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SPECIAL ISSUE

WATERCOLOR

The History of Watercolor
Materials and Techniques
Watercolorists At Work
Local, State & National Societies
And More

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THE LIVING LEGENDS OF AMERICAN

WATERCOLOR HAS BECOME an American medium. It can trace its lineage as a "serious" medium for finished works—rather than preparatory studies—to the carefully delineated paintings of Albrecht Dürer. Its full maturity can be found in the landscapes of the late 18th- and early 19th-century English painters, culminating in the remarkable works of Turner. But it is in America that artists have both explored and exploited its full potential—its fluidity, spontaneity, and luminosity—thereby making watercolor so eminently suited to depicting the American landscape. Another American "original," Henry Miller, declared: "Watercolor has affinities with the sonnet or haiku . . . it grasps the essential rhythm . . . the perfume, not the substance. Above all, it portrays the environment."[1]

Prior to the mid-19th century in America, transparent watercolor was almost exclusively the medium of cultured young ladies in finishing schools—i.e., amateurs. Of course, there were some notable exceptions: Henry Farny (1847-1916) and George Catlin (1796-1872) documented in loving detail the American West, and John James Audubon (1785-1851) produced superb watercolors of the birds of America in his classic book of the same name. But it was the founding of the American Watercolor Society (AWS) in 1866 that focused attention on transparent watercolor as an independent medium of artistic expression. The participation of such distinguished artists as Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), James A. M. Whistler (1834-1903), and Thomas Eakins (1844-1916) in some of the society's early annual exhibitions helped to legitimize the medium and elevate it to its present stature. Throughout its many years of active life, the AWS, through its annual exhibition and scholarship programs, has contributed to the growth of the community of American watercolor painters.

Yet, it is a curious irony that two *expatriate* painters were the first American artists to explore the true potential of watercolor. Both John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) and (to a lesser degree) James A. M. Whistler turned to watercolor late in their careers, finding that the medium offered them the freedom to explore a range of feelings and subtle color effects that had been absent from their oils.

But the American tradition in watercolor really began with Winslow Homer (1836-1910). Painted in the last 25 years of his life, Homer's paradigmatic works began a naturalistic style that Lloyd Goodrich has defined as "a style close to natural appearances." Even those artists who "depart radically" from natural appearances "still retain a direct relation to nature."[2] Homer's unsentimental depictions of the elemental forces of nature and his luminous technique have created a legacy that contemporary watercolorists still draw upon.

John Marin (1870-1953) defined the outer limits of the naturalistic tradition. While "departing radically," he always referred to nature at some point in his work. With his bold colors and architectural line, he created a modernist foundation upon which many of today's watercolorists have built.

From these two founding fathers—Winslow Homer and John Marin—have come a pantheon of watercolor immortals: Edward Hopper (1882-1967), with his luminous and lonely seacoasts; Charles Burchfield (1893-1967), with his midwestern fantasy landscapes; Arthur Dove (1880-1946); Charles Demuth (1883-1935); George Grosz (1893-1959); and Lionel Fenninger (1871-1956).

And so we come to the 14 artists selected for this retrospective salute. All have been painting for more than 30 years; indeed, some are well into their sixth and seventh decade of familiarity with the medium. While the following artists vary greatly in technique and subject matter, all of their works embody the naturalistic style. Even when their subject matter is reduced to the abstract, the reference to nature, together with an apparent desire to capture a direct impression of nature's changing moods, is always present. All 14 artists have exhibited and won prizes at the AWS and other major national exhibitions, and most are members of the National Academy.

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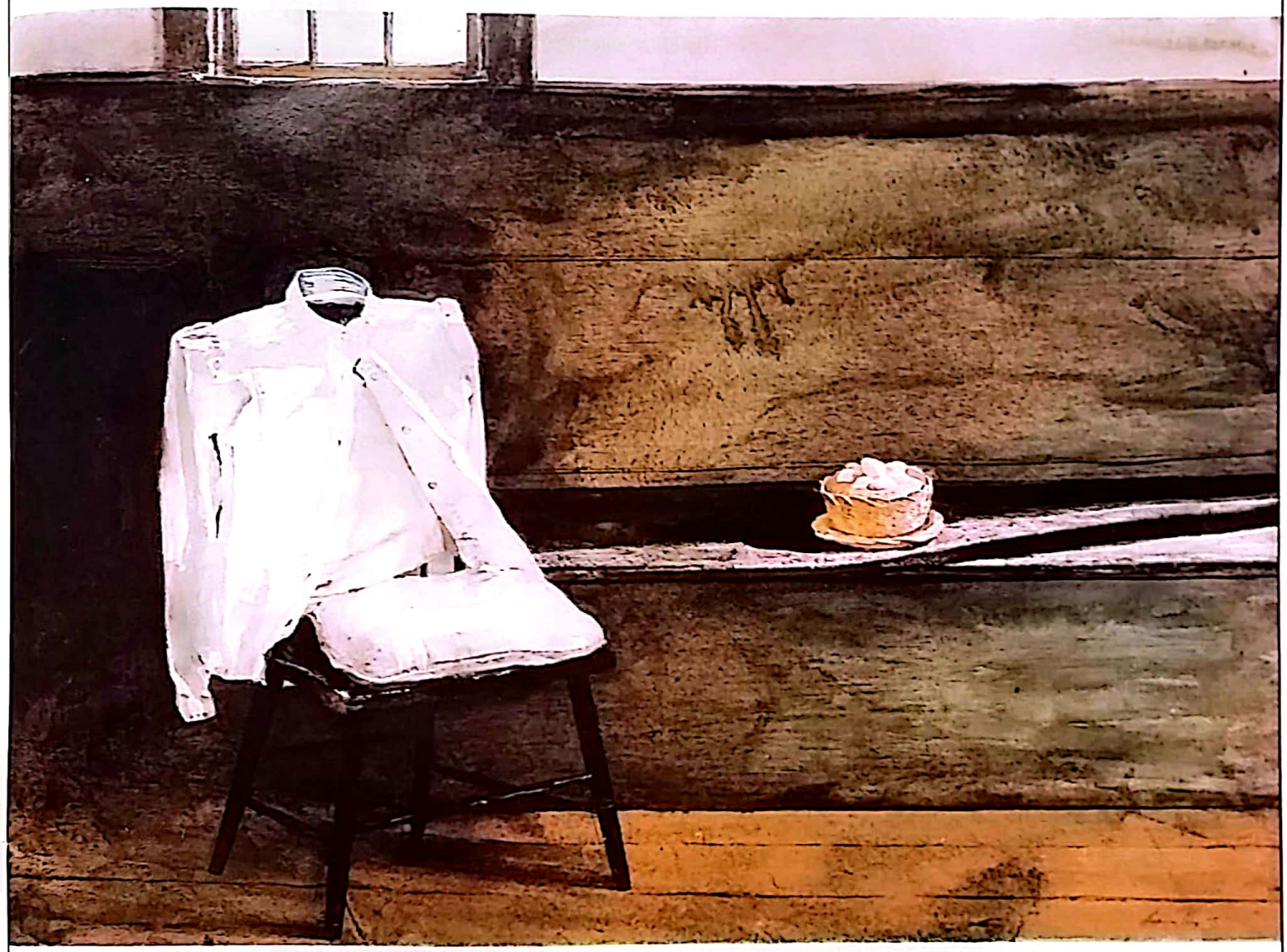
1. From *Peindre C'est Aimer à Nouveau*, Paris, 1966. 2. Lloyd Goodrich, *Winslow Homer and American Watercolor Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1966.

