About the Artist: Thomas Eakins (American, 1844-1916) entered the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1862, and in 1866 went to Paris to study further under the painter Jean-Léon Gérôme. Before returning to the United States in 1870, he traveled to Spain, where he encountered the work of Diego Velázquez and Jusepe de Ribera, whose trenchant realism and dramatic use of light were influential. Eakins taught at the Pennsylvania Academy, where he built a following of students, including one talented student, J. Laurie Wallace, who would eventually move to Omaha in 1891 and serve as Director of the Western Art Association.