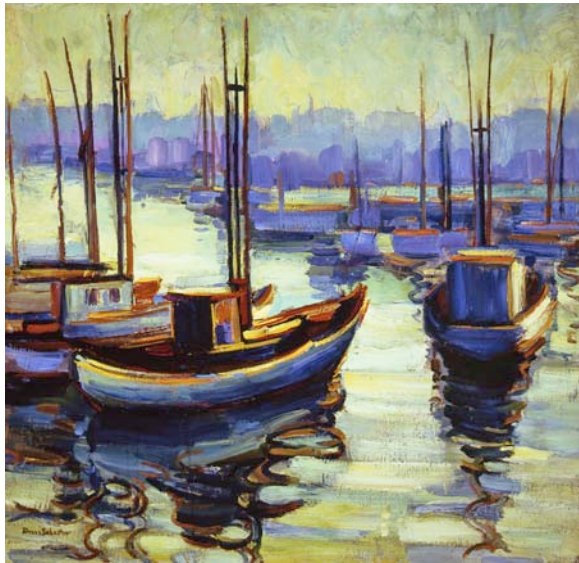


the Palette

Published by THE IRVINE MUSEUM | Autumn/Winter 2015



top: Jesse Powell, *Spring Bloom, Point Lobos* (detail), The Irvine Museum
center: Euphemia Charlton Fortune, *Study of Monterey Bay*, The Irvine Museum
above: Donna Schuster, *Los Angeles Harbor*, Private Collection, courtesy of The Irvine Museum
right: Marion Wachtel, *Sycamores*, Edward H. & Yvonne J. Boseker Collection

From the President's Desk

Our exhibition for Autumn, 2015, is entitled **INDEPENDENT VISIONS: WOMEN ARTISTS OF CALIFORNIA, 1880-1940**. This remarkable display celebrates the work of California's historic women artists. The paintings, sculpture and large ceramic plate in the exhibition vary from classically-inspired portraits and still-lives to bold Modernist paintings. As a whole, the exhibition documents the great variety of styles that characterize our women artists.

The independence of California's women artists is evident. Far from being limited to a dilettante role, our women artists were important figures in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century. Certainly, in keeping with the dominance of California Impressionism, they excelled in landscape painting, but they also were adept in portrait painting, figural studies, and still-life. Indeed, many of them set the standard in such diverse media as oil painting, watercolor and sculpture.

Anna Hills (1882-1930) stands out as one of the most important of the women painters in California. She was one of the founders of the Laguna Beach Art Association in 1918 and served as president on two occasions. An excellent organizer, she was instrumental in raising the funds that led to the construction of a permanent home for the association. That building is now the Laguna Art Museum.

Independent Visions will feature the largest work of art in the museum's collection. Painted by Jessie Arms Botke (1883-1971) in 1953, the mural for the Oaks Hotel in Ojai, California, measures approximately 7 feet high by 26 feet long. Botke is consistently one of the most popular artists displayed at The Irvine Museum. As an Art Deco painter, her elegant and brightly colored paintings of exotic birds and plants stand out for their sheer power to dazzle the eyes of the viewer. She loved to incorporate large areas of gold and silver leaf as part of the design of her paintings.

In addition to the artists discussed above, we will be showing works by Mabel Alvarez (1891-1985), Elanor Colburn (1866-1939), Grace Carpenter Hudson (1865-1937), Elsie Palmer Payne (1884-1971), Ruth Peabody (1893-1966), Henrietta Shore (1880-1963), Donna Schuster (1883-1953), Marion Kavanagh Wachtel (1870-1954), Julia Bracken Wendt (1871-1942), and Edith White (1855-1946), among others. The exhibit will continue October 2, 2015 through January 21, 2016.



I hope to see you at The Irvine Museum.—James Irvine Swinden, President

The Director's Featured Artist

DONNA NORINE SCHUSTER was born on January 6, 1883, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her father was George J. Schuster, the son of German immigrants. He owned a prosperous tobacco business. Her mother was Nora L. Devendorf of Delevan, Wisconsin. Donna was the second of four children.



Schuster began her art training at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she graduated with honors. She then studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School with Edmund C. Tarbell (1862-1938) and Frank W. Benson (1862-1951). In 1912, she went on a painting tour of Belgium with the great American Impressionist William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) and won the William Merritt Chase Prize.

