made his first trip to Yosemite with fellow painters William Keith and Virgil Williams. In 1883, Hill built a summer studio at Wawona in Yosemite Park and for his remaining years he lived in the park, except for winter months spent in Madera County for in his San Francisco studio. Following Williams' death in 1886, Hill took over as director of the San Francisco School of Design until a new director could be appointed.

Hill's work was in high demand during the 1870s and 1880s. Changing art styles at the turn of the century, however, made Hill's work seem out of fashion. Suffering a series of strokes in 1896, Hill required constant care and was unable to paint. He died at his Raymond home in 1908.

Today Hill is considered a giant in American art, best remembered for his grand view of the West, particularly the Yosemite Valley. Many of his works convey the immensity of these western spaces, but he also focused on smaller, more intimate vistas.