

1-1-2006

## Karl Priebe, Young Woman at the Seashore, 1940

Stephen L. Franzoi

Marquette University, [stephen.franzoi@marquette.edu](mailto:stephen.franzoi@marquette.edu)

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Published version. "Karl Priebe, Young Woman at the Seashore, 1940," in *Perspectives on Art at the Haggerty Museum*. Milwaukee, WI: Haggerty Museum of Art, 2006: 38-39. [Publisher link](#). © 2006 Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University. Used with permission.



Karl Priebe  
American (1914-1976)  
*Young Woman at the Seashore*, 1940  
Casein on board  
30 ¼ x 38 in.  
Gift of Mr. Emile Priebe, 82.15.107



Because psychology is the scientific study of the mind, there is a great deal of common ground between psychology and the artistic expression of that mind. The career of American artist Karl Priebe, born in Milwaukee in 1914, is a wonderful example of the artistic expression of the unconscious mind and fantasy. Priebe was part of the Wisconsin surrealists in the 1930s and 1940s, but his diverse creative works are not always easy to categorize. His paintings often have a dreamlike quality, which certainly describes *Young Woman at the Seashore*, 1940. The Haggerty Art Museum allowed me to use this painting as the cover image for the second edition of my textbook, *Psychology: A Journey of Discovery*. The theme of my text is that, for both the scientist conducting psychological research and the student learning about the theories and research in the discipline, psychology is a journey of discovery.

As I tell my students in the introductory psychology course, if you examine the figures depicted in many of Priebe's paintings, they nicely illustrate what psychologist Carl Jung calls the archetypal figures of the collective unconscious. Using Jung's terminology, perhaps this particular painting depicts the dreamer as "hero," searching for self-knowledge in the unconscious world of sleep. Yet it is also possible that the figures in Priebe's dreamlike paintings are more correctly understood as simply being creative byproducts of the human forebrain's attempt at interpreting the random neural activity initiated in the midbrain during sleep. This alternative explanation is consistent with the activation-synthesis theory, a more contemporary theory of dreaming than Jung's theory. Which is the better explanation? Discussing such issues while touring Haggerty Museum is just one example of how students can be encouraged to make intellectual connections between art and science.

**Stephen Franzoi, Ph.D.**  
**Professor**  
**Department of Psychology**