

THE SORDONI ART GALLERY WILKES COLLEGE



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THE SORDONI ART GALLERY
WILKES COLLEGE



Installation view of the Gallery with
George Luks: An American Artist, April-May, 1987.

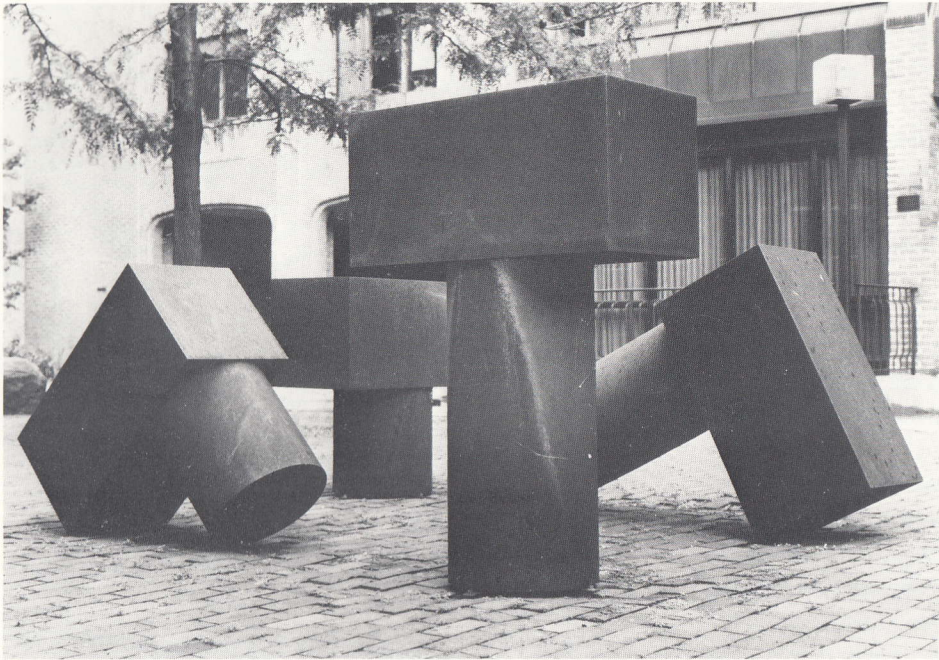
The Sordoni Art Gallery of Wilkes College was established in 1973 to encourage and support an appreciation of the visual arts in an academic setting. Representing more than the fine arts aspect of a liberal arts education, the Gallery serves as a teaching resource for campus and community and creates a stimulus for local artists. It is a professionally staffed and equipped facility which provides an ambitious schedule of exhibitions, lectures, and related programs, all of which are available to the public without charge.

Major exhibitions organized by the Gallery have included FRANZ KLINE: PAINTINGS (1978); THE EIGHT (1979); THREE PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN: BEAUX, CASSATT, AND WALTER (1980); STUDENTS OF THE EIGHT (1981); CARL SPRINCHORN: REALIST IMPULSE AND ROMANTIC VISION (1982); 1933 REVISTED: AMERICAN MASTERS OF THE EARLY THIRTIES (1983); and GEORGE LUKS: AN AMERICAN ARTIST (1987).

The Sordoni Art Gallery's growing permanent collection is focused upon nineteenth and twentieth century American paintings, and a print collection which includes works of old masters and contemporary artists. A select group of nineteenth century European paintings from the former

collection of Senator Andrew J. Sordoni is also part of the Gallery's permanent holdings.

Operating support for the Gallery is largely undertaken by Wilkes College, with additional funding provided by the Sordoni Foundation, Inc., grants from corporate and individual sponsors, and members of the Friends of the Sordoni Art Gallery.



View towards the Gallery from the surrounding Marts Courtyard.
Quartet #2 by Steve Porter is shown.

Hours:

Monday through Friday 12-5 p.m.

