



United States Embassy Oslo
ART in Embassies Exhibition

Ben Blessum

Peasant of Setesdalen, undated

Oil on canvas, 33 ¼ x 29 ¼ in. (84.5 x 74.3 cm)

Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

ART in Embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a: "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

"The ART in Embassies program reveals the rich history and cultural heritage of the United States and the communal experiences that we share with peoples of different countries, backgrounds and faiths, binding us closer together. Through its temporary exhibitions and permanent collections, the ART in Embassies program intrigues, educates, and connects – playing an ambassadorial role as important as that served by traditional diplomacy."

— Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State

Kunst i Ambassader



Det amerikanske utenriksdepartementets kontor for kunst i ambassader – ART in Embassies (AIE) ble etablert i 1963.

AIE programmet har en stadig ekspanderende oppgave og spiller en viktig rolle i USAs utadrettede informasjonsarbeid gjennom å skape midlertidige og permanente utstillinger, kunstnerprogrammer og publikasjoner. Museum of Modern Art begynte planleggingen av programmet et tiår før oppstart. President John F. Kennedy formaliserte AIE tidlig på 1960-tallet og oppnevnte programmets første direktør. Idag kuraterer AIE midlertidige og permanente utstillinger til over 200 representasjonsrom for alle ambassade-, konsulat- og kanselliboliger i hele verden. Ved å velge ut og bestille samtidskunst fra USA og vertsland til utstillingene gir AIE et internasjonalt publikum innblikk i kvaliteten og bredden av begge lands kunst og kultur. AIE er etablert i flere land enn noen annen amerikansk stiftelse eller kunstorganisasjon.

AIEs utstillinger gir utenlandske statsborgere som kanskje aldri vil besøke USA, anledning til å oppleve dybden og bredden av amerikanske kunsttradisjoner og verdier, og skaper noe som har blitt beskrevet som et "fotavtrykk som kan legges igjen hvor mennesker ikke har noen mulighet til å se amerikansk kunst."

"ART in Embassies-programmet viser USAs kulturarv og forteller USAs rike historie. Programmet knytter mennesker fra forskjellige land, med ulik bakgrunn og tro, nærmere hverandre gjennom felles opplevelser. Med utstillingene fascinerer, utdanner og introduserer AIE-programmet, og fyller en rolle som er like viktig som tradisjonelt diplomati."

— Hillary Rodham Clinton, Utenriksminister

Introduction

The ART in Embassies program (AIE) has been extremely popular and very successful in Oslo, and my wife Eleanor and I are very pleased with how it has enhanced the Embassy's mission in Norway. In selecting art for the Ambassador's Residence, with the help of AIE curator Imtiaz Hafiz at the State Department in Washington, we requested paintings that met the following criteria: They were created by Norwegian artists with a tie to the U.S., or by U.S. artists with a tie to Norway, and/or they evoked ocean themes, because both our home city of Boston and Oslo are on the water.

The idea was to show, through art, the ways in which Norwegian and U.S. cultures share similarities. The exhibition includes some very traditional Norwegian themes (emphasizing our respect for Norwegian history and culture), some very artistic themes especially suitable for the magnificent U.S. Embassy Residence, and geography that could just as easily be in Norway as in the U.S.

Shortly after the arrival of the art works at the Residence, we hosted a reception attended primarily by members of the Norwegian arts community. We were extremely pleased that AIE was able to send two representatives of the Luther College Fine Art Collection, the largest collection of Norwegian art in the United States and the source of many of the paintings we have here. The reception was a huge success and included some Norwegians who were seeing the Residence and meeting a U.S. Ambassador and spouse for the first time.

At virtually all events held at the Residence, we introduce the ART in Embassies exhibition and invite our guests to get more information or a tour from Eleanor. The degree to which this exhibition has resonated very positively with a wide variety of guests (scientists, sports enthusiasts, historians, educators, political scientists, business people, interfaith and multicultural groups, young people, and many others) has generated great interest in discussing the cultural similarities between Norway and the United States.

Many of our Norwegian guests recognize an artist or painting and express how wonderful it is that we and the American government are showcasing Norwegian art and culture. The Residence staff consistently receives compliments on the paintings, as well as inquiries and comments on the various works; the exhibition constantly serves as a topic of conversation. As with music and sports, art brings people together regardless of language, culture, gender, or age. When two cultures are as aligned as closely as those of Norway and the United States, art is a powerful method of enhancing communication and understanding.

