

DAVID ROBERTS

*Artist and
Traveler*

TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE



INTERNATIONAL
ARTS AND ARTISTS

1. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Kom Ombo* November 20-21, 1838 (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 5), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 16 3/8" x 23 15/16", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.



DAVID ROBERTS

ARTIST AND TRAVELER

Kom Ombo.

Nov. 21st 1838

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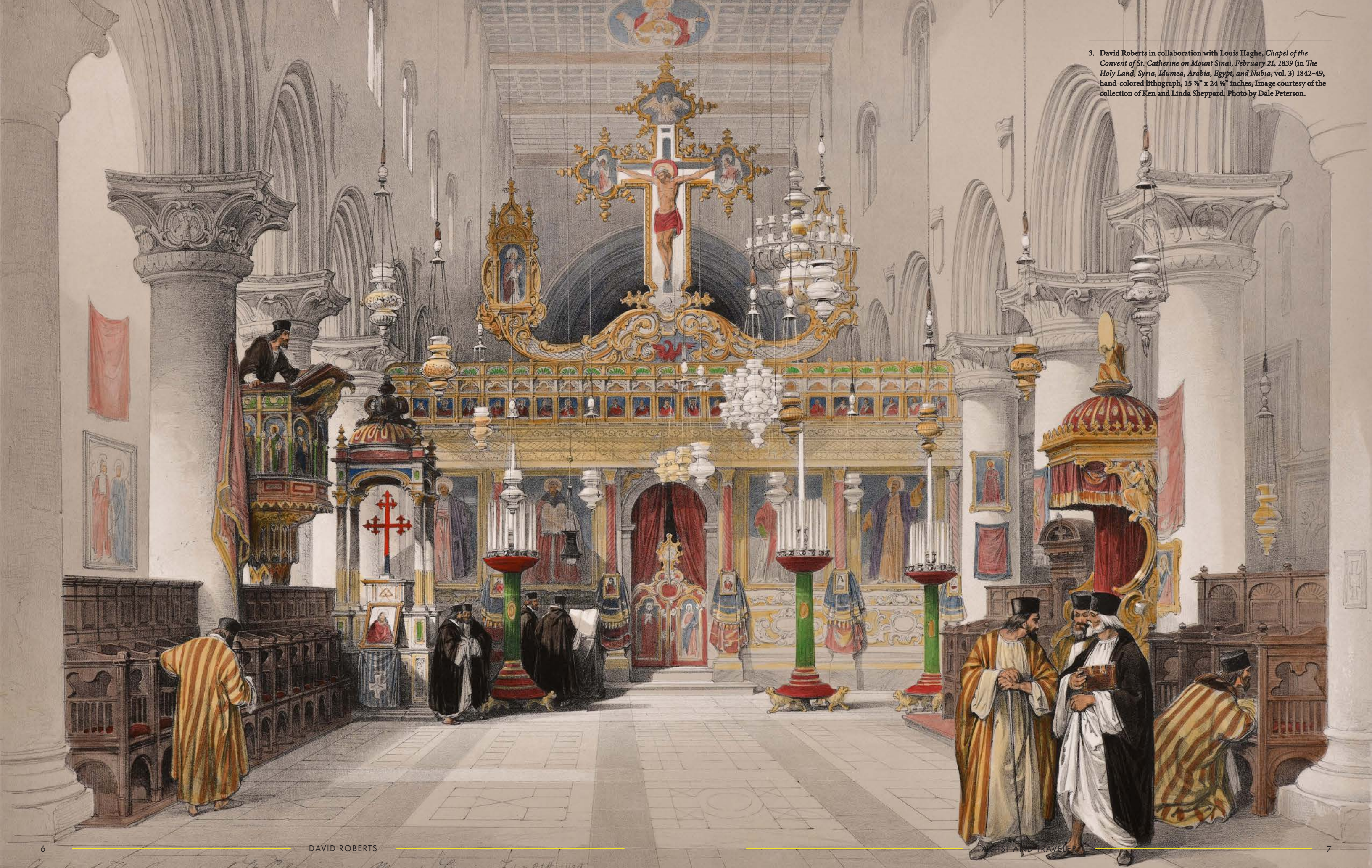
About the Artist