Thursday evenings until 9 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday 1-5 p.m.

Closed all major holidays.

Admission to the Gallery is free.

Location:

150 South River Street

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

(717) 824-4651, ext. 388

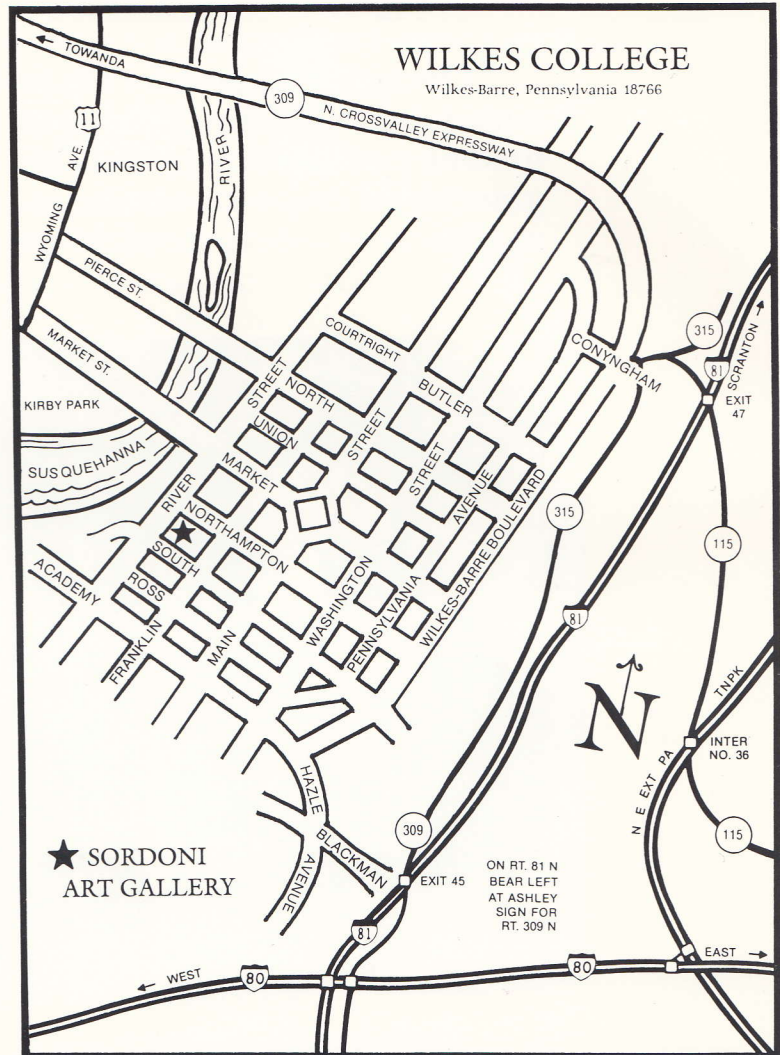
The Gallery is centrally located on the ground floor of Stark Learning Center on the Wilkes College campus. Parking is available south of the Gallery off South River Street.

Activities:

Gallery tours, lectures, bus trips, receptions, and gallery internships for students at Wilkes College.

Exhibitions:

Contemporary and historical; loan, traveling, and exhibitions from the permanent collection. The collection may be seen by appointment when it is not on exhibition.





INSIGHTS:

SELECTIONS FROM THE PERMANENT
COLLECTION, SORDONI ART GALLERY,
WILKES COLLEGE

in·sight (ĩn' sīt') *n.* **1.** The capacity to discern the true nature of a situation; penetration. **2.** An elucidating glimpse.