In 1913, Schuster moved to Los Angeles, and the following summer studied once again with Chase, this time at the Carmel Summer School, in Carmel-Monterey. In the fall of 1914, she made a series of watercolor sketches in San Francisco depicting the construction of the buildings for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. These paintings were later exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art.

In 1922, Schuster was one of the founders of the Group of Eight, one of the first organizations for the exhibition and sale of Modernist works in California. Founded by Luvena Buchanan Vysekal (1873-1954) and her husband Edouard Vysekal (1890-1939), the Group of Eight consisted of Mabel Alvarez (1891-1985), Henri De Kruif (1882-1944), Clarence Hinkle (1880-1960), John Hubbard Rich (1876-1954), E. Roscoe Shrader (1878-1960), and Schuster.

In 1923, she built a studio-home in the hills of Griffith Park, and joined the faculty of Otis Art Institute, situated near Westlake Park in Los Angeles. She spent her summers at a second studio-home in Laguna Beach. In 1928, she began to study with the Synchronist painter Stanton Macdonald-Wright (1890-1973), who would prove influential throughout her art career. Macdonald-Wright's presence can be seen in Schuster's work through the intense color harmonies she favored. A dedicated progressive, she also showed an interest in Cubism and Expressionism.

Schuster was active in many arts organizations, holding memberships in the California Art Club, the Laguna Beach Art Association, West Coast Arts, and the California Water Color Society, of which she was a founding member. She received numerous awards, including a Silver Medal in watercolors, at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, 1915; a Gold Medal at the California State Fair, 1919; and two Gold Medals at the Painters of the West Annual Exhibition, in 1924 and 1929.

Donna Schuster died on December 27, 1953, in Los Angeles, when her home burned as a result of a brush fire in nearby Griffith Park. It is said she died when she ran into her burning house to rescue her beloved dogs that were trapped inside.—*Jean Stern, Executive Director*



above: Donna Schuster, *Water Lilies*, Private Collection
above right: Donna Schuster with her pet dogs

right: Donna Schuster, *Girl in a Hammock*, The Beverly and Ray Redfern Collection
far right: Donna Schuster, *Girl with Red Umbrella*, Private Collection





top: Maurice Braun, *Yosemite, Evening from Glacier Point*, The Irvine Museum
 above: Thomas Hill, *Following the Trail of Hetch Hetchy*, The Irvine Museum

Reflections from Students of the University of California, Irvine

“I scan the oil canvas painting and imagine myself standing exactly where Maurice Braun stood. Looking at this serene impression of the glorious Yosemite glaciers, I feel a peace within. The amount of space and vastness displayed makes me feel small, and at the same time, taller than the peak of the world. As I look beyond Half Dome, the vastness stretches beyond the sky and into infinity. I wish I could be there to look up and around, passed the oil canvas, taking it out of the gold ornate frame that encompasses its majesty, and letting it stretch out with my imagination. If I close my eyes and place myself where Maurice stood, I can feel the crisp cool air all around me as the sunlight tucks in the hills and says, ‘Goodnight,’ to all the corners of the glaciers. Below me, the hills tumble down into dark sleep. Above me, the clouds float around like fish in a fish bowl. Before me lies a big slumbering giant, whose calm snore sends a resonating ‘om’ that echoes in all directions. As I imagine myself standing there, I wonder how Maurice Braun could scale such an enormous and powerful image onto this canvas and make you feel like you are there. I wonder what mysterious creatures could be hiding in the crevices of these giants. I wonder what it would be like to stand at the top of that slumbering giant. And at last, I wonder how different these mountains look when the sun has faded away into darkness.”

