THE ROY R. NEUBERGER COLLECTION: 8 AMERICAN PAINTERS OF THE 1940'S.

From the Bryn Mawr College Art Collection.

Sponsored by the Office for the Arts, the Centennial Campus Center, and Visual Resources, Collections.

Although the paintings in this exhibit may seem dissimilar, the artists represented shared many of the same artistic concerns. American art of the 1930's and 1940's is best known for the isolationist Regionalist and American Scene schools. However, there were many American artists of this same period who were interested in the contemporary European focus on form, color, and abstraction.

The eight artists exhibited here have been variously influenced by Picasso, Matisse, Cubism, Expressionism and other European artists and movements. They either travelled to Europe or they met European artists who had emigrated to this country. Unlike many of the contemporary European artists, they never renounced recognizable shapes or subject matter and in this way they continued the American artistic tradition.

During their artistic careers, many of these painters were also teachers in fine art schools. All the artists exhibited here have works owned by major American museums and have won prestigious awards.

This exhibit has been curated by Nicole Michelle King '86.

Exh. Campus Center
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THE ROY R. NEUBERGER COLLECTION

Roy R. Neuberger has always had a deep and personal interest in art, while maintaining a busy profession in the New York finance world. He began collecting in the 1930's with the premise to collect only contemporary American art and he has continued collecting since then. Mr. Neuberger concentrated on works by young artists whom he believed in, often before they became well-known. The works are primarily from the 1930's to the 1950's.

Mr. and Mrs. Neuberger made a gift of eight paintings to Bryn Mawr College to further the arts at this College. Marie Salant Neuberger, class of 1930, is a special representative to the College's Board of Trustees.

A major part of their collection has been given to the Neuberger Museum at the State University of New York College (SUNY) at Purchase, N.Y. The Museum, founded by Mr. Neuberger and designed by architect Philip Johnson, was opened to the public in 1974.

Eight paintings on exhibit: from the Bryn Mawr College Art Collection. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, 1948.
WILLIAM ZORACH (Lith.-Am. 1887-1966).

Monday in December, Five Islands Maine.

1942.

watercolor on paper.

Zorach was born in Lithuania and emigrated to America in 1891 as an apprentice to a lithograph company in Cleveland. He studied at the Cleveland Institute of Art and the National Academy of Design in New York. Although he started as a painter, by 1922 Zorach had turned to figurative sculpture in wood, bronze and stone. He is considered one of the best American sculptors of his generation. One of his numerous commissions was for work at Radio City Music Hall in 1932.

However, he continued to do some painting of which this watercolor of 1942 is an example. It shows, as in his sculpture, his interest in the simplification of forms.

Zorach's works have been shown widely, appearing in the Armory Show of 1913, Chicago's "A Century of Progress" in 1933-34, and in "American Painting and Sculpture" in Moscow, U.S.S.R. in 1959.

This watercolor was exhibited in New York in 1944 and at the Laurence Art Museum in Williamstown, Mass. in 1946.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.8 (Neuberger Collection)
RAYMOND BREININ (Rus.-Am. 1910-).

The Raid.
1941.

oil on masonite.

Breinin, born in Vitebsk, Russia, emigrated to Chicago as a teenager in 1923, where he attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. His first paid commission was a seventy-foot WPA-project mural for a high school in Winnetka, Illinois. He works in oil, watercolor, and gouache.

The Raid, typical of his works, has a dreamlike quality. The lonely cityscape, with an expanse like a mural, is invaded by a band of horsemen in an unexplained narrative. Breinin has said that he is not interested in recording events but in being able to freely paint timeless material.

The painting has been exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1942, Mt. Holyoke College in 1947, and Bryn Mawr's Admissions Office while in Taylor.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.4
(Neuberger Collection)
JOHN EDWARD HELIKER (Am. 1909- ).

Fish.
1944.

oil on canvas.

Heliker studied at the Art Students League in New York City with Thomas Hart Benton and others as professors. He has said that he especially admired the American artists, Marsden Hartley and John Marin.

This still-life shows what he calls "my concern with the organization of the plastic elements of painting," which he claims to be his main interest in painting. The objects are observed from multiple viewpoints and the table has been pushed up almost parallel to the picture plane.

The painting has been variously exhibited in New York, Williamstown, Mass., Mt. Holyoke College, and in a reception area at Bryn Mawr.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.6 (Neuberger Collection)
MILTON AVERY  (Am. 1885?-1965).

Young Artist Standing.

1939.
oil on canvas.

Raised in upstate New York, Avery moved as a teenager to the Hartford, Connecticut area where he eventually took on factory jobs. He stumbled onto art through an ad for a course in lettering which he thought might prove profitable. This led to his continuing his training, often in the evening, at the Connecticut League of Art Students and the School of the Art Society of Hartford.

In 1925 he moved to New York City and the next year married artist Sally Michel who supported the family while Avery turned solely to art. Their daughter, March Avery, was born in 1932 and was one of Avery's favorite subjects. She may be the subject of this painting. She later became an artist in her own right.

Avery is known for his interest in colors, shapes, spaces, and the texture of paint. The College's painting is typical of his works in the late 1930's in the use of a darkish palette and heavy-bodied paint. In his later and better known works his colors brightened and the paint was thinned out in a technique which later influenced the Color Field School of the 1950's-1960's.