JOHN SLOAN (1871-1951)

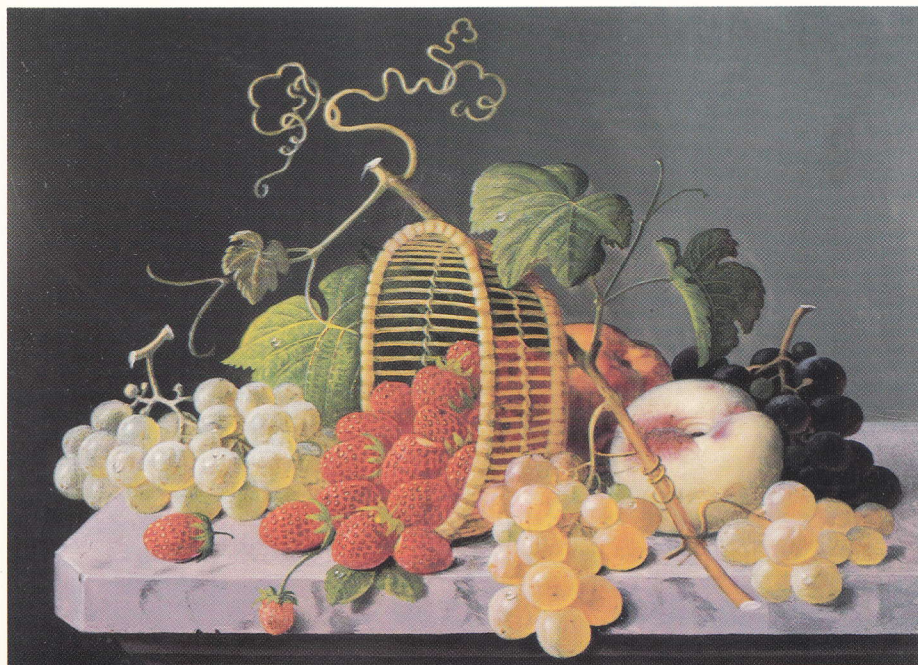
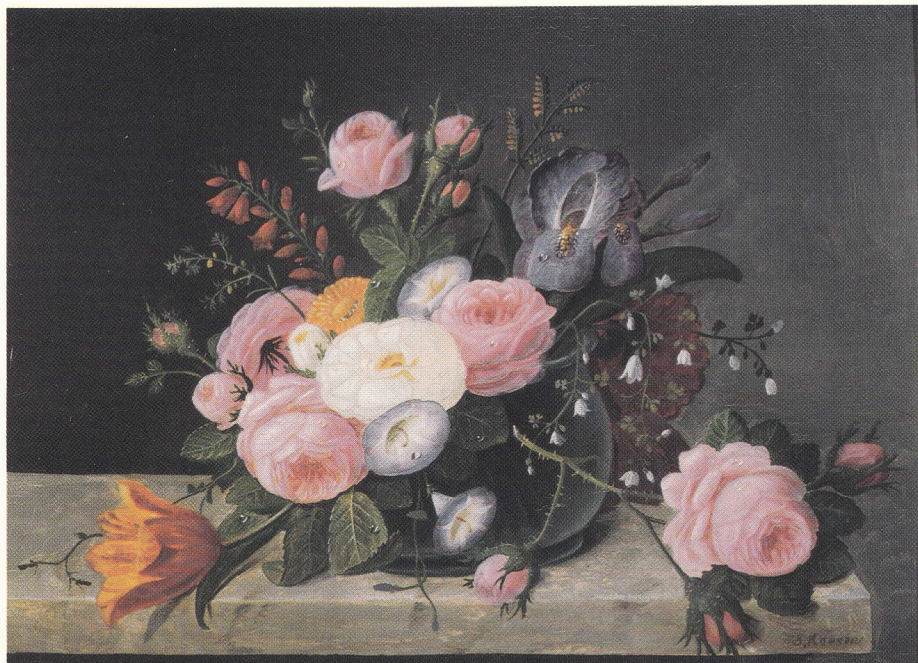
Helen in Green, 1947

Tempera and oil glazes on masonite, 21 x 18 inches

Born in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, John Sloan began his artistic career as a newspaper artist in Philadelphia, where he also took classes from Thomas Anshutz at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and met fellow artist Robert Henri, who encouraged him to paint. The two men later became leaders of a group of New York realists known as "The Ash Can School." While still in Philadelphia, Sloan became interested in etching, a process whose technical features resurface in the textured cross-hatching of later paintings.