—Marissa Piche

“During the museum visit, my first thought upon seeing this painting was awe. Starting from the dirt path that winds its way through the vast grasslands, I wondered at the beauty of nature and where a place as serene and as beautiful as this could exist. My eyes followed the path until it disappeared, blending into the towering mountains in the background. I could see the tips of the mountains creating a magnificent skyline, giants looming under the delicate clouds that floated in the sky. The artist does an excellent job of depicting the valley. It is like the calm before the storm. I did not realize that this magnificent scene would soon be drowned in water, today known as Hetch Hetchy. I enjoyed this painting because it was like a time capsule; a glimpse into the past of what the landscape used to look like, and speaks to the ecological mindset of the time. Was the benefit of building the dam a trade-off worth making to hide the beauty of the valley?”—Amanda Lee

Benefit for the Little Garden Club of Newport Beach



above left: Harry Best, *Redwoods*, The Irvine Museum
 above right: floral interpretation by Christopher Nichols, Roger's Gardens
 right: From left, James Irvine Swinden, Sheri Best and Jean Stern enjoy the floral display by Michael Sullivan, of Urban Gardener, inspired by Frederick Schafer's *Mount Shasta*, Private Collection, courtesy of The Irvine Museum.



In April, The Irvine Museum hosted a fundraiser for **THE LITTLE GARDEN CLUB OF NEWPORT BEACH**. The challenge for participating florists was to select a masterpiece painting as inspiration and create a floral display. Photo by Harriet Lewis.



above: Jesse Powell in his studio, Monterey
above right: Jesse Powell, *Spring Bloom, Point Lobos*, 2014,
oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in., The Irvine Museum, Gift of the artist



Spring Bloom, Point Lobos

In keeping with the recent announcement that The Irvine Museum will begin collecting works by noted contemporary plein air painters, the museum has accepted the following painting as the first work by a contemporary artist in its distinguished collection of California paintings:

“The Irvine Museum is delighted to have this exceptional painting as its first acquisition by a contemporary California landscape painter. We were intent on beginning the contemporary collection with the very best example of California’s exquisite environment by one of America’s most promising artists. We found that in Jesse Powell’s gorgeous rendition of golden California poppies on a mild spring day on the Monterey coast. The museum is earnest about building a contemporary collection to rival our exceptional historic collection, and Jesse’s painting is a fitting start” said Jean Stern.



Students from St. Catherine of Sienna Parish School
study *Sentinels of the Coast* by Edgar Payne

Education & Outreach

Quotes from Visiting Students

I enjoyed all the paintings, but if I could choose one painting to be my favorite it would be Incoming Tide. Thank you museum staff for that wonderful trip.

All of the paintings were very inspiring because it seemed that each painting had a story behind it.

Some of the paintings were so realistic you felt as if you were there.

I want to thank you for letting our class go to the museum. It was very intriguing!!! I loved all the beautiful artwork and can't wait to go back again!

The Laguna Canyon Road painting was beautiful and we learned about what it used to look like.

I really liked how I got to get up close to the paintings. You can't always do that at museums.

Sunlight & Shadow: The Tradition of Plein Air Painting Opening Reception

On June 11, The Irvine Museum hosted a reception for its newest exhibition, *Sunlight & Shadow: The Tradition of Plein Air Painting*. The reception featured live music by a string duo, small bites and champagne, gorgeous arrangements by Paul Fenner Floral Design, and the opportunity to meet some of the most prestigious plein air painters. The exhibition is on display through September 24, and features a selection of the museum's celebrated historic landscape paintings (one dating as old as 1890) alongside contemporary plein air works (some as recent as 2015).

right: Director Jean Stern (with microphone) and museum president James Irvine Swinden, far right, introduce participating artists; from left, Jeff Yeomans, Saim Caglayan, Michael Obermeyer, Jeff Sewell, Bryan Mark Taylor, Jeff Horn, Jesse Powell, and Mian Situ.

below, left: the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association was represented by, from left, Toni Kellenberg, Rosemary Swimm, and Celeste Gilles.

below, center: James Irvine Swinden, third from left, greets reception guests, from left, Serena Brinderson, Jeff Sewell, Bill Booth, Vicki Booth, and Michael Obermeyer.

below, right: A guest views *Coronado* by Louis Betts, 1907, at left, alongside *A Day in Laguna Beach*, by Mian Situ, 2014, from The Crevier Collection.



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Brian Mark Taylor with his painting, *Cruising through Chinatown*, in the collection of Kathy & Dan Winton. At left is *Green Light*, by John Crosby, from The Balzer and Burke Collection.

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Jeff Horn with his painting, *Island Solitude*, from The Rebecca Welch Collection. At left is the Hansen Puthuff painting, *Mystical Hills*, The Irvine Museum.

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