

# *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*

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*Young Woman Lying on a Meadow Looking at Swans: A Riddle for NCAW Readers*

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## New Discoveries

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### *Young Woman Lying on a Meadow Looking at Swans: A Riddle for NCAW Readers*

by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu

The painting shows a young woman in a long dress lying prone on a meadow. Pushed up on her elbows, her head resting in her hands, she is looking at three swans swimming on a nearby pond. The pond is flanked, on the left, by a chestnut tree; on the right, by an oak. The leaves of the trees have turned and are falling on the ground, suggesting that fall has come. In the foreground, a large thistle is about to go to seed. The theme, as well as the formal characteristics of the painting—pronounced, angular contours; flat, strongly contrasting colors (orange next to blue, lavender against yellow)—, suggest the late nineteenth century. *Young Woman Lying on a Meadow Looking at Swans* (fig. 1) was recently acquired by a private collector in the Netherlands. Executed in oils on canvas, it measures 34.5 x 82 inches. Although painted on canvas, the work's substantial size and horizontal format, as well as its chalky surface, suggest that it may have been painted in the style of a mural to serve as a decorative panel. *Young Woman* is unsigned and its authorship is unknown. Not entirely a new discovery, it was publicly shown in 2003 as *Reclining Woman with Swans and Thistles* in the exhibition *La Belle Epoque and Toulouse Lautrec* in the Nassau County Museum of Art in Roslyn Harbor, NY. In the exhibition's catalog, the painting is attributed to the French artist Paul Ranson (1864–1909)—an attribution that is not altogether satisfactory.

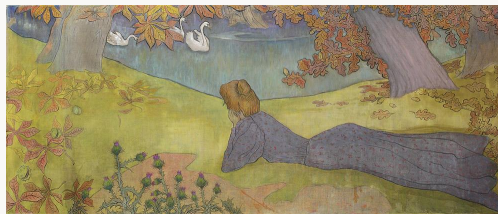


Fig. 1, Anonymous, *Young Woman Lying on a Meadow Looking at Swans*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection, Netherlands. [\[larger image\]](#)

While in previous installments of “New Discoveries,” we have always presented the latest research about the newly discovered work, this time we want to ask our readers for their opinions on the work. If you have an idea, please e-mail Petra Chu at [petra.chu\[at\]shu.edu](mailto:petra.chu[at]shu.edu). In the fall issue, we hope to summarize your responses.

Petra ten-Doesschate Chu

## Illustrations



Fig. 1, Anonymous, *Young Woman Lying on a Meadow Looking at Swans*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection, Netherlands. [\[return to text\]](#)