WATERCOLOR

Profiles of 14 celebrated American artists who have influenced generations of watercolorists.

BY DIANE CASELLA HINES



Model's Chair, © Andrew Wyeth, 1982, watercolor, 21 x 29. Photo by Peter Ralston, courtesy Coe Kerr Gallery, New York, New York.

ANDREW WYETH ▲

"I'M HAVING A very bad influence on American painting," lamented Andrew Wyeth in the February 1975 issue of *American Artist*. It is true that Wyeth's phenomenal popularity and celebrity status have influenced young artists to ape his subject matter and technique in the hopes of duplicating his success. Nevertheless, not since the paradigmatic works of Winslow Homer more than a century ago has an American artist had such an impact on watercolor.

"My fascination with watercolor has not diminished after 48 years," remarks Wyeth. "I find it the most flexible of all media and prefer using it in its purist form—no mixed media, no acrylics, just straight from the tube."

From the loose, bravura watercolors of his early career in the 1930s and '40s to his tighter, more introspective work in tempera of later years, Wyeth has married a virtuoso technique—perfected in the studio of his father and teacher, N.C. Wyeth—and an inspired vision. It is this vision that young artists hope to duplicate when they copy Wyeth's work; needless to say, lacking inspiration, they are doomed to failure.

It is perhaps ironic that the portrayal of the most personal of associations, as well as the mundane—drying ears of corn, a Flexible Flyer in the snow, a torn lace curtain in the breeze—can have the power to evoke universal responses of loss, sadness, isolation, mystery. It is this universality with which Wyeth imbues the commonplace that lifts his art out of the narrow realm of *trompe l'oeil* painting and beyond the reportage of illustration or the superficiality of surrealism and places it among the world's master works. This universality is perhaps his greatest contribution to American watercolor painting. The power of his technique allows him to convey the full depth of his personal feelings and responses to his environment in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and Cushing, Maine, and produces the inspired vision that marks his paintings as both American and universal.

DONALD TEAGUE ▼

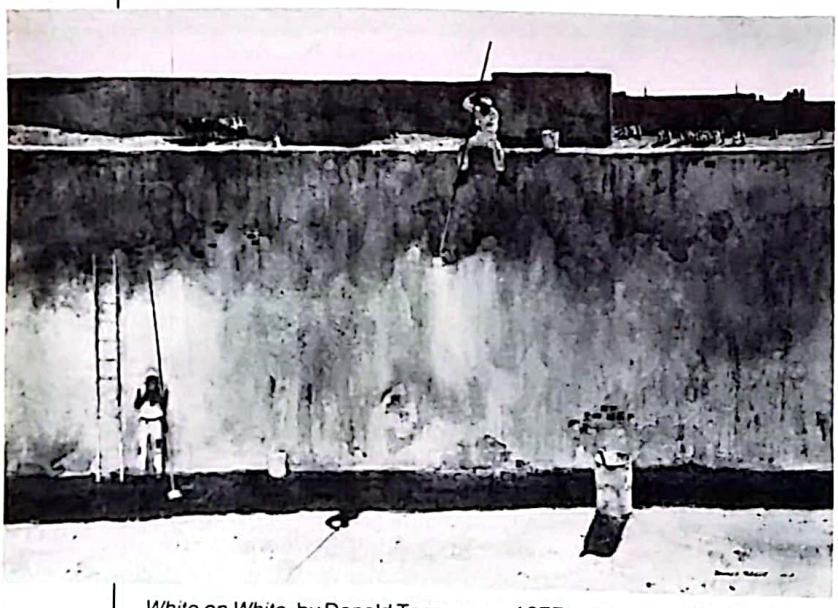
BY WAY OF the Pacific Ocean and the American West, Donald Teague carries on the naturalistic tradition of Homer. Now in his 85th year, the artist continues to work in his studio in Carmel, California, close by the sea and its rugged coastline.