We feel truly fortunate that the Department of State has provided us, and embassies around the world, with the opportunity to display art that is meaningful to both the U.S. and our gracious host countries.

Ambassador Barry B. and Eleanor G. White

Oslo, November 2011

Introduksjon

ART in Embassies (AIE) programmet har blitt svært godt mottatt i Oslo, og min kone Eleanor og jeg er glade for hvordan programmet har beriket ambassadens virke i Oslo. Da vi valgte kunst til ambassadørresidensen med hjelp fra AIE kurator Imtiaz Hafiz ved Utenriksdepartementet i Washington D.C., hadde vi følgende kriterier: Malerier av norske kunstnere med tilknytning til USA eller av amerikanske kunstnere tilknyttet Norge, og/eller malerier som vekker tanker om havet, da både vår hjemby Boston og Oslo ligger ved vannet.

Ideen var å vise likheter ved norsk og amerikansk kultur gjennom kunst. Samlingen inneholder noen svært tradisjonelle norske temaer, noen temaer spesielt velegnet den praktfulle residensen, og temaet geografi som like gjerne kunne vært i Norge som i USA.

Kort tid etter samlingens ankomst til residensen arrangerte vi en mottakelse for medlemmer av det norske kunstmiljøet. Vi var svært glade for at AIE hadde mulighet til å sende to representanter for the Luther College Fine Art Collection til denne mottakelsen. Luther College Fine Art Collection har den største samlingen av norsk kunst i USA, og mange av maleriene vi har er lånt derfra. Mottakelsen var svært vellykket og flere av gjestene fikk se residensen for første gang.

Vi presenterer ART in Embassies-utstillingen ved nærmest hvert arrangement i residensen, og tilbyr gjestene våre mer informasjon eller en omvisning av Eleanor. Samlingen har blitt positivt mottatt av et vidt spekter gjester (vitenskapsmenn, sportsentusiaster, historikere, akademikere, statsvitere, næringslivsfolk, unge og mange fler), noe som har generert stor interesse i å diskutere de kulturelle likhetene mellom Norge og USA.

Mange av våre norske gjester gjenkjenner en kunstner eller et maleri og uttrykker hvor fint det er at vi og den amerikanske staten viser frem norsk kunst og kultur. Utstillingen er et gjennomgående samtaleemne. I likhet med musikk og sport fører kunst mennesker sammen uavhengig av språk, kultur, kjønn eller alder. Når to kulturer er så nære hverandre som den norske og amerikanske, er kunst en kraftfull metode for å forsterke kommunikasjon og gjensidig forståelse.

Vi er takknemlige for at det amerikanske utenriksdepartementet har gitt oss og andre ambassader rundt om i verden muligheten til å vise kunst som er viktig for både USA og våre elskverdige vertsland.

Ambassadør Barry B. og Eleanor G. White

Oslo, november 2011

Arne Berger

1872-1951



Painted by Arne Berger, Martha Neprud (1830-1916) was a Norwegian American homemaker who settled in Westby, Wisconsin. Berger was born in Fagernes, Valdres, Norway in 1872, receiving his first instruction in drawing there. By the early 1890s Berger was living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was listed as an artist with the J.E. Burt Portrait Company in 1893. The following year he moved to Northfield, Minnesota, where he worked until 1903 and began an altar painting business. He also painted portraits for prominent members of the community. Berger moved to Decorah, Iowa, in late 1903, where he continued painting altars and portraits. In 1907 he moved to Portland, Oregon, where he produced landscapes, portraits, and altar paintings. He finally moved to Minneapolis in 1918 and set up a studio, continuing to paint altar pieces into the 1920s and 1930s.

~ Courtesy of Luther College

Martha Neprud, 1919

Oil on canvas, 32 ⁵/₁₆ x 23 ⁵/₁₆ in. (82.1 x 60 cm)

Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Emil Biørn

1864-1935

Emil Biørn was born in Oslo, Norway in 1864. He was trained at the Royal Norwegian School of Drawing and at Lindeman's School of Music in Oslo, and studied also in Paris, France, and at the Chicago Art Institute, Illinois. In 1887 Biørn came to the United States and settled in Chicago, where he spent the rest of his life. A commercial artist by profession, he was a prominent figure in the life of the Norwegian-American community. For many years he worked for the Barnes-Crosby Company, one of the largest engraving houses in America. Biørn achieved national recognition both as an artist and as a musician. He was a composer whose works were performed in Norway and the United States.

