Primary Maker: William Holbrook Beard
Title: The Bear Dance
Date: ca. 1870
Medium: Oil on linen
Dimensions: Overall: 41 x 62 in. (104.1 x 157.5 cm) Framed: 50 1/4 in. × 6 ft. 3/4 in. × 5 3/4 in. (127.6 × 184.8 × 14.6 cm)
Credit Line: Gift of Enoch G. Megrue
Object Number: 1942.108

Object Name: Animal
Classification: PAINTINGS

Curatorial Remarks:
William Holbrook Beard, who worked in New York City from 1859 until his death, earned a reputation as one of America's finest animal painters. Many of his paintings employed animals to mimic and satirize human behavior, thus participating in a tradition dating back to antiquity. This painting of a rather exclusive party in a forest clearing is also known as The Bears of Wall Street Celebrating a Drop in the Stock Market, and The Wall Street Jubilee. The painting was previously owned by the Strangers Club in New York City. When the club disbanded its property was divided among its members, and this painting was taken by Joseph R. Megrue, father of the donor.

Physical Description:
Oil on canvas painting depicting a large congregation of bears dancing and socializing in a forest clearing; those in
the foreground dance to music provided by a group of musicians playing trombones, trumpets, the bass, drums and cymbals on a ledge at left; a group in left foreground eats watermelon and drinks wine from bottles; wine cases at left, a basket of grapes, a grapevine and a covered pewter stein in the lower foreground. Another band plays in the right middleground while more bears arrive, descending a hill at right, some dancing and carrying grape vines and garlands. Foliaged trees provide a backdrop; blue sky visible above.

Markings: Stamp on canvas, stencil, "Goupil's / 722 / Broadway, N.Y."