But the deserts and mountains of the West also hold fascination for Teague. In the ever-changing patterns of desert light, it is easy to imagine the West of just a century ago. It's the people of that recent past—the settlers with their covered wagons, the cowboys with their horses—who often find their way into Teague's landscapes.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Teague studied at the Art Students League, as so many of the artists in this article have done. But he soon left the East Coast and spent many years traveling abroad, while in the Navy during World War I and afterward.

Teague's work is characterized by attention to detail. This tight draftsmanship sets up a dramatic tension that spills over into the final watercolor. Teague uses carefully placed passages of color that are often close in value, giving a look of uniformity to his work. The artist often adds opaque to his transparent watercolor. "Why the insistence," Teague wonders, "on pure transparent watercolors? Many watercolorists, present and past, freely used opaque color whenever they felt it would better express what they were trying to paint."

Speaking of the medium with which he has worked for over 50 years, Teague says: "Watercolor is the most captivating of all. To me, it is as beguiling as a beautiful woman—so female in its capabilities for change and stimulation, so voluptuous when it smiles on you. At times, I feel as though I have been seduced!"



White on White, by Donald Teague, ca. 1977, watercolor, 15 x 22. Courtesy Huney Gallery, San Diego, California. Photo by Robert Singhaus.

Spring Grove Chapel, by Edmond J. FitzGerald, 1981, watercolor, 18 x 24½. Collection the artist.

EDMOND J. FITZGERALD ▲

EDMOND J. FITZGERALD can be regarded as a direct descendant, in terms of spirit and subject matter, of Winslow Homer. His love of the sea began in his boyhood home in Seattle, Washington, and has shaped both his life and his art. Like Homer, FitzGerald loves the outdoors. He has worked at many interests, never far from the sea—roustabout on a paddle wheel steamer, boatman for a U.S. geological survey in Alaska (which was shipwrecked in the Yukon), and a World War II commander of an LST.

In the midst of such vigorous activities, FitzGerald still has found time to act as president of Allied Artists of America (1960-1963), write two art instruction books, and serve on numerous combat art assignments, most recently in Vietnam.

As an artist, FitzGerald doesn't confine his work to watercolor. "For me," he declares, "each medium helps define the perimeters of the other. . . ." But he finds the spontaneous, transparent qualities of watercolor particularly suited to depicting the sea. FitzGerald's technique with watercolor is characterized by subtle, transparent washes that allow the white of the paper to serve as the lights. Figures, boats, and buildings enter his work only as adjuncts to the dominant motifs of sea and sky. Usually working directly from nature, FitzGerald does few wet-into-wet washes in order to minimize accidental effects, and his careful draftsmanship is always evident.

While Homer's seascapes, for the most part, depicted the coast and sea off Prout's Neck, Maine, or the Caribbean, FitzGerald has painted the sea in many parts of the world—from Seattle to Provincetown, Massachusetts, and from the Bronx marshes in New York to Da Nang Harbor.

In describing his affinity for watercolor, FitzGerald observes: "The speed of execution that watercolor provides, it also demands! And this latter quality is the source of its unique charm for me."

JOHN C. PELLEW ▶

JOHN C. PELLEW carries on the naturalistic tradition of Homer as well and, like him, has painted and achieved success with both his oils and watercolors. But for Pellew, nature has many faces. "I could never paint one subject (such as seascapes) over and over, and no one has done it any better than Winslow Homer, anyway," he says.

Born not far from the sound of the sea in Cornwall, England, Pellew has been winning prizes with his landscapes and seascapes since 1934. He's a frequent workshop instructor.

Painting in a looser style than Homer, Pellew refers to himself as an "impressionist," but not in the manner of Monet: "The impressionist paints his impression of a landscape at a definite time of day or under a particular effect. I try for mood rather than detail." To that end, Pellew rarely makes a detailed sketch before beginning to paint. His palette is a limited one, creating subtle gradations of color rather than dramatic splashes. Buildings and figures play only supporting roles in his landscapes, with Nature in her many guises holding center stage.

Simplicity is a hallmark of Pellew's work—an effect that looks deceptively easy to achieve when it's actually most difficult, especially when one considers that Pellew paints on-the-spot watercolors very rapidly, taking usually less than half an hour to finish a quarter sheet.

Comments Pellew: "My reasons for painting have not changed since I timidly went to nature over 50 years ago. Watercolor has been the ideal medium for capturing nature's swiftly changing moods."

Good Harbor Beach, by John C. Pellew, ca. 1979, acrylic, 15 x 20. Collection the artist.

JOSEPH HENNINGER ▼

JOSEPH HENNINGER is certainly the undisputed "teacher" in the West. During his tenure as chairman of the illustration department at Art Center College of Design, now in Pasadena, California, no fewer than 3,000 students passed through his classes, many of whom—such as Mark English, Bob Peak, and Harry Carmean—have gone on to become the leading painters, illustrators, designers, and art directors of their day.