David Roberts (1796–1864) was a self-taught Scottish painter who rose from poverty and obscurity in Edinburgh to become one of the most celebrated artists of his generation, a member of the Royal Academy, and a painter whose works can be found in some of the most distinguished public and private collections in Europe and America. A highly ambitious and motivated artist who loved to travel, he is best known for *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*—a travelog illustrated with 247 hand-colored and tinted lithographs of Egypt and the Holy Land that he produced with lithographer Louis Haghe from sketches he made during a nine-month trip to the region in 1838–39. These exquisitely rendered prints of the architecture and topography of the Middle East, and the prints of Moorish Spain that he made on a trip there a decade earlier, firmly established him as the most accomplished architectural and topographical painter of his day. In addition to appealing to the European appetite for travel to “exotic” places, as well as the need to add authenticity and veracity to the Bible, Roberts’s prints would have a profound impact on the emerging fields of Egyptology and biblical archaeology.

2. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre, April 10, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 1), 1842–49, hand-colored lithograph, 24 1/8" x 17", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.



3. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Chapel of the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, February 21, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 3) 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 15 7/8" x 24 1/4" inches. Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photo by Dale Peterson.





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David Roberts was born in Stockbridge, Scotland, a small village on the outskirts of Edinburgh, on October 24, 1796. His father, John Roberts, was the second son of a farmer near Forfar and a shoemaker by trade. As a young boy, Roberts developed a keen interest in copying pictures and engravings. However, without the financial means to further his art education, he was apprenticed to Gavin Buego, a house painter and decorator, who taught Roberts the trompe l'oeil techniques of visual deception, spatial illusions, and faux finishes. In 1815, Roberts completed his apprenticeship and accepted a position as a house painter in Perth. The following year he returned to Edinburgh and went to work as a theatrical scene painter, where he learned to paint quickly and on a large scale, and to render both exterior and interior architectural spaces with a sense

of monumentality and dramatic flair that would capture and hold the viewer's attention. Crucially, in Edinburgh, Roberts also learned to work under less than ideal conditions—important skills that would help him as an architectural and topographical painter in the future.

4. David Roberts in collaboration with Thomas Shotton Boys, *Great Mosque and Palace of the Archbishop, Cordova* (in *Picturesque Sketches of Spain*), 1837, hand-colored lithograph, 14 5/8" x 21 1/2", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.

5. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Bazaar of the Silk Mercers, Cairo, January 6, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 6), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 23 15/16" x 16 3/8", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.



6. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Mosque of Omar (Qubbat al-Sakhra or "Dome of the Rock")*, Showing the Site of the Temple, March 29, 1839 (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 1), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 17" x 24 1/8". Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.





For the next fourteen years, Roberts worked as a theatrical scene painter in northern England, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London. It was during this time that he began to turn his serious attention to painting. Given his background and training as a house painter, decorator, and theatrical scene painter, and because of his keen interest in architecture, the outdoors, and travel, Roberts gravitated naturally to architectural and topographical painting, a tradition that dates back to the fifteenth century. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England, topographical art had become a highly popular genre. Topographical artists found employ in the service of military, antiquarian, naturalist, and archaeological expeditions; received commissions from the British aristocracy to paint

“topographical” portraits of their stately homes and estates; and earned money making prints of various locales for the numerous art, travel, and literary publications that were popular at the time. For an artist like David Roberts it was a perfect genre, but in order for him to be successful, he needed to travel.

7. Detail David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Isle of Graia (Graye), Gulf of Akabah (Aqaba), February 23-27, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 3), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 16" x 24 1/8" inches. Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.

8. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *El-Deir (Al-Deir), Petra, March 8, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 3), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 16 1/2" x 24 3/4" inches. Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.

Fortuitously, in the fall of 1824 Roberts had an opportunity to travel to France, where he spent time sketching in Dieppe, Rouen, and Le Havre. His oil painting *Rouen Cathedral*, based on sketches he made in situ in northern France, was shown at the Society for British Artists in 1825 and the Royal Academy in 1826. Roberts made further sketching trips to France and Belgium in the late 1820s and won broad critical acclaim with his *Departure of the Israelites* in 1829. In the wake of his growing success, Roberts traveled to Germany in 1830 and then to Spain and Morocco in 1832–33, where he discovered a lucrative art market, selling his landscape drawings to publishers to be engraved and used as book illustrations. In 1838 he set sail for Egypt and the Holy Land with the intention of making sketches that might be used as book illustrations. Almost a year later, upon returning to England with a large portfolio of sketches in hand, he signed a contract with Francis Graham Moon in 1840 to produce a six-volume set of prints based on his travels, executed in collaboration with the Belgian-born lithographer Louis Haghe.