The Luther College Fine Arts Collection contains a number of paintings by Biørn. Chief among them are works depicting significant events in the history of Norway.

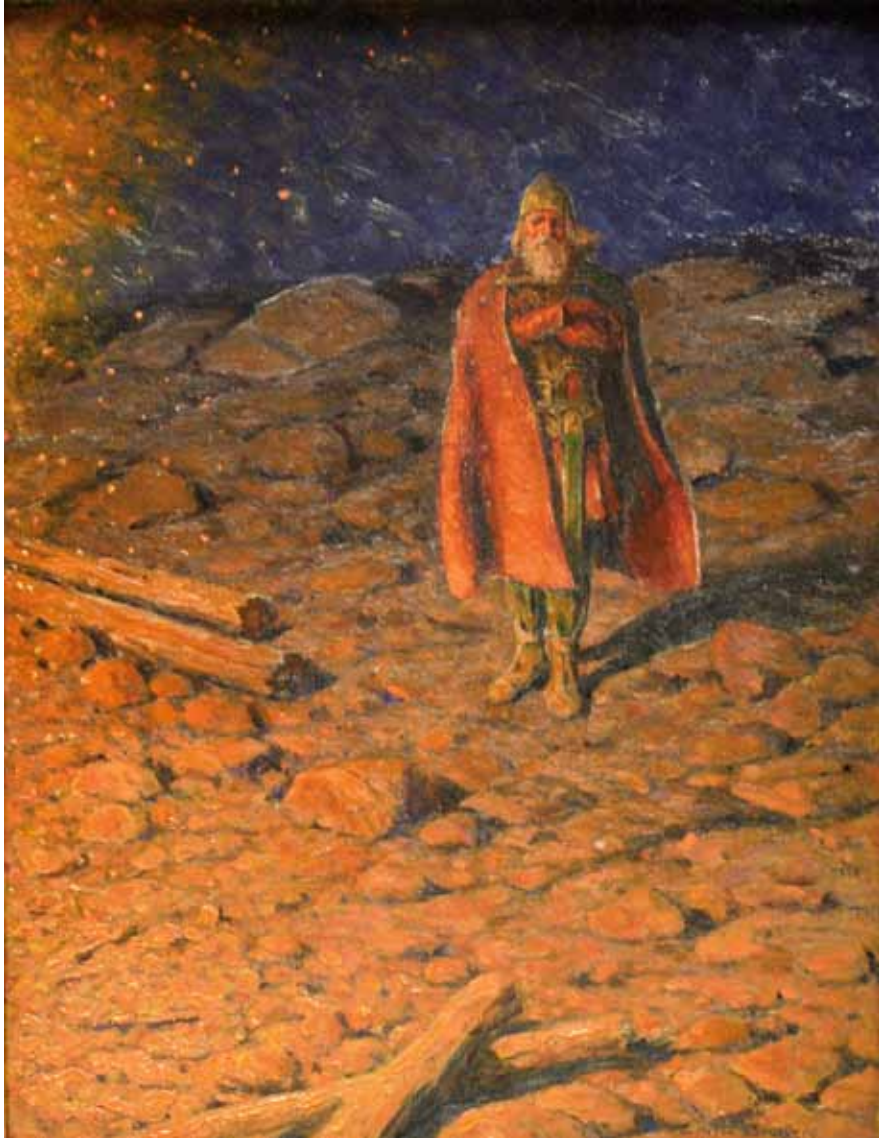
~ Courtesy of Luther College

Emil Biørn



Dynekilen, July 8, 1716, undated. Oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (75.2 x 83.2 cm). Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Emil Björn



Viking at Signal Fire on Mountain Top, undated
Oil on canvas, 21 1/8 x 17 1/4 in. (53.7 x 43.8 cm)
Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Ben Blessum

1877-1954

Ben Blessum was born in Marstein, Romsdalen, Norway. After spending his younger years in Trondheim, he emigrated to Menominee, Wisconsin, with his parents in 1888. At the age of eighteen, he moved to Chicago, Illinois, where he attended the Art Institute of Chicago and worked as a commercial artist for the *Chicago Tribune*, producing illustrations, book jacket designs, and satirical drawings.