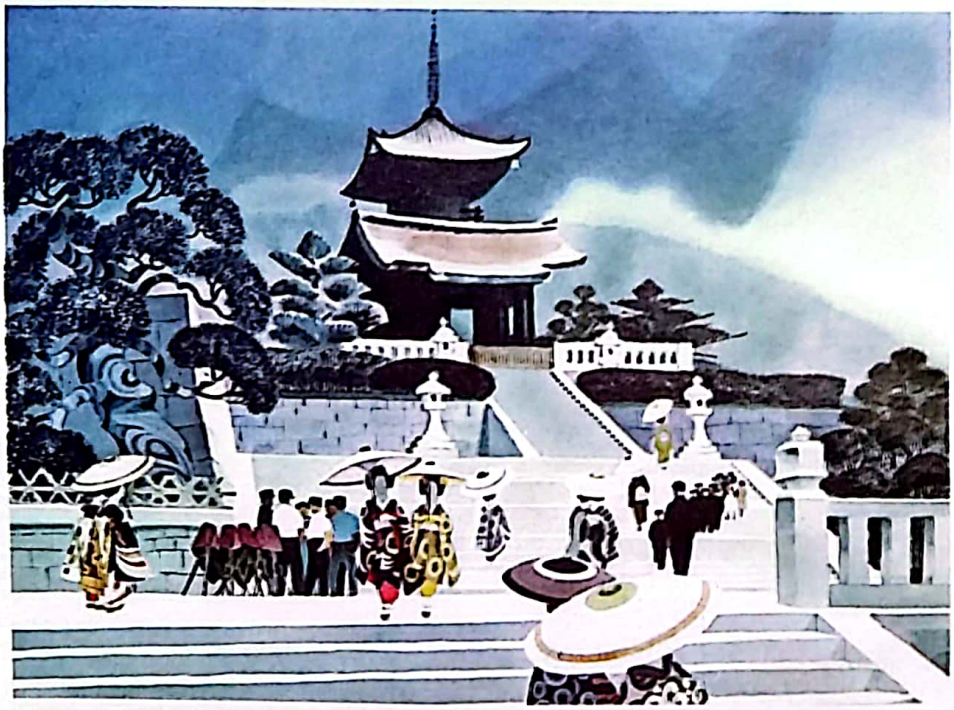
But Henninger was a first-rate illustrator and artist in his own right long before he took up teaching. He has worked at everything from continuity sketches for the movies in their earlier burgeoning years in Los Angeles to industrial sketches for California's aircraft industry during World War II. But whether teaching or working on a commercial assignment, Henninger has found time to do his own painting, working both in oils and watercolor.

London Sketches, by Joseph Henninger, 1974, watercolor, 3¼ x 5 each. Collection Danica Henninger.

Having developed a love for travel and foreign landscapes during his student days in Paris, Henninger has always kept sketchbooks. These are filled with meticulously rendered landscapes done on location with a minimum of equipment. These sketches, with their remarkably finished look, have become, over the years, the inspiration for larger watercolors executed in his studio.

His work demonstrates carefully controlled washes and precise brushwork. The smooth, finished quality of his watercolor landscapes creates a timeless mood, a "frozen moment" of experience that instantly draws in the viewer.

"I belong to an anachronistic group of painters," says Henninger. "We're called traditionalists." The traditional values found in his paintings have enriched the thousands of students who have come under his spell.



Kiyomizu Temple, Kyoto, by Mario Cooper, 1979, watercolor, 21 x 29. Collection Dale Meyers.

MARIO COOPER ▲

MARIO COOPER's fascination with landscapes all over the world, as well as his leadership in affairs of the art community, have made him a truly cosmopolitan watercolorist.

Born in Mexico City and educated at Chouinard in Los Angeles and Grand Central School of Art in New York, Cooper can trace his cosmopolitan tastes to his very beginnings. Cooper turned to watercolor after 20 years as a successful illustrator in New York. Throughout his career, he has shared his talents and taught scores of students in classes at Columbia, Cooper Union, and presently the Art Students League and the National Academy, and through several art instruction books that he has written.

Not only have his watercolors had an impact on the American watercolor tradition; his role as president of the American Watercolor Society, which he has ably led since 1959, has also effected change. Cooper took over the presidency at a time when the society was experiencing many financial and organizational difficulties. Under Cooper's dynamic leadership, the society achieved a sound financial basis, expanded its programs, added workshops, invited jurors from around the country, and introduced and supported the role of women on the board of directors and throughout the affairs of the AWS. Cooper himself designed and executed four medals to enhance the society's awards program.

Even if Cooper had chosen the life of a recluse, his watercolors would have earned him national recognition. A strong sense of design and color dominates Cooper's work. His subject matter can range from a Mayan temple to a palazzo on the Grand Canal. Producing only three or four major works a year, Cooper does highly detailed watercolor sketches on the spot, which he later enlarges and works on in his studio. An innovative, intuitive painter, Cooper tries techniques that a "purist" would scorn and even professionals might shy away from—such as removing whole areas of color without damaging the paper.

Of his chosen medium Cooper wryly comments: "In watercolor, you start a duel with light which you hope will end in a brilliant draw."

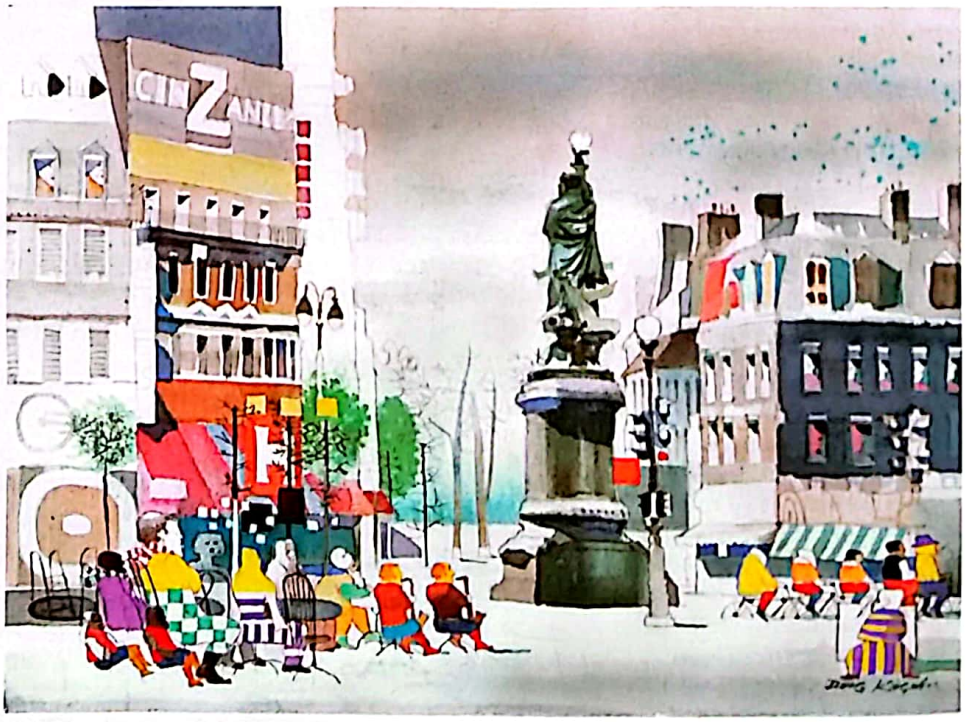
DONG KINGMAN ▼

DONG KINGMAN can be called a California watercolorist, having been born in Oakland and having achieved his success first in San Francisco and then nationally. But his childhood experiences and education in Hong Kong, where he received his earliest training in calligraphy, have indelibly impressed his work with an Oriental flavor and flair.