In 1904 Sloan moved to New York with several of his newspaper friends, with whom he continued to develop a painting style centered on the direct observation of city life. Scorned by the official exhibitions as too vulgar, Sloan and his friends banded together to begin the Independent movement which, among other things, permitted a non-juried opportunity for artists to exhibit their work.

Beginning in 1919, Sloan spent his summers in Sante Fe, where in 1947 he painted this portrait of his wife, Helen Farr. The series of glazes and cross hatching which form the image are an attempt to emphasize three-dimensional volume in a two-dimensional format. Helen Farr Sloan worked with her artist-husband to publish *Gist of Art*, an important book which records Sloan's ideas about art as expressed through his classroom lectures.



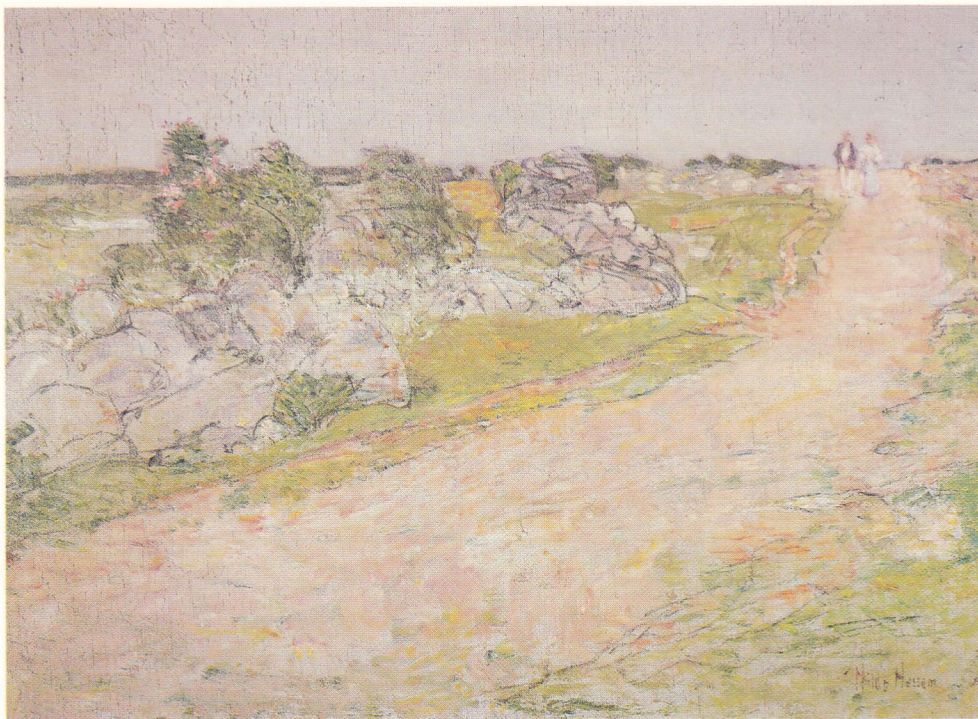
SEVERIN ROESEN (c. 1814-c. 1872)
Still Life with Flowers and Still Life with Fruit, c. 1865
Both oil on wood panel, 12 x 16 inches

Although little is known about his life, Severin Roesen was an artist who left a strong mark on American nineteenth century still life painting through the style and number of his compositions.

He came to the United States from Germany in 1848 and painted in New York City until 1856. At mid-century, there was already a growing appreciation for German art, especially still life, and Roesen's work appealed to the increasingly well-to-do middle class. His paintings were sold through the American Art Union and went to collectors as far away as Maine and Missouri.