Published as the monumental series *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, these hand-colored and tinted lithographs created a sensation when first released in 1842. Celebrated for their artistic brilliance as well as their scholarly contributions, these folios provided Europeans and eventually Americans with their first views of the Orient, changing forever their vision of Egypt and the Middle East. While Roberts always considered his travels to Egypt and the Holy Land to be the pinnacle of his career, he continued to paint for another twenty-two years, enjoying great commercial success and professional acclaim. In 1841 he was elected a full member of the Royal Academy, and in 1851 he was commissioned by Queen Victoria to paint a record of the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London. He passed away on November 25, 1864, after suffering a massive stroke.

9. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Approach of the Simoon, Desert of Geezeh (Giza), January 17, 1839* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 6), 1842–49, hand-colored lithograph, 17 3/8" x 24". Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.



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10. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *The Great Temple of Aboo Simble (Abu Simbel), Nubia, November 9, 1838* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 4), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 16 7/16" x 23 15/16", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.

About the Curator

John Olbrantz is the Maribeth Collins Director of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He holds a BA from Western Washington University and an MA from the University of Washington in the history of art, and a Study Certificate from the Getty Leadership Institute in arts administration and management. Throughout his long career, he has held museum directorships in Washington, California, and most recently, in Oregon. A specialist in ancient and American art, Olbrantz is particularly interested in Roman art, the history of archaeology, contemporary American art, and the history of museums. Over the years, he has written about the art and architecture of Roman Britain, ancient glass, Roman mosaics from Syria, the history of American Egyptology, the American discovery of the ancient Near East, and the nineteenth-century Scottish artist and traveler David Roberts.

About the Exhibit

Organized by Hallie Ford Museum Director John Olbrantz, who has been interested in Roberts's work for more than four decades, this exhibition features sixty-two prints of Spain, Egypt, Syria, and the areas known as Nubia, Idumea, Arabia, and the Holy Land. All the works are generously on loan from the collectors, Ken and Linda Sheppard. In addition to the works on display, the exhibition is accompanied by a text panel, chat panels, maps, annotated labels with excerpts from Roberts's *Eastern Journal* and other correspondence, Arabic and Middle Eastern music, and a full-color, clothbound book written by Olbrantz, with an introduction by collector Ken Sheppard. This is the first touring exhibition of the work of David Roberts, which continues to resonate for its technical and aesthetic excellence, as well as for its profound impact on history and culture. A unique treasure that International Arts & Artists is extremely proud to present, the exhibition can be shown by itself or in conjunction with an exhibition of Egyptian art also being toured by IA&A.

11. David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *View under the Grand Portico, Philae, November 19, 1838* (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 4), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 23 7/8" x 16 1/2", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.





FRONT Detail David Roberts in collaboration with Louis Haghe, *Thebes (the Colossi of Memnon seen from the southwest)*, December 4, 1838 (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 4), 1842-49, hand-colored lithograph, 16 9/16" x 23 15/16", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.
BACK Charles-Louis Bagniet, *Portrait of David Roberts*, 1844 (in *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, vol. 1), 1842-49, lithograph, 24 1/8 x 16", Image courtesy of the collection of Ken and Linda Sheppard. Photograph by Dale Peterson.

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works

62 (according to the updated Addendum B)

Requirements

Moderate Security;
2,500 - 3,500 square feet

Participation Fee

Please inquire

Publication

For more information contact
projectmanager@artsandartists.org

Shipping

IA&A makes all arrangements;
exhibitors pay outgoing shipping
costs within the contiguous US

Booking Period

12 weeks

Tour

2026 - 2029

Contact

For booking inquiries contact
TravelingExhibitions@ArtsandArtists.org
For publication inquiries contact
ProjectManager@ArtsandArtists.org

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