Kingman's first solo show of brilliantly colored cityscapes of San Francisco in 1935 brought him overnight recognition. Countless successful shows and major awards have followed. His classes at Columbia, Hunter College, and the Famous Artists School, as well as many goodwill tours sponsored by the State Department and his popular painting workshops, have taken him around the world. Kingman has illustrated numerous books and magazines with his bustling city scenes.

Kingman's watercolors of great cities in this country and around the world are his trademark. Characterized by colorful transparent washes with much white paper left sparkling in just the right places, these paintings capture not just the sights, but also the elusive spirit and vigor of the urban landscape. "I find I have much more fun painting if I let my imagination go," he says.

This observation is especially true of Kingman's paintings of his native Hong Kong and his adopted home in New York. Adding much to the spirit of his cityscapes are his characteristic brushwork with its strong calligraphic element and his many exuberant figures, seemingly randomly placed (but actually painstakingly planned).



Towards Montmartre, Paris, by Dong Kingman, watercolor, 21¾ x 30. Courtesy Hammer Galleries, Inc., New York, New York.

EDWARD BETTS ▶

COMBINING THE SPIRIT of both Homer and Marin, Edward Betts's interest—indeed his obsession, as he calls it—in coastal themes has never slackened over the past 35 years of his career. He began working with transparent watercolor and continues to use it "simply because I'm still in love with it." However, since the 1950s, Betts has restricted his use of transparent watercolor to his purely descriptive paintings and has taken up casein and acrylics for his more abstract explorations of the sea and its shoreline. These works have won him countless honors and awards and have broken new ground in terms of both their innovative technique and startling new visions of an ancient subject.

The author of successful books on watercolor and landscape painting, Betts has taught at the University of Illinois and conducted many watercolor and acrylic workshops.

Betts thinks of watercolor as being traditionally a landscape medium and is accustomed to viewing nature largely in terms of watercolor. But while his mixed-media and acrylic works have been largely abstract, they still can be considered well within the naturalistic style, for their inspiration lies in the artist's direct response to nature and desire to understand and transmit the many changing moods of the sea.

Betts feels that the message he has wanted to transmit through his art has not changed very much over the years:

Floodtide, by Edward Betts, 1980, acrylic, 22 x 30. Photo: Midtown Galleries, New York, New York.

"In transparent watercolor, I still want to use the medium as a vehicle for sharing with others what I have *seen* in nature . . . and in my acrylics, I am concerned with my *experiencing* of nature, getting at the abstract qualities . . . evoking weather and natural forces."

Having worked alternately and successfully with both transparent watercolor and opaque water-media, Betts hopes that in the future the division of opinion concerning the two will break down. Says Betts: "They're all part of the same thing, aren't they really? Painting methods that combine complex relationships of transparency and opacity serve to extend and enrich the resources of the painter; to limit those resources arbitrarily seems to me old-fashioned and foolish."

Summer Day, by Chen Chi, watercolor, 14 x 55. Collection D. B. Manche.

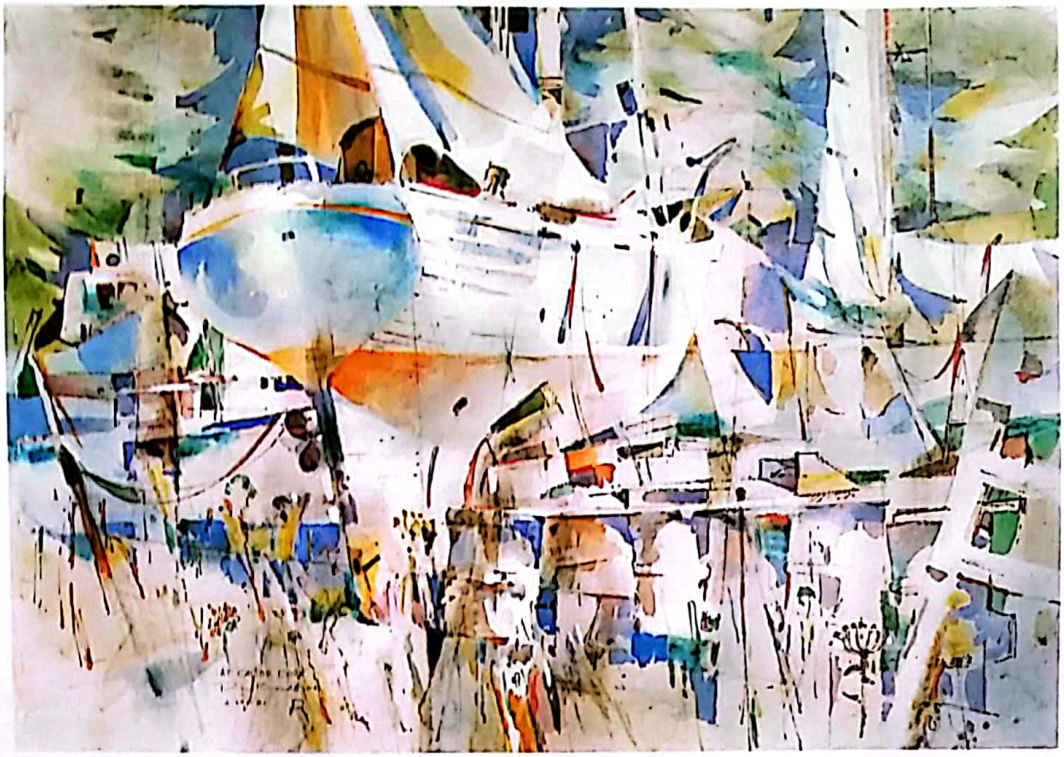
CHEN CHI ▲

CHEN CHI is another American watercolorist whose Oriental heritage has combined with his Occidental experience to produce an art that is a skillful amalgam of both worlds and their corresponding philosophies.