Roesen left New York to travel through Pennsylvania in 1856; in 1860 he settled in Williamsport, a prosperous lumber community in the center of the state. There he found an interested market for his paintings and a number of students to whom he could teach his style of still life composition.

These two paintings are matched in size and reflect the Victorian taste for having an ensemble of small paintings to group together on a wall. The pristine, detailed painting style is typical of Roesen, as are the bright color and jewel-like appearance of each flower and fruit. Roesen's concern for realism is evident in his careful brushwork, concern for detail, and mastery in reproducing the colors and textures of nature. Created by an immigrant for immigrants, his pleasing compositions represent the pride of nineteenth century Americans in the natural bounty and beauty of their new country.



CHILDE HASSAM (1859 - 1935)

Hilltop: Two Figures on the Dunes, 1895

Oil on canvas, 18 x 25½ inches

Given in honor of Dr. Arnaud C. Marts by his wife

Childe Hassam is considered to be one of the foremost painters of the American Impressionist movement. He was a member of the "The Ten," a group of artists from New York and Boston who organized in 1898 to draw attention to their work and away from the French Impressionists.

Hassam left high school to work as an engraver and illustrator in Boston, where he took lessons at the Boston Art Club and the Lowell Institute. By 1883 he had already begun sending paintings to exhibitions, and he felt the call to go to Europe. Eventually he spent three years in Paris, where he became familiar with the work of the Impressionists. Hassam was attracted by their subject matter, which was drawn from everyday life, and their new use of color and light, and he incorporated these ideas in his own canvases.

Hassam was a very successful artist and won 35 major prizes in exhibitions both at home and abroad. He is best known for his paintings of summer resorts in New England and street scenes in New York. *Hilltop: Two Figures on the Dunes* shows the unusual perspective and high horizon line of Impressionist composition as well as the use of bright color and stippled brushwork to simulate natural light.



WALTER ELMER SCHOFIELD (1867 - 1944)

Wandering Brook, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Gift of Phillip and Muriel Berman

Acknowledged during his lifetime as one of America's foremost landscape painters, Schofield was born and raised in Philadelphia. After attending the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, he joined the hundreds of American artists who studied at the Julian Academy in Paris. There he came in contact with the tenets of Impressionism, which he adopted for his mature style.

An important part of Impressionism is the concept of painting directly from the subject out-of-doors, rather than from memory and sketches in a studio. Schofield was a big, hardy outdoorsman who enjoyed painting scenes in all seasons, and he is well known for his winter landscapes. He divided his time between a home in Cornwall, England, and the United States, where he worked in New England, the Western states, and, especially, the Brandywine River Valley in Pennsylvania.

Wandering Brook was probably painted in Pennsylvania. It employs the square format Vincent van Gogh discovered to be effective in his late paintings and shows the same intense, flickering brushstroke. The use of raw, unblended colors helps invigorate the scene.

Schofield is represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Corcoran Art Gallery (Washington, D.C.) and other important collections. He is recognized as one of Pennsylvania's important contributors to the turn-of-the-century American Impressionist movement.



GEORGE CATLIN (1796-1872)

A Lone Buffalo Surrounded by a Pack of Wolves, n.d.