In 1916 Blessum moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he painted Native American subjects for the Santa Fe Railroad. During World War I, he served as a representative to the American Committee on Public Information in Norway and acted in the same capacity for the U.S. War Department. After the war, Blessum was commissioned by the Norwegian State Railways to manage their U.S. travel office in New York and to promote tourism in Norway with a poster campaign, lectures, and articles. During his lifetime, the artist received numerous honors, including the Order of the Knight of St. Olav, First Class, bestowed by King Haakon in recognition of his many services to Norway.

~ Courtesy of Luther College

Ben Blessum



Peasant of Setesdalen, undated. *Oil on canvas, 33 ¼ x 29 ¼ in. (84.5 x 74.3 cm).* Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Ben Blessum



Mountain Landscape, undated
Watercolor on paper, 27 5/8 x 31 1/4 in. (70.2 x 79.4 cm)
Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Frank Brunner

1971

New York based artist Frank Brunner is a contemporary painter who fuses traditional paintings with ideas drawn from recent history. His work has been dealing with the artificiality of nature and the complexity of image making. *45°* is a series of paintings revolving around the artist's exploration of pictorial elements inspired by the composition of liquid reflections in New York parks and public spaces. In this body of work, the artist has expanded and challenged his style: the surfaces of the paintings have been worked over and over again, and he employed a dripping device while the canvas lay horizontal on the ground.

After completing his degree in painting at the National Academy in Oslo, Norway, Brunner spent a year studying at the Iliya Repin State Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia. He then relocated to the United States to study at Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut), where he graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2000.

Frank Brunner



45° MoMA #2, 2005. Oil on canvas, 56 x 78 in. (142.2 x 198.1 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Brooklyn, New York

Laila Carlsen

1969



Laila Carlsen grew up in a small Norwegian village, sketching the world around her at a young age, often preferring the solitude of the forest. After one year at Einar Granum Art School in Oslo, she rejected the brightly colored, unnatural style popular with her instructors and subsequently spent two years apprenticed to the figure painter Odd Nerdrum. In the ten years since then, Carlsen has developed a personal iconography rich in the fusion of the physical and spiritual self, primarily evidenced in her deeply personal self-portraits. Her paintings have an ethereal quality about them. She paints from a world between worlds, inspired by nature and dreams. Using painting techniques based on those of the Old Masters, she captures contemporary matter fused with a timeless spirit.

Self Portrait as Bride, 2004

Oil on canvas

26 x 15 in. (66 x 38.1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

San Francisco, California

Laila Carlsen



Desert Dance, 2007. Oil on canvas, 48 x 63 in. (121.9 x 160 cm). Courtesy of the artist, San Francisco, California

Laila Carlsen



Boy, 2007
Oil on canvas
14 ½ x 11 ½ in. (36.8 x 29.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist,
San Francisco, California



Dream Flight, 2005
Oil on canvas, 66 x 71 in. (167.6 x 180.3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, California

Laila Carlsen



Fleeting, 2008. Oil on canvas, 29 x 27 in. (73.7 x 68.6 cm). Courtesy of the artist, San Francisco, California