Born in Wu-sih, China, in 1912, Chen studied art and was an instructor of art at St. John's University in Shanghai until 1947. In that year, when a show of his paintings was held at the Village Art Center in New York, $600 was raised to help pay the young artist's passage to this country. Since then, Chen has been the recipient of numerous awards and has taken an active part in affairs of the art community, serving as a director of the AWS as well as of the Audubon Artists and Allied Artists of America.

While his subject matter is often the teeming urban landscapes of American cities, his technique retains the delicacy of line and subtle tonal gradations and relationships found in Chinese art. The lyric, airy quality of Chen's cityscapes may seem at odds with the harsh vistas and rough spirit of this country's urban areas. Instead, Chen's watercolors enhance the vitality of the urban landscape.

On a trip back to the People's Republic of China in 1978, Chen purchased 58"-x-146" sheets of a specially made Chinese paper. He has used these sheets (often cut into halves and thirds) for a number of watercolors that he has since sent back to the Shanghai Museum to be mounted in the traditional Chinese hand scroll forms with verses of poetry in calligraphy. So it would seem that Chen has come full circle in his artistic journey.



At Canoo Cove, by Rex Brandt, 1981, mixed water-based media, 21 x 29. Collection E. Gene Crain.

PHIL DIKE ▼

PHIL DIKE is one of three southern California watercolorists who have done so much to focus attention on both the medium and southern California as an art center in the 1930s and 1940s (the other two are Rex Brandt and Millard Sheets). Born in Redlands and educated at Chouinard in Los Angeles, Dike used watercolor early in his career and has continued to exhibit and win awards with the medium, although he alternately uses oils in his work as well. A member of the California Watercolor Society (now often called the National Watercolor Society) for over 50 years, Dike served as president in the 1930s and continues to be active in the society's affairs. Of those early years and the rise in popularity of watercolor in general, and California watercolorists in particular, Dike recalls, "The medium seemed to have a time and place to flourish. The freedom was here and so was the light, the sun, the elegant seacoast. . . ."

Dike has also been an influential and beloved teacher, first at Chouinard and then with the Brandt-Dike Summer School from 1947 to 1955. As professor of art at Scripps College, Dike's enthusiasm for both teaching and painting watercolors influenced scores of students until his retirement in 1970.

Dike's watercolors have a strong compositional base that often becomes pure abstraction. Brilliant color and interesting batik-like textural effects give each painting a unity and uniqueness, regardless of the consistency of Dike's subject matter—the ever-present seashore filled with light, water, sky, birds, and beach.

While some would fault the narrowness of his subject matter, Dike feels that his initial aims have led him to simplify the complex shapes in nature to achieve a precisely composed painting. "I have concentrated on one specific investigation," observes the artist, "and it has led to many variations on a constant theme."

Ode to a Sea Temple, by Phil Dike, 1981, watercolor, 22 x 30. Collection E. Gene Crain.

REX BRANDT ◀

REX BRANDT's life and art personify the bold, joyous, casual (and often much maligned, because it appears so effortless) spirit that is southern California. Born in San Diego, Brandt has lived and painted in Corona Del Mar for more than 40 years. With exuberant, sun-filled watercolors of Balboa Bay-Newport Harbor, he has captured every nuance of that part of the California coast.

His success as a painter came early and by the time he was 26, he had already won several major awards and had formed and headed the Riverside College Art Center. There followed national exhibitions, more awards, the establishment of the Brandt-Dike Summer School of painting, the presidency of the California Watercolor Society, and more than ten books on watercolor methods and techniques.

But it is through his brilliant watercolors of Balboa Bay, with white sails flashing on the bright water, that Brandt is most recognized. Painting in a unique style that critic Henry Seldis once dubbed "Balboa Byzantine," Brandt's paintings convey a feeling of action through flat planes of bright color that capture the intense California sunlight on water.

"Transparent watercolor is the ultimate drawing medium," declares Brandt. "Nothing—but nothing—can match it. Over the years, it has helped me to portray my interests, which have changed very little—to make an expressionistic statement of relationships. . . ."

Brandt finds that he has become increasingly involved with watercolor paper "as an object, rather than a device." He employs other "devices," such as spattering pigment on a moist sheet, in order to "provoke the paper to provoke me."

Brandt never strays too far from the naturalistic limits of the American watercolor tradition. Says the artist, "My paintings are, for me, a rejoicing of life and are my way of sharing and holding on to every moment of it."

OGDEN M. PLEISSNER ▶

NATURE AROUND the world has become the subject matter for Ogden M. Pleissner. Ever since his days in the U.S. Air Force in World War II when he painted the Force's Aleutian bases and, later, the Normandy invasion which he recorded for *Life*, Pleissner's fascination with landscapes here and abroad have taken him over many miles. The paintings that have resulted from these travels have won him fame and countless awards.

Working alternately in both oil and watercolor, Pleissner finds that he can express himself more rapidly in watercolor and that is why he chooses the medium for painting on location. "I find the luminosity and richness of color that watercolor imparts especially important to my work," the artist observes.

