

**Patricia Hills
238 Putnam Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-3767**

August 21, 2008

Sarah Cash
Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington D.C.

Dear Ms. Cash:

Re: Eastman Johnson, Child with Rabbits, 1878. Oil on academy board, 29 x 24 3/4 inches.
Signed L. R. "E. Johnson/ 1878".

I studied this painting at the Corcoran Gallery of Art on March 10, 1998. In my opinion the work is by the American genre painter Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), and I plan to include the work in my catalogue raisonné of the artist's work.

During the 1870s Johnson and his family visited Kennebunkport, Maine, where he had relatives. In 1877-78 he did many paintings of children playing in a hay loft, one of whom would have been his daughter, Ethel, born 1870. Also throughout his career he painted children and their pets, a fine example of which is the Corcoran's Girl and Pets, 1856. The pets include cats, rabbits, and lambs. The Corcoran's Child with Rabbits thus combines those two themes: children in haylofts and children playing with pets.

Another painting, Child Teaching Rabbit, was included in my 1972 Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition Eastman Johnson (collection of Mrs. J. Pierre Bernard). You will note that the pose is the same as your painting: the girl with bangs is seen in profile sitting with her legs propped up, and the rabbit is tucked into the folds of her skirt. The difference is that the Bernard painting shows her sitting in a Windsor chair and yours shows her in a hayloft.

The Corcoran painting is a charming painting and one of the best of the Kennebunkport pictures. Johnson's style by 1878 had loosened considerably compared with your 1856 painting Girl and Pets. His new style was shared by other artists recently returning from European study, but he still mines the sensibility of sentiment of an earlier decade.

Please send me a jpeg of the painting for my records.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Hills
Professor of Art History
pathills@bu.edu
Boston University