Lithograph, 11¼ x 17¼

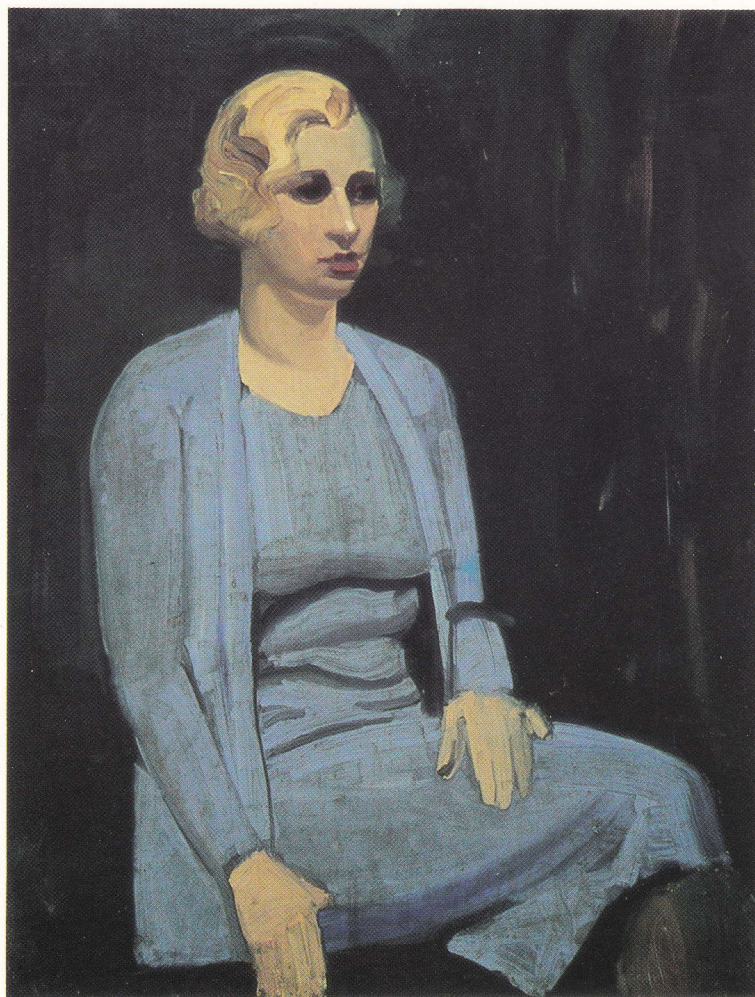
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert L. Mayock and W. Graham Arader III

In *A Lone Buffalo*, Catlin shows the animal in its final stand against a natural enemy: wolves. But the artist's real concern was the killing of wild life and invasion of the Indians' land by white fur traders. Catlin's images of the American Indian and his way of life are some of the most informative historical documents of that era.

According to nineteenth century practice, this piece was drawn and printed as a lithograph by master craftsmen from Catlin's original watercolor.

George Catlin was born in Wilkes-Barre, and grew up to practice law in his home town. In 1821, after three years as a lawyer, he sold his law library and moved to Philadelphia to devote himself to painting. He began as a portraitist, but when a group of Plains Indians passed through Philadelphia around 1825, he found his true calling. Fascinated by these “knights of the forest,” he decided to document the Indian tribes living between the Allegheny and Rocky Mountains.

By 1837 he had compiled an “Indian Gallery,” complete with 494 paintings and artifacts such as spears, drums, robes, and a teepee. Catlin took his Gallery to London and Paris, hoping that on his return home the United States Government would buy it for display. But it was not until the death of Joseph Harrison, a private collector who bailed the artist out of his financial troubles, that the Gallery was given to the Smithsonian by Harrison’s widow.