As a simple, direct response to nature and the scene at hand, Pleissner's work is in the grand tradition of landscape painters. A Pleissner landscape is a skillfully recorded scene, as well as an emotional statement about that scene. It is the latter element that captures the viewer's attention and raises Pleissner's paintings above "picture postcard" works into the realm of personal expression and universally experienced emotion.

In his works, Pleissner records light's myriad nuances. Making use of the effects of light, such as the reflection of light (the white paper) through the watercolor pigment, he is able to create changing moods in a landscape. Says the artist: "The moods I see in landscape are so numerous and exciting that I'm compelled to keep trying to capture them. . . . I suppose that's why I continue painting and attempting to make that one, strong, simple, solid statement."

The Ancient Oak, by Ogden M. Pleissner, 1981, watercolor, 18 x 28. Collection Jeffery Cooley. Photo by E. Irving Blomstrann.

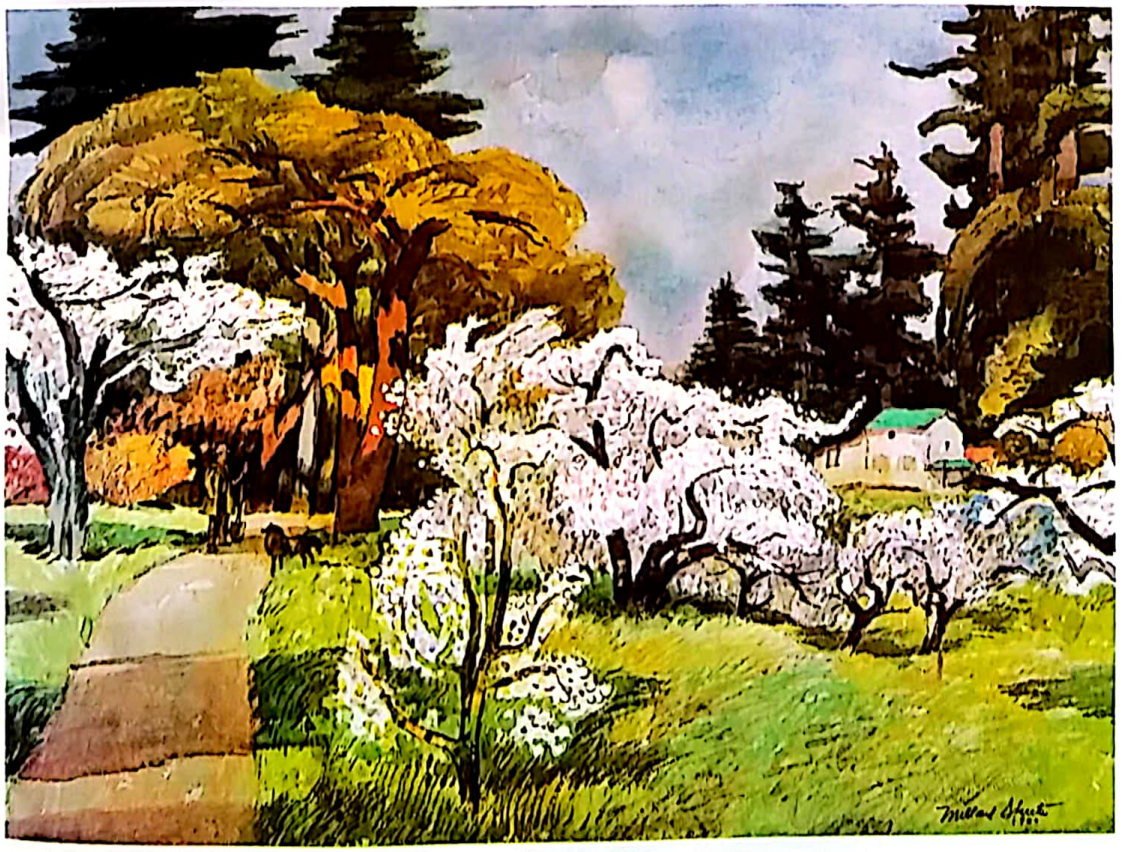
MILLARD SHEETS ▼

MILLARD SHEETS, perhaps more than any other artist, was responsible for arousing national interest in painters on the West Coast, in particular the so-called "California Watercolor School." These artists' style was strikingly different from that of Homer and Hopper and other "eastern" watercolorists and closer to the vision of Marin—characterized by calligraphic brushwork, strong color, and an almost abstract geometric design.