Arthur Cohen

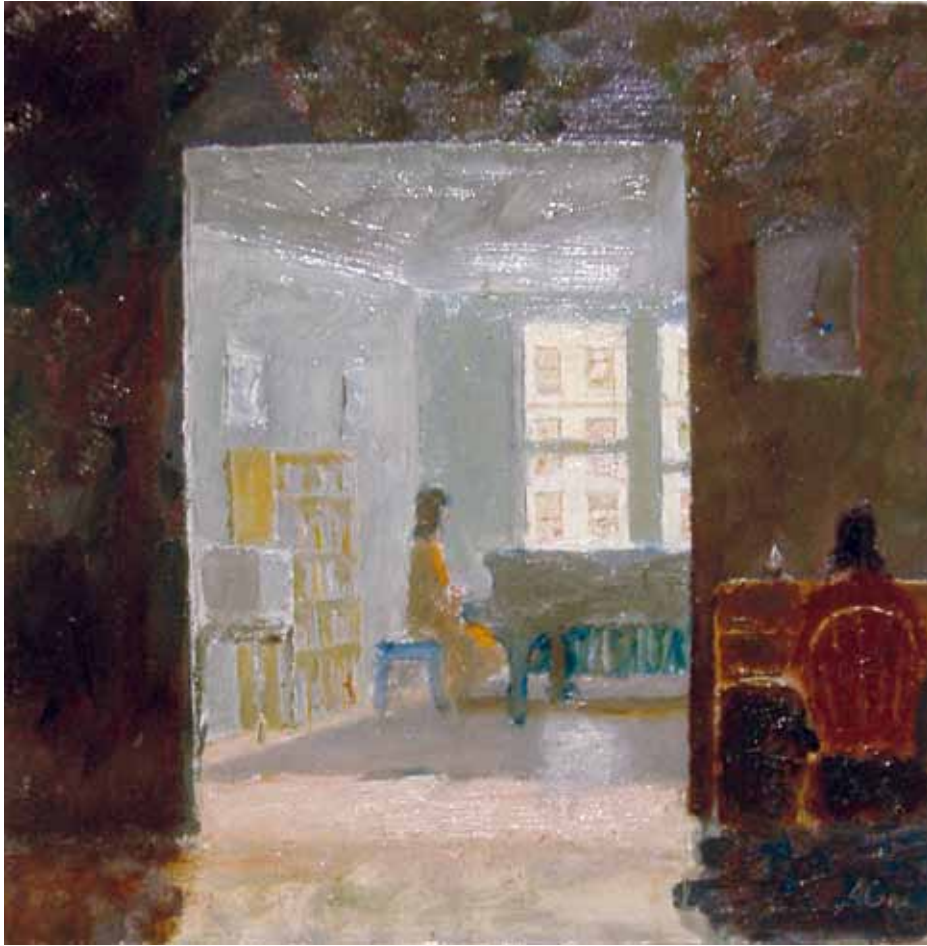
1928

Arthur Cohen has been painting Provincetown, Massachusetts, for almost fifty years. “When the timbre of a moment resounds in a handful of strokes and a wash of shimmering light,” observed art critic Jan Adlmann, “Cohen intuitively knows that ‘balance’ has been achieved.”

“Finding that balance,” the artist has explained, “is like walking a tightrope.” Cohen’s sweeping panoramas of Provincetown Harbor are developed from storied layering and scraping – thin levels of paint built up over a day, week, or even over several years, referred to by Cohen as the ghost in his painting. It is this buried sense of time and continuity that evokes a sense of timelessness and spatial infinity. Working with a focused palette of blues and grays, occasionally some pink and green, Cohen repeatedly brings the viewer a synthesis of light from different moments; his landscape paintings possess an inherent monumentality that is eternally, classically Provincetown.

~ Courtesy of Berta Walker Gallery

Arthur Cohen



Elizabeth III, 2004

Oil on panel, 12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Arthur Cohen



Provincetown November, 2000. Oil on panel, 11 x 14 in. (27.9 x 35.6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Arthur Cohen



Merrymeeting (Provincetown), 2001. *Oil on panel, 9 x 12 in. (22.9 x 30.5 cm)*
Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Salvatore Del Deo

1928

Salvatore Del Deo is a painter engaged in a spirited dialogue with his work, responding to the deep questions presented by the paintings themselves. Del Deo has painted all the familiar scenes of his life at land's end – fish, dunes, figures on the beach, boats moored at the town wharf, trap sheds, and lighthouses – made new for the viewer through the painter's rich palette and soulful perspective. It is as if he were focusing long stored energy through the lens of pure color – the color concentrated, coagulated by that intense focus.

Del Deo grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, and attended the Rhode Island School of Design (Providence), the Vesper George School of Art in Boston (Massachusetts), and the Art Students League in New York City.

~ Courtesy of Berta Walker Gallery



Full Bucket, 2008

Oil on canvas, 28 x 25 in. (71.1 x 63.5 cm)

*Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery,
Provincetown, Massachusetts*

Salvatore Del Deo



The Shuckers (Homage to the Patricia Marie, 1976), 1976-2001

Oil on canvas, 48 x 72 in. (121.9 x 182.9 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Homage to the Patricia Marie III, 2000

Oil on canvas, 72 x 72 in. (182.9 x 182.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts



Sydney Glenn Fossum

1909-1978

Sydney Glenn Fossum was born on November 13, 1909, in Aberdeen, South Dakota. He attended the Northern State Teachers College in South Dakota, and then studied at the Minneapolis School of Art from 1929 to 1933, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Fossum participated in government-sponsored art programs during the 1930s, including the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was very active politically and socially during this period, and was involved with the Minnesota Artists Union, which in 1939 changed its name to the United American Artists of Minnesota Local 86, and he was elected president of the organization that year.