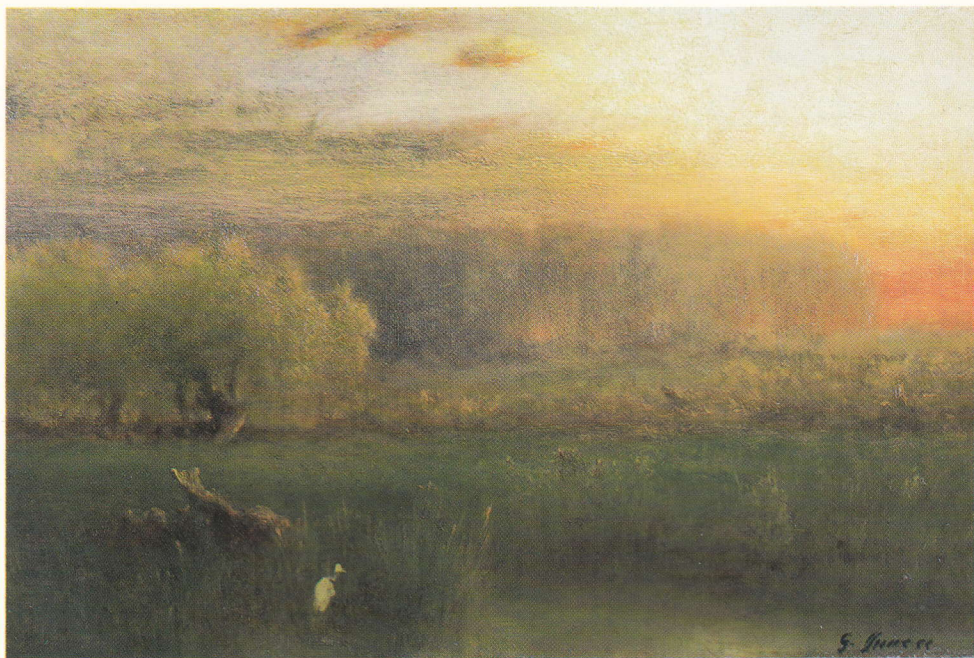
GEORGE BENJAMIN LUKS (1867 - 1933)
Society Lady, c. 1932
Oil on canvas, 43 x 33½ inches

George Luks is best known to the art world as a member of the “The Eight,” a group of American painters who broke with the traditions of the American academies of the early twentieth century in order to develop their own artistic styles.

Luks’s natural ability to draw was put to use as a reporter-illustrator for the *Philadelphia Press* in the 1890’s. The artists he met at the *Press* and in Philadelphia — John Sloan, William Glackens, Everett Shinn, and Robert Henri — encouraged Luks to paint in oils; later they became his associates, along with Maurice Prendergast, Arthur B. Davies, and Ernest Lawson, in “The Eight.” Luks had settled in New York City by the early 1900’s and his subjects became city workers, beggar women, and other eccentrics of the streets. His powerful ability to capture character in portraiture caused many (including himself) to compare his work to that of the famous seventeenth century Dutch painter, Frans Hals.

The sitter for Society Lady studied with Luks at his informal school in lower Manhattan. The painting shows Luks’s flamboyant brushwork and spontaneous sense of form and color. The raw sensation of a limited but brilliant palette — vivid blue, gold and red — laid on in strong brush strokes is remarkably modern, but despite his rough technique and sparse details, Luks conveys the dignified, introspective manner of the sitter.

This painting came to the Gallery as a result of research for the important traveling retrospective exhibition *George Luks: An American Artist*, which was organized by the Sordoni Art Gallery and opened there in May, 1987.



GEORGE INNESS (1825-1894)

Evening Landscape, c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 12 x 18¼ inches

George Inness was one of the most prolific American landscape painters of the nineteenth century. Very early in his career he painted in the style of the Hudson River School, but later he turned away from that school's realism and detail to create a more brooding, mystical view of nature.

Inness grew up in New York City and in Newark, New Jersey, where as a teenager he was an apprentice to engravers. In 1844, at the age of nineteen, he began to exhibit landscapes whose expressionistic mood differed from the Hudson River style. During the 1850s frequent trips to Italy and France introduced him to the romanticism of the Barbizon School, and a gentle, reflective quality entered his style.

During the late 1860s Inness' paintings began to take on a more abstract, introspective view of nature. From 1870-74 he lived in Italy and his work became less realistic and more dramatic through the use of color and a looser brushstroke. During his late period he rarely worked outdoors, but preferred to repaint a single canvas many times over from his imagination.

Evening Landscape, painted around 1890, dates from this late period. Though it is easily recognizable as a landscape, the brushstrokes are blurred and the colors intense. The white crane in the foreground is an exotic inclusion, appearing as a specter in a dramatic stage setting.