He was greatly influenced by European art, particularly the work of Matisse, and he made trips to Europe after 1952. He, in turn, influenced many artists such as Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb. Avery was ignored during most of his career but is now being hailed as one of the great American painters of his generation.

This painting has been on exhibit in several of the College's administrative areas for a number of years.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.2 (Neuberger Collection)
DAVID ARONSON (Lith.-Am. 1923- ).

Young Christ Disputing with the Doctors.
dated on tag on verso, 1945.
encaustic (pigment mixed with beeswax and resin)
on canvas-backed board.

Originally from Lithuania, Aronson emigrated in 1929 as a small child to the Boston area which has remained his home since then. He studied and taught at the Boston Museum School, and in 1955 he organized the Boston University Art School.

The artist explores religion in his art in the themes of the Old and New Testament, Hasidism, and during the 1960's, transcendental speculations. His works often depict saints and preachers.

Aronson uses paint densely, fused in many layers and scraped and melted. His style has been called "figurative Expressionism". In the College's painting, this is shown by the elongated necks, the agitated long fingers and the mustard yellow coloring.

In the year following the painting of Young Christ Disputing with the Doctors, Aronson wrote "...religion and art are two means of seeking ultimate truth. Religion has affinity for a great cross-section of humanity. Art is sympathetic to fewer members."

Since 1961 Aronson has turned to sculpture as his main medium. He has produced bronze reliefs and figures in an expressionistic style with close affinities to his paintings' subjects. The intensity of his vision is expressed in his figures' gestures and their roughly textured surfaces. Aronson continues to exhibit through the Pucker/Safrai Gallery in Boston.

The College's painting was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946, the San Francisco Museum of Art in 1947 and recently in 1979 at an Aronson retrospective at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis and the Jewish Museum in New York.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.1 (Neuberger Collection)
ROMARE BEARDEN (Am. 1914- )

Madonna and Child.

1945.
oil on canvas.

Bearden was born in the South (Charlotte, N.C.) but he grew up in the Northeast. He studied at the Art Students League in New York City with George Grosz in 1937-38. In the 1950's he travelled to Paris where he met Brancusi, Léger and others. As a Black Artist, Bearden has always been interested and participated in groups for Black Artists. In the 1960's he worked in the Civil Rights Movement.

Madonna and Child is typical of his earlier work for its interest in the semi-abstract and patterns of brilliant color reflecting a stained glass quality. Also typical of his work at this period is the splatter technique on the surface. In the 1960's Bearden started using collage, for which he is better known. He has said, "I work out of a response and need to redefine the image of man in the terms of the Negro experience I know best."

This painting has been shown at the Samuel M. Kootz Gallery in New York in 1946 ("Modern American Paintings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger"); the Annual Exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York during 1945-46; at the North Carolina Central University Museum of Art in 1977. Bearden's works will be the subject of a forthcoming exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.3
(Neuberger Collection)
SUZY FRELINGHUYSEN (Am. 1912- ).

Composition.
initialled SF lower right.
signed, titled, and dated on verso, 1944.
collage, oil on paper and corrugated board.

Estelle Condit Frelinghuysen (artist's name Suzy), from a prominent New Jersey family, started drawing and painting without formal art training. In 1935 she married George L.K. Morris, an abstract painter, collector and art critic. New influences around her led her to appreciate Cubism, particularly the Synthetic Cubism of Gris and the post-World War I work of Braque.

Frelinghuysen has said that she uses an intuitive process when adjusting formal elements, which she sees as being based on natural and not invented forms. She combines magazine clippings, corrugated paper, and printed paper with oil paint to enliven the surface. John R. Lane, Director of the Museum of Art at the Carnegie Institute, admires her work for its "cool elegance of color, contour, and geometric form." He further observes: "That Frelinghuysen's contribution to Synthetic Cubism came at a late moment in the history of the style does not obviate the poetry resulting from her mastery of this visual vocabulary."

She became a member of the American Abstract Artists group in the later 1930's and exhibited regularly in the New York modern art circles. During the late 1940's to mid-1950's, Frelinghuysen, professionally trained, was also a critically acclaimed opera and concert hall singer.

This artist was recently represented by a similar collage in a major exhibition, "Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America 1927-1944," which opened at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburg and closed at the Whitney Museum in New York during 1983-84.

The College's collage has been shown in Williamstown, Mass., Mt. Holyoke College, and various Bryn Mawr College administrative areas, where it has always had favorable response.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.5 (Neuberger Collection)
EDWARD JOHN STEVENS, JR. (Am. 1923-).

Woman with a Mask, Number 2.

1945.

gouache on paper.

Born in Jersey City, N.J., Stevens studied at the State Teachers College in Newark, N.J. and then at the Columbia University Teachers College. He has taught at the Newark School of Fine Industrial Art. His works are in gouache (opaque watercolor).

Mr. Stevens recently said that "it is difficult to reconstruct just what influenced paintings done forty years ago."

It would seem though that this work was inspired by African art and textiles. A strong resemblance is noted to early cubist Picasso paintings, circa 1907.

This painting has been exhibited in Williamstown, Mass in 1946, reproduced in Art News, May 1946 and House and Garden, Dec. 1947, was shown in Erdman Hall's lounge for a number of years.

The Bryn Mawr College Art Collection 1948.7

(Neuberger Collection)