Fossum served in the U.S. Army in World War II from 1943 to 1945. Following the war, he held numerous teaching positions at institutions around the country, including the Minneapolis School of Art (1945-50); Washington University (1950-1951); Des Moines Art Center (1953-1957); University of Nevada (summers, 1957 and 1958); and the Minnetonka Art Center (late 1960s). He also was the Director of the Duluth Art Institute from 1960 to 1962. He died in San Francisco in February 1978.

~ Courtesy of Luther College



Corner Grocery, 1961. Serigraph, 20 x 30 in. (50.8 x 76.2 cm). Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Herbjorn Gausta

1854-1924

Herbjorn Gausta has been described as the first Norwegian-American professional artist in the United States. He was born in Vestfjorrdalen, Telemark, Norway, and immigrated to Minnesota with his family as a youth. Gausta studied at Knud Bergslien's Academy of Art in Oslo, and in 1878 he attended the Munich Academy of Art, Germany, where he won the prestigious academy medal. The artist then returned to America in 1882, first settling in Chicago before moving to Madison and LaCrosse, Wisconsin. He returned to Decorah and taught at Luther College during the 1886-1887 academic year.

Gausta was an extremely dedicated artist known for his luminous landscapes. He also supplemented his professional career with commissions to paint church altars, and completed approximately 400 of them during his lifetime.

~ Courtesy of Luther College



Mending the Net, ca. 1900. Oil on canvas, 21 ½ x 27 ¾ in. (54.6 x 70.5 cm) Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Marie Løkke

1877-1948

Marie Løkke (also known as Mrs. Finn Mathiesen) was born in Christiania (Oslo), Norway. After studying art in Norway and Germany during 1900 and 1901, she came to the United States in 1902. In America, she studied with Charles Webster Hawthorne (1872-1930) in Provincetown, Massachusetts. She remained in the United States until 1916, and then lived in France and Belgium from 1918 to 1922, before returning to Norway.

Løkke was particularly known for her portraits of children, landscapes, marinescapes, and genre paintings. She exhibited at Marshall Fields in Chicago, Illinois, in 1908, and at the Art Institute of Chicago between 1902 and 1916, winning prizes on several occasions. Her biography was included in the Institute's publication *Works by Chicago Artists*. She also exhibited at the Chicago Norske Klub, where her work was purchased for the organization's permanent collection.

~ Courtesy of Luther College



Landscape, undated . *Oil on canvas, 17 ½ x 28 ½ in. (44.5 x 72.4 cm).* Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Gulbrand Sether

1869-1941



Snow Scene, undated. *Oil on canvas, 33 ¼ x 45 ⅝ in. (84.5 x 115.9 cm).* Courtesy of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Gulbrand Sether was born in Sørskogbygda, Elverum, Norway. After studying art in Norway with the landscape painter Fritz Thaulow, he immigrated to the United States in 1893. About 1900 he settled in Illinois, in Chicago's Humboldt Park, an area heavily populated by Norwegian-Americans. There he had his own studio and devoted himself to artistic pursuits.

~ Courtesy of Luther College

Nancy Whorf

1930-2009

Nancy Whorf is known for her vibrant, expansive Provincetown scenes. She painted the town – the narrow lanes, landmarks, golden sunsets, harbor and boats, snowy walks, and hidden gardens. Often her eye focuses on the town she knew as a child and young woman. Whorf said her work was “thoughtful and sentimental.” She created a kind of visual memoir. At the age of fourteen, Whorf began her formal art study as a folk artist, decorating furniture. She wanted to explore her own painting more deeply and spent a year at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

~ Courtesy of Berta Walker Gallery



MacMillian Wharf, Winter, Provincetown, 1992

Oil on panel, 36 x 72 in. (91.4 x 182.9 cm). Courtesy of the Berta Walker Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Acknowledgments

Washington

Imtiaz Hafiz, Curator
Jamie Arbolino, Registrar
Marcia Mayo, Senior Editor
Sally Mansfield, Editor
Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager

Oslo

Kristina Boraas, Manager, Ambassador's Residence
Keiji Turner and Ted William Salazar, General Services Office
Hilary Olsin-Windecker and Tim Moore, Public Affairs Officers
Line Anne Hovdenakk, Cultural Affairs Assistant
Siri Brockmeier, Translator

Ambassador and Mrs. White wish to thank Jane Kemp and David Kamm of Luther College for their authoritative presentations at Villa Otium about the works on loan from the college's Norwegian-American collection.

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Designer



Published by ART in Embassies
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.
November 2011