HARRY GOTTLIEB (1895 -)
***Bootleg Mining*, 1937**
Lithograph, 14 x 18½

Harry Gottlieb was one of the founding members of a special unit of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project. This unit was formed in 1938 to explore the potential of the silkscreening process; the result was serigraphy, an important development in printmaking. Prints were a relatively inexpensive way for the Federal Art Project to distribute original works of art to various public institutions during the Depression years. In turn, serigraphy provided a relatively simple and inexpensive process for artists who could not afford canvas and paints.

Gottlieb was born in Bucharest, Rumania; later the family moved to Ireland and then to the United States. He attended the Minneapolis Art Institute, leaving in 1908 for New York City, where he became a set and costume designer for Eugene O'Neill's Provincetown Theatre group.

After a one-man show of his serigraphs was held in New York in 1940, Gottlieb toured the country giving lectures on serigraphy. His experiences with people led him to become interested in the labor movement and when he visited Northeastern Pennsylvania he was sympathetic to the plight of the coal miners.

Bootleg Mining is a lithograph, a more expensive type of print medium; it reflects Gottlieb's view that the artist has a responsibility to record the events and emotions of his own time.



CARL SPRINCHORN (1887 - 1971)

The Blizzard, 1941

Oil on canvas, 21 x 29 inches

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Klein

The Blizzard shows the bravura of Sprinchorn's brushwork and demonstrates his move from the gritty realism of his earlier style to the more romantic, interpretive images of his later work. Although still clearly a landscape, the tightly controlled abstract rhythms of The Blizzard evoke a pictorial winter storm. The zig-zag brushwork and the dagger-like forms of dark pines threaten the observer with a primitive force.

Carl Sprinchorn moved to New York City from his native Sweden in 1903, when he enrolled at the Art Students League. His mentor there was the charismatic teacher, painter, and co-founder of "The Eight," Robert Henri. Drawing his subjects from the hectic life of the city around him, Sprinchorn's painting style became bold and vigorous.

Sprinchorn's career looked promising and by the 1920's he was thoroughly involved in the polemics of the New York art world as Director of the New Gallery, which showed the work of such Europeans as Van Gogh and Matisse. But repeated excursions to the back country of Maine began to draw his attention away from the city. He found work as a lumberjack and eventually moved to a small village in the Maine woods, where he became a recluse, going to New York only when he needed to sell paintings.

Sprinchorn's respect for nature produced powerful images, but his retirement from the art world caused a public eclipse of his work. *The Blizzard* was included in a retrospective exhibition, *Carl Sprinchorn: Realist Impulse and Romantic Vision*, mounted at the Sordoni Art Gallery in 1983.



THOMAS HART BENTON (1889-1974)

Sunset, 1941

Lithograph, 10 x 9¼ inches

Together with Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, Thomas Hart Benton was a proponent of Regionalism, a style popularized in the 1930s which was intended to create a purely American style, independent of European inspiration. Benton believed that “we must find our aesthetic values . . . in penetrating the meaning and forms of American life as known and felt by ordinary Americans.”

Benton studied first at the Chicago Art Institute, then from 1908 to 1911 in Paris, where he developed an abstract style. But by the early 1920s, after serving in the Navy and painting a series of large canvases illustrating American history, Benton had rejected modernism. His mature style was rooted in realism and influenced by the anatomical distortions and expressionistic forms of the Spanish painter Goya.

In 1935 he moved to Kansas City, a change that reflected the anti-urban aspect of Regionalism as well as Benton’s search for his own roots, which were in the mid-west. *Sunset*, done in 1941, is a peaceful landscape filled with soft, rounded forms that evoke latent fertility. It depicts the America Benton loved, which he felt could not be expressed through an abstract style.



SORDONI
ART
GALLERY



INSIGHTS