

# Basic Detail Report



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## **Title: Night**

Date: c. 1909

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@2859b

Medium: Oil on board

Description: At 6 ½ by 4 feet, Night is one of Haberle's largest and most mysterious paintings. An illusion of a large stained-glass window, the painting remained unfinished at his death in 1933 and was never sold. Haberle left written instructions from 1903 regarding the completion of the painting. Two stained-glass panels frame the central section, which contains an unfinished female nude. In his notes, Haberle changed the title of Night from the original; The Earth and Reflection Moon. Scholars debate the completeness of this painting. Alfred Frankenstein, one of the most renowned Haberle scholars, believed that the artist had intended to trick viewers into thinking the painting was unfinished. Night, he says, "is a completely finished picture of an unfinished picture." This, however, is complicated by the precision of the directions Haberle left behind. Gertrude Grace Sill, curator of this exhibit, believes that such instructions indicate that Night remains unfinished. The curtain draped across the picture is rooted in the Dutch tradition of covering a painting with cloth to protect it from light. The varying tones of gold mimic genuine velvet, tempting the viewer to test its softness. Despite Haberle's failing eyesight, Night remains a testament to his skill and attention to detail. Each and every shard of colored glass is rendered perfectly, as is the detailing of the window frame and the gleam of a candlestick holder above the curtain. On a long white scroll at the left edge is Haberle's twist on the English poet Alexander Pope's epitaph for Sir Isaac Newton's grave: Nature and Nature's Works Lay Hid in Night. (Pope's precise quote is: "Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night.")

Dimensions: 79 x 52 in.