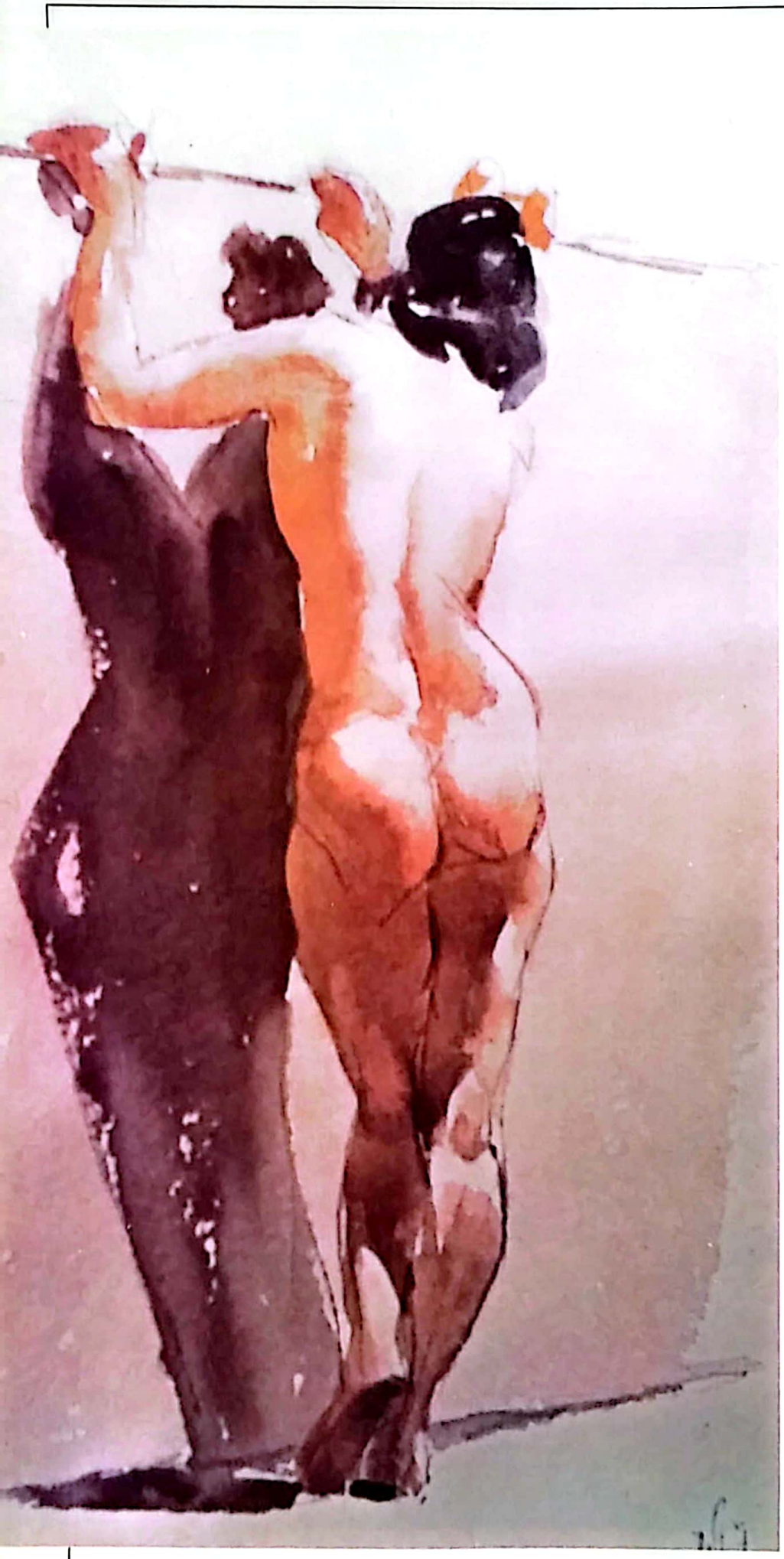
Working directly from nature, Sheets creates a simplified composition that often contains dramatic juxtapositions of light and dark. The rolling hills of California, with their rhythmical contours, feature prominently in Sheets's landscapes, as does the spirited horse with tossing mane. Indeed, that horse has almost become a symbol for the artist's work, adding a romantic touch to its decidedly modern base.

But Sheets's watercolors are only one aspect of his contribution. As professor of art at Scripps College in the 1930s and '40s and as director of the Los Angeles County–Otis Art Institute in the 1950s, the artist's concern for education and his belief in the role of visual arts in community life contributed to a cultural renaissance in southern California.

Of his own work, Sheets comments, "I paint as I do, because it is what I know. As I have grown in my appreciation of the magic of this life, I find painting more exciting and rewarding, because I have slowly gained the ability to express my affection for life."



Apple Orchard of Sebastopol, California, by Millard Sheets, 1982, watercolor, 22 x 30. Courtesy Kennedy Galleries, Inc., New York, New York.



The Model, by Edgar A. Whitney, ca. 1980, watercolor, 10" high. Collection the artist.

EDGAR A. WHITNEY ◀

EDGAR A. WHITNEY's influence on American watercolor painting would have been felt even if he had never exhibited his paintings, because Whitney is that *rara avis*, an inspirational teacher and a gifted artist.

After 25 years in commercial art, he began painting and teaching full-time. Thousands of students have since benefited from Whitney's teaching skills, humor, and personal magnetism. Besides his classes, the artist conducts his own Whitney Watercolor Tours, which have taken students all over the U.S. and Europe to capture picturesque landscapes and delight in Whitney's on-the-spot demonstrations. Now in his ninth decade, Whitney leads his tours every year and they are always booked well in advance.

A strong sense and feeling of design can be found in Whitney's work, as well as complete technical competence. His bravura brushwork often belies his adherence to art fundamentals of precise draftsmanship, color, and value placement. In his works, Whitney tries to capture the fleeting impression. Says Whitney: ". . . the province of watercolor is partial statement. . . . I try to express only the essence of each area and record that expression with the fewest possible number of strokes."

Whitney believes that painting is a craft—an activity to be learned, practiced, perfected, and passed on. The artist sees it as the hope of our future: "Despite the bomb . . . artists will . . . go right on creating and loving, constituting an aristocracy in the best sense of the word—the epitome of the best in human understanding."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, please note that women have not been excluded in this article because of prejudice or careless omission. Quite simply, there are no American women artists of the stature of those mentioned who have been painting with watercolor consistently for more than 30 years in the naturalistic style. There is, of course, Georgia O'Keeffe, but she left behind her watercolor masterpieces and, since the 1940s, has painted almost exclusively in oil. So, too, Isabel Bishop relinquished the watercolors of her early career to paint in oil.

It is not surprising that these artists—and contemporaries such as Alice Neel, Helen Lundeberg, and Joyce Treiman—chose oils. In order to be recognized as "serious" artists, women have chosen to work in what has been traditionally the most acceptable, professional, and legitimate of media. And while the struggle continues, the gains already made may allow women today the freedom to explore watercolor as men have.

But the medium itself has no gender. There will always be some painter who will rise to meet its challenge and create with it an enduring statement of beauty that transcends time, place, and even the painter. •